Sabbatical Purpose and Summary

The purpose of my sabbatical was to gauge the success and “needs improvement” of the Affordable Learning Solutions (ALS) Initiative as well as Fresno State students’ view/attitude regarding OER and/or Low-cost materials used in their courses.

Since the ALS initiative began in academic year 2013-14 a formal assessment of Fresno State students’ perception and use of OER, library resources, digital or customized textbooks, and/or faculty-authored materials have never been conducted. With the recent AB 798 grant requiring Fresno State to ramp up its OER adoption in an effort to give all students a better learning experience; we need concrete local data specific to our institution in order to effectively move towards meeting this goal.

The objectives as listed in my sabbatical proposal were to:

1. To ascertain and understand Fresno State students’ perception and awareness of OER.
2. To identify factors (if any) that indicates using OER have may positively or negatively impact learning and/or student success at Fresno State.
3. To increase faculty adoption of OER to give all students a better learning experience.

Sabbatical Accomplishments and Benefits

During my sabbatical I worked on the following:

1. Applied for IRB approval.
   Update: Done

2. Worked with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE):
   o to formulate survey questions
   o identify courses (therefore students) that have used OER and/or lower-cost materials
   o deployed the survey
   Update: Done

3. Organized and analyzed data from the survey.
   Update: See Major Findings (below)

4. Published findings in an academic article.
   Update: A draft has been written. Sabbatical presentation was given on April 23, 2019.

5. Developed a marketing plan to increase Fresno State faculty adoption of OER.
   Update: Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) has taken the lead on the ALS/OER initiative at Fresno State during my sabbatical and have adopted a different approach.

Major Findings:
Fresno State students:

✓ are aware of OER/and or low-cost materials and think OER/and or low-cost materials are “just as good” as traditional textbooks

✓ think that a reasonable price to pay for textbooks or instructional materials for a single, 4-unit semester course is $26-$75 only
✓ are appreciative of their instructor’s care for their success as a student when an instructor uses OER and/or low-cost materials in the course

✓ prefer both formats (print & digital) if their textbook or OER and/or low-cost materials were free

✓ like students across the country have decided against buying (or renting) required textbooks or instructional materials for a course they’ve taken because they were too expensive

✓ understand that not buying (or renting) the required textbooks or instructional materials would hurt their grades in the course but they do it anyway

✓ have decided to choose which courses and how many courses they take each semester base on cost

Thank you for the opportunity.

Vang Vang
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