

THEC Open Education Initiative

Advancing Course Material Affordability and Student Success

Framing Pillars

The following three pillars provide a statewide framework for expanding access to affordable course materials through innovative teaching practices and cross-institution collaboration. This structure promotes alignment across sectors and regions while remaining adaptable to evolving needs and initiatives.

Leadership and Collaboration	Data and Definitions	Engagement and Support
<p><i>Strategic coordination with cross-sector input</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refine and structure the Steering Committee to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure broad representation across Tennessee’s institutional sectors, three grand divisions, and stakeholder roles (faculty, librarians, instructional designers, administrators, financial aid officers, etc.) ○ Maintain balanced membership from community colleges, TCATs, universities, system offices, and THEC ▪ Guide strategic planning to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Align implementation efforts with statewide objectives, including the Tennessee Higher Education Master Plan ○ Define priorities, scope, and goals for time-bound task forces ○ Evaluate task force outcomes to inform continuous improvement ▪ Strengthen collaboration and communication to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote communication and collaboration among public and private institutions, including technical colleges, community colleges, and universities 	<p><i>Data-driven foundation for impact</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch time-bound task forces to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First, develop THEC definitions for course material affordability terms such as Open Education Resources (OER), low-cost, no-cost, and affordable materials ○ Second, design a statewide data collection process in collaboration with THEC data strategists ○ Explore opportunities to incorporate workforce-aligned, certification-relevant, and licensure-related content into OER that address critical workforce needs across the state ▪ Implement coordinated data strategies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Track course marking, student impact, institutional practices, faculty engagement, etc. ○ Contribute affordability data and insights to THEC reports ○ Leverage data to inform statewide planning, infrastructure, policy, and collaboration 	<p><i>Outreach to build awareness and community</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage faculty and stakeholders to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote adoption of open pedagogy and OER at module and course levels through collaboration and sharing practices across institutions ○ Incorporate student perspectives by engaging student leaders in statewide discussions ○ Partner with key campus roles (librarians, instructional designers, financial aid staff, registrars, course schedulers, bookstore managers, etc.) ○ Support Z-degree pathway development by connecting institutions and highlighting scalable models and resources ▪ Coordinate strategic events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organize a statewide virtual event during Open Education Week informed by insights from regional convenings ○ Convene annual in-person regional meetings (one per Grand Division) ○ Facilitate timely and relevant webinars