

# OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES Publishing Program



University  
of Regina

Newsletter  
Spring 2021

## A SNAPSHOT OF THE OER PUBLISHING PROGRAM AS IT CONTINUES TO FLOURISH

First launched in early 2016 following the provision of three-year funding from the provincial government, the University's OER Publishing Program has grown significantly since then. The main objectives of the program are: to reduce textbooks costs for students; to contribute to greater access to higher education; and to support faculty members' creation of open-access textbooks and other types of OERs that integrate Canadian, local, and Indigenous content, and thereby better serve the learning needs of our students.

The OER Program (formerly called the Open Textbook Program) was initially focused on the creation and adaptation of open-access textbooks in large enrollment introductory-level undergraduate courses. The OER Program soon expanded to fund supplementary OERs for use in teaching at the University of Regina; such OERs include slide-decks, lab manuals, and field-trip research videos. OER-Program funded textbooks and supplementary materials are adopted not only by U of R faculty but also by instructors at other high education institutions in Canada and abroad. It is important to note that the OER Program requires that all textbooks funded by the program must go through a double-blind peer review in order to ensure that they meet the academic standards in the relevant area of studies.

More recently, the program has started to support "open-pedagogies", with the focus on funding the publication of senior undergraduate and graduate student papers written in a course. The faculty member teaching the course works with students to prepare their coursework for publication as a chapter or part of a chapter in an edited volume. The process of publishing is usually incorporated in the course from the start and serves as an important pedagogical strategy for enhancing student research and writing skills. This approach to open pedagogy fits well the U of R Strategic Plan's area of focus "Discovery" where teaching and research intersect in a mutually enhancing manner.

**OER Program purchased  
an institutional licence to  
Pressbooks...**

To facilitate faculty members' creation, adaptation, and use of OERs, the OER Program purchased an institutional licence to Pressbooks in collaboration with the Archer Library and the CCE. Pressbooks is one of the most-widely used open-access publishing platforms in the world. In addition to academic staff members, graduate students may also request a Pressbooks account with their supervisor's recommendation. The OER Program provides a variety of supports for U of R members with Pressbooks accounts who would like to use Pressbooks for publishing OERs or adapting suitable open-access publications for their courses.

Development of Indigenous-content textbooks has been an important priority for the OER Program. Several Indigenous-content textbooks have recently been published or are currently in development with the support of the OER Program. Among them are also Science textbooks such as Physics and Statistics.

The OER Program makes significant contributions to the University's recent initiative of zero-cost material courses (ZCM courses in short). These contributions include not only the development of open-access textbooks but also the provision of customized supports for faculty who wish to adopt open-access courseware for their courses. From Fall 2018 to Fall 2027, projected student savings from the open textbooks and supplementary OERs developed through the OER Program amount to no less than \$2.3 million.

The University of Regina is committed to supporting the creation and use of open educational resources for teaching and learning and expanding the repertoire of ZCM courses over the years to come.

Dr. Nilgün Önder  
Associate Vice-President (Academic)  
University of Regina



# STUDENTS AS PUBLISHED AUTHORS

By Professor Raymond Blake

When I broached the idea with students in my hybrid undergraduate-graduate course on Canadian Political History (HIST403/803) in the Fall 2020 semester of publishing their research essays, they were excited. What could be more exhilarating for a student than being a published author? My students were doing original research on how Canadian Prime Ministers have articulated their vision of Canada through Speeches from the Throne and in their Leaders' Day speeches. They are eager to share what they learn with others.

The idea of an ebook was a great one, especially during a year of remote teaching and learning.

I have published a number of books in the traditional paper format and even though most are available in electronic formats, I really had no idea of how all of that came together, but as students began work on their research and writing, I reached out to Isaac Mulolani, an Instructional Designer with the U of R's Flexible Learning Centre. Mr. Mulolani was immediately supportive and he suggested we work through Pressbooks, an open source software platform that provides online authoring and publishing services. The platform is a key resource supported by the U of R's Open Educational Resource Program, an initiative that facilitates the creation and use of open educational resources for teaching and learning.

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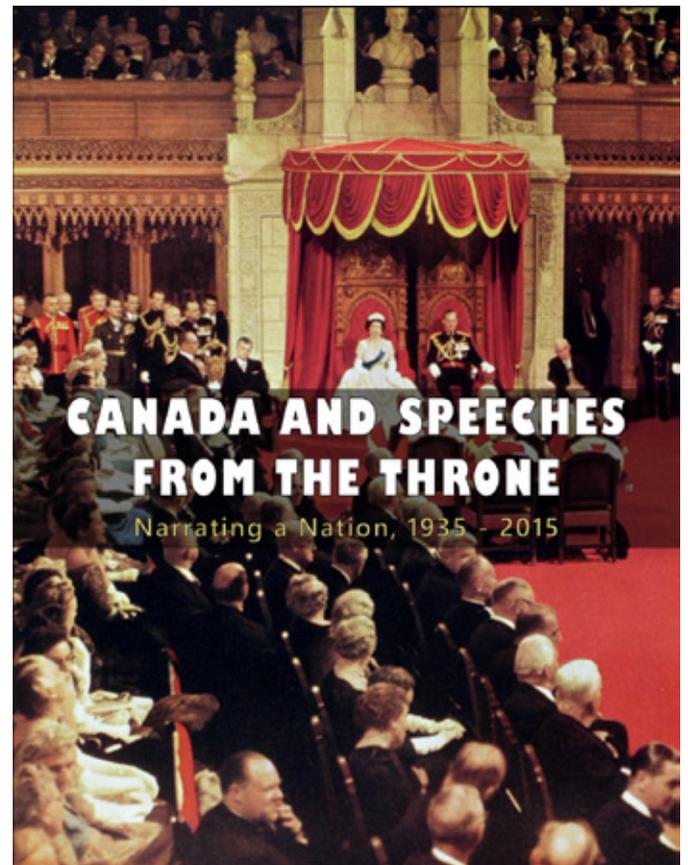
With Mr. Mulolani's patient assistance, I learned the various stages of the process from setting up an account to uploading the finished essays and photos. I was surprised how easy and efficient the process was. It was all very intuitive and whenever I encountered a problem or had any concerns, Isaac was always available. He provided valuable support.

My name does not appear on the e-published version of the book. That was deliberate but I acted as editor of the project. I spent more time editing the various papers and proof-reading each chapter than might usually be the case with final essays. Students can be tasked with uploading their own work but it was suggested that it might be more efficient if I did so to insure consistency of font, format, and other minor technical issues.

I asked each student to supply two images for the publication but we had to be careful of copyright infringement. In the end, I found the images selected for most of the chapters, largely because I had access to several databases of photographs. This aspect took more time than I had anticipated. If you embark on an e-book you should be aware that for most students the course ends when their final essays are submitted.

Are those projects worth the effort? Absolutely. I couldn't be happier with the end result. The book looks great. It took a lot of effort from the students and a little extra effort from me but the excitement of the students at having the published book was very gratifying and well worth the effort. One of the students, Rebecca Morris-Hurl agrees. 'I absolutely encourage other instructors and students to explore collective publishing because not only does it challenge students to produce quality work, but the process really does help foster a community in class – which is especially difficult in an online environment', she was quoted as saying in a URegina Research News post.

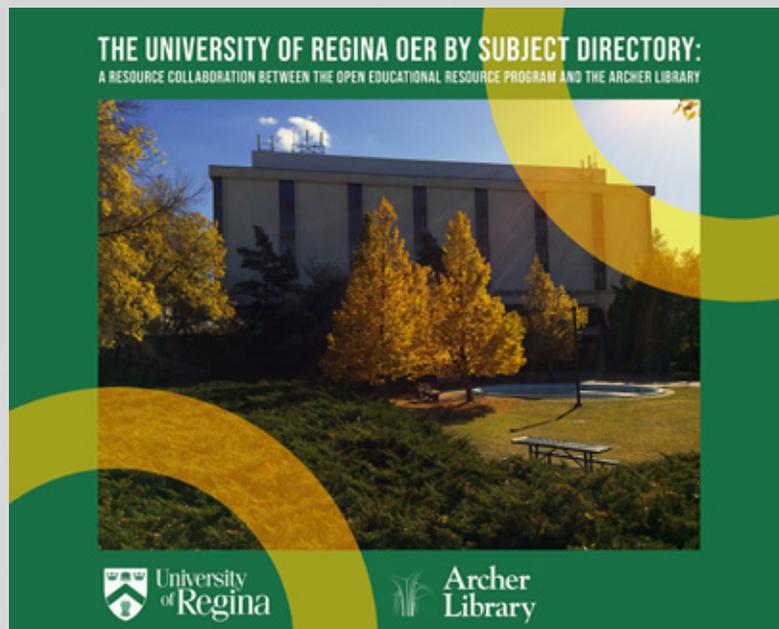
Canada and Speeches from the Throne: Narrating a Nation, 1935-2015 is available to read or freely download through the University of Regina library and at <https://opentextbooks.uregina.ca/primeministers2020/#main>.



# OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE MERGE PROJECT

By Arlysse Quiring

The Open Educational Resource merge project is a joint collaboration between the University of Regina OER program and Archer Library that began in fall of 2020. Initially created as a cloning project by OER coordinator Isaac Mulolani, the project began as a smaller venture to create a resource of academic resources already being utilized by Canadian universities. Similarly, library staff led by Cara Bradley had created three Research Guides or LibGuides to assist researchers, staff and faculty in their search for open textbooks and similar resources. Divided into three sections, the library resources are still available in the following format on the Research Guides section of the website: Open Textbooks, Open Educational Resources, and Open Access.



In conversation between the two units, Isaac approached staff at the library in efforts for collaboration. The root idea was to create a single one-stop-shop for any individual looking for further research resources in their discipline, to see what open textbooks were available for their current classes, to learn about the possibilities in creating online texts and cloning, and learn of the benefits of a program like PressBooks. Isaac created the initial clone from Concordia University, and along with User Services staff member Arlysse Quiring (Archer Library), the project began.

The merge has not been without challenges as resources were sorted, filtered, updated and cross referenced. What began as a collaborative idea became a significant merging of resources and teams. As the project continued to grow however, it became apparent that the purpose and end-goal of the document was exemplified by its creation. While the LibGuides and other OER will remain available to campus staff, students and faculty, this resource will be the starting point for anyone interested in OER.

The project, now entitled The University of Regina OER by Subject Directory was launched on May 6th. The open book will be considered a living document, with continual resource updates as they are discovered, created and contributed. For more information please contact Isaac Mulolani ([isaac.mulolani@uregina.ca](mailto:isaac.mulolani@uregina.ca)) or Arlysse Quiring ([arlysse.quiring@uregina.ca](mailto:arlysse.quiring@uregina.ca)).



# PROJECT UPDATES

## 2021 PROJECT COMPLETION SCHEDULE

DEPARTMENT/FACULTY	AUTHORS	TITLE	COMPLETION DATE
Geology/Science	Monica Cliveti	Geosciences Virtual Field Trip	Summer 2021
Geology/Science	Dr. Janis Dale	Geosciences Virtual Tour and Tutorials	Summer 2021
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy	Dr. Iryna Khovrenkov	Economics PowerPoint slide deck	Summer 2021
Justice Studies/Arts	Dr. Muhammad Asadullah	Justice Studies open pedagogy text	Summer 2021
Nursing	La Cité (French translation of English text)	Leadership and Influencing Change in Nursing	Fall 2021

## NEWLY FUNDED PROJECTS FOR SPRING 2021

DEPARTMENT/FACULTY	AUTHORS	TITLE	COMPLETION DATE
Justice Studies	Dr. Muhammad Asadullah	Justice Studies Open Pedagogy textbook	Summer 2021
Indigenous Knowledge and Science, Indigenous Education/First Nations University	Dr. Arzu Sardarli, Dr. Ida Swan	Cree Mathematics Dictionary	Fall 2021
Geology/Science	Dr. Joyce McBeth	Geology Lab Manual	Winter 2022
Kinesiology and Health Studies	Dr. John Barden	Biomechanics textbook	Summer 2023
Indigenous Knowledge and Science/First Nations University, Mathematics and Statistics/Science	Dr. Arzu Sardarli, Dr. Andrei Volodin, Dr. Syed Ejaz Ahmed	Statistics textbook	Summer 2023

## OER PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE OER PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT/FACULTY	AUTHORS	TITLE	COMPLETION DATE
Luther College, Gender Religion and Critical Studies	Dr. Brenda Anderson, Dr. Carrie Bourassa, Dr. Mary Hampton, Dr. Wendee Kubik	Femicide: Indigenous Women and Girls Torn from Our Midst	Fall 2021
Flexible Learning Division, CCE	Isaac Mulolani, Greg Bawden, Kieren De La Rue, Julie Fisowich	Flexible Learning Course Development Process	Summer 2021
Flexible Learning Division, CCE	Nataly Moussa, Isaac Mulolani, Kaetlyn Phillips	UDL Guide for Instructors	Summer 2021
John Archer Library & OER Program	John Archer Library & OER Program	OER By Discipline Resource Guide: University of Regina	Spring 2021
OER Program	OER Program	OER Creation Toolkit	Spring 2021
Flexible Learning Division, CCE	Flexible Learning Division	Flexible Learning LIVE-streamed courses guide	Fall 2020
Flexible Learning Division, CCE	Flexible Learning Division	Instructor Guide	Winter 2021
Flexible Learning Division, CCE	Flexible Learning Division	Student and Site Attendant Guide for LIVE-streamed courses	Winter 2021
Flexible Learning Division, CCE	Flexible Learning Division	Flexible Learning Getting Started Guide	Winter 2021
Flexible Learning Division, CCE	Flexible Learning Division	Flexible Learning Procedures	Winter 2021

# OER PUBLISHING PROGRAM ORIGINS

**As the cost of traditional (print) textbooks increases and access to journals and other educational materials becomes more difficult due to expensive licensing fees, universities and governments are looking for ways to reduce student expenses and improve access to education. Open textbooks, and other open educational resources, are viewed as one potential solution.**

In 2015, the Government of Saskatchewan provided funding for the development of open textbooks and other open educational resources at post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan, with the goal of reducing overall costs for students and enriching teaching and learning. Soon after the announcement of the government funding, the University of Regina created the Open Educational Resource Publishing Program (formerly called the Open Textbook Publishing Program).

The Program provides funding, and support to faculty who want to develop open textbooks or supplementary teaching resources for use in first- and second-year courses offered at the University of Regina.



**The Program provides funding, and support to faculty who want to develop open textbooks or supplementary teaching resources for use in first- and second-year courses...**

The OER Publishing Program was administered directly through the AVP-Academic's Office during July 2018 - May 2021. During this time, the Program was supported by an advisory committee and a Program Manager (Elsa Johnson until February 2020 and Isaac Mulolani since June 2020). The advisory committee was composed of:

- Nilgün Önder, Associate Vice-President (Academic), Chair
- Isaac Mulolani, Program Manager
- Cara Bradley (Brad Doerksen during Cara's sabbatical), Dr. John Archer Library
- Joan Wagner, Faculty of Nursing
- Kieren de la Rue, Flexible Learning, CCE

As of May 2021, the OER Publishing Program was brought into the Center for Teaching and Learning. This merger is expected to create a great synergy between the two units.