

Annual Report 2017 -2018

UNESCO/COL Chair in Open Educational Resources

Rory McGreal
Athabasca University

April 13, 2018

UNITWIN/UNESCO/COL Chairs Programme Progress report

Period of activity: April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018

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

Institution/Country Athabasca University, CANADA

Report established by: Rory McGreal

Function / Title: Chairholder & Professor Centre for Distance Education

To be sent by electronic mail to both: unitwin@unesco.org and i.nichanian@unesco.org

or to UNESCO, Division of Higher Education
7, place Fontenoy – 75352 Paris 07 SP
Fax: 33 1 45 68 56 26/27/28

Executive Summary

This past year, the Chair has been monitoring the effects of the provincial project supporting OER. This project has supported OER development in higher education institutions in Alberta. The impact of this initiative represents savings of more than \$1.5 million to students and/or institutions for this fiscal year alone.

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, 2018 the Cloud now hosts more than 1 800 research articles on OER, including 282 reports.

As co-Editor of the open access journal [International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning](#) (IRRODL), the Chair has successfully transformed the journal to include a greater emphasis on open and distributed education. IRRODL has a ranking of 6th among Educational Technology Journals and a rank of 13th of all Education Journals (h5 index = 36; h5-median = 65). It is the only fully open access journal in the top 20.

The Chair researched, for Contact North/Contact Nord, OER implementations in 13 higher education institutions in 5 countries, including Malaysia, Nigeria and South Africa. The results of this investigation were presented at the International Council for Open and Distance Education conference in Toronto in October.

The Chair is also working this past year as a co-editor of a new book on OER for primary and secondary schools (K-12), which will be submitted to AUPress for publication in October.

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	roly@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) 1**
- **Number of academic staff (full time and part time), full professors, researchers, lecturers Profs: 1 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 1 @ 10% X 1 yr.)	\$ 5 000
Participating faculty (10% @ \$120K X 2 X 1 yr.)	\$ 24 000

New external funding (2017 -2018)

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant to IRRODL	\$ 23 500
---	-----------

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

TOTAL \$ 155 500

All sums in US Dollars.

III. Activities

(Please, provide short information for each activity)

1. Academic activities

Education (leading to certification)

As co-Editor of the open access journal *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* (IRRODL), the Chair has an extended grant from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of c. USD 23500 for the year 2018-2019 to aid in scholarly publishing. In addition, the transformation of the journal to include a greater emphasis on open learning has been successfully achieved. This includes web site and application changes as well as the addition of four UNESCO Chairs to the Editorial Advisory Board. The changeover was previously 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 *Global OER Graduate Network* (GO-GN) research network now being led by the Dr. Martin Weller at the Open University UK. The Chair is a mentor for the GO-GN doctoral students. *The Cloud* now has more than 1800 searchable scholarly articles and reports.

The Chair has been leading in bringing together other Chairs (UNESCO, Commonwealth of Learning, International Council for Open and Distance Education) associated with OER activities in the following countries: Brazil, Canada, Holland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Tanzania, Tunisia and the UK.

The Chair researched, for Contact North/Contact Nord, OER implementations in 13 higher education institutions in 5 countries, including Malaysia, Nigeria and South Africa. The results of this investigation were presented at the International Council for Open and Distance Education conference in Toronto in October. These are available at <<https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/open-education-resources-oer-applications-around-world/taxonomy-term>>

The report prepared by the Chair for CC-UNESCO was accepted for publication in IRRODL and appeared in the Autumn 2017, edition.

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)

The Chairholder focused on OER research and the goals of the OER Chair by studying and disseminating information both internally and across Canada on OER and copyright issues. The Chair also collaborated with an NGO and the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) in developing curriculum for hairdressers as OER. This curriculum has been validated and approved by the OUT. The Chair's previous work with the Commonwealth of Learning on the creation of two OER courses in beginning Economics for a MOOC style delivery through the OER universitas has now come to fruition and will be offered this coming year to students globally.

OER Regional workshop for UNESCO/COL, Sao Paulo Brazil

- ! Duration: 4 hours April 2017
- ! Target groups: instructors & administrators; 30+ participants
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Latin America and the Caribbean***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 2 hours December 2016
- ! Target groups: faculty; 20 participants at University of North Texas
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Texas, USA***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 2 hours December 2016
- ! Target groups: faculty; 10 participants at University of Texas, Arlington
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Texas, USA***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 3 hours August 2016
- ! Target groups: University faculty; 62 participants online at Allama Iqbal Open Univ.
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Pakistan***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 4 hours: January 2017
- ! Target groups: instructors; 45 participants online & at Univ. Technologico Monterrey
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Mexico***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 3 hours October 2016
- ! Target groups: instructors; 45 participants online at Univ. de Sousse, Tunisia
- ! ***Geographical coverage: North Africa***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 3 hours Oct 2016
- ! Target groups: instructors; 10 participants at Open Univ. Scotland
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Edinburgh***

OER workshop,

- ! Duration: 2 hours, Oct. 2016
- ! Target groups: instructors; 15 participants at the Provincial Territorial Distance Education Association
- ! ***Geographical coverage: Edmonton AB***

2. Conferences/ Meetings

Refereed Conference Presentations

R

Invited Speaker: Conference Presentations & Workshops

Canadian

Invited presenter: APOP (L'Assoc. pour les applications pédagogiques de l'ordinateur), Dec, 2017 (teleconference)
Invited presenter: Canadian Association of Instructional Designers, November, 2017 (teleconference)
Invited Participant: ICDE 10th Anniversary Chairs Workshop, Toronto, October, 2017
Invited participant. Canadian Commission for UNESCO Chairs meeting and AGM, Montreal, May 2017
Invited Speaker. OER: An International Perspective. ORION THINK Conf. Toronto, May, 2017
Keynote: Why OER? Canadian Network for Innovation in Education Conf. Banff AB, May, 2017
Keynote: Why OER? Alberta OER Summit, Edmonton, May, 2017
Invited participant. Hewlett Foundation Meeting, King City ON, April 2017.
Invited presenter, Why OER? Renison University College,, Waterloo ON. April, 2017
Invited presenter: OER for the Future, Norquest College, Edmonton, April, 2017

International

Workshops on OER: Univ. de Piura, Piura, Peru, March 2018
Invited presenter: Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral, Guayaquil, Ecuador, Feb. 2018
Workshop on OER: Univ. San Marcos Medical School; Lima Peru February 2018
Invited presenter: Peruvian Medical School Administrators: Lima Peru February 2018
Invited presenter: GO-GN (Global OER Graduate Network), December, 2017 (teleconference)
Visiting Professor: Tsinghua University, Beijing, China, November, 2017
Keynote: UNESCO-NDL Intl. Workshop Knowledge Eng. for Digital Library Design, New Delhi, Oct., 2017
Invited Participant: OERu Presidents' Forum, Toronto, October, 2017
Invited Participant: 2nd OER Congress, Ljubljana, Slovenia, September 2017
Keynote: Why OER? E-Learning Korea Conference, Seoul, August, 2017

Report

McGreal, R. (2018). Pockets of Innovation: OER implemenations. Contact North/Contact Nord. Available from <https://teachonline.ca/tools-trends/open-education-resources-oer-applications-around-world/taxonomy-term>

McGreal, R. (2017). *Special Report on the role of Open Educational Resources in supporting the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal 4: Education for All*. Canadian Commission for UNESCO, IRRODL, 18,7 October, 2017. Available from <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/3541/4433>

Review experience

Refereed Journals

Special Edition Co-Editor, *Comunicar*, 2017-2018

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-

International Journal of Distance Education Technologies 2011-

International Journal of Distance Education Technologies

Journal of Technology for Education and Learning,

International Journal of Mobile Learning and Organisation (IJMLO)

3. Interuniversity Exchanges/ Partnerships

Universities:

- ! Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), Islamabad, Pakistan
- ! Hamdan bin Mohammed SMART University, Dubai, UAE
- ! Universidad Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico
- ! Open University of Tanzania
- ! UNICAMP, Brasil
- ! Open University of the Netherlands
- ! Open University UK
- ! OER universitas initiative (30 institutions on five continents)

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)
- ! European Distance Education Network (EDEN)
- ! 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 completion of a \$1.5 million project supporting OER in the higher education institutions in Alberta. Impact from this initiative are projected to show savings to students and/or institutions of more than \$3 million over the next 3 years and more in the future as the effects of the initiative become apparent to institutions in the province and across Canada. The Chair was 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.

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. 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. AU is now in the developing and delivering 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.

In recognition of his accomplishments of the Chair, he was awarded a *Lifetime Achievement Award* by the Open Education Consortium at the conference in Krakow, Poland in April, 2016. This was followed by the *Canadian Network for Leadership in Education Award*, from the Canadian Network for Innovation in Education in May, 2016. And, in October, he was recognised as a *Senior Fellow* by the European Distance Education Network.

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;
- ! Collaborate on a decentralized international OER Network to promote North-South-South triangular collaboration;
- ! 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;
- ! Support a network of OER researchers through online seminars and face to face meetings;
- ! 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 digital equipment and internet connectivity.