OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES, frequently referred to by their acronym OER, are gaining increasing traction as an alternative to high priced commercial publications and as an affordable option for cash-strapped students. OER can take many forms and what they have in common is a license in which the author freely agrees to share the resource beyond the usual limits of copyright. The licenses governing OER are called Creative Commons licenses which provide varying levels of sharing at the discretion of the author. (See related article in this issue on Creative Commons licenses.) The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation defines OER as: “OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge.”

Although OER can include the varieties of materials mentioned above, most often the focus of OER relates to textbooks or educational software. The reason for this is that students are increasingly finding the cost of assigned textbooks to be prohibitive, and supportive faculty are looking for ways to ease that burden. However, a significant barrier for faculty in adopting OER has been lack of awareness and the difficulty of finding and evaluating these open resources. A 2014 study by the Babson Survey Research Group found that more than two-thirds of the faculty surveyed were unaware of OER. For those who were aware, 38% considered finding OER materials was difficult or very difficult. There are also faculty concerns about evaluating OER.
After careful consideration of all works submitted for our sixth annual research award competition, the committee was pleased to name the winners in the freshman/sophomore and junior/senior categories.

2016 FRESHMAN/SOPHOMORE CATEGORY WINNER

Christina Welch
“Effect of different substrates on the transcription level of the Lac operon in *Escherichia coli*”
Supporting document provided by Dr. James R. Camp

2016 JUNIOR/SENIOR CATEGORY WINNER

Talia Erris
“Five Feet of Feminine Anarchy: Press Depictions of Emma Goldman From 1892-1901”
Supporting document provided by Dr. Caitlin Carenen

The winning essays and papers are located on our award site: [http://easternct.libguides.com/content.php?pid=62741](http://easternct.libguides.com/content.php?pid=62741). Please remember that this competition is open to undergraduate students taking classes during all semesters and may be sent in at any time before the due date. Thank you to all who encourage our students to submit the products of their hard work and research for this award.

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**Tara’s Trivia**

by Tara L. Hurt, University Archivist, Head of Archives & Special Collections

Keeler Hall (1953-2003), was the first Early Childhood Education building on campus. What dorm is now on this site?

- a) Occum
- b) Laurel
- c) Mead
- d) Noble

Send your answer to askarchives@easternct.edu
This past semester I was talking to a faculty member about Open Educational Resources and he told me he had been freely sharing his own scholarship for years on a website he created for that purpose. But he was constantly being asked if it was OK to use the resources he had posted. He was happy to hear that there is a mechanism by which he can indicate the level of sharing he wishes to offer by adding a Creative Commons license attribution to his webpage. Creative Commons (creativecommons.org/) was founded in 2001 and is a non-profit dedicated to making content freely available for use as well as adaptation and remixing. The licenses offered by Creative Commons have varying degrees of sharing permitted. In assigning a Creative Commons license to his or her work, the creator of the work does not give up copyright. What they agree to do is give up some of the rights that copyright would normally provide, and they decide which ones they are willing to cede. The chart below is a visual summary of the various Creative Commons licenses.

The most open sharing model is often referred to as “CC By” which basically means you are giving someone permission to use your work in any way they choose, even for commercial profit, as long as they give you credit by attribution. More restrictive versions of the license can limit commercial use, or restrict modifying and remixing your work. All of the license combinations and definitions are explained on the Creative Commons website.

Of course not everyone can afford to give away their creative work nor is it proposed that they should. However, there are often cases where scholars wish to share some portions of their work freely, not only for the common good, but also because it may make their work more widely known.

If you have interest in learning more about Creative Commons licenses, their website fully explains all the options.
PLEASE CONSIDER BEING A FRIEND OF THE LIBRARY

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_____ Tower Society $5,000 and above  
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