Transcript for Finding the Free Path: Making Zero-Textbook-Cost Courses Visible (March 10, 2023)
BCcampus event hosted March 10, 2023
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Panelists: Amanda Grey, Kwantlen Polytechnic University; Elena Kuzmina, Vancouver Community College; and Brenda Smith, Thompson Rivers University

ROEN JANYK:
Welcome everybody to our B.C. Open Education, Librarian's Open Education Week event, Finding the Free Path: Making ZTC Courses Visible. So please do introduce yourself, say good morning. Put your name into the chat. Please let us know where you are joining us from today. So we can see the broad spectrum of people joining us. My name is Roen Janyk, and I'll be your moderator today. I am the web services librarian at Okanagan College and I'm a member of the B.C. Open Education Librarians group. And I'm joining our event today from the traditional unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan people. So I'll just give everybody a moment to, if they want to say hello. And then we'll get started. Okay. So today we're going to learn from librarians across three B.C. post-secondary institutions. Thompson Rivers University, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and Vancouver Community College have created Zero Textbook Cost offerings for students. So our panelists Elena, Brenda, and Amanda, will provide insight into how their institutions make ZTC course information visible and discoverable. And how highlighting or marketing the ZTC courses has allowed their students to make informed decisions regarding the cost of their course materials. So in case you're not familiar with the acronym said ZTC, it means Zero Textbook Cost, and it is used to refer to courses that are using zero cost course materials in the form of either open education resources or it may include resources such as e-books provided by the library. These Zero Textbook Cost initiatives are aimed at providing more equitable access to education. So today we're really going to look at how we can market to students that a course has no associated textbook costs. So this gives students the opportunity to make an informed decision when registering for courses. And it also provides them with more control over the cost of their education.

So I'm going to introduce our three panelists now. And then we'll go right into questions that we have for them. And if you have any questions for the panelists, I ask that you either please save them for the end or you can put them in the chat and Caja will be monitoring it and then we'll ask them at the end. So Elena Kuzmina is the copyright and open education resources coordinator and a librarian at Vancouver Community College. And in her role as open education coordinator, she advances an OER strategy at VCC that increases stakeholder engagement, Her MLS is from the University of British Columbia. And her masters in linguistics is from Kharkiv University. As a SPARC Open Leadership fellow, Elena has focused on OER accessibility and discoverability. In collaboration with the VCC marketing team, she's developed a novel approach to highlighting Zero Cost Textbook programs on the VCC website. The visible, the free textbook symbol featured on the program pages has made programs that use OER visible to potential students. And the public facing OER website link to that ZTC program aids in the discoverability of OER. Brenda Smith is the open education librarian at Thompson Rivers

University, TRU in Kamloops, B.C. She's a past recipient of a BCcampus award for Excellence in open education. She's been supporting open education by conducting workshops and webinars, helping faculty to identify existing OER and co-facilitating open textbooks sprints. And Amanda Grey is an open education strategist at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. She supports faculty in the sharing, creating, and use of open education practices, facilitating open education initiatives, such as the Zero Textbook Cost Initiative, the OER Grant Program, and KPU's Open Publishing Suite. As a trained librarian, Amanda has worked on open education initiatives for several B.C. institutions.

So we're gonna go right into questions and we're going to start with Elena. So can you please give us a bit of an introduction on our topic from the point of view of your institution? So you can include things such as why and how you market your Zero Textbook Cost courses, how many courses are considered ZTC and whether you're primarily using open textbooks or free from the library textbooks.

ELENA KUZMINA:
Hi everyone. Thank you for being here. So imagine that you're in a restaurant and you get the menu, and you would like to get sustainable fish. So you look at the menu, and you get that little sign, Ocean Wise by the dish that contains the fish. So that's kind of in a nutshell, our approach to marketing courses. So basically what we wanted to do, we wanted to have a course listed and then for students, for that being visible on a website. And it all started with the OER website that every other institution had, and VCC didn't. So what I wanted to do, I wanted for students, prospective students, actually, do go and have a look. And for students in the college as well and know what OER is. And then it led up to marketing courses right on the website. Then student is interested in the course. They look there and they'll see if there are OERs available. Courses is how many courses we have. Not so many because not so many programs use OERs, but one of the courses I'll show you use OERs for sure. And then our adult basic education mostly use OER.

ROEN: Great, thank you. Brenda?

BRENDA SMITH:
At TRU, we really wanted to make our ZTC courses visible. So we used an attribute in the Banner registration system where it marks ZTC courses by this, down to the course section level as an attribute. So that way if it is a multi-section course and some at TRC are and others aren't, we can separate it to that level. The bookstore also has the information, but they don't have a clearly marked attribute there, just if it's an open textbook, they'll include it with the open textbook. For us, we use the term Zero Textbook Costs to mean no required textbook that has a cost. So if there's a recommended textbook but it's not required as a cost, we'll still classify it as ZTC because it's not required for the course. So that's sort of how we do it. And similarly, if a course, just by the nature of the course, doesn't have textbooks that will also count within that. So for us ZTC isn't just because they use OER or just because they use library resources, we use a broader view of that. For us, I do an inventory every semester and I haven't quite finished the

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ones from last semester yet. So the most recent numbers I have are for fall and winter, fall 2021 and winter 2022, in which case, there were 888 courses at TRU that were ZTC and that impacted registrations of 21,809 students. I think it was, I can't remember. So ours because we have that mix of that. And the way I do it is that of those 888 courses, only 163 courses, I know 100% for sure, use OER because the faculty don't always tell us why or how their courses are ZTC. Some will say they're using an open textbook or other OER, but very few of them will actually share that information of what the actual title is. So just as an example, for the winter of 2022 of the 72 known courses using OER, I only know the specific titles for 29 of them and I just haven't had time to go through and contact all of the faculty who say their courses. are ZTC to find out why and how. That would be nice to do at some point.

ROEN:
Yeah, that's excellent. To include how much broader that your definition is of ZTC and then it just brings more awareness to students to their choices. Amanda.

AMANDA GREY:
Hello. So KPU ZTC initiative launched back in 2018 with funding from BCcampus. In addition to marking individual courses that have Zero Textbook Costs, we have also worked with our faculties to identify and create eight different full credentials that students can earn without having to pay for textbooks. In the years since the launch of the program, over 24,000 students have benefited from it with cumulative students' savings over 7 million. And we're currently at a point where in our academic year we're averaging 20% of course sections being offered have Zero Textbook Costs. You can find all of this data on our data dashboard, which is on our website. I'll put the link in the chat where we track the growth of the program since the beginning. And the reason why we're able to do this and have this data is that we mark our ZTC courses in Banner, our course registration system. And we do this, one so that we have the data, but also so that students can see during registration which courses have Zero Textbook Costs. At KPU Zero Textbook Costs, we've taken the approach that the bottom line is, as long as students don't have to pay for their textbooks or course materials, it counts as ZTC. So this covers using open educational textbooks, library resources, instructor-created resources, free online resources and courses that have no textbooks at all. Courses that require students to purchase materials like art supplies, we still consider those ZTC because students have an option to purchase at whatever price point they can manage. So we still consider that ZTC. But courses that require students to purchase lab manuals and access to homework systems, we do not consider Zero Textbook Cost because those prices are fixed and required. Our process of marking ZTC courses is complex and it does rely on instructor reported data and working with people from the different faculties to upload that information into Banner, working with the registrar's office to make sure that it's all working correctly and our timelines are in place. I am continually working on the workflow and collaborating with those colleagues to make improvements and trying to make this process as easy as we can make it be. So I haven't yet processed our data on how courses are ZTC. But just anecdotally glancing over the data, I think I've seen a pretty even split between instructors using open textbooks, using library resources, and then those other options. And one day, if I ever get time, I would like to add this data to the

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dashboard as well so we can see how things are playing out. As Rajiv pointed out, a course can be ZTC using more than one of those.

ROEN:
Yeah, it's really interesting seeing the different definitions or approaches that people have taken. Back to Elena. How do students find marked courses? You've described it a little bit, but maybe you could give us a little bit of a demonstration and are the tags searchable? those types of things. And what kind of advertising have you done?

ELENA:
So I just wanted to add that what I meant to say in terms of courses, how many courses at VCC. I talked about certificates and AB, its whole program. So there are more courses at VCC that use OER. So just a little bit of correction and then we don't mark open resources provided by the library, but it's something for us to think about. It's a really good idea that I'm just picking up from other panelists, so it will be great to do. So how students find it. If I'm a student, I'm just going to share my screen, and I'm interested in one of the programs. So let's say I'm interested in becoming a CAD technician. This is a short certificate. And so if I scroll down to fees and other costs. So we have this little sign. And it says that no cost textbooks are available for this program. And if I click on that, it will take me to Open Educational Resources page. And here there are benefits, what OER is and then benefits and explained. And it's very simple and easy so that students would know what is going on. And then also, if we go to Hairstylist, So we'd like to enroll in Hairstylist Program, then saying that similar concepts. So same sign No course textbooks. And then it will take me to BCcampus website. And it's because there's only one book available for this course. And they use other courses as well. And so our idea was not... it was big debate of whether we're going to use ZTC or explanation of no cost textbooks and with helpful marketing, the decision was made that no cost textbooks and librarians as well will be more obvious to students. And marketing created this sign. That is a little different as well.

ROEN:
Great. Thank you. Brenda, how are your courses marked?

BRENDA:
Great. So in our Banner registration, under Attributes, there are various ones that you can choose. Some of them are by a certain type of delivery and some are meeting certain general education requirements. But one of them is also Zero Textbook Costs. So you can choose that and it will show all of the courses for a particular term that had been marked as the... Why is it not showing? Okay, so I'll try this first, because what I've done is that if you look for a specific course, for example, it will show the Zero Textbook Cost right there. And so the reason we have it by the individual sections, like some, not all sections of a course like this is all for our first-year English course, are going to be actually using that. So in this case, we've got the Zero Textbook Cost logo for the individual course that the students can see that. But if we went back and did the keyword attribute, of Zero Textbook Costs, two browsers open. It would just show all of

them so students can choose from that. So that's how we have ours structured. And it's just done every semester. I'll stop my share.

ROEN: Right. Amanda?

AMANDA:
Our process is going to look very similar because we use Banner as well. So I'll just share my screen here. So from the registration page when students are browsing for classes. So let's search for the upcoming term. So students can also go down into the Advanced Search and use the attribute field for and choose Zero Textbook Costs. One thing that we recently realized is that students aren't really aware that this is how they can find courses. And I think that's addressing a question that you're going to ask later. So we've been working at letting students know that this is the process of how to do that. Then, for example, they can search for whichever subject they're interested in. So in this case, let's do Criminology. And when they do the search, only the results that are ZTC will come up. And if they click on the course name and go to attributes, here's the ZTC designation there.

ROEN:
Thank you. Okay. So onto marketing. How did you get some buy-in on marking these courses? Because these are not sort of library-managed systems. Sorry, Elena.

ELENA:
I would say that marketing encompasses OER and advancing OER as a whole. Then those marking of courses comes in. So what Spark program taught me, which I took last year, where you have to include people from the community, college community that you may not think about. And we had one of the assignments where we had to go and talk to administrators, deans, VPs, and talk about OER. And so that's where it started and also student union was instrumental as well, given the idea that students need to see it. And collaboration with the student union was good as well. And also collaboration with marketing and having support of the dean. And then that gives me access to marketing and the marketing digital director was very supportive too and the marketing team was amazing. And they gave me an idea about my audience and how to approach it. But it's still a work in progress. After launching the website and launching some of the courses, the message was sent to deans and department leaders. It was received really well, but I'm still working on some departments to provide information, up-to-date information on marking courses. So it's work in progress.

BRENDA:
So for us, it's really been a gradual multi-step process that's kind of built over the years. So back in I think it was 2018. I worked with our then associate registrar to start the marking process. So we kinda... the technical thing, but we hadn't really figured out how to get the data. So we asked the registrars, or we asked the department chairs to let the registrar's office know about courses, and some responded and others didn't and the ones that did didn't always have the full details. So it was a little haphazard and we also didn't think that we should have to send a

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reminder each semester. We kind of thought, well, once we've said we can do this, that they'll just do it. And that didn't happen. So in 2020, I decided to compile an inventory of which courses at TRU campus were ZTC and/or used OER. Because I wanted to find out what was actually happening and try to get a more sustainable process. Partially to let BCcampus know about what our open textbook adoptions were. So I went through the bookstores website and I've pulled all the data, and I went through all these ZTC marked courses in Banner. And I went through the self-identified OER use that faculty had sent to BCcampus. And I put them all together. And then I shared that with our open education working group, which people were really interested in. And they said, Oh, we should actually look at ways to streamline the data. So then that led me to approach the university librarian for support. And then she arranged a meeting with me, this instructional designer Marie Bartlett who helped me with the data, and then the registrar's office and the associate registrars. And the registrar's office was really interested in the results of the inventory. And they liked the idea of centralizing the data to provide a better tracking method of what's happening. And to do that. So then Marie went off working on something for open learning because the way that their courses are is completely different. So this method wasn't going to work for them and the registrar's office, and they would be the ones who'd reach out to faculty to identify courses. And then they would put it in and then they would share it. And then to the bookstore and to us. So we talked to the people at the bookstore and they wanted to be part of it as well. But we really felt that it was important to get buy-in across campus. So we, to show that it was good to get the buy-in for the idea of centralizing the tracking of it. And to also demonstrate that this was a joint initiative by the registrar's office, by the library, and by the bookstore. So we presented at three senate committees to discuss the initiative and get their support and all of the committees support for it. So we launched it but in an abbreviated way because of timing. So when I did the inventory the next year in fall 2021, there was way more courses that were ZTC and that was great. But the bookstore still had more data than was in the actual registrars course stuff. So then we decided to talk again. And it was decided that, oh, well, obviously faculty are going to the bookstore first, not the registrar's office. So we should have the bookstore collect the data, then share it with the registrar's office. So that's what we did this year. We thought, Oh, that's great because that's how they're doing it. But the number of ZTC marked courses went down. And I think it's because faculty don't report what they're doing to the bookstore until after registrations have happened in the spring. So we're still working that out. But ours was to get the buy-in. And we also talked to the student union as well. So we really wanted to make sure that we had a lot of things. So it's been gradual going and doing that, but also learning from those experiences of what worked and what didn't work. But that's sort of how we structured it.

ROEN: Excellent. Thank you. Amanda?

AMANDA:
I was not at KPU when this initiative was started, so I don't have that knowledge of how it was in the beginning. Very happy to see Rajiv Jhangiani in the chat today. So if he's willing, maybe he can provide some more insight into how buy-in was built in the beginning. But I can speak

more generally that we're really fortunate at KPU to have strong support from senior leadership. Open education has been identified and KPU's strategic plan as a priority. And it is one of our strategic goals. So we already have institutional buy-in, which makes it much easier to approach other departments and make the case for why we need to be doing things. I think when I'm working with my colleagues in different departments, they are also, they are already bought into the idea of making things easier and less work and smoother. So that's my answer for this.

ROEN:
Thank you. Okay. So Elena. And I think many of you sort of touched on this a little bit already about who your strong supporters are and who are the early adapters that got this off the ground?

ELENA:
Yes. But I would like an opportunity to add that I am really lucky because, as you all know, librarians are very strong supporters and they did support me, and then also Brenda mentioned EdCo. So EdCo chairs, give me one of the chair of the committee, give me amazing advice on working with the registrar office and then what is possible. And then now the chair... We had a conversation after the launch and it was very exciting news to them so it was nice to hear. Also departments and they reached out to departments. They were happy to see this initiative as well. And also help to have the dean, who actually knows what OER is and is well-versed in OER.

ROEN: And Brenda?

BRENDA:
I would say at TRU, I think my biggest supporter, and early adopter, was the instructional designers in open learning. And they're the ones who got me involved in open in the first place. I would then say the next thing would be our pretty active Open Education Working Group which includes faculty, students, staff, administrators from across campus. The registrar's office has been a huge supporter, the student union has been a big supporter, and the bookstore has been a big supporter. I think, looking for that... and then just individual faculty who would then try to do that. But I can't. There's like someone from this department and someone from this department, so it wasn't even like a defined... It was all over the place.

ROEN:
Amanda, I know you spoke about that sort of higher-level leadership that was a pretty big supporter and that was helpful. Is there anybody else?

AMANDA:
Well, I do want to acknowledge that to start all of this off in 2017, KPU received a grant from BCcampus to support this development, which was extremely helpful. And while I don't know specifically who they were, in our first semester that we ran it, we had 38 instructors who were involved and they were teaching a total of 75 sections. And on the senior leadership note at the

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time, regime was a special advisor to the president on open education. So that meant that we had senior leadership support from the very beginning.

ROEN:
Yeah, I think that's really important. So in terms of sort of maintaining things, how are you maintaining the marking in Banner or on the website after they've been added? So I know of course sections change. Different professors teach them. It can be hard to manage. Elena?

ELENA:
So we are in the very early stages and so far it's on me to watch for that. So initially I relied on BCcampus list that we now maintain, but when I reached out to some instructors, as back as 2016 who were teaching courses, some of them were not there. And other instructors were not using OER, so it was quite the discovery there. And I rely on departments with communication and just confirming with them. But then I also have a marketing dedicated person to maintaining this. And she's absolutely amazing. Her name is Hila Coopman and she responds right away. So if I have information, she just goes right there and so I have no problem there.

ROEN: Brenda?

BRENDA:
We actually do it every semester because we do it at the individual course section level. And because of the fact that not all sections of a course are a ZTC and the fact that it changes who's teaching a course from... And then there's also been some people that went to ZTC and then returned to using a traditional textbook. So that's why we do it. So there's no sort of maintenance of doing that. It's just the ongoing getting the data every year. So it's a full unique project every single term. And that's where ... One thing I did want to mention that I forgot to, is that TRU was also a recipient of a BCcampus ZTC grant. So we have a... Through our Open Learning Division, we have a certificate in General Studies, which is a ZTC, the whole program, and we are almost finished. And an Associate of Science, where the courses are also all, the whole program is ZTC and a couple of the courses are actually going to be fully open as well. I think one of the courses for sure.

ROEN: Amanda?

AMANDA:
Exactly the same as Brenda. We do ZTC identification of the course section level, so every semester we need to collect this data. The historical data is in Banner for us to go back and see those numbers and use them to create our data dashboard. But I can talk a little bit about our process of gathering that data if you'd like? Yeah. So before every semester I go into Banner and I get a list of upcoming course sections that are being offered. And then I send an email to every single line instructor asking them to fill out a web form if their course is going to be ZTC. So to share my screen so you can have, so you can see the current iteration of the web form. Of course it gets tweaked over time. But essentially, so first we just background, name faculty,

things like that. But then we ask them to fill out all of the course information that is in Banner. And this is also where we ask how their course is going to be ZTC. And of course they can choose more than one depending on. And then we also ask if they're using an OER to provide the name and link. And this is how we report our adoptions to BCcampus through the information that we get from this web form. And then they can do this same process for as many courses as they're teaching. So I give them a couple of weeks to fill up the web form. And when they all get back, I process the data and I send each faculty a list of the upcoming courses that will be ZTC. And then the wonderful admin assistants in those faculties go into Banner and add ZTC as the attribute. We are currently testing out a new addition to this, where we're keeping track of historical instructor course pairings. In order to prevent faculty from having to fill out the same information year after year after year if they are continuing to teach ZTC. Yes. This is the first semester we've done it, so we'll see how it goes. But we've sent those instructors who have that same instructor course pairing, an email instead saying, Hey, we noticed you're teaching this upcoming course. We know in the past you've taught this as ZTC. We're going to assume that you will be teaching it as ZTC again. Please let us know if you are not and, or let us know if you're not and let us know if you have updated your teaching materials. And I did get several responses from people that had changed their materials or had not done ZTC before. So I think that was a success, hope it was a success. But that's the current thing that we're trying out in terms of maintaining. So then I just automatically add those to the list of courses that I send the faculty admin assistants.

ROEN: That's really great. It's really helpful to hear the processes, I think the different processes across institutions. So has there been any faculty or instructor pushback or pushback from really anywhere as this has been progressing? Elena?

ELENA:
So there was no pushback. Only I heard good things about it. And I think one of the reasons is because of the kind of promotional campaign of OER, but also because lots of thought went into creating that label. Then we were chatting about it with marketing. Marketing designer Hila Coopman mentioned that it might become next swoosh, Nike swoosh. And so that's what I'm hoping for, that it's going to be very recognizable very, very soon. Or maybe it will take time, but it will become the next Nike swoosh.

BRENDA:
We had some pushback, back in 2018. A couple of faculty felt that this was infringing on their academic freedom because it was pressuring them to do it even if they didn't want to, and they were afraid that students wouldn't want to register for their course if it wasn't ZTC and how dare we. You know, but the interesting is, is that the most vocal of those people, when I was doing my inventory in 2021, said they were... It turns out they were using an OER and had made sure that their courses were marked ZTC. So I think it might have been that the change was there, and it made them reflect on how they were teaching. But it was interesting that the most vocal person who was against it, is now... They're now retired, but they actually ended up moving in that direction, which I thought was kind of hilarious.

ROEN: Yeah, it's funny how that works, isn't it? Amanda?

AMANDA:
Yes, Brenda, that sounds very, very familiar for here as well. We also run into the academic freedom issue here as well. So we're very careful to reassure faculty that they still have freedom to choose whatever course materials they would like, we just encourage that they use, consider other ZTC options. And we've also heard the idea of instructors not wanting students to know that criteria because the students might choose a ZTC course over their own. So again, same as Brenda was mentioning. I don't know whether this fits or not, but I do want to mention the label itself, ZTC. As most of you are probably already aware, they were originally called Z credit courses. Some pushback to that label because it was misleading and people thought it meant that they weren't going to receive credit for their courses. So that's why it was changed to Zero Textbook Cost instead.

ROEN: I forgot, I had kind of forgotten about that. How it was called Zed Cred before. Interesting. So in terms of students, have you had any students feedback on the marked courses? And if possible, if you've got any analytics or student data such as whether there's more waitlists for Zed cred courses or more interest in those specific courses.

ELENA:
Our initiative is quite new. So it was just launched this year. And we don't have the data yet. But the hope was that students, more students will register if there are those courses, No Cost Textbook courses listed on the website. In my conversation with student union representatives they really liked it. But they went even further because during actually this week's campaign, they heard from students that were quite upset of registering for courses and then having to pay for quiz banks or for something else that adds cost. And so they actually expressed their opinion. They wanted to see this course listed as well as the register because sometimes they add so much money to the registration. And so we chatted about potentially having another sign or some kind of transparency there on the website listing those costs as well. So it was very surprising for me, but also I can see that. So we'll look into that as well.

ROEN: Brenda?

BRENDA:
We haven't really done the deep dive regarding that sort of waitlist or registrations. I know looking at it, it looks like the courses that are ZTC tend to be pretty full, but that's just anecdotal. I have not had formal feedback in that way, but in a student panel that we had on Monday for Open Ed Week at TRU, all three students on the panel have said that they like the ZTC course markers and they do actually use it and it does impact their decision-making process. However, they also said it is not the only factor because sometimes it's like who the instructor is that they want to take a course with that person. It's like I have to take this course regardless, so even if it's not ZTC, I still need to take it because I need this particular course or it

fits my schedule. But they do so they like it and they do see it as a benefit. They would like, which is one of the things that I need to do, it more promoted and advertised so students actually know what it is. They think they know what it is because they are involved with the student union and involve the student caucus. And so they're learning about that, but they said, there needs to be more. So that's something that we need to be better at, which is something that was on our list to do. It just sort of fell off.

ROEN: Amanda.

AMANDA:
We haven't heard direct feedback from students. Again, we had had that issue where we realized students weren't didn't really know exactly how to specifically search for ZTC. But we do have feedback from our first-year students survey run by KPU. In 2020, 30% of students said that our ZTC programs were among the factors of why they chose KPU, which is really, really great to hear. In terms of our data. I already mentioned our data dashboard. On this dashboard, one of the stats that we were able to find was that the ZTC courses do have a slightly faster fill rate.

ROEN: That's really interesting.

AMANDA:
Yes. And now that we've begun informing students more about how to find ZTC courses, we're going to be asking a lot more feedback from students on the process, how it is, and things like that.

ROEN:
That's great. That'll be good information for everybody to see in the future. So Elena, what would you say is the future of marking courses as ZTC? How can improvements be made to expand on this as a project? Are there any supports that are still needed? What would you say?

ELENA:
So I wanted to have the sign wherever possible. And so I'm just going to share my screen and just show you where. Ideally, I would have it as well. So when students go to just look at the program, and here they look at CAD and BIM. One of those has OER, so they don't see it here. So I would like to see it here. If they go to the actual program, then we can see it on the fees. And that's where marketing felt was possible to place it. So that is one of the things that I didn't give up on and I'll be working on. And also thinking about sustainability and possibly talking to the registrar office. I started conversations before, but maybe continuing conversation and marking them in Banner as Brenda and Amanda do in their institutions also involving bookstore. That has been a journey, I would say, but I'll try again.

ROEN:

Yes, we've had challenges with our bookstore as well. I don't think you're alone there. Brenda, what would you say?

BRENDA:
I think with ours, there's two futures. One is that we need to be better about promoting it. And we do have plans to house some of the information on the specified website and then to share that with TRU SU, the Student Union to share it with students. And it slipped off the top of our to-do pile. But I'm talking to students on Monday and just reflecting on it, it's kind of got to go back on the list and we need to get that done. So I think that's one sort of future, just looking at better ways to promote it. And the registrar's office is open to sharing it on their site as well, so we just need to get that done. The other thing is that we need to continue to streamline the processes. So while one of the things is it's like, for example, we are now having the bookstore collect the data, but they're not always getting it in time for registration, so the timing isn't working. But there also is the issue for the winter semester. In the fall semester, for example, in fall 2022. In fall 22, we had over 300, 330 courses that were identified as ZTC in Banner, which was an increase because the previous year it was like 127. So we're like, Oh wow, great. But a lot of those numbers didn't come in until after students registered in June. So it wasn't really a good thing for registration purposes. But at the same point, for the winter semester, in 2022, we had 130 courses that were marked, and now this year we have 71. There's no way we've gone down 50. And I was looking at some of the things. I know that person is ZTC. I know that one is there. So getting that information, that's not just for the fall semester, but also for the winter semester. So we really need to continue to streamline processes. Unfortunately, I mean, KPU is really lucky that they have Amanda who... This is a big part of her job and she can do that. For me to hear you... I'm the main open education librarian. We have another second person that's helping, but we also have busy liaison areas that we do as well. And I'm for three more months the acting systems librarian as well, which is kind of a hilarious thing in and of itself. But what that means is that I don't have the time to contact individual faculty. I don't have the time to follow up in some of these ways. So we need to find better systems to do that. So that's one of our futures and those are some improvements. So it'll come eventually I hope.

ROEN:
I find that too. I've found that sometimes professors will report once and then they'll say, Okay, I've reported to you and then they just assume

BRENDA:
That's exactly what I think is happening. I think that that's exactly what's happening.

ROEN:
Yeah, that's happened to us a little bit with our e-textbook lists. They're like, Why is my textbook not on there? And I'm like, well, you didn't tell us you were still using it. We don t know. Amanda.

AMANDA:

I'm going to echo again some of the things that Brenda was bringing up in terms of timelines and things. So I've been having a lot of conversations with the faculty admin assistants and with the registrar's office on the entire process workflow and trying to smooth things out as soon as possible and identify what is it about the sheet that I'm sending to you? Is the sheet that I'm sending you compatible with your workflow or am I sending you information that you then have to rearrange or edit or clean up in order so that you can do your job. So when having so many conversations with everybody trying to get that big picture of like, okay, what's the overall process and how can we make this as smooth and easy as possible and trying to identify those problem areas to fix them. So I've been making slight adjustments over the time that I've been here and it's slowly getting better, but it's still very cumbersome. And one issue that we're running into is that our deadline for getting the ZTC designation into Banner is when the timetable gets published because students can then... When the timetable gets published, students can put together, like they can select out courses and save them so that when registration happens, they can just click a button and it will automatically try to register them. So we want to get that ZTC information in there when the timetable is published so that students can start making those choices. However, that means that we are starting our ZTC process extremely early. Unfortunately, we're starting it so early that there's a significant amount of courses that haven't even been assigned to instructors yet. So that's the current issue that I'm trying to solve. And I think what we're going to try to do is do it in stages. Get as much as we can for publication, then try to get as many as possible for when registration actually is. And then again, just doing it over and over and over again, trying to fill in all of those gaps, which takes a lot of time to do. But that's currently what I'm working on. One improvement that I would like to make if we're talking about dreams and goals, pie in the sky, ideal. It involves people much higher than I am approving this and figuring this out. So currently instructors, after they get the course assignment, we reach out to them asking about ZTC. And then a few months later, the bookstore reaches out saying like, Hey, what materials are you using? Then the library often doesn't get information at all about what texts, what materials people are using. They get that information from the bookstore even farther after that date. So I would love it if when instructors get their course assignment, instead of me, the bookstore, and the library reaching out separately. If with the assignment there was a link to the web form or a link to something that said, okay, you're teaching this course, what materials are you using? And then from there we could figure out, you know, ZTC, bookstore library, all of that. That is my dream, would love if that could be the case. But again, that's above my pay grade. That's for people much higher than me to figure out whether or not that's possible.

ROEN: You've got to start from somewhere, right? Okay. So we're onto our last question now. And some of you touched on this a little bit, but what do institutions who want to mark ZTC courses need to know? Do you have any lessons learned that you'd like to share or any other tips you have? Elena?

ELENA:
Yes. So my maybe first lesson learned is thinking about the audience. And what it came from when it started was the website I thought it should be complicated. It should have all the

information that we know. Being a librarian, you know, maybe understandable. And then working with marketing team, it just became just landing page. And then also working on sign that students will understand the description as well that could be applicable to courses or programs. Yes, that marketing was really indispensable in that. And that's another lesson. Befriend your marketing team, because they have all the knowledge of how to promote and how to market. And they were amazing people to work with, the marketing team. And then I guess the last lesson is patience. I wanted it to be done, I think now, quickly. And it took longer than I thought, much longer than I thought. It took many more meetings and conversations. But in the end, it also gets you buy-in when everybody knows what's going on.

ROEN: Sorry, I was muted there. Brenda.

BRENDA:
I would say that it's not a straightforward one-step fix. So you can get your technology set up and that's great, but there's going to be ongoing work to populate the data. And just because of all of the different changes about whether there's individual sections that are different or it's all the sections in the course. Whether someone decided to go with ZTC but then discontinued it. Whether there's a different person teaching the course and so it's no longer. So I think that one of the lessons learned is that it isn't straightforward. It is an ongoing thing that you keep needing to change. I totally agree with Elena that you need to promote it. I'm still not so good at that. But that's a goal for me to do. But I would say the biggest lesson for me was to talk to the people that may have some of the information. Because when I first started doing my inventory, I was going in manually and copying the data from Banner because it wouldn't let me copy and paste. I was typing it all into an Excel spreadsheet. And then I was going through every course in the bookstore's online tool to check for their textbooks status and what the name of the textbooks were and then adding that inventory to my inventory. And it took me hours and hours and even when I got some help from the library technician, it was still really time consuming. But it turned out that the bookstore and the registrar could send me Excel spreadsheets that had all the data I wanted. And I just had to figure out how to merge the two, which still took some time, but it was a way faster process. The one thing is, is that neither of those processes let me know what the names of specific textbooks are. But that meant that if I knew something was for sure OER, I could just go in and check the bookstore system and pull that data. So it did make my life a little bit easier. But that's one thing, is that reach out to figure out what existing information is out there that you can pull to collate and bring it together because I felt like an idiot.

ROEN:
When I asked our bookstore for a list, they gave it to me as a PDF. So they were not, they weren't cooperating very much at the time. They've come around since then. Amanda.

AMANDA:
Yeah, I've got a couple of different things to note. The first one would be to find out what other departments' processes are. I already talked about this earlier, but find out what other people

are doing. Talk to your registrar's office, figure out how things work. So during one of my attempts to make the process smoother, we ran into an issue where I thought the registrar's office knew about a change I'd made only to find out that they didn't and what I was doing actually didn't work with what is happening on their end. So yes, you'll need to know your particular piece and how it works on your end. But it is so helpful to have the bigger picture of how things work elsewhere and how your piece fits in, and how you can make small changes to make things slightly easier for other people along the line as well. I also think it's important to remember, as Brenda and Elena mentioned, that it is an iterative process. It will not be perfect from the start. It will never be perfect. As long as you get something in place that works, you can take it from there and begin making improvements and tweaking it to make things better. At the end of the day, as I said, it will never be perfect. But as long as we're doing something, as long as some things are in place, as long as some students are getting this information, that is an improvement and that is a benefit for students.

ROEN:
Definitely. Thank you. Okay, So I want to thank you all for sharing your experiences and your knowledge. So now we'll take a look at some of the questions that have come in through the chat. And Caja, if you want to. Do you want to read them or do you want to send them to me?

CAJA BLOMLEY:
I'm good to do either. The bulk of them were from Alexander who maybe we should open the floor to him and see if he has a preference as well.

ROEN: Sure. Let me see. Alexander, do you want to speak? Oh.

CAJA: They were answered.

ROWEN: It's possible they may have been answered already.

ELENA:
I would like. Sorry, Roen, if I may. Sure. I like one of Alexander's questions. Slash. I think it is a suggestion as well, which I found really interesting where he said, Would it help to have as part of the policy reporting of those courses? And I think it's a great idea. We don't have OER policy at VCC yet, but it might be the next step. And it will be great to consider either for OER policy or for some instructional policy. That kind of make it a smooth process.

ROEN:
Other questions from anybody else in attendance? Feel free to put them in the chat or you can unmute yourself and you can ask one of our panelists. I have, I have a question. The little icon of free textbook that I noticed, Brenda and Amanda are both using the same icon. Is that icon built into Banner? No. Okay. So you've just chosen to use the same icon?

AMANDA:

I don't, I don't know where the icon came from. It was around before I started. Brenda, do you know?

BRENDA:
Our associate registrar chose it. If you Google it, it's actually used quite frequently.

ROEN:
Okay. I thought maybe it was like some built-in feature. No. Let's see here. So what about partial adoptions? Do we feel any momentum towards that as also being ZTC?

AMANDA:
What do you mean by partial adoptions? I'm not quite sure what that is.

ROEN:
I'm assuming that would mean maybe a course that has partially free materials? Is that what that means? Not a whole textbook, but more like course pay substitute. All open. Oh, sorry, course pack. Not a whole textbook but more like a course pack as a substitute to open.

AMANDA:
So as I spoke, Sorry, Brenda, did you want to...

BRENDA:
I was going to say that for us. Is that the way we interpret ZTC, it could be... For us it's like if there's no required texts. So it could be because they're using an open textbook or an OER, but it could also be because they're using library resources or they're doing a course pack that's embedded into their learning management system and doing it that way. If there's no cost to the student, That's the key for us, is there's no cost to the student for it. Or the free resources, all the things that Amanda was talking about earlier. But if they use those and have a... still have required text, we don't class those as ZTC. But if, for example, there's a course. There was a course that we had that was using OER but for part of the course, but used a commercial textbook for the other part of the course. Those would, I would mark those as being an OER course, but not as a ZTC course. I would kind of put a little asterisk for them so that I can keep that for information. But they've moved since then to an open textbook. But we haven't marked them in that way. If it's a purchase thing.

AMANDA:
Yeah. Again, KPU as long as the students don't have to pay, that's kind of our requirement. And we do include instructor created or curated resources as a part of ZTC. We do have, KPU library has a service called Link Scan Open, where instructors can use fair dealing to take pieces from a variety of different sources and package them together in a course pack. Because they're falling under fair dealing and students don't need to pay because they're library resources, that does fall under ZTC as well. So I would say it depends how we're going about it. But the bottom line is if students don't have to pay for the resource, then it's ZTC. As much as we are advocates of

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open education and we would like people to be using OERs, and want to promote open education, we're always keeping in mind that at the end of the day, from the student's perspective, students don't really care whether it's an open textbook or a library book that they're getting as long as they don't have to pay.

BRENDA:
That's our philosophy as well.

ELENA:
We're just started. So we don't have as many courses, but it's similar for us. The only thing that I might add, I actually inquire with instructors and departments and see what they would like to do. And if it helps to have part of the course using the textbook and having that featured, I'll do it and then we will iron it out later. I saw that Alexander posted that he prefers course packs because otherwise, working together and creating OER textbook, course pack is just easier to do and I agree with that. And it touches on very important thing that OERs are free for students, but they're not free for institutions. Institutions need to allocate resources for instructors. Release time to actually create OERs and they need to be committed to that.

ROEN:
Yeah, that's interesting. We at Okanagan College have sort of a course reading list system that we've implemented over the last couple of years. And when we introduced it to faculty, they said, Oh, it's just like an online course pack. And I guess we'd thought, oh, well, we're digitizing things according to fair dealing and including library, e-books and those types of things. And we just sort of thought of it as a reading list. Whereas they said, Oh no, it's like an online course pack. As much as we think that professors are moving away from course packs, they're still using them, but just in a different manner, I think. So there was a couple of the questions from Alexander relating to whether an open syllabus system could help to track those ZTC programs and courses, which is an interesting idea. It actually sort of ties into the second question on whether there's hope for a province-wide system to allow students to compare things. So I think if you had an open syllabus program or a set system that might tie into a provincial system. Sorry, Go ahead, Amanda.

AMANDA:
Oh, yeah. I was just gonna say KPU has just started using CourseLeaf. And I have had a few conversations with people about the possibility of using CourseLeaf to indicate whether or not course sections are available as ZTC or not. That's definitely a much bigger conversation that we haven't had time to seriously sit down and think about it. But it's been on the edges of my mind ever since learning about CourseLeaf. Again at KPU, I think the issue would come back to academic freedom. I think this is where we would run into issues with a province-wide system because we can't guarantee 100% that a course section will always be ZTC. And I think we would run into some issues with that. Not to say that we couldn't get around that in some way. There's always hope. But I can definitely foresee some issues around academic freedom there.

ROEN:
Yeah. The other question was whether there's been any help from or movement on institutional policies requiring some form of reporting on material used in courses. To anybody who has that process at their institution. It was definitely something that I worked on an OER report a couple of years ago now that was looking at the best practices for implementing OER. And that was one thing that came up as a good way to include or to, I guess, notify people of an OER and make it more of an awareness was to include it as part of the course proposal process. But it's challenging because not everybody knows what materials that they're going to use at that point. You don't even necessarily know who's gonna be teaching the course. So I don't think you could actually make it an institutional policy necessarily. Unless you were doing it on a more widespread scale where you said we're going to do zero cost course materials for all of our courses in this program, regardless of who teaches it.

AMANDA:
Yes. So it's not a policy at KPU but one thing that we have managed to do, and my apologies if I don't have the exact terminology for what some things are called in the university system. But when courses undergo course review, where we're thinking about what resources are being used. When they're going through that official process, which happens every two or three years or something like that. It's a very specific, like every few years it comes up for review, we were able to embed a question in that review form asking whether faculty have looked for open resources for the course. So we're not saying that they have to use them or anything like that. We're just raising the point, have you looked. Kind of raising that awareness and hopefully sparking some, some thought about whether or not open resources would be an option for them. So that's as far as we've gotten in terms of some higher up policies, structural things. For us that applies to curriculum development money. When people apply for these funds, then there is a form where they have to indicate whether they looked for open educational resources or not. I feel like there is something that can be done there. And this is my next step to just look into. We kind of left it there, but maybe there's something that could be done. And also at the curriculum development stage, I tried to go to those meetings where instructors have their annual stage and talk to them about OER. Part of this conversation is, of course, academic freedom, but also OERs are available and how can we help? So it has been useful. However, I want to be invited to many more meetings. Sometimes I don't even know that they're happening. And also at the curriculum development stage, it could be that somebody else, when there is a new course, somebody else is hired from outside of the college to develop those courses. And I was fortunate enough to have conversation with this person and talk about OER, but it happened only once.

ROEN:
Are there any other questions for anybody from anyone? I'm sure everybody wouldn't mind ending a little bit early today. So I think now we've got a few or a couple of approaches that we can put into practice at our own institutions. So I really want to thank everyone for coming today and I want to express our gratitude to Brenda, Elena, and Amanda for sharing their experiences so that we can grow these practices of ZTC course marking across our own

institutions. I also want to thank those who helped to organize this events. So Darcye Lovsin from JIBC, Caja Blomley from SFU, Ali de Han from Acsenda School of Management, Ian Linkletter from BCIT and Deborah Flewelling from Douglas College. And also thanks to BCcampus who supported us with this event. They helped us out a lot. And I just want to thank everyone for coming and to enjoy going forward into the weekend.