1. **Purpose**

This policy provides guidance to faculty in achieving the following outcomes through the utilization of Open Educational Resources (OER) at Tidewater Community College: improve student success through increased access and affordability, and improve teaching efficiency and effectiveness through the ability to focus, analyze, augment, and evolve course materials directly aligned to course learning outcomes. Faculty will be supported in their use of OER to achieve one or both of the stated outcomes.
2. Policy

Tidewater Community College (TCC) shall make use of OER materials in accordance with the provisions of Section 12 (Intellectual Property) of the Virginia Community College System Policy Manual; the Creative Commons licensing standards; the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998; applicable state and federal copyright laws; accepted best practices of the OER community; and college policies and academic standards.

Faculty who incorporate OER materials into their courses shall assume all responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the course content as related to copyright and scholarly merit.

In order for a course to carry a ‘Z’ designation within TCC’s Student Information System, faculty must follow the procedures contained in this policy. Faculty who adopt OER content are strongly encouraged but not required to meet ‘Z’ standards.

3. Responsibilities

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer shall be responsible for developing and maintaining procedures that are consistent with this policy and that comply with applicable regulations, policies, and procedures of the Virginia Community College System, and the laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

4. Procedures

The following procedures will be followed when adopting OER to improve student success and/or to improve teaching efficiency and effectiveness:

4.1. OER Training and Professional Development

TCC will offer an OER Pathways course for faculty interested in teaching with OER. Pathways will be taught by designated Librarians at each campus. Successful completion of Pathways is required for faculty who are either (a) seeking to have a course designated as a Z course or (b) teaching a course that is designated as a “Z course.” Completion of the Pathways course is not required for faculty who wish to incorporate OER into a course, although it is strongly recommended.

4.2. Quality Standards for OER

As subject matter experts, faculty are responsible for selecting OER of equal or greater quality than commercially distributed publisher content currently available for adoption. All OER materials selected for inclusion in any course must align directly to the Course Outcomes as reflected on the Official Course Outline housed in i-INCURR.
4.3. OER Selection

Faculty are to use only materials that are published under a Creative Common’s License or exist in the Public Domain. Faculty are encouraged to employ the following OER Community standards in the adoption of OER: Retain, Reuse, Revise, Remix and Redistribute.

4.4. OER Support

Librarians will serve a central support role for all faculty wishing to incorporate OER into a course. Among the support provided by designated Librarians are facilitating Pathways, preparing OER LibGuides, and assisting faculty in the location and curation of OER content. Additional support will be provided by faculty leaders, and an OER advisory group representing a cross-section of stakeholders.

4.5. Licensing of Faculty Original Content

Faculty who create original content which is incorporated into a Z Course shall place a Creative Commons CC-BY license on such content at the time it is introduced into the course. It is the faculty member’s responsibility to ensure that such content is eligible for and meets the standards for a CC-BY license. As such, no portion of such work may be claimed by others in whole, in part, or as a derivative work. This requirement is mandatory for Z courses and strongly encouraged for non-Z courses.

4.6. Z Course Instructor Qualifications

In order to teach either a new or existing Z course the faculty member must have successfully completed the Pathways course. In addition, regardless of the Z course delivery method (traditional, online, hybrid), the faculty member must meet one or more of the following criteria: (a) be certified as an online instructor (b) have completed the TOPS or TOPS Elite course or (c) provide documentation of proficiency in the college’s Learning Management System equal to or exceeding requirements (a) or (b). In no case will an instructor be permitted to teach an online Z Course without having completed all of the requirements for online instructors.

4.7. Z Course Modifications

Once a course has received a Z designation, faculty will not add, amend, or otherwise incorporate content into the Z course. Modifications that change the nature of a Z course by 10% or more are considered substantial and require review and approval by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer or his/her designee to ensure proper licensing, attribution, and alignment. Modifications will be documented in the TCC OER Master Course file maintained by the District Academic Office.
4.8. **Z Course Publication**

All Z courses will be published in an electronic format in a manner that permits access to the course content, materials and assessments by any entity within “The Commons” after the Z course has been through two continuous improvement cycles. Z courses will be published by the Center for eLearning.

4.9. **Authorization for Z Course Creation**

Only those courses that contribute to a Z degree program and that are approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer shall be designated ‘Z’ courses. A faculty member who wants to either (a) have a Z designation placed on an existing course or (b) create a new Z course must present such request to the Vice President for consideration. The request will be evaluated based on the quality of the course, impact on student success, compatibility with broader program level OER efforts, and adherence to Z Course standards.

4.10. **Continuous Improvement**

Faculty who teach a Z course must document utilization of data regarding the effectiveness of the OER content in achieving learning outcomes. Data will be collected regarding, among other things, student engagement with the OER content, appropriateness of OER content and assessments. Faculty will be provided with the results of this analysis through written documentation such as a Continuous Improvement Report (see sample in Appendix A). All such reports are designed to improve course design, course content, and course delivery. In order to meet this requirement, all OER content must reside within the college’s approved Learning Management System regardless of the course delivery method (traditional, hybrid, or online). Z-courses will be reviewed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer or his/her designee on a three-year cycle to ensure standards are being met.

5. **Definitions**

**Copyright.** Copyright is a form of protection grounded in the U.S. Constitution and granted by law for original works of authorship fixed in a tangible medium of expression. Copyright covers both published and unpublished work. [http://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/faq-general.html](http://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/faq-general.html)

**Creative Commons License.** Creative Commons licenses manage the copyright terms that attach automatically to all creative material under copyright, and allow that material to be shared and reused under terms that are flexible and legally sound. [http://wiki.creativecommons.org/FAQ#What_are_Creative_Commons_licenses.3F](http://wiki.creativecommons.org/FAQ#What_are_Creative_Commons_licenses.3F)
Open Educational Resources (OER). OER are freely accessible, openly licensed documents and media that are useful for teaching, learning, educational, assessment and research purposes. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_educational_resources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_educational_resources)

Public Domain. A work of authorship is in the “public domain” if it is no longer under copyright protection or if it failed to meet the requirements for copyright protection. Works in the public domain may be used freely without the permission of the former copyright owner. [http://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/faq-definitions.html](http://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/faq-definitions.html)

The Commons. Refers to the body of work that is available to the public for free and legal sharing, use, repurposing, and remixing.

Z Course. A TCC course that has been built using the Z Course template and is comprised solely of content that is eligible for distribution in the Creative Commons as part of a program, coded with a ‘Z’ in SIS, and subject to demonstrated continuous improvement in course content, course delivery, and/or course design. All content in a Z course must reside in the college’s designated Learning Management System.

6. References

VCCS Policy Manual, Section 12, Intellectual Property, subparagraphs 12.0 through 12.0.11

Creative Commons, [http://creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org)

7. Review Periodicity and Responsibility

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer shall review this policy annually on the anniversary of its approval and, if necessary, recommend revisions.

8. Effective Date and Approval

This revision of the policy is effective upon its approval by the College President on July 10, 2014.

Policy Approved: ____________________________  Procedure Developed: ____________________________

Edna V. Baehre-Kolovani, Ph.D.  Daniel T. DeMarte
President  Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer

9. Review and Revision History

The initial version of this policy was approved August 8, 2013.
Based on implementation and experience in pilot year one of the Z-Degree, Revision 1 includes:

- Strengthening the purpose, policy, and procedures.
- Additional definitions.
- Recognition of 'Z' as a distinct OER option at TCC, but not the only option. The 'Z' designation carries a higher set of standards and expectations.
APPENDIX A

SAMPLE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REPORT

Probability and Statistics for Business and Economics, Fall 2013

Your Most Effective Units

Your most effective units this semester were:

- Module 8: Sampling Distributions & Central Limit Theorem
- Module 7: Discrete Probability Distributions
- Module 1: Introduction to Statistics

Students appear to have engaged well with this content and performed well on the associated assessments.

What Can Be Improved?

The following units would benefit the most from some improvements:

- Module 10: Estimation and Hypothesis Testing
- Module 6: Continuous Distributions (Parts I and II)
- Overall Comments

Detailed recommendations for improving the assessments are provided below.

Module 10: Estimation and Hypothesis Testing

Specific Issues

Students struggled on the Module 10 Quiz relative to their performance on other course assessments.

Details
Average Score: 63%
Zero / Perfect Scores: none / none
Late: 6%
Median page views for this module: 17 (median for all modules - 19)
Potential Causes

- This is the final module in a course where each module builds on those that came before it. We would therefore expect this module quiz to have the lowest score of all module quizzes (which it does).
- Students may not have had the opportunity to practice the specific types of tasks included in the quiz. This may not be a problem for remember or understand type items, but this quiz includes a number of apply items.

Potential Improvements

- Consider providing students with the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on the specific types of apply items included on the quiz before taking the quiz.

Module 6: Continuous Distributions (Parts I and II)

Specific Issues

Students struggled on the Module 6 Part I Quiz and Module 6 Part II Quiz relative to their performance on other course assessments.

Details

Average Score: 73%; 69%
Zero / Perfect Scores: 11% / 17%; 11% / 22%
Late: 17%
Median page views for this module: 13; 18 (median for all modules - 19)

Potential Causes

- Even though you have provided a huge amount of material, students interacted with this module’s content less than they did with the average module’s content.
- The first five modules may have trained students to treat the “Stuff That Helps” section as supplemental material.
- Students may not be sufficiently motivated to engage in the practice exercises and practice exam.

Potential Improvements

- Consider ways you can increase student motivation to engage in the practice materials. For example, you could award five points each for completing the practice problems and practice exam (for completion only, not based on correct/incorrect). Students clearly need more practice with these concepts.
- Consider renaming the “Stuff That Helps” section this week to something like “Critical Information You Need to Pass.”
- Consider either cutting down the amount of material you provide this week or consider organizing it differently. The statement that the Stuff That Helps section
includes “Anything else that I have found that helps AT ALL in your understanding of
the content of this Module” makes it feel like you may have dumped a bunch of
resources in here. Students likely need more structure working through the materials -
for example, removing some resources from this section and linking to them from the
relevant problems in the practice exercises and exam (the way you’ve already linked
up the sections from the readings).

Overall Comments

1. Practice exercises and practice exams are terrific ideas for this content. Students
need the opportunity to practice their new skills and get some feedback on their
understanding before being summatively graded on that understanding. Consider
creating practice opportunities for all modules that don’t currently have them. Also,
consider moving answers to the very end/bottom of the file so that students are not
tempted to look so quickly and can genuinely work through the practice before
checking their work.

2. The Stuff That Helps section of the modules first appears in Week 4 – so I’m
guessing this was a response to things happening in the course. Nice! With
additional time to reflect on how things went and process that data, it’s probably
now appropriate to begin thinking about integrating these additional resources
directly into the readings.

Rather than using the PDFs of the chapters next time, consider using the HTML
versions of the readings and integrating the Stuff That Helps material directly inside
the readings at the point where they will be most useful. Adding some interactivity
to the readings (e.g., a video in the middle of the reading here and there) would
likely increase student’s engagement with the readings. It will also add some
needed structure to the STH material, which now feels a bit like a disorganized
collection of supplementary materials.

Note: The Continuous Improvement Report has been developed in partnership with
Lumen Learning to support the teaching efficiency and effectiveness outcome stated in
this policy and TCC’s Z-Degree model.