**Open Educational Resources Grant**
**Final Report Template**

The last step toward completing your OER funded project is to submit a short final report. The purpose of this report is to share with the OER committee the successes and challenges of your project, and the extent to which you exceeded, met, or fell short of meeting project milestones or key objectives as outlined in your project plan. We expect final reports to be submitted within 3 – 4 weeks of completing your project.

Please note that your final report may be referenced or made available to the Office of the Vice President, Academic and Provost, upon request.

The SFU Library and the TLC would also like to ask for your permission to use sections of your report for promotional materials related the OER Grants. Please indicate whether you will or will not allow the SFU Library and the TLC to use your report.

**X** **Yes**, I <u>allow</u> the SFU Library and the TLC to use sections of my report for promotional materials related to the OER Grants.

No, I <u>do not allow </u>the SFU Library and the TLC to use sections of my report for promotional materials related to the OER Grants.

Please submit your final reports to oer-grants@sfu.ca.

## Section 1: General Information

Title of Project: Evaluating the use of open educational resources in sustainability teaching and learning

Principal Applicant: Mark Roseland
Faculty: Environment
Department/School: Centre for Sustainable Community Development; Resource and Environmental Management

Co-applicant(s) (if applicable): Joanna Ashworth
Faculty: Environment
Department/School: Centre for Sustainable Community Development; FENV

Project Start Date: May 2016
Project End Date: December 2016
Total Grant Funding: $3000

## Section 2: Findings and Results of Your OER Project.

1. Please provide a brief overview of your project. (Up to 200 words)

   In the constantly evolving interdisciplinary fields of sustainable development (SD) and sustainable community development (SCD), dozens of videos, open textbooks, and related scientifically sound resources are developed and offered by reputable institutions and leading experts, and are freely accessible by learners around the world. With the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement blooming rapidly, we at the SFU Centre for Sustainable Community Development initiated a project funded by an OER Grant in order to successfully re-design one of our courses so as to incorporate up-to-date and interactive OER that can offer a more diverse experience and a variety of perspectives to the students, and hopefully increase their learning and engagement with the course concepts.

   This project contributes to the evaluation of the effectiveness of OER in SFU courses by incorporating OER in one of the most foundational courses of the Sustainable Community Development and Resource and Environmental Management (REM) undergraduate programs. Classroom versions (supervised by Dr. Roseland) and online versions (developed by Dr. Ashworth) of the SCD/REM courses are offered alternately in the fall and spring terms each year. We chose SCD/REM 301 "Sustainable Community Development Theory and Practice", offered in person in the fall term 2016.

2. How did you adapt and/or adopt an OER for your course? (Up to 200 words)

   In partnership with the TLC and the Library, we carefully identified the OER that matched the course's objectives, based on our pre-existing inventory and/or other reliable sources, and developed a well-structured and coherent syllabus. We sought not just to select, organize, and present some open online material to the students but above all to incorporate it seamlessly in the course's syllabus – and if possible on Canvas – so that students were offered an integrated flipped-classroom experience for an entire semester.

   Therefore, we chose a variety of resources, such as TED Talks, other educational videos and documentaries, modules from MOOCs (massive open online courses), press articles, editorials and op-eds, websites with databases, governmental documents, and so on. These OER were linked to weekly learning objectives, assignments, or other pre-class or in-class activities. All resources were openly accessible for our students either because they are freely available to anyone or because our library provides access for such resources to SFU students for free.

3. Did you meet the outcome(s) you hoped to achieve? Please explain. (Up to 200 words)

   Confident in the material we selected and the digital aptitude of students today, we set out to explore whether student learning and course engagement would increase if their weekly

readings were combined with a variety of interactive, online resources. As demonstrated in their classroom participation and their responses to our questionnaires, we believe that this project indeed provided us with constructive feedback on the effectiveness of OER and with valuable ideas and suggestions for similar ventures (for more details, please see question 4 below).

4. What were your findings and/or assessment of the effectiveness of the OER? (Up to 200 words)

The course roster included 22 students of various levels and with a variety of workloads for that semester: 19 undergraduates and 3 as continuing studies; for 7 students the course counted towards the SCD Certificate; whereas nearly half of them were taking 4 or more courses that semester. These demographics show the diversity of students and support the fact that they were quite receptive to using mixed material (including OER) for class preparation instead of only traditional readings and textbooks. Also, most students responded that they prepared the OER from home, the library, or in transit; this speaks to the importance of providing students with portable and flexible study material.

In the mid-term evaluation, the majority of students stated that the OER used that week had helped them "get a sense of real-world examples of implementing sustainability", "recognize the challenges in planning for, implementing, and assessing sustainability", and "understand the importance of integrated planning for sustainability". Also, they confirmed that they didn't encounter any challenges using that week's OER. The final evaluation contained more open-ended questions and students had the opportunity to tell us how OER helped them or didn't help them. Several comments related to the dynamic, audiovisual nature of OER such as talks and documentaries, and others suggested that instructors always provide worksheets or discussion questions in advance, even for OER that will be used in class (as opposed to pre-class preparation).

Most students praised the flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness of OER, and talked about how showing videos of real-world case studies allows to connect theory to practice, provides examples that students can relate to, and thus enhances their learning. They believe that a balanced combination of resources, i.e. academic and non-academic (including OER), is the best option for their assigned readings, as long as the material is checked for quality, broadness in terms of perspective, and up-to-date information, that all OER are accompanied by study guides, and that the weekly workload is kept at a reasonable level.

5. How did you share the resource(s) and your project? Do you have future plans for your project? (Up to 200 words)

We discussed the project with colleagues in our research group within the Centre for Sustainable Community Development and will present the project results and findings to them in our next research group meeting in January 2017. We look forward to implementing the next phase which will be to develop a database of OER on sustainability, along with guides and worksheets, for use by instructors SFU-wide.

## Section 3: Overall Experience and Impressions

1. What were some of the successes and challenges you faced in completing your project?

   Student eagerness to use the assigned OER and their support at evaluation time were the major successes of this project and also the main drivers for us to continue on the path of using OER. Enthusiasm for documentaries, interactive websites, and educational yet inspirational TED Talks was evident throughout the semester and in the evaluation forms. Matching OER with the weekly objectives had some challenges, as there isn't an abundance of OER available for every weekly module and sometimes we didn't have a choice but to assign the only related resource we had found and evaluated ourselves. Another challenge related to the use of the SFU web survey tool for the mid-term evaluation; although this platform provided us with some results and basic graphs, exporting the data in a data-analysis-friendly format was painstaking and thus we avoided using the tool for the final evaluations. When weighing the successes against the challenges though, we are confident that this project has been overall successful.

2. What in-kind support(s) did you receive (e.g., from library and TLC staff)? What other supports would have been helpful?

   We received ample support from the library, through Hope Power, and from the TLC, through Janet Pivnick. Particularly Janet's help in constructing the evaluation questionnaires was invaluable and very much appreciated.

3. General comments and overall impressions.

   We would like to thank the library and the TLC for this grant that gave us the opportunity to explore a modern, interactive way of learning at SFU.

Date: January 6, 2017

Signature (electronic signature accepted): _____