

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Delmar Larsen, LibreText Project Director

Phone: 530.204.8319

Email: dlarsen@libretexts.org

LibreText Project Announces \$5 Million Federal Award

Award will bring textbook cost relief to higher education across America

[DAVIS, CA, Oct. 2, 2018] The LibreText Project, a leading, non-commercial open textbook organization initiated at the University of California, Davis, announced today that it is receiving the \$5 million Open Textbooks Pilot Program award from the Department of Education. The award, funded by Congress in the 2018 Fiscal Year omnibus spending bill, is intended to decrease the burden of textbook costs on college students while increasing the availability, usage and educational value of open textbooks that are freely available to download, edit, and share to better serve all students.

“With our track record of developing and disseminating high-quality, open textbooks in partnership with institutions of higher education across the country, the LibreText Project is ideally positioned to maximize the impact of this investment in college affordability,” said Delmar Larsen, the project director. “We are honored to accept this grant to exponentially grow our efforts for the benefit of millions of students across America.”

With LibreTexts, students, faculty, and outside experts work together to build freely available open education resources (OER) that supplant conventional paper-based textbooks. LibreTexts currently encompass twelve widely used college-level disciplines from chemistry to humanities with over 68,500 pages. Used across the nation as primary course textbooks and as supplemental learning resources, LibreTexts have already recorded more than 250 million pageviews with 650 years of confirmed student reading—an impressive track record on which the grant-funded project will build.

The project team that will be funded by the proposal includes a broad national coalition spanning more than a dozen states. In total 62 faculty were part of the proposed team, including those from the University of Michigan, the University of Kansas, DePauw University, the University of Minnesota Rochester, the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University, Mendocino College, Monroe Community College, and South Tahoe Community College. The lead organization is the

University of California, Davis, where Larsen is an associate professor of chemistry.

Other institutions directly involved in the project are the California State University system through its Office of the Chancellor, the University of Washington, the University of Arkansas Little Rock, Hope College, St. Mary's College, Prince George's Community College, and two community college districts in California: the Contra Costa Community College District and the Los Rios Community College District.

“Conservatively, LibreText is estimated to have already saved students approximately \$30 million dollars while providing a high-quality, modern learning experience,” said Larsen. “Our goal, with the support of this award, is to help students save at least \$50 million in textbook costs over the next three years in a thousand classrooms. As described in the proposal, this will involve going beyond adding new content to expanding the range of online services available to faculty developers and student users including a single sign on, interactive 3D visualizations, embedded executable source code, big data informatics, the ability to include personal and class wide annotations, and intelligent coupling into learning management systems. We recognize that millions of students and parents are counting on us to achieve a significant impact through this project, and we are committed to living up to that potential.”

For further information contact Prof. Delmar Larsen at dlarsen@libretexts.org. See <https://LibreTexts.org> for details about the LibreTexts project.

ABOUT LIBRETEXTS

The mission of the LibreTexts project is to unite students, faculty and scholars in a cooperative effort to develop an easy-to-use online platform for the construction, customization, and dissemination of open educational resources (OER), particularly for courses relevant to academic programs, to reduce the burdens of unreasonable textbook costs to our students and society. The project ensures the OER “5Rs” (Retain, Reuse, Revise, Remix, and Redistribute) design are fully met enabling faculty to build course-specific LibreTexts to meet the needs of their students. Visit us at www.LibreTexts.org

ABOUT THE FIPSE Open Textbooks Pilot Program

The Department of Education, as part of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), in July 2018 called for proposals that would

achieve the highest level of savings for students using OER to improve postsecondary education. Congress under the leadership of Sen. Richard Durbin of Illinois (D) provided \$5 million of seed funding. The Senators and the Department recognize that textbook cost has become prohibitive, creating a real barrier for students and teachers alike. LibreTexts, which has been working to tear down that wall since 2007, is excited to join with them in helping American students achieve their educational and career goals.

#