2018-2019

CONNECT OER

REPORT

Published September 2019

SPARC

ABOUT CONNECT OER

Connect OER is SPARC's platform to share and discover information about Open Educational Resources (OER) activities at campuses across North America. Through Connect OER, academic libraries create and manage profiles about their institution's efforts on OER, producing valuable data that we use to populate a searchable directory and produce an annual report. SPARC launched Connect OER in 2017 in response to demand from our community.

Join Connect OER: To search the Connect OER directory or to join and create a profile for your institution, visit connect.sparcopen.org.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

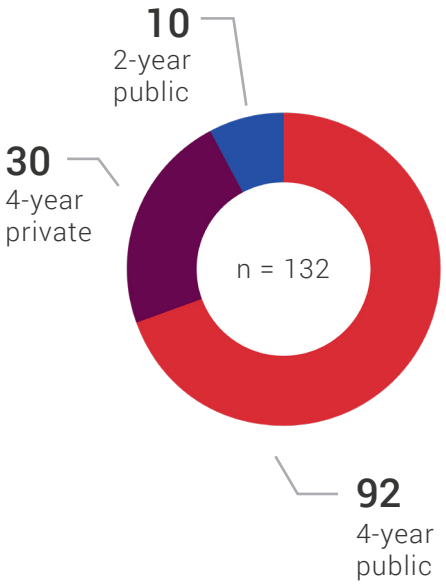
This report offers a snapshot of the state of OER activities at participating institutions as of the end of the 2018-2019 academic year. Our intent is that these insights will help inform SPARC members, open education advocates, and the library community at large about current trends, best practices, and the collective impact being achieved through OER at participating institutions.

The data underlying this report was collected through the Connect OER platform between July 2017 and August 2019. Analysis was performed by the SPARC team. A full open dataset with data tables is published at connect.sparcopen.org.

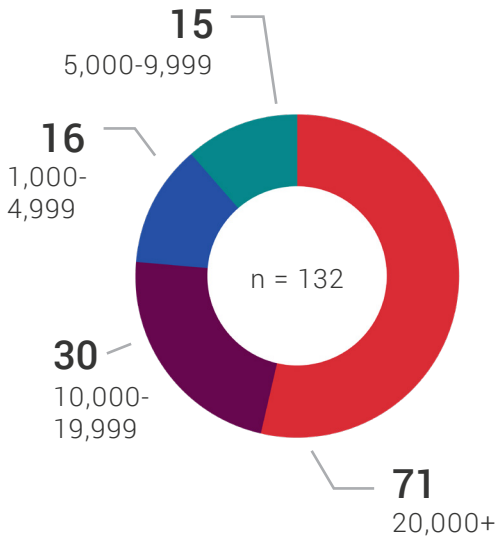
*Data collected excluded the answer options “other” and “none”.

132 INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED

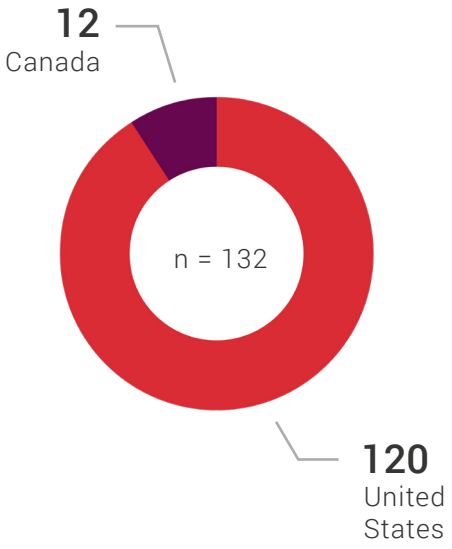
CLASSIFICATION



STUDENT POPULATION



COUNTRY



CAMPUSES ACROSS NORTH AMERICA

A CLOSER LOOK

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

"Promoting OER adoption at USU has been a multi-pronged effort including advocating for and increasing awareness of OER, gaining valuable insights and ideas from OER colleagues, engaging with pertinent stakeholders, setting and achieving OER project goals, and developing a campus action plan."

A CLOSER LOOK

TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"The use of Open Educational Resources (OER) at Tidewater Community College provides increased access and affordability for students, and also improves teaching efficiency and effectiveness through the ability to focus, analyze, augment, and evolve course materials directly aligned to course learning outcomes."

CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

All participating campuses identified the library as engaged. Over the last two years, OER efforts have developed and grown within libraries. This year's data shows a marked increase in engagement among subject liaisons and library administration.

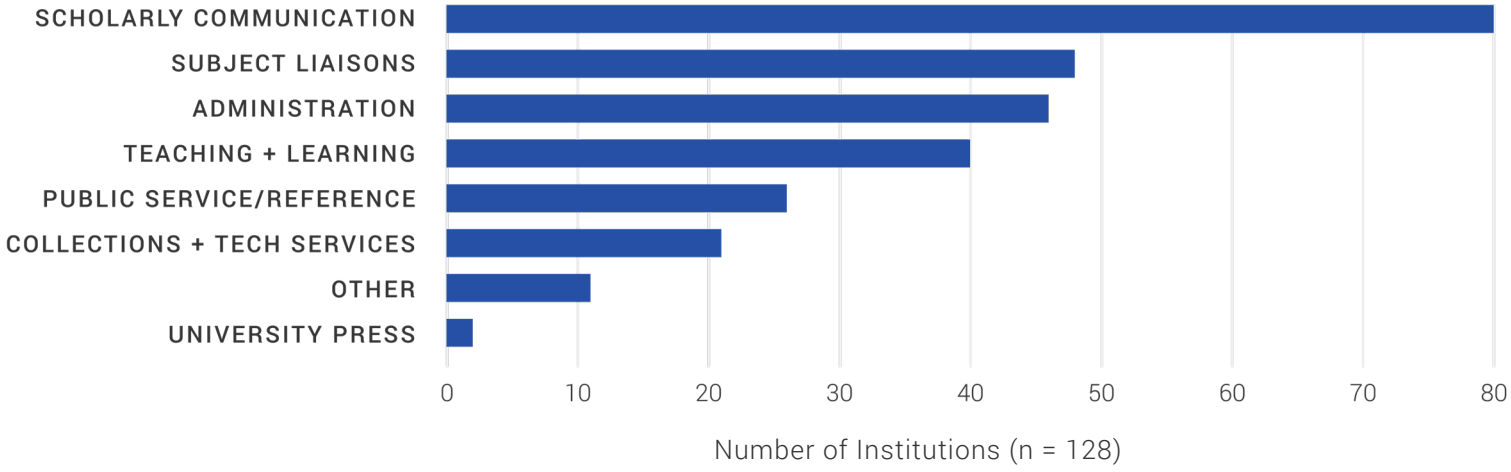
A CLOSER LOOK

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

In 2017, the University of Texas at Arlington Libraries launched a program to increase awareness of the transformative power of open education.

"We believe open education reduces barriers, empowers learners, and connects the academy to the world that it serves."

LIBRARY DEPARTMENTS LEADING OER EFFORTS

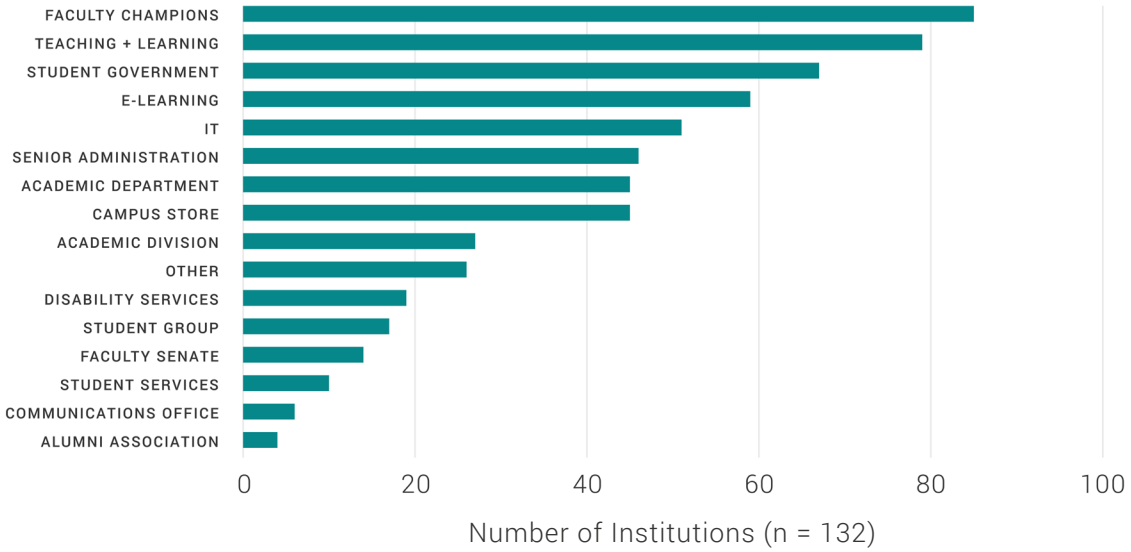


CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

BEYOND LIBRARIES

A clear majority of institutions identified faculty champions, the teaching & learning center, and student governments, with one in four institutions identifying all three as engaged. It is common for these three groups to work together with the library to secure funding, promote adoption, curate resources, and more.

ENTITIES ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN OER EFFORTS ON CAMPUS BEYOND LIBRARIES



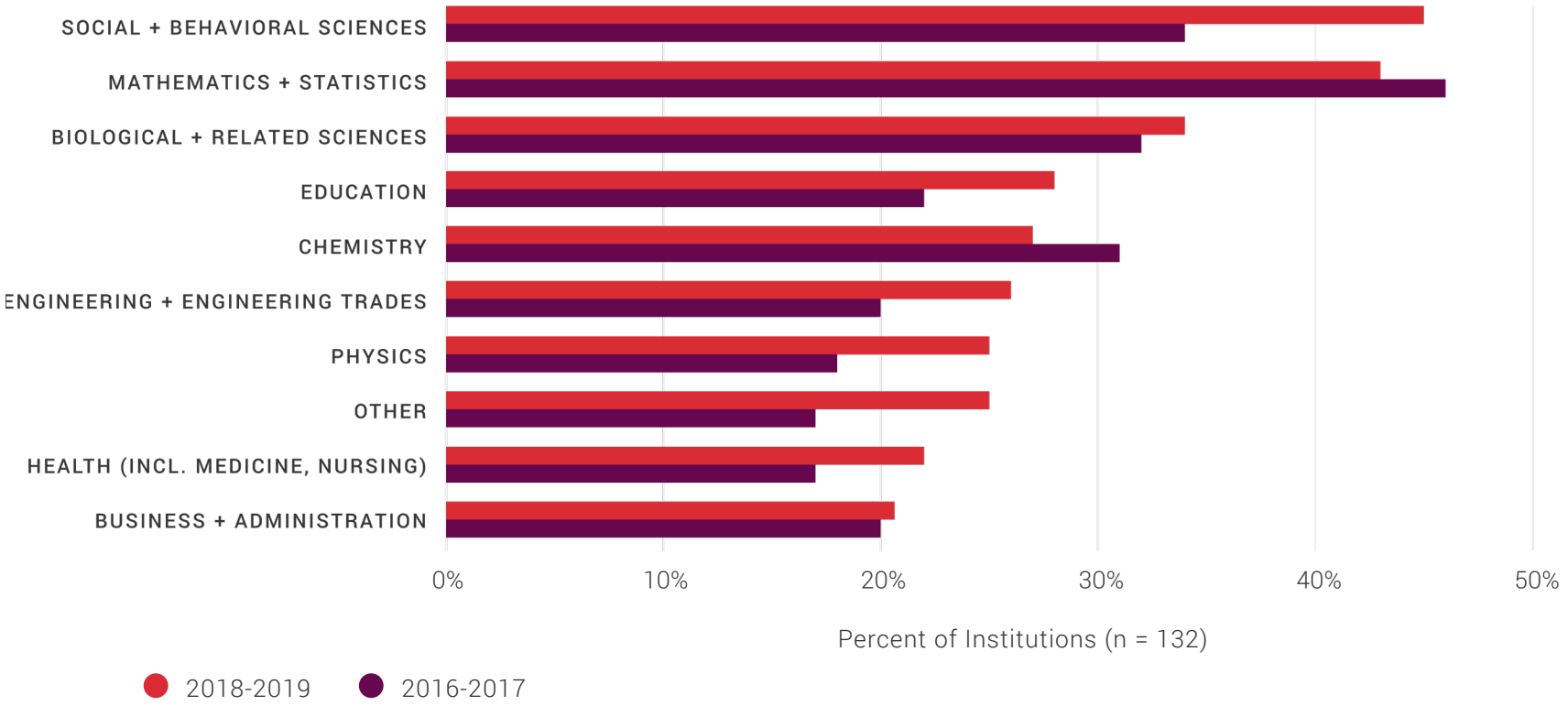
A CLOSER LOOK

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

To help defer costs of textbooks, University of Houston (UH) Libraries offers the Alternative Textbook Incentive Program (ATIP) for faculty to adopt OER for their curricula. ATIP is co-sponsored by the Office of the Provost, and incorporates support from UH instructional designers, the campus book-store, the registrar's office, and faculty advocates.

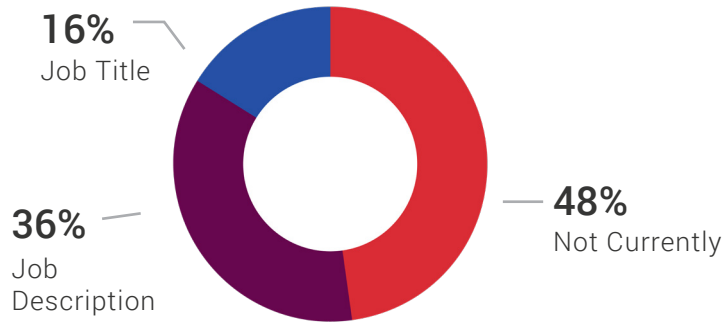
"In the first year of the incentive program, 16 alternative textbook projects were awarded, result-ing in student cost savings of over $200,000 for the 2018-19 academic year. Twenty-three projects were awarded for the second year of the program, with projected student savings of over $750,000 for the 2019-20 academic year."

OER TRACTION BY ACADEMIC SUBJECT



OER FACULTY + STAFF POSITIONS

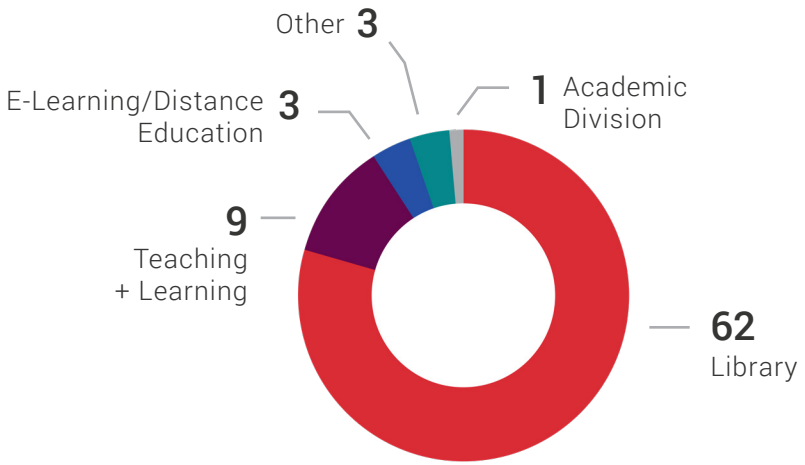
INSTITUTIONS WITH POSITIONS DEDICATED TO OER



Percent of Institutions (n = 129)

Just over half of institutions reported a faculty or staff position that is dedicated to working on OER. About a third of the positions mention OER or an equivalent term explicitly in the job title, and the rest mention OER only in the job description.

LOCATION OF OER POSITIONS



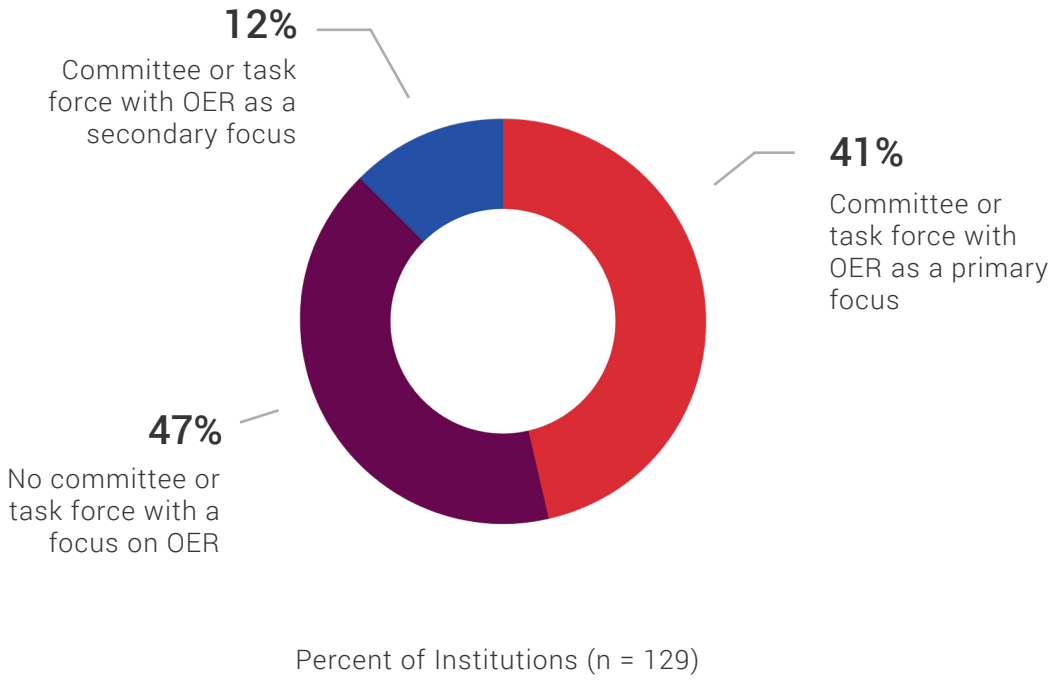
Number of Responses (n = 71)

The vast majority of the positions are located in the library. The responsibilities of an OER staff person or librarian varies, but often includes working with faculty and students on OER programming and campaigns, research, data management, community building, and knowledge sharing around open education.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

OER TASK FORCES

More than half of campuses indicated that they have an OER task force or committee. These entities are often charged with identifying and developing approaches for systematically adopting, adapting, and creating OER on campus.



Percent of Institutions (n = 129)

A CLOSER LOOK

SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

Sacred Heart University formed an OER Taskforce in spring 2016 consisting of faculty members from departments including Arts & Sciences, Business, Nursing, and Health Professions.

"OER has the added benefit of increasing faculty control over instructional resources and enhancing pedagogical practices. These holistic benefits drive our advocacy efforts forward."

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

OER DEGREES

An OER-based degree, sometimes referred to as a Zero-Textbook-Cost degree or a "Z-Degree", is a pathway to a degree or credential with no textbook costs. OER-based degrees have been gaining in popularity over the last few years, particularly at community colleges.

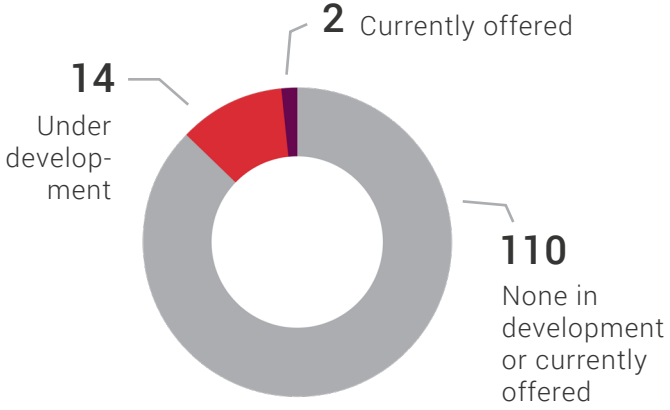
Of the ten community colleges participating in Connect OER, almost all of them are working on OER degree pathways.

A CLOSER LOOK

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

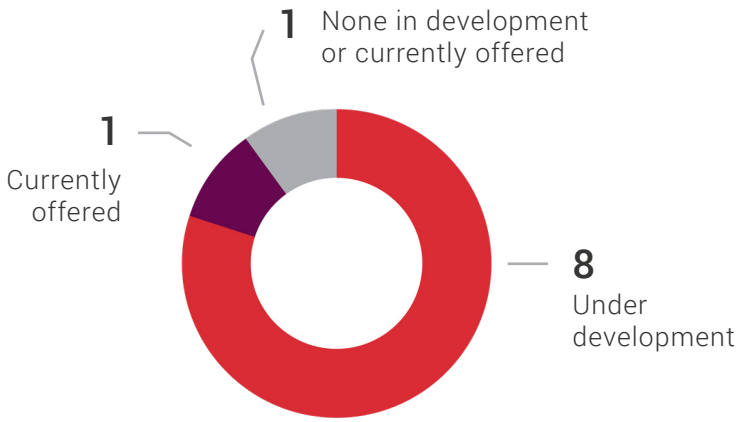
Montgomery College gave faculty funds to adopt or build their own OER for zero cost courses, ultimately leading to the development of several zero-cost degrees.

"The aim was, and remains, to develop all courses that have no associated costs for instructional materials, what we are calling 'Z' courses."



Number of Institutions (n = 126)

ALL INSTITUTIONS

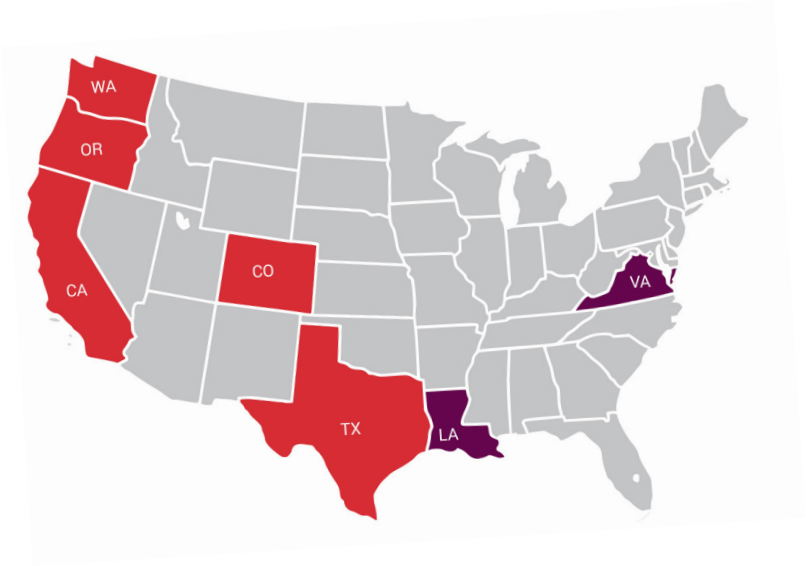


Number of Community Colleges (n = 10)

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

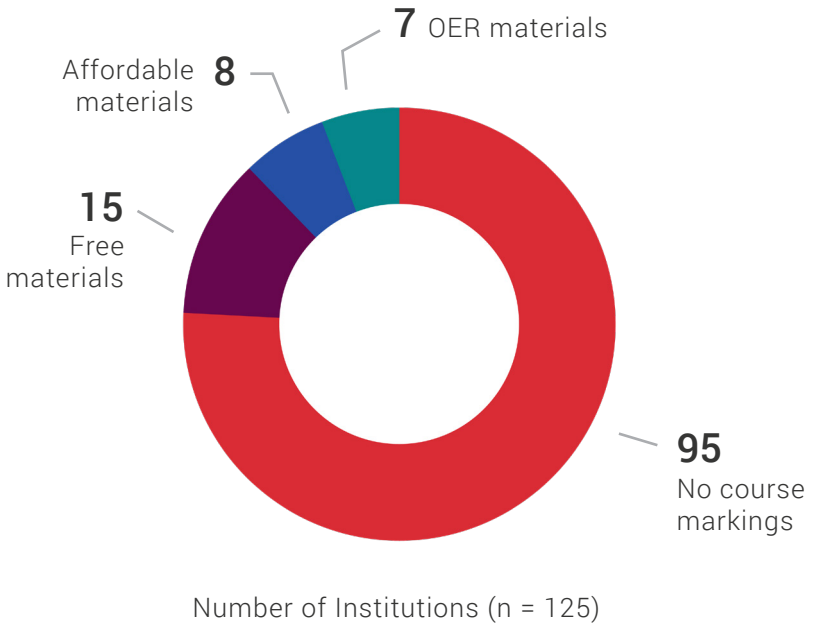
OER COURSE MARKINGS

Many institutions have started marking courses that use OER or affordable materials in their course schedules, allowing students to make more informed choices when selecting their classes. Eight state legislatures in the U.S. have passed laws requiring institutions to mark courses that use OER or other low-cost materials.



- OER Course Marking Legislation
- Affordable Course Marking Legislation

CAMPUS COURSE MARKING PRACTICES



Number of Institutions (n = 125)

About a quarter of institutions (24%) said that they had some form of marking in their course catalog.

GRANT PROGRAMS

Institutions were asked to provide detailed information about their OER program. Of the 30 programs that awarded grant funding, here is how their numbers break down:

$35,249

AVERAGE GRANT FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR OER

26

AVERAGE NUMBER OF GRANTS AWARDED

$1,339

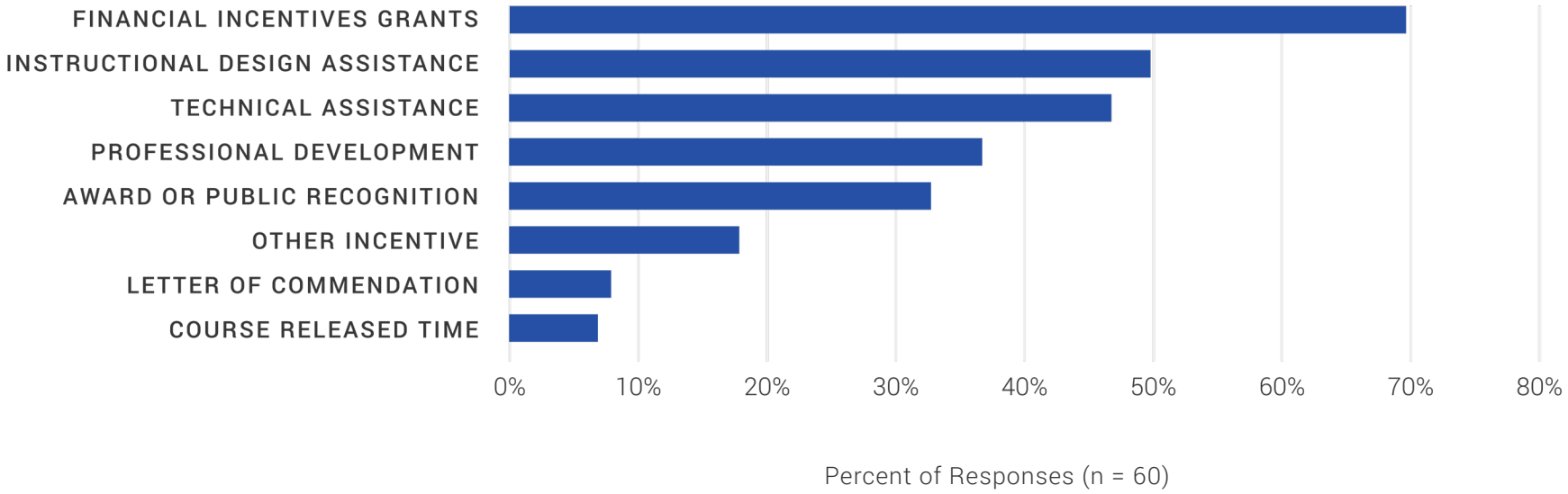
AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD

A CLOSER LOOK: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AT COLUMBIA

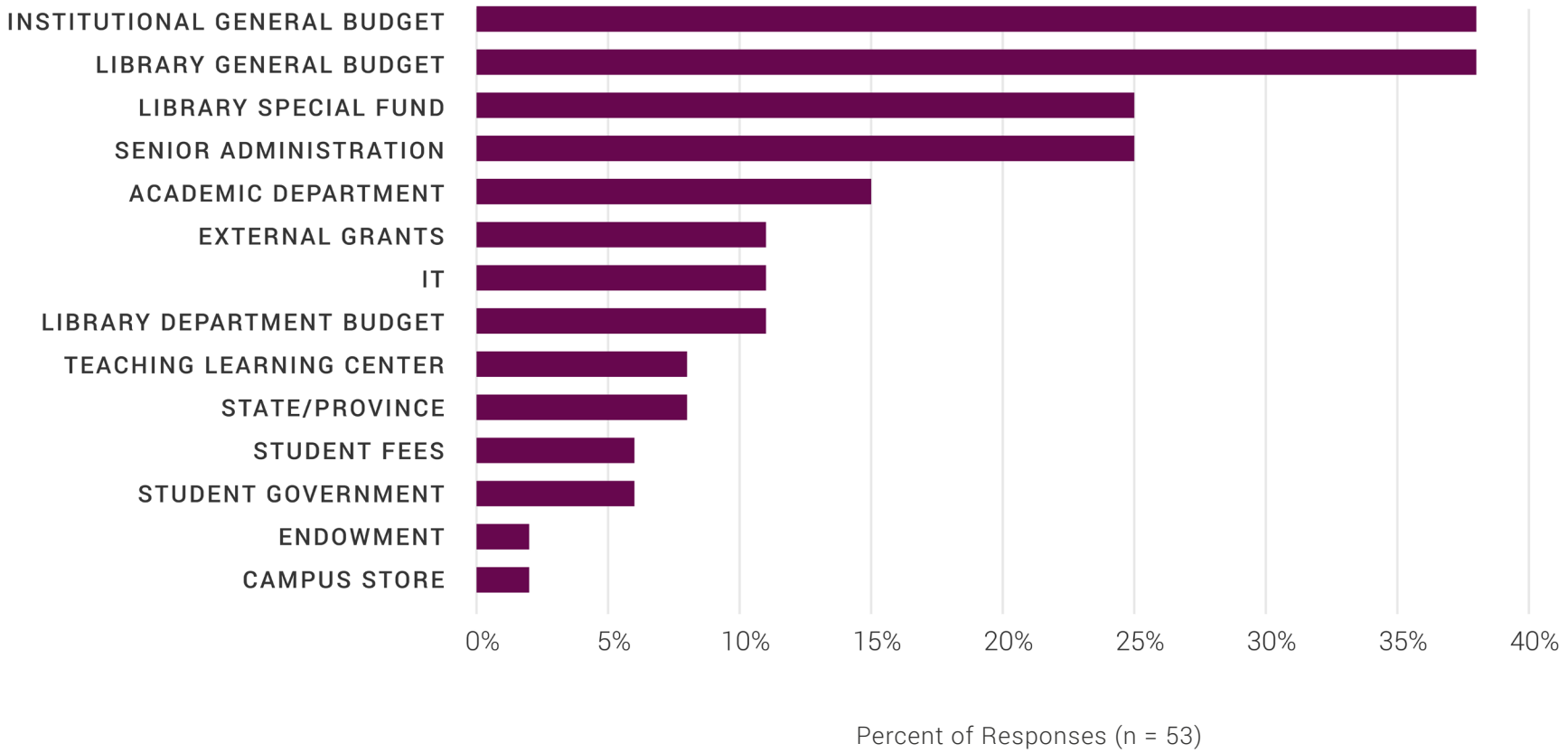
"Since 2015, winners of the SCoer! Faculty Award have saved students over $150,000 in textbook costs and have experienced the freeing effects of regaining control over their course materials."

PROGRAM INCENTIVES

OER programs typically offer some kind of incentive to support faculty in adapting, adopting, or creating open educational resources.



PROGRAM FUNDING SOURCES

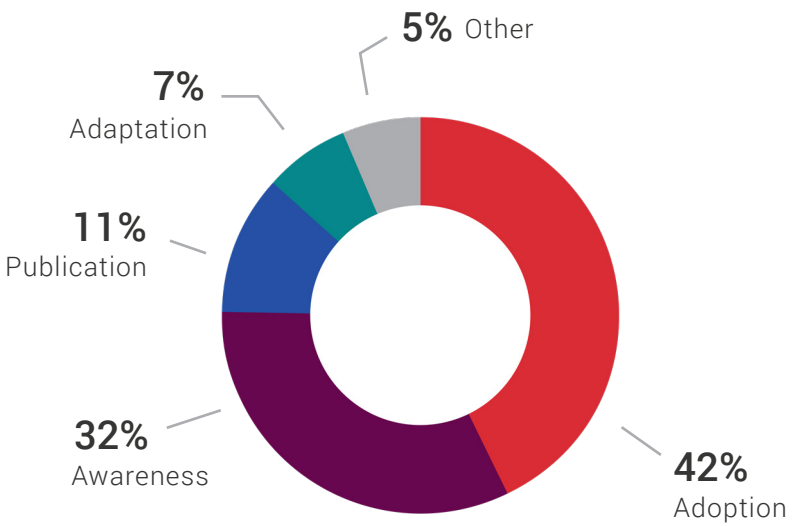


CAMPUS PROGRAMMING

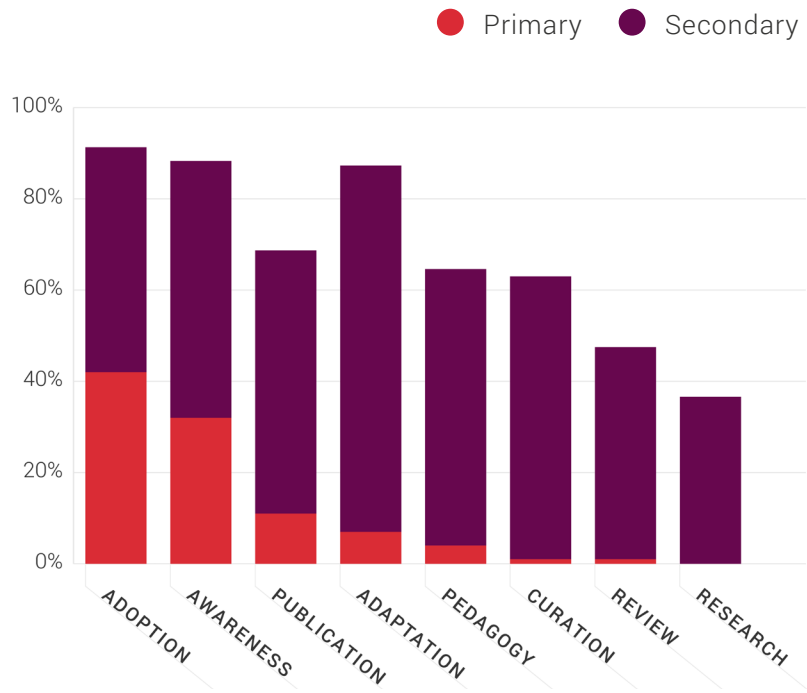
PRIMARY STRATEGIES

While OER awareness and OER adoption are the dominant focuses on campus, most efforts are multi-pronged and many institutions listed a variety of other secondary strategies.

Both graphs: Percent of Responses (n = 71)



PRIMARY CAMPUS STRATEGY



PRIMARY + SECONDARY PROGRAM STRATEGIES

Author:
Mo Nyamweya
Open Education Coordinator
mo@sparcopen.org
@MoNyamweya

SPARC

21 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC, 20036 USA
www.sparcopen.org

Design by Kim Henze

This work by SPARC is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.