Z-DEGREE
What, Who, Why, and How?
---with Tanya Spilovoy & Sybil Priebe

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WHAT IS A Z-DEGREE?
Who is using them?

Z-DEGREE IMPORTANCE
Why should campuses look into them?

PROCESS
How can faculty/librarians/admin implement a Z-Degree on their campus?

CONCLUSION
A path to a degree that includes no textbook costs. This means instructors use OER and/or library materials.

WHAT IS A Z-DEGREE?

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William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

- 2002: Began funding Open Educational Resources
- $8 Million/year
- 2014 - 2015: Funded the first Z Degree Initiatives at Tidewater Community College/Achieving the Dream/Lumen Learning
- TCC saw a significant increase in the percentage of students completing courses with a C or better, while simultaneously cutting the cost to graduate by 20-30%. TCC also saw a significant decrease in withdrawal rates among students enrolled in the Z-Degree.
List of Z Degrees (Richard Sebastian)

- Tidewater Community College in Virginia (one of the first!)
- M-State Community Colleges
- BC Campuses
- Austin Community College & Houston Community College
- Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) & the Virginia Community College System
- the Washington State Community College System
- Thomas Edison State College
- the University System of Maryland...

WHO IS USING Z-DEGREES?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Credential</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alamo Community Colleges (4 colleges)</td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>General Studies (AA and AS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexandria Technical &amp; Community College</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Associates in Arts (AA) and Health Science (AS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anoka-Ramsey Community College</td>
<td>Coon Rapids</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Liberal Arts (AA)</td>
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<td>Austin Community College</td>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>General Studies (AA and AS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bay College</td>
<td>Escanaba</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>Associates in Arts (AA), Business Administration (AS), and Mechatronics &amp; Robotics (AAS)</td>
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<td>Borough of Manhattan Community College</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>Criminal Justice (AA)</td>
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<td>Bronx Community College</td>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>Liberal Arts &amp; Science with History Option (AA)</td>
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<td>Broward College</td>
<td>Davie</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Business Administration (AS), and Marketing Management (AS)</td>
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<td>Bunker Hill Community College</td>
<td>Charlestown</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>General Concentration (AA)</td>
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<td>Central Virginia Community College</td>
<td>Lynchburg</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>General Studies AA&amp;S, Science AA&amp;S, General Education (Certificate),</td>
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<td>Clinton Community College</td>
<td>Plattsburgh</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>Health Administration (AS)</td>
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<td>El Paso Community College</td>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>General Studies (AA and AS)</td>
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<td>Florida State College at Jacksonville</td>
<td>Jacksonville</td>
<td>FL</td>
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<td>Forsyth Technical Community College</td>
<td>Winston-Salem</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Associates in Arts (AA)</td>
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<td>Germanna Community College</td>
<td>Fredericksburg</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Business Administration (AA&amp;S) and Science (AA&amp;S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grace College</td>
<td>Winona Lake</td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>BS Management, BS Business Administration, BS Human Services, BS Quality Mgt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herkimer Community College</td>
<td>Herkimer</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>General Studies (AA) and Social Studies (AA)</td>
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<td>Hostos Community College</td>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>Early Childhood (AAS)</td>
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<td>Housatonic Community College</td>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
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<td>Lake Superior College</td>
<td>Duluth</td>
<td>MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake Washington Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Kirkland</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Biology (AA-T) and Mechanical Engineering (AA-T)</td>
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FROM GRASSROOTS TO POLICY
Governor Polis’ ZTC Challenge

- Equity as a foundation
- Part of Colorado Department of Higher Ed Master Plan
- Self-paced ZTC Course
- OE Week Decree from Gov. Polis
- OE Week Youtube Video from Gov. Polis
- Statewide OER Conference
- OER Ambassadors on Campuses
- ZTC Challenge Awards
  - Outstanding ZTC Advocate
  - Outstanding ZTC Department
  - Outstanding ZTC Program
  - Outstanding ZTC Professor
Students are more likely to do well and be retained if they can afford the materials necessary for their various courses. Students typically have access immediately - on Day 1 - with Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) courses because they are digital and not tied to financial aid.
NON-ZTC

- Tied to publishing company.
- Less work on faculty member.
- Less retention of students.
- Lower accessibility; students may not have access on Day 1.
- Access tied to financial aid.

$-$$$$

ZTC

- Academic Freedom & total faculty flexibility with content.
- More prep work on faculty member and librarians.
- More retention of students.
- Highest accessibility.
- Student choice in buying physical copy.

FREE TO STUDENTS

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Here are just a few reasons to urge campuses to consider Z-Degrees. Zero textbook cost (ZTC) courses counter these statistics:

- Students typically spend $1200/year on textbooks.
- 65% of students will skip buying a textbook if it is too expensive.
- 68% of students want to be able to access the textbook anywhere.
In 2014, faculty at Tidewater Community College (TCC) in Virginia “designed a curriculum that allows students to skip nearly $3700 in textbook costs and achieve a two-year degree in Business Administration. [...] In the first year of Z-Degree implementation, TCC saw a significant increase in the percentage of students completing courses with a C or better, while simultaneously cutting the cost to graduate by 20-30%. TCC also saw a significant decrease in withdrawal rates among students enrolled in the Z-Degree.”
“Minnesota State colleges are working on saving even more money for students by implementing Z-Degrees, which are AA degrees with no textbook costs. Directed by the Minnesota legislature, in 2019 the Z-Degree saved students $1.28 million on textbooks statewide. SCTCC is set to start offering it fall 2021.”
POSSIBLE PROCESS

1. Creation of a campus-based OER taskforce, if one doesn’t exist.
2. Identify who does not have textbook costs in their courses.
   ○ Survey? Email? General knowledge?
3. Record this, maybe with a editable Google Doc?
4. Where are the “holes”? Can these faculty be persuaded & reimbursed?
5. Send specific faculty emails with information regarding OER substitutions.
6. Follow-up with faculty and continue to fill in record of those with ZTC.
NDSCS PROCESS

1. Research.
   ○ Who: Faculty in the General Liberal Arts Transfer
   ○ How: Email
   ○ What: An editable Google Doc with chart to be filled in with who had a ZTC course

2. August 27, 2020 - Email #1 - Intro sent to all identified faculty.
3. Faculty listed narrowed as faculty filled in chart, etc.
4. September 19, 2020 - Email #2 - Revised intro sent to a smaller group; this time I asked for low-cost courses to be identified.
5. Two charts created (Textbook List for Non-ZTC/OER & a Complete List of all courses and what textbooks are used).
NDSCS PROCESS, CON’T

6. Use CCCOER Listserv to seek out OER I can’t/couldn’t find.
7. September 24, 2020 - Email #3 - Specific faculty targeted with OER substitutions.
8. October 1, 2020 - Email #4 - Specific faculty who use OER asked to help fill in Complete List document.
9. October 8, 2020 - Email #5 - Wrap up.
10. Present preliminary research during NDUS’ October Webinar.
11. Follow-up with faculty and continue to fill in Textbook Lists.
12. Wrap up research and submit report.
13. Present during Open Education Week in March.
In order for NDSCS to implement and market a Z-Degree, the following categories or courses would need to shift to OER (or embed their course materials inside the LMS, etc.):

- FYE 101 uses fee?
- One Math Course.
- One Computer Course.
- A few more Free/General credits...
  - Ideas (due to available OER): HIST 101-4, PSYC 100, SOC 110, PHIL 210...
Which courses are students most likely to take to meet their degree requirements? Click on the dots to find out!

Click here to learn more about the benefits of using OER!
CONCLUSIONS
“If your campus can’t do a Z-Degree, do something.”
-Tanya
“I can’t control housing or tuition, but I can control textbook costs.”

-Sybil
MAKE LEARNING ACCESSIBLE TO ALL STUDENTS
RESOURCES

“Pathway to Associate of Science Degree.”

Pearson Tackles Racism

bit.ly/NDSCS-Open-Folder

Skills Commons (OER for Technical Courses)

ZTC Blog from Hawaii

California Case Studies
THANK YOU.

Do you have any questions?
Contact us at: tspilovoy@wiche.edu and sybil.priebe@ndscs.edu

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