

[Annual Report 2015 -2016]

[UNESCO/COL Chair in Open Educational Resources]

[Rory McGreal]

UNITWIN/UNESCO/COL Chairs Programme Progress report

Period of activity: April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016

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

A major highlight of this past year has been the Chairs activities in Alberta as co-Chair of the provincial initiative supporting OER. This USD1.5 million project has supported OER development in higher education institutions in Alberta. This follows from previous Chair lobbying with partners in British Columbia, which was instrumental in convincing three Ministries of Higher Education in Western Canada (BC, AB, SK) to sign a Memorandum of Agreement supporting OER.

In recognition of this initiative, the Open Education Consortium chose Alberta Canada for the 2015 international conference in April, 2015. This conference was attended by more than 250 participants from more than 20 countries. UNESCO Canada sponsored the conference (USD4K). In addition, a pre-conference meeting of the UNESCO Chairs in OER from six countries was sponsored by UNESCO (USD20K) and attended by the Chairs, OER champions and Abel Caine of UNESCO.

The OER Knowledge Cloud, a responsibility of this UNESCO Chair continues to grow in the number of scholarly articles and reports and the number of downloads. As of March 31, 2016 the Cloud now hosts more than 1 100 research articles and reports on OER.

As co-Editor of the open access journal *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* (IRRODL), the Chair has led in the transformation of the journal to include a greater emphasis on open education.

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

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 T9S 3A3	
City	Athabasca University	
Province	Alberta	
Country	CANADA	
Phone	+1 780 231-0596	
Fax		
E-mail address of the Chairholder or its representative	rorry@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) 5**
- **Number of academic staff (full time and part time), full professors, researchers, lecturers Profs: 2 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**
- **Number of administrative staff: 1**

2. Other resources

Financial contributions: April 1, 2015 to March 31 2016 (USD)

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 4 X 1 yr.)	\$ 36 000
TOTAL	\$ 146 000

New external funding (2015 -2016)

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant to IRRODL	\$ 20 000
UNESCO grant for conversion of IRRODL journal	\$ 20 000
UNESCO grant for UNESCO Chair meeting in Banff, Canada	\$ 20 000
UNESCO grant for an OER in Communication Studies	\$ 20 000
UNESCO Canada grant for OER Conference	\$ 4 000
EMundus Europroject:	\$ 20 000
TOTAL:	\$ 104 000

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)

The Chair supported Dr. Ellerman at Athabasca University with sponsorship from UNESCO of \$20K. AU constructed an OER university level course in Communications in Moodle. It is a 10-unit MOOC intended primarily for an audience of women and girls in the Arab-speaking world, but attended by people of both genders from around the world. The course is now being translated by UNESCO into Arabic, French and Spanish with plans to extend to other languages in the near future. More than 5000 students registered and about half that number (2258) actually began the course and over 240 received certificates of completion.

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 USD60K 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 learning. This includes web site and application changes as well as the addition of four UNESCO Chairs to the Editorial Advisory Board. The changeover was supported by UNESCO with a USD20K grant

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 former Dutch Chair. The Cloud now has more than 1100 searchable scholarly articles and reports. As part of the OER Knowledge Cloud initiative, the Chair has been co-editing a book on OER policies: *OER: Policy, Costs & Transformation* that will be jointly published by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO in 2016.

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

Training (short term)

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 concluded with the eMundus Erasmus Europroject

- ! Title: MOOC, Virtual Mobility and OER mapping;
- ! Duration: 2012 - 2015
- ! 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,

- ! Duration: 3 hours April 2015
- ! Target groups: instructors; 15 participants at Portage College
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Alberta, Canada***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 2 hours April, 2015
- ! Target groups: instructors; 15 participants at Athabasca Univ.
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Alberta Canada***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 6 hours May 2015
- ! Target groups: University presidents; 12 participants at COL programme
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Pakistan***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 6 hours May 2015
- ! Target groups: instructors; 25 participants at Univ. of Gulf
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Bahrain & Gulf states***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 3 hours May 2015
- ! Target groups: instructors; 25 participants at Beijing Normal Univ.
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Beijing, China***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 3 hours May 2015
- ! Target groups: instructors/students; 10 participants at Tianjin Univ.
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Beijing, China***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 3 hours, July 2015
- ! Target groups: instructors; 25 participants at Open U Hong Kong
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Hong Kong***

OER workshop,
! Duration: 4 hours, Feb, 2016
! Target groups: instructors; 25 participants at UTEC, Montevideo. Uruguay.
! **Geographical coverage: Uruguay**

OER workshop,
! Duration: 9 hours Feb, 2016
! Target groups: instructors; 52 participants Univ. de la Republica
! **Geographical coverage: Montevideo**

OER workshop,
! Duration: 6 hours
! Target groups: instructors; 25 participants at Univ. of Gulf
! **Geographical coverage: Bahrain & Gulf states**

OER workshop,
! Duration: 9 hours
! Target groups: instructors; 45 participants at Univ. dela Republica
! **Geographical coverage: Montevideo, Uruguay**

OER Workshop, U. Tecnológico de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico, June, 2014
! Duration: two hours
! Target groups: instructors; 60 participants
! **Geographical coverage: Monterrey**

Refereed Conference Presentations

OER in Canada. CIST 4th Conf. on Information Systems and Technologies_ Recife Brazil March, 2016
OER in Canada. Technology Knowledge & Society Conference. Buenos Aires, Feb. 2015

2. Conferences/ Meetings

Invited Speaker: Conference Presentations & Workshops

Keynote and chief organiser: Open Education Global Conference, Banff, Canada, April 2015/ 250 participants
Keynote: Intl Conf. On Software and Information Systems, Las Vegas,USA May, 2015/ 80 participants
Keynote: Elearn Bahrain, Manama, University of the Gulf States, May 2015. 300 participants
Invited Presentation: UNESCO Canada Ottawa, 2015
Keynote: Int'l Conf on Open and Flexible Learning, Hong Kong Open University, July 2015. 400 participants
Keynote: OER in Canada. The Ontario Universities' Council on e-Learning (OUCEL), Aug., 2015
(teleconference)
Invited participant: UNESCO/ICDE High Level Policy Forum, Pretoria, S. Africa, Oct. 2015. 60 participants
Invited Presentation: Open access publishing, Intl. Council for Dist. Ed. (ICDE), Sun City, S. Africa, Oct. 2015
12 participants
Invited presenter: UNESCO Chile, Santiago, November, 2015 26 on site, 150 online participants
Keynote: Catholic Universidad de Chile, December 2015
Keynote: Universidad de la Republica, Montevideo, Uruguay, Feb 2016. 60 participants

Refereed Journal article

McGreal, R., Anderson, T., & Conrad, D. (2015). Open Educational Resources in Canada 2015. *IRRODL*, 16(5).
Retrieved from <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/2404>

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:

- ! Univ. de la Republica, Uruguay
- ! UNICAMP, Brasil
- ! Open University of the Netherlands
- ! Open University UK
- ! OER University initiative (35 institutions on five continents)
- ! University of Southern Queensland

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 the implementation of a \$1.5 million project supporting OER in the higher education institutions in Alberta. The Chair is the co-Chair of this initiative. This can be seen as a consequence of the advice provided by the Chair and others to the Alberta Ministry of Advanced Education and Innovation. The Chair has also been actively involved in the Europroject (eMundus) to report on OER activity and policies across Canada and build a map for OER, 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.

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.

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.