

[Annual Report 2014 -2015]

[UNESCO/COL Chair in Open Educational Resources]

[Rory McGreal]

UNITWIN/UNESCO/COL Chairs Programme Progress report

Period of activity: April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

Title of the UNESCO/COL/ICDE Chair: UNESCO/COL Chair in OER

Institution/Country Athabasca University, CANADA

Report established by: Rory McGreal

Function / Title: Chairholder & Professor Centre for Distance Education

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Executive Summary

As one highlight, the Chairholder was awarded a prize by the Open Courseware Consortium (now the Open Education Consortium) for his Chair work in establishing the OER Knowledge Cloud, which as of March 31, 2015 now hosts more than 1 000 research articles and reports on OER. The Consortium have also chosen Alberta Canada for the next international conference in April, 2015.

As co-Editor of the open access journal *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* (IRRODL), he is now the grantee from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of USD130K over four years to aid in scholarly publishing. In addition he has led in the transformation of the journal to include a greater emphasis on open and “distributed” learning (name change from “distance” to “distributed”). This includes web site and application changes as well as the addition of four UNESCO Chairs to the Editorial Advisory Board. The changeover is being supported by UNESCO with a USD20K grant.

The Chair is now working as a co-editor in a new research book on OER, which will be jointly published by UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). It's working title is *OER: Policy, Costs & Transformation*.

The Chair continues to work with the New Zealand UNESCO/COL Chair, Dr Wayne Mackintosh on the Board of the OER Foundation to promote the success of the OER universitas initiative. The Chair has actively campaigned in Canada and it now has seven Canadian members, out of the +35 in the consortium. We have also worked with the Dutch UNESCO Chair on supporting the Graduate network for OER (GO-GN).

I. Address and Contact

	Address of the Host Institution	Address of the Chairholder
Name	Rory McGreal	Rory McGreal
Function/Title	Professor	UNESCO/COL/ICDE Chair in OER
University/Institution	Athabasca University	
Faculty/Department/Centre	Centre for Distance Education Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute	<i>Information is the same</i>
Street	Athabasca University	
Postal Code	1 University Drive	
City	T9S 3A3	
Province	Athabasca University	
Country	Alberta	
Phone	CANADA	
Fax	+1 780 231-0596	
E-mail address of the Chairholder or its representative	ror@athabascau.ca	
Website of UNESCO/COL Chair or UNITWIN Network	http://unescochair.athabascau.ca	

II. Available resources

For each type of resource placed at the disposal of the Chair/Network, please specify its source (cf. Annex 1)

1. Human resources

- **Status of the Chair in the organizational structure of the Institution (number of posts contributing to the Chair) 6**
- **Number of academic staff (full time and part time), full professors, researchers, lecturers** Profs: 3 Assoc. Profs: 1; Assistant Profs: 1
- **Number of visiting staff: 1**
- **If there are other staff or groups contributing to the Chair or Network, please indicate their number and status (postgraduate students, advisors, consultants, experts, NGOs, etc)** Consultants: 1; Postgrad: 1
- **Number of administrative staff: 2**

2. Other resources

Financial contributions: April 1, 2014 to March 31 2015

Athabasca University contribution

Chair (\$100K /yr) portion of salary:	\$ 100 000
Support staff & costs (\$50 K X 2 @ 10% X 1 yr.)	\$ 10 000
Participating faculty (10% @ \$120K X 5 X 1 yr.)	\$ 60 000

External funding

Open Education Foundation (OEF) in kind contribution of Director	\$ 5 000
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TOTAL \$ **275 000**

New external funding (2013 -2014)

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant to IRRODL	\$ 63 000
UNESCO grant for conversion of IRRODL journal	\$ 20 000
EMundus Europroject:	\$ 10 000
TOTAL:	\$ 93 000

Material resources (indicate their nature and use):

Server space for housing OER repository and websites	est.	\$ 2 000
Computers for staff and faculty	est.	\$ 1 000

Space placed at the disposal of the Chair or Network

One office for the Chair and desks for staff and faculty	est.	\$ 12 000
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All sums in US Dollars.

III. Activities

(Please, provide short information for each activity)

1. Academic activities

Education (leading to certification)

As part of the Chair priorities, the Chairholder continues to maintain a functional OER Knowledge Cloud that can be used to support the GO-GN research network being led by the Dutch Chair. The Cloud now has more than 1000 searchable scholarly articles and reports. As part of the OER Knowledge Cloud initiative, the Chair has co-Edited a book on OER policies: *OER: Policy, Costs & Transformation* that will be jointly published by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO.

As co-Editor of the open access journal *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* (IRRODL), the Chair is now the grantee from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of \$130K over four years to aid in scholarly publishing. In addition he has led in the transformation of the journal to include a greater emphasis on open and “distributed” learning (name change from “distance” to “distributed”). This includes web site and application changes as well as the addition of four UNESCO Chairs to the Editorial Advisory Board. The changeover is being supported by UNESCO with a USD20K grant.

The UNESCO/COL Chair website and blog are being maintained:
<http://unescochair.athabascau.ca> as is the open courseware website”
<http://ocw.athabascau.ca>

Training (short term)

Athabasca University Open Access Week Online Seminar: October, 2014

- ! Duration: one week
- ! Target groups: instructors; professionals (cf. Annex 2) + 140 participants
- ! Geographical coverage for partners and participants: worldwide

Athabasca University Open Education Week Online Seminar: OER . March, 2015

- ! Duration: one week
- ! Target groups: instructors; professionals (cf. Annex 2) + 200 participants
- ! Geographical coverage for partners and participants: worldwide

eMundus Europe Open Education Week Online Seminar: OER . March, 2015

- ! Duration: one week
- ! Target groups: instructors; professionals (cf. Annex 2) + 140 participants
- ! *Geographical coverage for partners and participants: worldwide*

The Chairholder focused on OER research and the goals of the OER Chair by studying and disseminating information both internally and across Canada on copyright and the new copyright Bill C-32. Other research included collaborative work with the OER Foundation on OER for assessment and credit for students, in which we investigated assessment and accreditation practices, including Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) internationally.

The OER mapping has continued with the eMundus Erasmus Europroject

- ! Title: MOOC, Virtual Mobility and OER mapping;
- ! Duration: continuing
- ! Target groups (cf. Annex 2): administrators, instructors, professionals, policymakers
- ! Geographical coverage for partners and participants: world wide (cf. Annex 3)
- ! Intended use of results: Build the open education community

OER workshop, Al Quds Open Univ., Palestine, March 2014.

- ! Duration: three hours
- ! Target groups: instructors; 10 participants
- ! *Geographical coverage: Ramallah Palestine*

OER Workshop, U. Tecnologico de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico, June, 2014

- ! Duration: two hours
- ! Target groups: instructors; 60 participants
- ! *Geographical coverage: Monterrey*

Refereed Conference Presentations

Presentation on the eMundus project at the ISANA/ANZSSA Conference (International Education Association and 19th Australia/tNZ StudentServices Association), Adelaide, Australia. Dec. 4th, 2014

Presentation with T. Anderson on OER, Virtual Mobility, MOOCs at the 3rd ICIET Conference (International Conference on Information and Education Technology), Kuta, Indonesia, Jan 5th, 2014

Presentation on OER, Virtual Mobility, MOOCs at the 7th ICCRD Conference (International Conference on Computer Research and Development), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Feb 6, 2015 (to come)

OER in Canada, EDEN Research Workshop, Oxford UK, October, 2014

2. Conferences/ Meetings

Invited Speaker: Conference Presentations & Workshops

Keynote: Entretiens Jacques Cartier, Ottawa, October, 2014.
 Keynote: Australian National Symposium on OER, Hobart, Tasmania, November, 2014
 Debate: European Distance Education Network Research Conf., Oxford, UK, October, 2014
 Keynote: Intl. Council for Open & Distance Learning, Moscow, September, 2014.
 Keynote: 2nd Intl. Conf. on Open and Distance Learning (ICODEL), Manila, Philippines, June 2014 (to come)
 Keynote: OER Workshop, U. Tecnológico de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico, June, 2014 (to come)
 Expert: APEC University Associations Cross-Border Education Cooperation Workshop, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, May, 2014.
 Panelist MOOCs for Development Intl. Conf., Philadelphia, April, 2014

Review experience

Refereed Journals

Editorial Board, *The International Journal of Interactive Multimedia and Artificial Intelligence – IJIMAI*
Revista Ingeniería e Investigación
INNOQUAL, International Journal for Innovation and Quality in Learning 2013-
Journal of Technology for Education and Learning, Editorial Board, 2012 -2014
IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies, 2011-
In Education Journal (formerly Policy & Practice in Education) 2010-
 Advisory Board for the *International Journal of Distance Education Technologies* 2011-
 Reviewer for the *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*
 Advisory Board for the *International Journal of Distance Education Technologies*
Journal of Technology for Education and Learning, Editorial Board
 Editorial board of the *International Journal of Mobile Learning and Organisation (IJMLO)*
 25th International Council for Distance Education Conference Programme Committee
 Program Committee, International Conference on Computer Supported Education (CSEDU 2012)
 OER4Adults Europroject Advisory Board
 European Commission Open Education Advisor

3. Interuniversity Exchanges/ Partnerships

Universities:

- ! UNISA, South Africa
- ! Open University of the Netherlands
- ! Open University UK
- ! OER University initiative (35 institutions on five continents)
- ! University of Southern Queensland
- ! MESI, Moscow, Russia

Organizations:

- ! OER Foundation
- ! African Virtual University
- ! Association of African Universities
- ! Brazilian Association for Distance Education (ABED)
- ! Commonwealth of Learning (COL)
- ! European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU)
- ! International Association of Universities
- ! Open Education Consortium
- ! SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition)
- ! International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)

IV. Outcomes

Please describe shortly (up to 500 words) the major outcomes of the Chair/Network with special reference to their impact on the human, social, economical and cultural development at local, national, regional or international level. Whenever applicable indicate the impact of activities on promoting gender equality, rural development, attaining the Millennium Development Goals, Education For All and Sustainable development etc. We would like also to receive more detailed information on the activities of the Chair or Network at national level for e.g. implication of the Chair/Network in national Policies.

The most significant outcome from the activities of this Chair has been the MOU signed by three western provinces supporting OER. This included a \$2 million grant for OER in Alberta and the Chair is the co-Chair of this initiative. This Chair had direct input into this initiative. As part of this, the Alberta government has created a \$2 million grant to promote OER in the province. The call for proposal is now underway in the province. This UNESCO Chair has been appointed co-chair of the implementation initiative. This is a consequence of the advice provided by the Chair to the Alberta Ministry of Advanced Education and Innovation, leading to Alberta's leadership at the Council of Ministers of Education Canada meeting in Iquluit, where all the provinces agreed to support the UNESCO Paris Declaration on OER. The Chair has also been actively involved in two Europrojects (POERUP and eMundus) to report on OER activity and policies across Canada and build a map for MOOCS, and Knowledge Mobility.

Institutionally and for international researchers, the Chair is maintaining the OER Knowledge Cloud website and the OCW site listing OER created/adapted at Athabasca University. We have also re-established the UNESCO network for OER and worked closely with international partners including the OER Foundation on building the OER universitas initiative, where we participated as founding members: and we are continuing the process of mapping the international OER, MOOC and Virtual Mobility communities.

Progress towards outcomes

This was an important year for the OER/COL Chair. The Chair has actively campaigned in the university, provincially and nationally for OER and its significance for universities. As co-chair of the new Alberta OER initiative, the Chair continues to promote OER provincially, as well as institutionally and nationally. The major impacts of Chair activity are beginning to be realized. At AU, we now have committed ourselves to OER and have removed ourselves from a copyright collective in order to focus on OER and university-licensed materials. In the province, the Chair is supporting a call for proposals supporting OER that is now underway. AU is now in the process of developing OER MOOC-like courses using OER.

In Canada, we were involved in Europrojects (POERUP & eMundus) to report on OER activity and policies across Canada and to map the OER landscape. The OER Knowledge Cloud has been a major success with thousands of researchers visiting the site and using the database, for which we received an international award. Internationally we are continuing to be active participants in the OER Foundation-led assessment and accreditation for students, collaborating on initiatives including submitting OER proposals to funding agencies. We also are supporting the new UNESCO OER list.

V. Forthcoming activities

(Please outline the action plan for the current biennium)

Background

This workplan for the UNESCO/COL Chair in OER focuses on maintaining the international OER Community and enabling an international OER Network. The objective is to build the capacity of institutions, particularly those in the developing countries to create, adapt, modify, localize and reuse

OER, and to conduct research into the benefits and problems associated with introducing and deploying OER in institutions. Building on the present OER Community, the Chair will continue to complement it, collaborating with the international OER Graduate Network, essentially moving from a Community of Interest to develop a Community of Practice, recognizing the priority areas identified by UNESCO - Africa and youth, as well as the need for gender equity.

Outputs and outcomes will include sustaining the international OER Community; building the international OER Graduate Network; mapping OER initiatives worldwide; maintaining a significant online presence; and promoting IRRODL as a journal that includes OER research for information sharing and dissemination.

Institutional Capacity Building

- ! Train AU faculty and staff in the creation, development, adaptation and use of OERs to promote high quality learning at lower cost;
- ! Undertake collaborative research on OERs and priority issues, such as quality and cultural appropriateness through the Technologically Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute (TEKRI);
- ! Conduct research on current problems in creating and using OERs in a cost effective and efficient manner;
- ! Conduct and assemble scholarly research on OERs, disseminate it actively to other Canadian institutions and those in other countries via online lectures and publish research findings online in open access scholarly and popular journals.
- ! Initiate policies promoting OER

National Capacity Building

- ! Raise awareness of OER through appropriate national entities such as the Canadian Virtual University and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO;
- ! Promote inter-provincial collaboration in OER creation and use.
- ! Work with provincial educational ministries to inform them of the need for OER and help in the formulation of policies in support of OER.

International Capacity Building

- ! Support interaction and information exchange in the international OER Community;
- ! Enable a decentralized international OER Network to promote North-South-South triangular collaboration;
- ! Continue a collaborative mapping exercise of open education initiatives worldwide;
- ! Undertake an awareness raising discussion across the entire network of UNESCO/COL Chairs and UNITWIN Networks;
- ! Conduct research on the use of OER and related issues, such as access;
- ! Collaboratively develop or use post-secondary programs as OER, with partners in the South and in fields relevant to the concerns of the South;
- ! Maintain an online presence, enabling collaboration and information sharing.

Goals

Specific goals include:

- ! Build the international OER Network of institutions and organizations;
- ! Sustain a map of the landscape of OER initiatives worldwide;

- ! Develop and support a network of OER researchers through online seminars and face to face meetings;
- ! Train teachers in developing countries in the coming year (using OER), who will become empowered and capable of instructing others online;
- ! Undertake and disseminate research on OER;
- ! Provide consultancy and advisory services.

VI. Development prospects

Action aimed at obtaining a stable permanent status of the Chair/Network in the structure of the Institution

Short and medium term:

Raise the profile of the UNESCO/COL/ICDE Chair and include relevant institutional partners

Long term:

Secure sustainable funding for the Technology Enhanced Knowledge Institute (TEKRI) with the OER Chair as an integral component.

Expanding activities: Include interdisciplinary institutional partners.

Broadening partnerships: Widen the scope of OER activity to include non-TEKRI researchers in Nursing, Computer Science, the Arts and Sciences.

Mobilization of resources: Include partners in proposals to funding agencies and make effective use of the CFI equipment that has been awarded.