Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Collaboration Cohort Process

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Introduction

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) Open Educational Resources Initiative (OERI) is facilitating the ZTC Acceleration Grant Collaboration Cohorts. Although this process was introduced to prevent the duplication of effort, it also provides a means to ensure the awareness of available open educational resources (OER) and other sustainable means of achieving ZTC status, share OER development plans, and identify opportunities for collaboration. Participation in a Collaboration Cohort is not a commitment to collaborate, but rather an indication of a willingness to share and learn. The outcome of the process would only be a collaboration if representatives from some or all of the participating colleges agree on a project that would benefit from collaboration. Ideally, the cohort process will decrease the work necessary to achieve a ZTC pathway for all who are involved. At the conclusion of the cohort process, the OERI will provide a report to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) that will document the work of the cohort, verify the absence of duplicative plans, and/or delineate how duplication will be prevented or minimized.

The Collaboration Cohort process is intended to address the following components of California Education Code §78052:

- The chancellor's office shall ensure that a grant does not result in the development or implementation of duplicate degrees for a subject matter to avoid duplication of effort and ensure the development and implementation of the greatest number of degrees for the benefit of the greatest number of students. (Note: this does not mean that working on the same degree is prohibited, but that "duplication of effort" is avoided. In other words, a process is needed to verify that the same work is not happening at multiple colleges.)
- As a condition of receiving funding appropriated in the annual Budget Act to develop and implement degrees, a community college district shall
  - prioritize the development and implementation of a degree from an existing associate degree for transfer and, to the extent possible, prioritize the adaptation of existing open educational resources through existing open educational resources initiatives, or elsewhere, before creating new content.

- o develop degrees with consideration for sustainability after grant funding is exhausted, including how content is updated and presented.
- o Ensure compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (Public Law 104-197) and the federal Copyright Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-553).
- o Develop and implement a degree that other community college districts can use or adapt, and post each degree, and the contents of the degree, on the online clearinghouse of information established pursuant to Item 6870-101-0001 of the Budget Act of 2016, or a successor internet website.
- o All open educational resources used as learning materials for a degree developed pursuant to this section shall be added to the California Digital Open Source Library established in Section 66408.

Determination of Potentially Duplicative Proposals

The CCCCO identified potentially duplicative pathway proposals based on the discipline associated with the pathway's title. Because some awards had already been made after the initial ZTC Acceleration Grant deadline (September 15, 2023) and potentially duplicative pathways may have been a focus of a college's Implementation Grant work (plans were due on October 30, 2023), colleges that had already received funds for a pathway that was deemed potentially duplicative have been invited to participate in the identified cohorts.

Discipline Cohorts

Cohort participants that chose to opt into a cohort upon receipt of the invitation from the CCCCO allocated $25,000 to support their participation. There is no expectation that the cohort process will require anything close to this sum of money to support participation. The intent is to provide compensation for cohort participation and to initiate any preliminary work while the cohort process is underway. It should be noted that this amount is per cohort, not per pathway. In other words, if your college proposed both a degree and a certificate or certificates in a discipline for which a cohort was established, the college would only receive $25,000. The college determines how to spend the provided funds.

Colleges that were invited to a cohort as a consequence of having already been awarded funds (i.e., the college received a ZTC Acceleration Grant award before duplication concerns arose or the pathway is being funded with implementation dollars) do not receive additional funds for cohort participation. In other words, colleges that have already received the funds they applied for are not receiving additional funds to support their cohort participation.

Established Collaboration Cohorts (including presumed sub-groups)

1. Administration of Justice

2. Anthropology
3. Art History
4. Art (Studio Art)
5. Biology
   a. Biology Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT)
   b. Pre-health
6. Business Administration
7. Chemistry
8. Child Development/Early Childhood Education (ECE)
   a. Adolescent and Child Development ADT
   b. ECE ADT
   c. ECE Career Technical Education (CTE) Certificates
9. Communication Studies
10. Data Science
11. Economics
12. Elementary Teacher Education
13. English
14. Geography
15. Geology
16. History
17. Humanities
18. Journalism
19. Library Science and Library Technology
    a. Library Science
    b. Library Technology
20. Mathematics
21. Multimedia, Film, Television, and Electronic Media
    a. Film, Television, and Electronic Media ADT
    b. Multimedia
22. Philosophy
23. Physics
24. Political Science
25. Psychology
26. Social Work and Human Services
    a. Social Work and Human Services ADT
    b. Human Services
27. Sociology
28. Spanish

Informal Resource Sharing

Because there are potentially duplicate pathway plans but funds were awarded prior to the CCCCO's determination that there might be a duplication issue (or the pathway was the focus of a ZTC Implementation Grant), some colleges have been asked to informally

share their resources and plans. The OERI is not involved in the informal resource sharing.

Disciplines falling in this category include:

- American Sign Language
- Chicano/a Studies
- Culinary Arts
- Entrepreneurship
- Ethnic Studies
- Fashion Merchandising
- Global Studies
- Hotel, Restaurant, and Casino Management
- Kinesiology
- Liberal Arts: Behavioral Sciences
- Music
- Music Industry
- Nutrition
- Paralegal
- Performing/Visual Arts
- Pre-Health Occupations
- Public Health Science
- Social Justice Studies
- Sustainability (Environmental Science)
- Yoga Instructor

The Collaboration Cohort Process

All colleges that opted into a cohort – and all those that have been invited to join a cohort – were asked to provide the OERI information regarding the courses in their pathway that are already ZTC and how ZTC was achieved. Information was also requested on the courses to be worked on and the OER that is being used to achieve ZTC. In addition, the OERI wanted to gather information regarding planned adaptations and/or ancillary development.

The initial outcome of the data gathering and analysis process is intended to provide:
1. A comprehensive list of the OER and other resources being used to achieve ZTC.
2. A summary of the courses and resources colleges have reported they need to establish a ZTC pathway.
3. An analysis of where the planned work of the colleges in a cohort appears to be aligned and where it appears to diverge.
4. A proposed action plan for the cohort.

After the data analysis, the initial findings will be shared with cohort members. Additionally, the OERI will develop preliminary recommendations and work with the cohort members to determine how to proceed.

Below is an overview of the process.

Step 1 – Data Collection
Cohort participants are being asked to provide two types of information:

1. For the targeted pathway, what course(s) will be converted to zero textbook cost (ZTC) and how will this be accomplished?
2. For the targeted pathway, what resources were used to get the courses that are already ZTC to ZTC?

Step 2 – Data Analysis and Cohort Action Plan Development
Upon receipt of information from the colleges, the OERI will conduct its initial analysis of the data. As noted above, this process will result in the production of:
1. A comprehensive list of the OER and other resources being used to achieve ZTC.
2. A summary of the courses and resources colleges have reported they need to establish a given ZTC pathway.
3. An analysis of where the planned work of the colleges in a cohort appears to be aligned and where it appears to diverge.
4. A proposed action plan for the cohort. The action plan would address all identified needs – noting where needs are unique to a college and where needs are shared.

Step 3 – Cohort Action Plan Review
The work of the cohorts will typically be facilitated by a faculty member from the discipline and a representative of the OERI. At an initial meeting of a cohort, the findings from the cohort data will be shared and a potential action plan for the cohort will be discussed. For most cohorts, the focus will be on the courses in the major discipline of the pathway.

Step 4 – Cohort Action Plan Finalized
Additional cohort meetings, when warranted, would be scheduled to address elements of the action plan. The finalized Cohort Action Plan would consist of a timeline and schedule for all specified activities. In addition, anticipated deliverables and outcomes would be delineated. A Cohort Action Plan may include any combination of the following:
- Meetings of the cohort.
- Resource-specific meetings of interested cohort members.
- Further division of the cohort.
- Referral of college representative(s) to another cohort.
- Suggested collaborations.
- Webinars for resource-sharing.

- Additional data collection.
- Platform-specific training.
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism training.

Step 5 – Cohort Action Plan Implementation
Cohort work may be conducted both synchronously and asynchronously. If desired and feasible, in-person meetings may be scheduled.

Step 6 – Cohort Deliberations and Determinations
The implementation of the Cohort Action Plan will ensure activities occur to ensure broad knowledge of available resources, allow for collaborations to be considered and realized, and inform conclusions regarding the likelihood of duplicative efforts. The OERI will prepare its draft report of the cohort's work, allowing the colleges to respond to the recommendations and findings.

All products of the cohort process will be broadly available, allowing colleges that were not a part of the process to learn from the cohorts. Access all information regarding the ZTC Acceleration Grant Collaboration Cohorts at tinyurl.com/ZTCCohorts. Instructions, data collection spreadsheets, and the ASCCC OERI's ZTC Collaboration Cohort Data Submission Dropbox can all be found on the website. The site will be updated as needed.

Step 7 – Final Collaboration Cohort Report
The final report will summarize the work of the cohort, from the initial data collection and analysis, to the development and implementation of the Cohort Action Plan, and conclude with an overview of the determinations made regarding duplication of effort. Cohort members will be given the opportunity to provide input regarding the final report.