

OER & Open Education Initiatives

Annual Activity Report — Strategic Update

Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College

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Strategic Focus: Open Educational Resources (OER)

Reduce textbook costs for Eastern students by adopting, adapting, and authoring openly licensed course materials that are specified and localized to our programs, our region, and our learners. Build faculty capacity in open licensing, the 5 Rs, and Creative Commons so that OER becomes a sustainable, college-wide practice rather than a one-off project.

Executive Summary

Over the last few academic years, Eastern has continued to expand its commitment to Open Educational Resources, with substantial faculty-led work in course-level adoption, original textbook authorship, grant development, statewide engagement, and faculty credentialing in open licensing. Eastern's general education catalog is now largely OER-supported: the natural sciences, social sciences, and many humanities courses run on openly licensed materials, and active conversion work is underway in mathematics, business, business management, and selected Allied Health courses. Two grants currently in motion — the OER Challenge Grant and the Learning-to-Earning Grant — will close remaining textbook cost gaps in the low-cost Cyber Intelligence pathway (MTH 121) and across Industrial Maintenance, producing a fully OER-supported Industrial Maintenance program in partnership with Brent Hiatt. Faculty capacity-building has accelerated alongside the content work: five Eastern faculty have now completed the Creative Commons Certificate for Educators, a statewide OER award has been brought home to Eastern, and a new locally built Creative Commons credential for faculty is being developed for delivery in Brightspace the next academic year.

Statewide Recognition

OER Educator Award — West Virginia Open Learning

Curtis Hakala received the OER Educator Award from West Virginia Open Learning in recognition of sustained work in adopting, adapting, and authoring openly licensed course materials at Eastern. The award recognizes faculty whose OER practice produces measurable cost savings for students and genuinely improves the fit between course materials and learners. Documentation and public mention of the award appear on the West Virginia Open Learning site.

OER Travel Grant — Open Education Conference

Awarded a competitive OER grant to attend the Open Education Conference in November 2025. The conference informed Eastern's subsequent textbook-authoring work, the Creative Commons faculty credential design, and the panel work described below.

Panelist — West Virginia Open Learning OER Convening ("Inconceivable")

Served on the "Inconceivable" panel at the West Virginia Open Learning OER convening, addressing common perceptions about OER and how to build better OER for the courses that genuinely need specified, localized materials — particularly in technical and trade programs where generic textbooks fail rural community college students.

Authored OER Textbooks (In Progress and Released)

Two original OER textbooks are in active development at Eastern, each fully aligned with the 5 Rs (Retain, Reuse, Revise, Remix, Redistribute) and licensed under Creative Commons so that other institutions — and future Eastern faculty — can adapt them freely. Both are written for Eastern students specifically: the trades they enter, the regional employers they work for, the rural broadband they actually have, and the equipment they actually use.

ENL 115 — Technical Communication for Auto Tech and Wind Tech: A Shop-Floor Guide

- Author: Curtis Hakala. Eastern WVCTC, Fall 2026.
- License: Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).
- Sixteen chapters covering audience and purpose, plain style, instructions and SOPs, technical descriptions, information literacy, professional email and memo, incident and near-miss reports, document design, reports, proposals, the five-minute pitch, oral communication, resumes and portfolios, and a closing chapter on career pathways.
- Adapts CC-licensed sources (Technical Writing Essentials by Suzan Last; Open Technical Communication by Powell et al.; Howdy or Hello? by McKinney et al.) and integrates industry references (GWO Basic Safety Training, OSHA 29 CFR 1910, ANSI Z535, ASE Entry-Level guidance).
- Embeds AI Disclosure Boxes and explicit guidance on where AI helps and where it hurts in technical writing — directly responsive to the Title III and HLC focus on AI integration with academic integrity.

IMS 211 — Industrial Maintenance OER Textbook (Draft Chapter 1, in progress)

- Co-developed in partnership with Brent Hiatt (Industrial Maintenance program).
- Part of a planned full-program OER conversion for Industrial Maintenance, eliminating commercial textbook costs across the IMS course sequence.
- Specified and localized to the equipment, employers, and safety culture Eastern students will encounter in the field.

OER Status Across the College

Eastern's OER footprint is broader than many faculty realize. The current state, by area:

General Education — substantially OER

- Natural sciences (hard sciences): OER.
- Social sciences: OER.
- English (selected courses including ENL 115 and ENL 102 supplemental materials): OER

In Active Conversion

- Mathematics — MTH 121 conversion is being addressed through the OER Challenge Grant (see Grants section). Once complete, this closes the remaining textbook cost gap in the low-cost Cyber Intelligence degree pathway.
- Business and Business Management — identified as the next priority area for OER conversion.
- Allied Health — selected courses moving toward OER; work ongoing.

Career-Technical Programs

- Auto Tech / Wind Tech — ENL 115 trade-specific OER textbook authored and ready for Fall 2026 deployment.
- Industrial Maintenance — full-program OER conversion in progress with Brent Hiatt through the Learning-to-Earning Grant.
- Cyber Intelligence — low-cost degree pathway; only remaining non-OER course (MTH 121) is being converted.

Active OER Grants

Two grants are driving the next wave of OER work at Eastern. Both are scheduled for completion by the end of summer 2026.

OER Challenge Grant (Draft of OER Grant)

- Focus: closing the final textbook-cost gap in the low-cost Cyber Intelligence degree by converting MTH 121 to OER. Other OER conversions include two history courses, medical terminology, Human A&P II, and drug dose calculations.
- Outcome: a fully OER-supported Cyber Intelligence pathway, removing a recurring student cost barrier.
- Status: active; expected completion summer 2026.

Learning-to-Earning Grant (Preliminary Proposal, 4-29-26)

- Focus: full-program OER conversion of the Industrial Maintenance curriculum, in partnership with Brent Hiatt.
- Outcome: every textbook in the IMS sequence converted to specified, localized OER aligned to the equipment and employers Eastern students actually encounter.

- Status: preliminary proposal submitted April 29, 2026; build-out continuing through summer 2026.

Faculty Capacity Building — Creative Commons and Open Licensing

Creative Commons Certificate for Educators (Completed)

Five Eastern faculty and staff have now completed and passed the Creative Commons Certificate for Educators course. This is meaningful institutional capacity: Eastern now has an in-house bench of faculty who understand open licensing, the 5 Rs, attribution, and the practical mechanics of building and sharing OER legally and well. Completers include Curtis Hakala, Nikki Chandler, Tiffany Sentman, and Monica Wilson.

Eastern-Built Creative Commons Credential for Educators (In Development)

- A four-week, locally built Brightspace course adapted from the official Creative Commons Certificate course but condensed for Eastern faculty workloads.
- Designed and delivered by Curtis Hakala.
- Offered free to faculty interested in learning about OER and the copyright and licensing practice that goes with authoring their own specified, localized textbooks.
- Goal: give Eastern faculty the knowledge and confidence to write their own OER for their own students, instead of relying on generic commercial textbooks that do not fit our region or our programs.
- Target launch: 2027 in Brightspace.

Connection to Strategic Plan and Institutional Priorities

- Affordability and access: every OER conversion directly reduces the cost barrier for Eastern students, many of whom are first-generation and Pell-eligible.
- Workforce alignment: trade-specific OER (ENL 115, IMS 211) is designed around the actual equipment, employers, and safety standards Eastern graduates will work with.
- Faculty development: Creative Commons certification and the planned in-house credential build durable institutional capacity, reducing dependence on outside vendors.
- Statewide visibility: the OER Educator Award, Open Education Conference participation, and panel work at the West Virginia Open Learning convening keep Eastern visible as a working partner in the statewide OER community.

Next Steps — Summer and Fall 2026

- Complete MTH 121 OER conversion under the OER Challenge Grant; finalize the low-cost Cyber Intelligence pathway.

- Complete Industrial Maintenance OER conversion under the Learning-to-Earning Grant in partnership with Brent Hiatt.
- Deploy ENL 115 OER textbook in Fall 2026.
- Launch the four-week Eastern Creative Commons credential for faculty in Brightspace in 2027.
- Begin scoping OER conversion in Education and Business/Business Management.
- Continue Allied Health OER work.
- Maintain statewide engagement with West Virginia Open Learning and Quality Matters.

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