

LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network – NLG-Libraries-FY21

Title: Connecting the Pipeline: Libraries, OER, and Dual Enrollment for K-12 to Postsecondary

Summary: LOUIS requests \$235,000 in IMLS funds for the design and implementation of a library-centered Open Educational Resources (OER) Textbook Transformation program to support the expansion of high school Dual Enrollment (DE) courses. This program provides a model for connecting OER initiatives between secondary and post-secondary institutions and for positioning these programs within a library context. DE programs in Louisiana and beyond allow high school students to simultaneously acquire postsecondary and high school credit for coursework, thus improving college access and completion rates. Yet the infrastructure to connect OER expertise across these venues is absent. In this OER Textbook Transformation program, DE instructors, in consultation with librarian professionals in both settings, will design openly licensed courses. Through focus groups and workshops, school and academic librarians will build connections and capacity in DE and OER. In the OER Textbook Transformation program, DE instructors, who may be stationed in either high school or college settings, will collaborate with library professionals to design openly licensed courses. Librarians will provide technical expertise in areas of pedagogy, instructional design, accessibility, and copyright in projects that span K-12 and higher education.

Statement of National Need: In 2020, Louisiana’s Dual Enrollment Task Force adopted recommendations that called for access to college coursework in core academic content areas and career/technical fields for all high school students.ⁱ For this to occur, the development and adoption of OER to reduce textbook costs was identified as a priority. Research has found that DE programs “have a particularly difficult time financing college textbooks.”ⁱⁱ When students must cover textbook costs, this can “drastically reduce participation, particularly among traditionally underrepresented students who are less affluent than typical college-bound students.”ⁱⁱⁱ States typically do not cover this cost and, in Louisiana, students are advised that they “must secure the required textbooks and course materials to fully participate in the DE class.”ⁱⁱⁱⁱ These costs can restrict DE access for families unable to pay textbook costs average \$90 per course.^{iv} This is part of a larger conversation on barriers from textbook costs, which have increased by 88% from 2006 and 2016 and negatively impact access and completion.^v OER are a robust and increasingly widespread mechanism to reduce this barrier.

LOUIS: the Louisiana Library Network, a statewide consortium of academic libraries and a program of the Louisiana Board of Regents, is positioned to capitalize on existing initiatives, infrastructure, and expertise via a successful affordable learning program. Over the last over 5 years, LOUIS has cemented the role of libraries in supporting the creators and users of OER. To date, LOUIS has supported over 600 faculty and saved students over \$11 million through programs designed to provide open and affordable course materials to students. Additionally, this effort builds off of other previously-funded IMLS proposals, such as the HBCU Library Summit on Open Education Resources, which identified opportunities to bring in-depth training to librarians with limited access to professional development. Finally, LOUIS has to date curated over 250 courses in its LOUIS OER Commons repository with local course alignment metadata, and DE OER courses will receive similar metadata. Through LOUIS’ participation in ISKME’s IMLS project, Building OER Curriculum-Alignment Networks, the shareability of previously created metadata along with new DE courses will further enhance resource discoverability.

Project Design: Completion of the project, in three phases, will be led and monitored by the Associate Commissioner and Executive Director (ED) for LOUIS and will include strategy and CFP development, project selection, contracting, and final assessment measures. Additionally, the ED will oversee project accountability with the LOUIS Executive Board and Louisiana’s Dual Enrollment Task Force. LOUIS’ Affordable Learning Program Administrator will lead the management of and creation of instructional content for all professional workshops, the implementation of the Textbook Transformation Program, coordination of lead technical consultant group, and ensuring discoverability of all work products.

Phase 1, Program Planning and Assessment: Using an external consultant with OER expertise (ISKME), LOUIS will facilitate focus groups and interviews with libraries, campuses, and schools to develop

strategies to connect and deliver programming to new and existing DE instructors and librarians. To develop a cohort of trained and interconnected school and academic librarians, LOUIS will deliver librarian workshops on DE and OER, leveraging existing training materials developed through LOUIS' faculty cohort program and Open Education Network membership. Priority DE courses will be identified, as informed by stakeholder feedback, BOR statewide enrollment data, and gap analysis. LOUIS and participating institutions will work to identify policy changes or incentive structures needed to enable librarian and DE instructor participation in Textbook Transformation projects.

Phase 2, OER Textbook Transformation Program: Informed by focus groups and interviews from Phase 1, a Call for Proposals (CFP), updated from a previously used LOUIS OER CFP to include new DE priorities, will be released. Outside reviewers will prioritize projects, which will be awarded via a subcontracting process with LOUIS institutional members. Librarians will serve as lead technical consultants on projects to ensure development of local expertise and a connection to the LOUIS member community.

Phase 3, Discovery and Promotion: As projects are completed, OER will be added to the LOUIS OER Commons repository and other OER repositories, promoted to ensure widespread discovery, and tagged with metadata that allow for other entities to bring the curated resources into additional repositories. An openly licensed toolkit with workshop training materials and project management approach will be shared via the open education community. Data on use and impacts will be captured, assessed, and reported, and a maintenance schedule will be applied to ensure sustainability of the content.

Diversity Plan: Louisiana has seen uneven participation in DE by low income and minority students.ⁱ Nationally, a report from the Department of Education on high school students showed 13 % of white students participated in DE programs compared to 6.5% of Black students.^{vi} LOUIS membership includes HBCU and community colleges, both of which serve a diverse student population and have DE courses. To target barriers to DE participation among traditionally underserved and minority communities, the OER Textbook Transformation Program will prioritize proposals that include one or more of the following: Minority-Serving Institutions, community colleges, and Title I secondary schools.

National Impact: National impacts of this project include a replicable model for collaboration and professional development among school and academic librarians, and OER for academic core and career/technical courses currently otherwise unavailable. In order to share the model, LOUIS will develop a toolkit with workshop training materials, sample CFP, and project management materials, all openly licensed. This will reside on the LOUIS website and will also be shared with the following established networks: Open Education Network, SPARC LibOER, ISKME's OER Commons Community of Practice, and CCCOER Advisory. OER created from funding will be shared via these networks, and the resources will be deposited in OER repositories for discovery: LOUIS OER Commons microsite, OER Commons, and Merlot. In turn, they will be indexed by the Mason OER Metafinder. Presentations will be conducted to share the model. Identified venues include ALA Annual, with both school and academic librarians in attendance, ICOLC, and the Professional Development Alliance (PDA) of library consortia.

Budget Summary: LOUIS requests \$235,000, without cost share, for a period of 2 years: \$80,000 will fund LOUIS personnel; \$120,000 will fund the Dual Enrollment OER Textbook Transformation Program; and \$35,000 will fund a 1-year external consultant contract to facilitate focus groups and interviews.

ⁱ <https://regents.la.gov/dual-enrollment-task-force/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/slcp/finaldual.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://regents.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/DE-FAQ-AA2.22-030618.pdf>

^{iv} <https://www.nacs.org/research/HigherEdRetailMarketFactsFigures.aspx>

^v www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2016/college-tuition-and-fees-increase-63-percent-since-january-2006.htm

^{vi} <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019430.pdf>