

**Transcript for Report on Institutional Capacity to Support Open Educational Practices in B.C.
BCcampus session recorded on November 24, 2025**

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JOSIE GRAY:

Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining us today for this webinar, where we will be diving into research that looks into the capacity of B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions to support open educational practices. This research was funded by BCcampus and completed by the Inclusive Education Research Lab at Brock University. My name is Josie Gray. My pronouns are she/her and I am the interim director of Open Education at BCcampus. BCcampus is funded by the B.C. Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills to support teaching and learning and open education practices in the province. I am joined today by Dr. Rajiv Jhangiani, vice provost of teaching and learning and director of the Inclusive Education Research Lab at Brock University, as well as Oya Pakkal, PhD candidate and lab manager of the Inclusive Education Research Lab at Brock University, and Clint Lalonde, interim executive director of BCcampus. Each of us here presenting today, we're all joining from different cities, and we are really grateful to be able to live and work on the lands of many Indigenous nations across what is now known as Canada. The BCcampus office is situated on the unceded territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ and the Lekwungen Peoples, and I myself am joining you all today from my home office in Moh'kins'tsis on Treaty 7 Lands, which includes the territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy, made up of the Siksika, Piikani, the Kainai Nations and the Tsuut'ina Nation and the Stoney Nakoda, which includes the Chin-iki, Bearspaw, and Wesley Nations, and Good Stone Nations and really grateful to be able to live and work here today. We got our first big dump of snow last night and so everything is very white and fluffy and chilly here.

As we go through our presentation today, please feel free to use the chat to share comments and ask questions. There are four of us, so we should be able to address chat questions as we go. But also will be a good chunk of time at the end to really get into your questions as well. So we will come back to any if we don't answer them when they come up, we will come back to them at the end. Automatic captions are enabled in Zoom, so you can turn them on yourselves by just enabling captions in the Zoom window. We will not be sharing our slides today, but the session is being recorded and the recording will be sent out to all registrants following. Also, all of the data that we are talking about today will be shared in a public report that will be openly licensed, you will be able to get a copy of everything that we're sharing today and share it with your network as well. Unfortunately, the report isn't quite ready for us to share it in this session, but it should be following later this week. Definitely by the end of this week, we'll be able to get the final report out to everyone. I also just wanted to remind everyone that our code of conduct is in effect and it's something you would have agreed to while registering for the session. I will put a link to the code of conduct into the chat just in case you'd like to refer back to it.

Okay. So before we get into the research and results, we're going to start with some framing, some context, some key concepts and starting with open education. Open education is a

philosophy about the way people create, share, access, and build upon knowledge, and it aims to reduce or eliminate barriers that restrict people from being able to do all of those things. These barriers can look like high tuition and course material costs, the legal or technical mechanisms that prevent or inhibit collaboration and sharing among educators, as well as things like geography and admission requirements. Ultimately, open education is about widening access to quality education and giving students and educators agency over their teaching and learning experiences. The research we are talking about today is looking at institutional capacity to support open educational practices.

Open educational practices are generally practices related to the use, adaptation, creation, and sharing of open educational resources or OER. OER are learning, teaching, and research materials that are either in the public domain or released under an open license that permits no cost access, reuse, repurpose, adaptation, and redistribution by others. Open educational practices also includes open pedagogy, which integrates open education and teaching practices. For example, by asking students to create, adapt, and share OER as part of their coursework. And I will pass the mic.

CLINT LALONDE:

Thanks. To better put this particular research project on what's happening in British Columbia into a bit of a national and historical perspective, we wanted to take a quick look at the history of open education in B.C. and maybe highlight some of the current initiatives that are happening across the country. Canada, in particular, British Columbia have been international leaders in open education for over 20 years now. And there are currently active open education projects and programs happening right across the country. This map shows some of the provincial and national organizations that are working on open education initiatives, and we know that there are many institutional initiatives that are not represented on this map that are happening at institutions across the country. In British Columbia, open education, as we currently know, it began around 2004 when BCcampus launched the Online Program Development Fund or OPDF in 2012, open education in B.C. really took off when the B.C. government invested \$1 million to launch an Open Textbook Initiative that continues to this day and has saved students over \$40 million in learning resource costs. Similar initiatives have been launched across Canada in Ontario. OER use is significant with about 93% of ECampus Ontario's 56 member institutions reporting OER adoption and with student savings there of well over \$40 million as well in Ontario. Recently there's been a concerted effort to try to coordinate some provincial projects nationally. In 2021, the Canadian Association of Research Libraries, CARL, led the development of a national open education strategy, which many of these organizations were involved in. Recently, BCcampus, ECampus Ontario, Atlantic OER, and Campus Manitoba have begun working together on a new initiative called the Canadian Coalition for Affordable Learning, where open education is one of the four pillars where we are working together to coordinate our activities. There's a brief look at what's currently happening across the sector and across the country in terms of open education.

RAJIV JHANGIANI:

Thanks, Clint. The uptake of open educational practices across B.C. and the rest of Canada, I think can be understood well in the context of the strong alignment of OEP for short, with common institutional goals related to equitable access, student success, pedagogical innovation, but also the growing embrace of digital teaching and learning practices and an awareness of the financial pressures faced by learners. Since 2012, of course, BCcampus has provided centralized support to B.C. institutions, but also training, infrastructure for open education in the province, things like grants for open textbook adaptation and creation, as well as larger grants designed to allow institutions to develop and increase their own supports for open education. They've also maintained the B.C. Open Collection, hosted Pressbooks, which, of course, is an open source, self-publishing tool for OER and developed training materials and guidelines for using, adapting and creating accessible and inclusive OER.

As awareness of the benefits of OEP has grown, so too have references to OEP and institutional strategic or academic plans and sometimes even faculty collective agreements. Just to give you a quick set of examples, at UB.C. and Brock University, the strategic plans and tenure and promotion guidelines in both institutions support working with OER. At Kwantlen Polytechnic University or KPU, successive academic plans have aimed to strengthen that institution's leadership in open education. But institutions have also established supportive policies such as to do with intellectual property, for example, procedures such as with curriculum development and practices such as with course marking for OER based or zero textbook cost courses. B.C. institutions such as UBC and BCIT have created open education working groups and developed and operationalized these strategies. Some institutions like KPU and Thompson Rivers University have created dedicated support positions to support this work. And finally, of course, groups and communities of practice, such as the B.C. Open Education Librarians have been working to collaboratively support open education, create resources, share knowledge, and provide mutual support and mentorship.

So that brings us neatly to the goals of the present study, which in a sentence was really to assess and then to strengthen the capacity of public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia to support open educational practices through a comprehensive system-wide evaluation.

This work builds on, we get on the next slide, a previous SSHRC-funded research project conducted in the province of Ontario. with that assess the capacity of Ontario's colleges, universities, and Indigenous institutes to support open educational practices. The resulting report, which you're seeing on your screen now is called "On a Path to Open." That was published last fall by ECampus Ontario and it's available for you to download and read in both English or in French.

Now, both the previous study in Ontario as well as the present study in B.C. utilized the ISAT 2. This is an institutional self-assessment tool that we developed that draws on previous research here in British Columbia, as well as within the Dutch higher-education system. I'm showing a couple of examples of that.

For those interested in taking a closer look at the research instrument, the ISAT 2 is openly licensed and freely available again in both English and in French on the website of the Inclusive Education Research Lab, as well as ECampus Ontario's Open Library. But for now, I will hand things over to Oya who'll provide a quick overview of the tool.

OYA PAKKAL:

Thanks, Rajiv. The ISAT 2 is organized into six groupings or broad themes. They are vision and implementation, partnerships, policies, incentives, and professional development, institutional supports, leadership in advocacy and culture change.

Within those groupings, we find 23 dimensions. These dimensions were assessed across different levels of maturity. I won't go through each dimension here, but we will present some representative dimensions in the feature slides.

I do want to take some time to talk about the different maturity levels. So for each dimension, we provided a scale of maturity levels that facilitated a deeper understanding of institutional capacities across various aspects, ranging from implementation at the institutional level in a continuous and sustainable manner to limited and incidental execution and ultimately to the absence of such practices.

The primary objective, again, of this study as a reminder was to investigate the capacity of B.C. post-secondary institutions to support open educational practices through a system-wide assessment. And to do so, invitations were sent to provosts at all public post-secondary institutions in B.C. This included universities, colleges, and institutes, and the data collection phase was hosted on Qualtrics conducted between January and April 2025. And participants were asked 28 questions, 23 multiple choice and 5 open-ended. And this resulted in 20 out of the 26 post-secondary institutions, so about 77% completing the self-assessment instrument. This included 9 out of 11 colleges, 9 out of 12 universities and 2 out of 3 institutes. We will share some results.

But first, let me take a moment to orient you to this pyramid image because this will come up again in feature slides. At the bottom of the pyramid, you will notice the different shapes representing types of institutions. We have squares representing colleges, triangles for universities, and circles for institutes. This will give you a quick visual sense of how these institutions are distributed across the different levels. On the left side of the pyramid, you will see the maturity levels that I mentioned before. The top represents the highest level of integration of open educational practices, and as you move down, the level of integration decreases with the bottom indicating that OEP is completely absent. So now focusing on the institutional vision integration, a large majority of institutions indicated that their institutional vision does consider OEP to some extent. Only 26% reported that OEP was absent from their vision entirely. To break this down a little further, at the very top, about 11% of institutions, so very few said that their vision fully embraces OEP, and it's being emulated by other institutions,

moving down, a 5% reported that their vision acknowledges the need for cultural policy and practice changes to embrace OEP, and moving down again, 16% said that their vision considers how OEP supports existing teaching and learning practices. The largest group, about 42% indicated that their vision includes OEP in a limited, incidental or informal way. So as you look at this pyramid or these pyramids moving forward, keep in mind that the higher you go, the stronger sense of integration of OEP, and the shapes show you which kind of institutions fall into each category. Next slide, please.

So to determine where institutions fell in terms of their OEP support journey, we use the trans theoretical model of change. Of the 19 institutions that responded to this specific question, a large majority of institutions reported being in the contemplation stage. That was about 42% of them. So this indicates an intention to implement their vision in the medium term, but there is some ambivalence. And three institutions each were in precontemplation, preparation or determination, and action stage. And only two institutions were in the maintenance stage, which means having sustained implementation for a significant period of time.

In terms of partnerships, all institutions reported having at least one internal partnership to support OEP. The most common partnerships were with the Centre for Teaching and Learning reported by all the institutions and followed by library partnerships at 90%.

This slide shows how institutions partnered internally to support open educational practices, focusing on libraries on the left side and Centre for Teaching and Learning on the right side. Looking at the left pyramid, about 39% of the institutions reported strong ongoing partnerships with libraries, and these were sustainable and reflected a long-term commitment. About 33% had partnerships that were more localized or tied to a specific project or term, 11% reported more one off projects and 17% had only incidental or informal connections, such as individual staff supporting a single initiative. Overall for libraries, universities reported a bit of a higher engagement with libraries compared to colleges and institutes. On the right side, we see partnerships with the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Here, 33% of the institutions reported sustained ongoing collaboration. 22% had ongoing but localized or time limited partnerships, while 28% were limited to one off projects and 17% reported incidental or informal engagement. And universities, again, led in sustained partnerships, while colleges and institutes mostly engaged in short-term or project-based collaborations.

CLINT:

The policies, incentives, and professional development groupings of the ISAT 2 look at some of the key institutional supports in place to support OEP. Things like, are there specific institutional policies that support OEP? What do those look like? Are there institutional incentives, things like grants or stipends or recognition as part of maybe the tenure and promotion process? Is there professional development specific to OEP available to staff, administrators, and instructors? I'm going to look at a couple of those here in the next few slides. I'm going to skip over the incentive section today, which is in the full report and just focus on the policies and professional development piece. Here's the policies. We can see for

policies around 77% of institutions reported little to no specific open education policies. It feels like we do have some work to do in this area around demonstrating the importance of policy, as well as providing examples of effective policies and maybe how institutional policies in general can support OEP. Of the institutions that reported having policies around OEP, the most common policies were often around copyright, internal grants, and libraries. Next slide, please.

In terms of professional development, we can see about 70% of respondents offer some form of professional development around OEP, either at the institutional level or within specific areas of the institution. I think these are really positive numbers and I think it really underscores the importance of one of the key institutional partnerships mentioned earlier by OIA, and that is with institutional teaching and learning centres, as it's these centres that are often the place where professional development at an institution occurs. Some common internal professional development opportunities mentioned include workshops on Creative Commons licensing, how to find and use OER, often mentioned with support from the library indicating some evidence of the importance of library partnerships internally and designing and implementing open pedagogy with support from centres for teaching and learning. Next slide.

The next dimension is what kinds of other institutional supports are in place to support OEP? Specifically, is there support for technologies and infrastructures that specifically support OEP? Is there research support specific to OEP research, are there supported communication channels like email distribution lists or websites or newsletters that support OEP at the institution? We'll start with technology and infrastructure. With technology and infrastructure, we can see that nearly all responding institutions, 19 out of 20, almost 95% reported that some form of infrastructure exists at their institution to support OEP and 70% reporting basic or robust infrastructure. Some of the common technology platforms that were mentioned included open journal systems, Pressbooks, H5P, and web work. Next slide.

Research supports. The story for research supports is, however, not quite as robust as it is with technology and infrastructure. Of the 18 institutions that responded to this question, a majority or 55% reported an absence of internal research support for OEP. We're not seeing a lot of empirical research about open education happening across the sector, or if there is, it's often done with little institutional supports in place to support that research. What I find also interesting about this finding, or at least interesting to me is that college is reported offering slightly more research support for OEP than institutions or universities, which maybe goes against the grain of how we might think about research around OEP happening. Next slide.

The final dimension I'm going to look at before handing it back over to Josie is what types of communication channels are supported at institutions for OEP-related work? This one's very interesting and perhaps highlights a potential missed opportunity for some institutions to promote their OEP work beyond the boundaries of their own institution. Only 5% of respondents, that was one institution communicates regularly about their OEP work beyond their internal institution to regional, national, or international networks. These numbers tell me that while communication about open education is happening maybe at the institutional level,

it doesn't necessarily get communicated and is most likely never communicated beyond the walls of that institution when open education can be a really powerful institutional story to tell to the public and to other stakeholders about what's happening at your institution. If you are an institution that is doing excellent open education work, you may want to look at engaging with your institutional communications people, tell the stories about how open education is impacting the students at your institution. Over to Josie.

JOSIE:

Thanks, Clint. I'm going to talk about the leadership and advocacy dimension as well as the culture change dimension. The leadership and advocacy dimension looks at leadership structure, OEP advocates, and the adequacy of provided institutional resources. Today, I'm only going to get into the adequacy of provided institutional resources, which includes things like money and time. So while most institutions, 14 out of 19 reported their senior leadership provides some institutional resources to support OEP, this was one of the weaker dimensions with five institutions saying that they have no or minimal resources, nine saying that they only have limited resources that are insufficient to support institutional wide uptake. Only five institutions were on the stronger end of the scale with four institutions reporting that they have adequate resources to support institutional wide uptake, and one institution reporting that they have substantial resources. Looking at the median responses, colleges and universities provide comparable institutional resources to support OEP, with universities being maybe just a little bit stronger and institutes being on the lower end.

The culture change dimension looks at awareness of OEP, use of provided institutional resources, curriculum integration, perceptions of change in attitudes, and perceptions of barriers to change. Awareness of OEP is an area where B.C. institutions are generally strong. All institutions reported some level of institutional awareness of OEP with 11 institutions reporting that there is widespread or moderate awareness of OEP across the institution. Three institutions reported awareness limited to specific areas of the institution, and six reported awareness limited to individual champions.

When looking at curriculum integration, all responding institutions reported some level of integration of OEP into courses and programs. Although the majority 13, said that it is limited to individual educators. Six institutions reported that OEP is integrated into many courses, three of whom some cases it is at the program level as well. However, no institutions reported that OEP is integrated into a large number of courses, including many at the program level, so that is the very highest bar there.

When asked whether respondents had observed any changes in attitudes towards open educational practices at their institution, 81% or 13 out of 16 reported a positive shift in attitudes and 19% or 3 out of 16 reported no significant change or a decline in support for OEP. For the 81%, they cited things like increased faculty engagement and interest in things like professional development, open pedagogy, and grants, greater use of open tools like H5P, WordPress and web work, and the presence of active support structures like communities of

practice and advisory groups is some of their evidence for change. For the 19% that reported no change or a decline, they cited things like limited awareness, minimal leadership attention, discontinued incentives, and no OEP in strategic plans.

When asked about perceived barriers, a barrier that came up multiple times was inadequate staffing. One person shared, "Our institution has been supportive of OEP in principle, but has lacked in having a specific person or people to keep it going from the administration side." Another person shared that "growth and awareness are slow but are happening in spite of having no formal dedicated support at the institution." Other perceived barriers include the loss of faculty stipends, educators that don't have enough time to be able to meaningfully engage with open educational practices, unable to get open education in strategic plans or on the radar of senior leadership, and a lack of awareness and understanding of open licenses and copyright. And I will hand it over to Rajiv to talk about overall trends.

RAJIV:

Thanks, Josie. I think we can move to the next slide. But really looking across the various dimensions of internal capacity to support OEP, it is clear that public post-secondary institutions in B.C. are strongest when it comes to awareness of OEP, but also library partnerships, which, of course, play a very strong role in elevating that awareness. Also technology and other infrastructure to support OEP, is particularly strong. I think the strong partnerships with libraries, of course, are followed closely by robust partnerships with centres for teaching and learning, which often play central roles when it comes to educational technologies that underpin OEP, as well as, of course, the embrace of open pedagogies and the professional development that we spoke to earlier. A notable strength in B.C. and one not always seen in other jurisdictions concerns formal and institution wide communications. It's only moderate institutional support across the sector for professional development and external partnerships related to OEP. I think moderate levels of adequacy of resourcing for OEP are also reflected by moderate utilization of the resources. The absence of a systemic approach to evaluation of the impact of OEP also appears to be a missed opportunity. As proper evaluation of OEP initiatives will certainly demonstrate the strong ROI for institutions that are found elsewhere. For example, with the use of OER, you often see higher enrollment and retention in courses that utilize those resources and thereby would make a strong argument for greater resourcing. Dimensions that show significant room for improvement include student partnerships, policies, incentives, resources and funding, the leadership structure, and curriculum integration. These relatively weak levels of institutional support perhaps reflect the lukewarm embrace of OEP within institutional visions and the implementation of such visions. Finally, the dimension that showed the weakest support for OEP was research support. While this may come as a bit of a surprise, particularly given as Clint mentioned, the capacity for research within the sector traditionally, scholarly research on open education and B.C. has much more often been advanced by faculty members who are either seconded to partnering with or supported by organizations such as BCcampus, the Open Education Group or the Global OER Graduate Network, rather than through the support of their home institutions. Nonetheless, given the tremendous value of local research on OEP and the need to ensure that

OEP is maintained as an evidence based set of practices, support for the scholarship of teaching and learning on OEP should be regarded as a potential priority area.

Moving to the next slide, we thought we'd provide you with a bit of a comparison for those interested in how the results from B.C. institutions compare with the responses from Ontario's post-secondary institutions. What you may notice is some similarities and some differences. For example, both provinces showed strong partnerships with the library and the Centre for Teaching and Learning, as well as technology and other infrastructure support. But in B.C., communication to support OEP is also fairly strong, as you may recall. In both provinces, the majority of dimensions lie at or slightly below the midpoint of the scale, showing plenty of room for improvement and growth. However, whereas research support for OEP is the weakest dimension in B.C., it is policy support for OEP that was weakest in Ontario. Next slide, please.

We also looked at differences, of course, by type of institutions and with the first bullet, it appears that B.C.'s universities have developed a stronger institutional supports for OEP than have college or so institutes. But that's a global statement. Universities show only slightly greater integration of OEP in the institutional vision in their median responses, but they demonstrate an especially stronger implementation of that vision. For universities, that includes stronger partnerships with students, the library, the centre for teaching and learning, more supportive incentives and policies, more funding, better communications, and more robust evaluation of OEP supports. And although B.C.'s colleges report being at a more advanced stage of change when it comes to OEP, they only report greater supports when it comes to four dimensions, and that's external partnerships, internal partnerships with the office of the registrar and the campus store and research support. And finally, B.C.'s institutes reported stronger supports for OEP on two dimensions: professional development and curriculum integration. Overall, dimensions that showed the greatest differences between types of institutions were resources and funding and incentives. In both cases, universities reported supports that were at least two levels above the levels of support reported by colleges and institutes. Now, in order to analyze the data by region, responding institutions were grouped into categories, as you can see, we had Interior institutions, Island institutions, those in the Lower Mainland and Northern institutions. Overall, institutions based in the Lower Mainland reported greater capacity to support OEP across the majority of dimensions, and that includes partnerships with students, the library, the centre for teaching and learning, incentives, PD, research support, communications, leadership structure, and curriculum integration. Interior institutions led with the integration of OEP into visions and external partnerships, as well as with policies, funding, awareness, and evaluation that were equal to those of institutions in the Lower Mainland. By contrast, Northern institutions reported the weakest or the joint weakest capacity to support OEP across nine dimensions, followed by island institutions that were weakest or joint weakest with seven dimensions, and then Interior institutions, weakest or joint weakest with four dimensions. Curiously, I will say, despite the relatively greater capacity of Lower Mainland institutions, this group reported their stage of implementation or vision as slightly lower than all other groups, perhaps underscoring the relationship between greater capacity and greater ambition.

And this takes us to our recommendations. Again, these are global recommendations for the sector. Note that individual institutions that took part are also going to receive a customized set of recommendations in what is to follow. But we will start with strategies that involve integrating an explicit reference to OEP within institutional strategic plans or academic plans and developing an implementation plan for the strategic goal that outlines ambitious yet achievable operational goals, ensuring that relevant metrics or milestones are aligned so that progress may be tracked. Second, the lead, and that involves creating a cross functional open education working group and designating a senior academic leader to coordinate, liaise or support this group. Third, is to partner. That involves deepening internal partnerships in support of OEP with areas, of course, such as the library and centre for teaching and learning, but also to develop new partnerships with areas such as the campus store or the office of the registrar. Partnerships with the undergraduate student association are also essential and externally leveraging provincial, national, international organizations, communities, and networks. That of course, includes BCcampus, B.C. Open Education Librarians Group, the B.C. open education community. Looking further afield, institutions should consider joining groups or organizations such as Canada, OER, the Open Education Network, and Open Education Global. Fourth, encourage, identify and align appropriate incentive structures for OEP, whether formal, such as time releases or grants or even informal. Consider revisions to policies in areas such as intellectual property, curriculum development, or tenure and promotion, so that these explicitly permit and encourage, but do not necessarily mandate the embrace of OEP. Raise awareness of OEP and provide regular professional development opportunities for educators. Fifth, is to staff, invest in the creation of one or more dedicated positions such as an open education librarian and support appropriate professional development for these roles. Sixth, fund, support a limited number of curriculum integrations of OER each year, potentially targeting program areas that enjoy an abundance of high quality OER and that also enjoy high student enrollment. Incentivize educators to review relevant OER and go on to create an OER adoption grant program that recognizes the labor involved in simply shifting to OER. Seventh is to integrate. That's embrace or sorry, embed support for OEP within major institutional platforms and technologies. Everything from the library catalog and mark records, the learning management system, the student information system, and the course timetable when it comes to course marking, and the campus store's course materials reporting platform. Consider creating an OER dashboard using the Institutional research offices tools. Communicate. Use existing communication channels to share resources, opportunities, and other updates related to OEP with educators and work with the student association or associations to communicate with students, for example, in support of raising awareness around initiatives related to the affordability of course materials. Ninth is to research, support the scholarship of teaching and learning on open educational practices through existing internal training and funding, as well as by promoting relevant external opportunities and fellowships. I'll highlight, in particular, BCcampus Research Fellows Program. And tenth is to collaborate across the sector, including on professional development and OER creation projects, openly licensed training and promotional materials and other resources like lib guides to permit their wider reuse and adaptation. And as a bonus recommendation, if your institution did not participate in this study,

please do use the ISAT 2 to self-assess your capacity and maturity and do share your results with our research team as well. We'd love to see it. All right. With that, that's back to Josie.

JOSIE:

Thank you, Rajiv. As I mentioned at the beginning, we're not quite ready to share the report, but we are very, very close. As soon as the report is finalized, we will be emailing out to all registrants to this webinar. If you've registered for this webinar, you will get the report emailed directly to you. It will also be shared very widely through BCcampus's channels, so we will be sending it out through our newsletter, through our LinkedIn, and also to our B.C. Open and Canada OER Listserv. We will work very hard to ensure everyone gets access to this report.

That takes us to the end of all we have prepared to share with you today, but we would love to hear your questions, your comments, would love to hear what's on your mind, what this is making you think of, what you're unsure about. We'd love to open it up for questions. You're welcome to put questions into the chat or raise your hand. If you'd like to verbalize your question out loud. That is very welcome as well. And maybe while you all start thinking of your questions, there were some questions that people shared with us when they registered, so maybe we will start with one of those.

So one of the questions was, post-secondary education in B.C. and elsewhere have struggled for a number of years to find their place in society and fiscal security. How has open education been embraced or not, and what potential does it hold for struggling institutions, governments, industry, and society as a whole? Maybe hand it to Rajiv to take a first stab at that one.

RAJIV:

Indeed, thanks, Josie. And thank you to whoever supplied us with that question as you registered as well. You know, if I may point to some research that Oya and I published earlier this year with a colleague of ours from the Inclusive Education Research Lab as well, you know, as many of you know, I worked at KPU for many years and with the zero textbook cost program over there, one of the things we were able to witness and through the study published earlier this year in open practice, we were able to document was the impact on educational outcomes of that program. But at KPU you will also see dashboards that illustrate that the adoption and embrace of OER at that level, at that programmatic systematic level, didn't just save students money. It didn't even just enhance enrollment or persistence or indeed, course performance, but it actually had a net economic impact, a benefit to the institution as well, if you think about things like tuition retained by the institution. I'm sharing that, just to illustrate, I think sometimes within the sector, we often think about the service mission of the institution or the social justice work of the institution as something that's a luxury that one has to afford, and I hate to articulate that, but this is often part of the discussion. I think one of the powerful implications of that research is to show that when you take this work seriously, when you evaluate it carefully as well, you can see that these things are not the intention. It's not that you need to struggle to find, necessarily, funding to make this work sustainable. But if you do it at a systematic level that's properly incentivized and supported and actually does benefit the

institution financially as well in terms of things like tuition retained. But I'll also point to the power of creativity and partnerships. At Brock University, for example, when we began this work a few years ago, it was the student association that funded Brock's OER adoption grant program, in fact, that's a program that's seen a phenomenal return on their investment, more than 20 ROI from the dollars that they put behind it. So it just goes to show. I think, you know, if the institution can come to the fore, the student association can serve as phenomenal partners over here, but one does not have to wait until the institutions in stable fiscal footing to support this work because it can be sustainable if you find the right way to move it forward and especially if you evaluate it carefully. But I'll certainly invite my colleagues to augment my initial response.

CLINT:

Yeah, if I could just add a little bit. There's a small piece in that question too about how has OER open education been embraced in British Columbia? I think that really gets at one of the impetuses for us to do this research in British Columbia because B.C. has one of, I would say, one of the more mature open education ecosystems within the open education community. We really did want to see how it has been embraced over the past 20 years of working on open education within the sector. I think it has been embraced. When we look at some of the numbers for the impacts that we have at the institutions, the work that is happening at the institutions, the response rates that we have received, yes, it does show that there is some work for us to within the province, but it also shows a lot of progress happening in open education within the province of B.C. I would say it has been embraced here in British Columbia and our hope with this report is to be able to find areas where we continue to make it grow within the province.

JOSIE:

Thank you. I see we have a hand up, Brian.

BRIAN LAMB:

Thank you. I'm hoping Rajiv and/or the others might elaborate a little bit on the theme that you were just responding to in the last question. You know, it's no secret that a lot of institutions are dealing with real resourcing challenges and it's getting especially cut throat to preserve funding around efforts that are perceived to be expenditures of the institution, even if there is an accepted social good attached to it. So for example, I've heard the line that adopting an OER textbook essentially is a step where the institution bears the cost of adaptation and maintenance rather than handing that cost off to the student. I'm a little concerned that we might be entering a budgetary era where that argument could boomerang against us. Rajiv, you made reference to the tuition retained argument. If I could just ask you maybe to just flesh out a little bit about how that works as an economic benefit. I would invite anyone on the panel or on this call to maybe help me map some of the social benefits that you highlight very well in this report to some of the other studies that have been done that we know about that have demonstrated some of the economic benefits for OER and arguments and maybe point to directions for future research, who knows? I hope that's not too big of a question.

RAJIV:

No, it's a great one and I appreciate you asking that Brian, because I think many people on the call will benefit from this discussion. I think there's a few things one can point to, but I can tell you from my experience at KPU, let alone the fact that waitlists for courses that had course marking that indicated that they would be using OER, that there would be zero textbook costs associated with the course section. Waitlists for those courses were significantly higher, enrollment for those courses was higher, drop failure and withdrawal rates were lower. And given all of that context, course performance, average GPA was higher. I will say in general, you know, to find that OER has superior academic outcomes or student outcomes is not unusual. But to understand even when students who would otherwise have dropped the course are retained within the course and with them in the course, you're still ending up with a more positive outcome. That's quite significant. Educationally, it's fantastic. But tuition-wise, yes, you can break it down. Certainly, when I was in my role as AVP for teaching and learning at KPU, I would do this quite regularly. I could tell you, for example, the proportion of domestic and international translate that into tuition dollars per credit and identify the gains in terms of this is the amount of incremental tuition benefit, revenue benefit through the decrease in the withdrawal rate, for example, or the increase in enrollment, for example. And you can do that by analyzing it with previous years, with other sections that don't utilize OER, other ways to compare it. KPU has a wonderful data dashboard that speaks to many dimensions of this that goes back to when we launched that program in January of 2018. So I invite you to engage and other people to look at the KPU dashboard, engage with conversations over but while I think the student outcomes over there are powerful, there's another piece that I haven't spoken to yet, which is the year before I left KPU for Brock University. I still recall there was a large survey we conducted of first year undergraduate students who had just come into the institution, and one of the things that we'd ask them was the reason why they had chosen KPU. It still sticks with me. It was greater than 30%. The number of students who indicated that KPU's zero textbook cost program was among the top reasons why they selected the institution in the first place. That's not going to be something that's going to show up easily in other metrics. But to give you a sense, reputationally, this has an impact, and it certainly does for students. That's without talking about what it does for educators who reignite with the values that brought them into education, what it does for employee retention when they find that they work within an environment that actually walks the talk, and it's not just performative allyship yet again, which it does so well. I think there's a few pieces over there for you to run with, but I'll even point and there's an empirical article that Dave Wiley and some colleagues published years ago. They called it the INTRO model that gave me some other ideas over here. It stood for Increased Tuition Revenue through OER. That's one of the ones that laid out the sort of conceptual model that eventually we were able to implement. And to be clear, you know, you know, I'm the sort of person who if somebody comes to me and makes a business case for inclusion, I want to throw up in the back of my mouth. But it is important as an administrator, to be able to make those arguments so that you can advance the work of critical pedagogy while making sure that whether it's the senate budget committee or the board of trustees, that they can understand that this is not just a nice to do. This is not just the right thing to do. Actually, if you want to

speak the language of fiscal efficiency, there's a reason why I think the B.C. Open Textbook was launched under the Liberal government in B.C. and why it continues under the NDP government. You know, if you're interested in fiscal efficiency, this work supports it. If you're interested in social justice, this work supports it. The challenge over here, of course, is just as student leadership is transient, one has to repeatedly reacquaint senior administrators with the powerful convergence of mission and fiscal efficiency that can be represented through open educational practices.

Yes. And if I may, I'm seeing a comment as well in the chat from Inba, another major ally in the open education space from the University of Victoria. Some argue that including, excuse me, information about open textbooks in the registration system harms the courses that don't use open textbooks. Yes, absolutely. I think many institutions have had the conversation around transparency and pushback around it. But the reality is, and many institutions that have done this already, I think I've realized that it's not that you're providing anything that's different. All you're doing is moving up the timeline of when students find out. Instead of inconveniencing them by having them have to withdraw from a course after they learn what the cost of the books is, if this is indeed something that matters to them, you're supplying them with that information in advance. Just as they may choose a course that fits them for time of day or campus of offering or modality, this becomes another factor. But I do think the important question in this space, particularly if you're talking about OER, and I'll gladly hand over to my colleagues momentarily, is, if that is really the threat, I think the question for us as educators, and universities and colleges and institutes is, you know, whenever something is a different practice, we tend to interrogate it with a much more stringent lens. And so I would invite people to flip this dynamic entirely over here because the question shouldn't be, you know, why are we letting students know that they can potentially take a course based on the cost of course materials. The question really should be, if we're asking students to spend a lot of money on course materials in areas where there are high quality OER, where colleagues in your same department even have recognized that they're high quality and are adopting it. Are you convinced that asking students to spend all of that money that creates that inequitable access is worth what you see as value in those resources? I think that's the honest choice that educators need to make. I recognize we're talking about the precarious, in some cases, teaching the precarious. But I think there's an honest reckoning that needs to take place over here, and simply continuing with the status quo without that interrogation is a disservice to the students and ourselves. So I've soapboxed enough. I'll hand things over to my colleagues.

JOSIE:

I don't have anything additional to add, but I appreciate Rajiv for articulating those things. I think it's helpful to hear these types of arguments made in different ways, and I was taking notes as you were speaking. So thank you very much. Appreciate it. Other questions from folks in the audience. Was there things that stood out to you in the report or were a surprise? I'd love to hear people's reactions to some of this information.

One of the questions that came in when people registered was, what does sustaining open educational practices look like when funding is low or nonexistent? I'm wondering if anyone on our research team wants to take a stab at that question. Or if there are people in the room that are dealing with that reality right now, what does sustaining OEP look like for you when funding is low or nonexistent?

CLINT:

Well, I'll jump in a little bit here. First off, I just want, I don't think it takes a ton of funding to sustain some open education practices. There are some pieces that do, obviously. If you're looking at creating textbooks, if you're looking at adaptation projects for open educational resources, some of that does some funding. I think there are multiple ways that you can address that within the system. But I also think that there are some things that can be done that are fairly low cost and don't require a lot of big outputs of resources and funding in order to make that happen. Being aware of open educational practices and the types of activities. Courses come up for redesign often, to have instructional designers familiar with different ways of integrating open pedagogy into a course at the time of a course redesign seems like a good opportunity where you can try to do things that don't cost a lot of money to even integrate one open pedagogy activity or assignment into a course. Continuing to include open education workshops in your workshop offerings. When you're putting workshops together, if you are putting workshops together around training to be able to do all of that, just incorporating some of this work into your regular workflows doesn't require a big outlay of money. I also think part of the reason with OEP or open educational resources is the ability to reuse resources. There are tons of resources out there that we can reuse for little cost. I don't know if it's something that we do very well in the open education community is focused on the reuse aspect of reusing open educational resources. I don't want to downplay the real and necessary funding piece and sustainability piece, but I also think that there are probably ways that you can address it with a little creativity and try to incorporate it into existing and current workflows that don't have to break the bank.

RAJIV:

Yeah, I agree. Let me just add a couple of quick thoughts over here that maybe reflect some of our recommendations as well, right? It doesn't take any funding to modify policies. It doesn't take any funding to align some incentive structures so that those who are very interested and willing to exercise their academic freedom in this direction are swimming a little less against the current. I would start by seeing what one can reshape. For example, Clint mentioned courses come up for review. When I was at KPU we passed the Senate policy that meant that every course that comes up for review or any new course that's developed has to undergo a consultation with the library that involved a search for relevant OER. It's not a mandate to adopt but it is a nudge to make sure that there's an informed choice being made or TNP tenure and promotion policies for that matter. But I think a couple of the strategies or tactics, if you will, that have really, really high impact, I would say course marking for me is near the top of the list over here. I cannot tell you what a game changer it is at institutions when students for whom that choice is important can benefit from that transparency. The other bit though, and

again, reflects some of the commentary in the chat from Inba about the importance of time to work is staffing. It's hard to overstate the importance and the impact of having a dedicated person, having dedicated time to do dedicated work. It is not some secret sauce or recipe. It is just that simple, particularly when you see the gains that have been made in institutions that are leading in this work that have developed a strong reputation, it's often because they've had the foresight to invest in that work. Of course, then you see the collateral benefits in a whole host of other ways as well, right? But it does take that foresight. But I will say, yes, grants, you can look at partnerships, external grants, you can look at student partnerships, other things like that. But faculty members will use their PD funds. They will apply for educational leave or sabbaticals. You'll see them using every channel at their disposal, if they care about this work. What you need to do at the very least as an institution, though, I would say is align those incentives, as I say, so people are not swimming against the current if they want to do we by students and right by the institution. And so funding will help, but funding is not the make or break. It is the will of the institution to change its structures to make it more hospitable so that it can get out of its own way.

JOSIE:

Thank you. We have another question in the chat. Florence asks, With the advancement in technology and AI, will this drive the advancement of open educational practices, sustainability? What are your thoughts?

RAJIV:

Do any of my colleagues want to jump off on this one? I feel like this is one where a lot of people on the call may have some opinions.

JOSIE:

I can go first. I think people will have different opinions depending on their experience with AI in particular and how they see it fitting into their open education work. I think there's probably a lot of potential for AI when we're thinking about developing open educational resources and creating supplemental materials and things like that where AI could really help with that first draft type work and help with the getting started and the mapping out and the planning. I think there's lots of ways that AI can fit in there. I don't know if it's going to be a game changer in terms of sustainability. I think there's even when working with AI, you still need the time to engage with the AI tool and to look at the content that it's giving you critically and to be able to bring in your own perspectives and needs into the materials you're creating. I'm not convinced that AI is going to solve the sustainability problem in Open, but I think it's a tool that could be used in really useful and interesting ways that could lower some barriers for folks. I'm really interested in seeing where it goes. Also interested in hearing what other people's thoughts are.

RAJIV:

Yeah, I mean, at the risk of speaking too much, a couple of comments quickly. I don't disagree with Josie at all. I think there's certainly some possibilities over there, and I'm thinking particularly around library collections, metadata, some of the work that can benefit from

leveraging AI. I do think though, there is obviously that challenge of, you know, uncritical use of AI, as has been done repeatedly, not just with open education but higher education, particularly, doing harm with the very best intentions. So the extent to which it is being leveraged, in some cases to support discoverability of OER, in some cases to develop supplemental resources, in some cases to support revision and continual adaptation of OER or localization or translation, that it is being done critically. It is being done thoughtfully, because there are plenty of examples I could share with you that demonstrate that whether it's traditional knowledge, that's sacred, that is then stolen effectively, if it is, epistemic injustice that is reinforced over and over again. There is a lot of harm that can be done through many of the pitfalls of AI. So more than anything, I think it can amplify some of the existing pitfalls of open education that's done uncritically. So it's possible, but it's even more important to be vigilant, I would say.

JOSIE:

Thanks for Rajiv. All crucial points. I see we are at time, so I will let you all go. But thank you so much for your time today and keep an eye out for your inbox for the report, which we will send out to you all as soon as it's ready. If you have more questions that come up, please feel free to reach out. We'd love to chat. Thanks so much, everyone. I hope you have a good rest of your day. Take care.