

### ELITE Digest Virtual Campus

#### **Open Education Week: Empowering Access and Innovation**

During the first week of March, Montgomery College joins the global celebration of Open Education Week, an initiative aimed at raising awareness and promoting the benefits of open education. We come together to recognize the transformative power of open educational resources (OER) and open pedagogy practices in higher education.

Open Education Week serves as a platform to highlight MC's commitment to accessibility, affordability, and innovation in education. As a forward-thinking institution, we understand the importance of providing students with accessible and affordable high quality resources and removing barriers to learning. Through OER, and more broadly, open pedagogy, MC empowers students to succeed academically while alleviating the financial burden associated with traditional textbooks.

Through the MC Open initiative, we offer five Z degrees and one Z certificate in which there are no costs associated with instructional materials. Our Spring 2024 student enrollments in Z courses has been the highest at the College with nearly 12,000 in over 650 sections taught by 346 unique instructors. Since Spring 2017, we have saved students more than \$14 million in estimated textbook costs.

MC kicks off Open Education Week by talking with students on all of the campuses about the benefits of our Z courses, Z degrees, and Z certificate. Students will have an opportunity to learn more about the MC Open initiative and how it benefits them. We will also offer virtual professional development for faculty and staff to help enhance their knowledge and skills in open pedagogy. The Open Education Week website contains the schedule along with Workday registration links.

#### **The OER Microcredential: Empowering Educators and Unlocking Opportunities**

In today's higher education landscape, the rising costs of textbooks and instructional materials present significant barriers to student access, success, and completion. Recognizing this

challenge and being committed to an equity-driven solution, Montgomery College embraces the principles of open educational resources (OER) to ensure that all students have access to high quality course materials without financial constraints.

The OER microcredential at MC is a comprehensive professional development opportunity that encompasses practical applications of open education. This OER microcredential, best described as a way to certify that a set of competencies have been mastered, is currently comprised of the OER Advocate Badge and the OER Learning Architect Badge. The OER Advocate Badge validates that the participant has demonstrated the ability to leverage OER and knowledge of open pedagogy, and the OER Learning Architect Badge validates that the earner has demonstrated an understanding of how OER can enhance student learning, support diverse learning needs, and promote collaboration. For more information on the OER microcredential, please visit the [website](#).

**March 2024**