The Z x 23 Project
Request for Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Amount</th>
<th>Up to $15,000 per college</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohort 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Application review begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notification of Award begins</td>
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<td>May 30, 2015</td>
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<td>June 6, 2015</td>
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<td><strong>Cohort 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Due</td>
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<td>Notification of Award</td>
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<td>June 27, 2015</td>
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<td>July 11, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Deliverables Due</td>
<td>June 25, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal Applicant</td>
<td>Academic Vice President</td>
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<td>Letter of support</td>
<td>College President</td>
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Overview

Due to the dedication and hard work of VCCS faculty and administrators over the past three years, Virginia has become a global model for the successful development and use of open educational resources. During this short period, over 100 VCCS faculty members have developed and deployed over seventy open courses through the Chancellor’s Innovation Fund (CIF), Chancellor’s OER Adoption Grants, Professional Development Grants, various external grants, and local college funds. Collectively, the efforts of our faculty have saved students millions of dollars, savings that will continue to be passed on to new students semester after semester.

The Z x 23 Project is a one-year grant to support the VCCS’s long-term goal of scaling Z-Degrees to all 23 VCCS colleges. The $200,000 grant from The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, combined with matching funds from Chancellor DuBois and the System Office, will be used to fund, support, and train faculty and staff at up to fifteen Virginia community colleges interested in building Z-Degrees. An initial cohort of six VCCS colleges will work through the summer. A second cohort will begin work in early fall 2015. Each cohort will pilot the open courses in the semesters subsequent to course development. Lumen Learning will work closely with faculty and staff at participating colleges to help build these pathways, host courses in Blackboard Learn, and evaluate the outcomes of the pilots.

The Zx23 Project has three primary outcomes:

1. 50,000 VCCS students will successfully complete Z-Degree courses.
2. The VCCS will establish a model for sustaining and supporting the Z-Degree project and other OER infrastructure.
3. The VCCS will create a detailed “roadmap” to be used by other postsecondary institutions interested in scaling and sustaining a statewide or system OER infrastructure.

This project is an important component in meeting the single, ambitious goal of VCCS’s new strategic plan, Complete 2021. To achieve this goal, Virginia’s community colleges must provide every student with access to an affordable educational pathway that leads to a meaningful postsecondary credential as well as eliminate any unnecessary technical, bureaucratic, or financial barriers that could delay or derail a student’s academic
progress. With growing evidence that fewer students drop out and more students succeed when they have all of their course materials on the first day of class, establishing broad institutional adoption and support of open course materials will be a significant tool in meeting the challenge of Complete 2021.

## Project Timeline

This is a one-year grant and all courses, course pilots, and project deliverables must be completed no later than June 24, 2016. Up to fifteen colleges can participate in the project. Participating colleges will be divided into two cohorts.

**Cohort 1** (up to 6 colleges)
- June 2015: Faculty orientation and training
- June-August 2015: z-course adoption & development
- Fall 2015: Pilot z-courses
- December 2015: Complete full Z-Degree plans & OER policies

**Cohort 2** (up to 9 colleges)
- September 2015: Faculty orientation and training
- September-December 2015: z-course adoption & development
- Spring 2016: Pilot z-courses
- June 2016: Complete all Z-Degree plans & OER policies

**June 24, 2016: project concludes**

## Roles & Responsibilities

**College administrators (president, vice presidents, deans)**
- Assemble a faculty team to adopt and adapt the initial twelve z-courses
- Identify a Zx23 project leader for the grant who will serve as the main point of contact
- Identify, with project faculty and staff, the Z-Degree that will be created
- Manage the disbursement of Zx23 grant funds
- Oversee the creation of a college OER policy that addresses the ongoing quality of z-courses. This policy should include criterion for:
  - OER textbook adoption
  - Faculty training
  - Open licensing requirements
  - Continuous improvement
  - Identifying z-courses with the new OER course attribute in SIS

**Zx23 Project Leader:**
- Keep project faculty and staff on schedule
- Help faculty and staff fulfill all of the grant requirements
- Provide regular project updates to college administrator(s), the Zx23 Program Manager, and the System Office

**Faculty & staff**
- Complete the Pathways OER course
- Work collaboratively with other project participants, including faculty and staff at other VCCS colleges.
- Become a member of the VCCS OER Peer Group and subscribe to the OpenVA mailing list
- Participate fully in all project trainings, workshops, and events
Support
In addition to regular support from the System Office, faculty and staff of participating colleges will receive ongoing technical and content-related support from Lumen Learning, Inc. for the duration of the grant period. This support will consist of regular tele- or videoconferences, on-site meetings, trainings and workshops with the Zx23 Program Manager, help from Lumen’s technical team, and the deployment of all project z-courses into Blackboard Learn.

Project Deliverables
Each Zx23 college will:
1. Adopt and adapt twelve free and openly licensed courses, or z-courses, that will eventually lead to the creation of a Z-Degree. These z-courses must be:
   a. free and openly licensed6,
   b. of satisfactory quality and scope, and meet required course outcomes,
   c. shared internally with VCCS faculty, as well as publicly, and
   d. licensed with a CC-BY license if created with grant funds, or licensed with the appropriate Creative Commons license if not.
2. Pilot a minimum of one section of all z-courses during the fall 2015 semester and/or spring 2016 semester.
3. Create an OER policy to ensure the ongoing quality of z-courses (see Tidewater Community College’s OER policy: http://www.tcc.edu/policies/2000/2108-UseofOpenEducationalResources.pdf). The OER policy should make a distinction between an OER course and a z-course, as well as address the following areas:
   • Faculty training for z-courses
   • College open licensing requirements
   • Guidelines for continuous improvement of course materials and student outcomes
   • Procedures for using the OER attribute in SIS to identify all low-cost and no-cost courses, including z-courses
4. Develop and share a detailed plan and timeline for building out the remainder of the Z-Degree.
5. Share all project materials, deliverables, and reports of the final outcomes of their projects. This could include the distribution of the final report, as well as a presentation to one VCCS-sponsored professional development event during the 2016-2017 academic year (New Faculty Seminar, Faculty Leadership Academy, Peer Group Meeting, New Horizons, etc.).

Budget
All grant funds will be used to fund activities outlined in the college’s project budget that align with the goals of Zx23 Project. All Zx23 applicants will be required to submit a project budget. All Zx23 grantees will be required to submit a final report that includes a breakdown of how the grant funds were spent. Grantees should also follow the federal Uniform Guidance for meals6.
**How to Apply**

Please submit your Zx23 Project proposal and all supporting materials by the dues dates listed above using the Zx23 Project online application at [http://edtech.vccs.edu/z-x-23-project/](http://edtech.vccs.edu/z-x-23-project/) (click on the Application tab). Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis.

**All Zx23 Project online applications must also:**
- include signed letter(s) of support from an academic dean, director, and/or department head, and
- include a signed letter of support from the college president
- follow the standard approval procedures for grants

**Intellectual Property and Licensing**

All course materials *used* to build Z-Degrees are required to be openly licensed with an appropriate Creative Commons license. All Zx23 course materials *created* with Zx23 funds are required be licensed with a Creative Commons Attribution license (CC-BY).

For more information on licensing through Creative Commons, please visit: [http://creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org)

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**Notes**

1. While full degrees will receive preference for this project, other credentials may be considered.
2. It is strongly recommended that colleges establish a formal college policy.
3. The OER attribute in SIS has two values that can be attached to VCCS courses:
   a. LT40-all *required* course materials cost less than $40 (there is no requirement that course materials be openly licensed)
   b. ZERO-all *required* course materials are free, openly licensed, with zero cost for students
4. Alternate faculty orientation programs, such as the TOTAL Implementing OER workshop, may be substituted.
5. Exceptions to this requirement would be made only after consultation with the Zx23 Program Manager, Lumen Learning, and the Principal Investigator.
6. Costs of light refreshments and working lunches are allowable if food is integral and inseparable to the meeting agenda and taking a meal break would negatively impact the meeting. Meals must be integrated into a project-related event that has a written agenda that includes activities *during* the meal. Finally, costs per person must not exceed the state per diem rates for the locality where the event occurs. Grantees need to maintain documentation, including a dated agenda or other written document, that clearly demonstrates the purpose of the meeting/event in furthering project goals/aims, as well as a roster of attendees and their roles in the project.
FAQ

1. **What is a z-course?**
   A z-course is the term used for a VCCS course that consists solely of free and openly licensed content that is part of a credential, coded appropriately in SIS, and subject to a college-defined standard of continuous improvement in course content, course delivery, and/or course design.

2. **What is a Z-Degree**
   A Z-Degree is a set of z-courses in a specific program area that allows a student to earn a college credential, such as an associate degree, with zero textbook costs.

3. **Can Zx23 Project grant funds be used to develop a certificate instead of a degree?**
   For the Zx23 Project, preference will be given to colleges interested in developing an all-OER associate degree. However, depending on the level of participation and availability of funds, alternative credentials may be considered.

4. **What does “adopt and adapt” mean?**
   The term adopt and adapt means the focus of the project is on the reuse of existing OER rather than the creation of new OER.

5. **Is it possible to pilot z-courses over two semesters instead of one?**
   This is acceptable for colleges participating in Cohort 1. Colleges in Cohort 2 may request a similar exception, but approval may depend on the receipt of additional funding beyond the end of the grant term of June 24, 2016.

6. **What is Pathways?**
   Pathways is a six-module, instructor-lead course developed by Tidewater faculty member Linda Williams as part of the 2014 Chancellor’s Innovation Fund. The course provides participants with an in-depth understanding of open licensing, open repositories, and creating, revising, and sharing OER.
   The Pathways course can be found here: https://courses.candelalearning.com/pathways/.

7. **How much should I pay my faculty members for developing a z-course?**
   Colleges awarded a Zx23 grant have some flexibility in how to spend the funds. However, it is strongly recommended that the majority of the funds be used to incentivize participating faculty and staff for their work. The traditional rate to adopt and adapt, with external support, is $800-1000 per person.

8. **Can a faculty member use web links or licensed library resources instead of OER?**
   All required z-course materials should, whenever possible, consist solely of free and openly licensed content. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the Zx23 Project Program Manager and Principal Investigator. While the VCCS supports the use of internet resources and licensed library materials, use materials that are not openly licensed complicate the sharing with VCCS as well as non-VCCS institutions.

9. **How do I join the OER Peer Group and OpenVA mailing list?**
   You can subscribe to the OER Peer Group Mailman list here at https://lists.vccs.edu/lists/listinfo/vccs-oer-peer-group. You can subscribe to the OpenVA Google Group here at https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/openva.

Please direct any additional questions about the Zx23 Project to VCCS Director of Teaching and Learning Technologies, Dr. Richard Sebastian, at rsebastian@vccs.edu or (804) 814-4795.
Links & Resources

OER Repositories

VCCS Blackboard Learn OER Courses
https://learn.vccs.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/SO/OER/courses.html

OER Commons
http://www.oercommons.org/

Open Stax College
http://openstaxcollege.org/

Open Courseware Consortium
http://ocwconsortium.org/

Saylor
http://www.saylor.org

OER Organizations, Support, and Training

Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources (CCCOER)
http://oerconsortium.org/
The mission of the CCCOER is to expand access to education by promoting awareness and adoption of Open Educational Resources. Over 100 colleges are members of the consortium and many more participate in activities and use the resources posted on the CCCOER website.

Creative Commons
http://www.creativecommons.org
Creative Commons (CC) is a nonprofit organization that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools. CC offers free, easy-to-use copyright licenses to provide a simple, standardized way to give the public permission to share and use creative work.

Lumen Learning
http://www.lumenlearning.org
Lumen Learning was founded to 1) expand a collective vision of what is now possible with OER, and 2) help K-12 and higher education institutions, faculty, and learners take full advantage of its benefits to cut costs and strengthen student learning. Co-founded by open education visionary Dr. David Wiley and education technology strategist Kim Thanos, Lumen is dedicated to facilitating broad, successful adoption of OER. Lumen Learning will be providing comprehensive support and training to all VCCS colleges participating in the Zx23 Project, and will evaluate the outcomes of the pilot z-courses.

Pathways Course
https://courses.candelalearning.com/pathways/
This course provides faculty with an introduction to the laws that influence the use, re-use, and distribution of content they may want to use in a course. Activities include finding openly licensed content for use in a class and publishing openly licensed works created by faculty. At the end of the course, students will have openly licensed content that will be ready for use in a course.