

# Customizing a Business Law Textbook

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## How This Project Started

Keith Tierney, an instructor at Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC), was unhappy with the commercial business law text. It was expensive (over \$300) and irrelevant to the students' experience and course outcomes. Business Law (BA 226) is required for business majors, and Keith wanted to provide them with a relevant resource for their future careers. He believed he could better capture student interest by catering to their diverse learning abilities, stimulating critical thinking, and addressing their daily lives and learning goals.

LBCC integrates affordability and OER in its strategic plan and provides grants for faculty to create and use OER. Keith initiated conversations with Michaela Willi Hooper, the OER librarian, about available resources and the feasibility of the project. In academic year 2017/2018, Keith was awarded a grant for this project.

## Student Responses

Students who look at both resources mention that the OER text flows better and is more narrative and readable. They indicate that the course is now relevant to both their careers and their personal lives. Because the OER has hyperlinks to the Oregon Revised Statutes and other resources, it's a dynamic, living reference that students will continue to use after they complete their education. Students make a practice of using the print in conjunction with Keith's cross-referenced notes and the online text in their open-book exams.

**Find the materials  
at [bit.ly/ba226arx](https://bit.ly/ba226arx)**

## Creating a Dynamic Text

Keith and Michaela did a scan of available business law OER. Keith thought that Saylor's *Business Law and the Legal Environment* (CC BY-SA) was the best match, but he wanted to remove distracting content, add continuity, increase readability and relevance, and make the text more visually pleasing.

Keith reorganized the resource so that it flowed better and matched the course outline. He made major revisions to some topics, like the sections on torts, and updated the resource to reflect current trends in business and law. He also created a supplement to the text containing cases, statutes, and legal research, which he will continuously update. The supplement can also be used and modified by faculty at other institutions.

The Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR) collaborated with Keith to ensure the text was accessible to students who use screen readers. The OER librarian and library student employees supported Keith in structuring the document, adding a hyperlinked table of contents, and updating links.



## The Pilot

When the OER was launched, Keith participated in a study conducted by a 2018-2019 Open Ed Group OER Research Fellow, assigning an OER text in one section and the previously-used commercial text in another. The data from the study are still being analyzed.

The first term the OER was used, the Campus Store began offering print copies, but not many students purchased them. Students also have access to both a print copy of the OER and the formerly-used commercial textbook on reserve in the library. Based on feedback from students in the pilot, Keith now highly recommends that students purchase the print copy, or print it themselves. Some research ([bit.ly/singerreading](https://bit.ly/singerreading)) indicates that people understand complex ideas better in print.

## Process for Continuous Improvement

Keith received an update grant from LBCC which he will use over the summer to do further revisions, addressing new court precedents and statutes. He has been gathering feedback from students ever since the OER launched. Based on their requests, he will create outline slides that include links and summarize the course content.

Keith also plans to write case summaries using the IRAC (Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion) format, which will be easier for the students to grasp than the opinions themselves. Students respond positively to case studies/hypotheticals, so Keith plans to create more of these.

Michaela and Keith will also conduct focus groups with this term's students to ask them for platform and content suggestions. Based on this feedback, Keith will transition to a format for the supplemental text that's more easily updated (probably a Google doc).



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