

# Francophone OER Summit Report

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Co-organizers and co-hosts of the Francophone OER Summit

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## Preamble

In June 2021, the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) began engaging various stakeholders, including national student groups, spokespeople from provincial open education organizations, academics and open education experts, as well as individuals and groups from higher education institutions, in order to develop a strategy for open educational resources in Canada. Through those efforts, the *Open Educational Resources (OER) National Strategy* group was formed.

After a number of meetings, a diverse subgroup of members from the community of practice and experts in open educational resources from the Canadian post-secondary system drafted the *National Advocacy Framework for Open Educational Resources in Canada* (CARL, 2023), intended to facilitate cooperation and coordination among OER stakeholders in promoting OER nationally, and to present a series of arguments and considerations for federal government involvement in the field of OER.

To identify the priorities to be put forward during advocacy efforts, a series of three summits were organized to bring together members of the community of practice and experts to discuss the subject. The three summits follow three priority areas highlighted by the *National Advocacy Framework for Open Educational Resources in Canada* (CARL, 2023), namely Infrastructure and Policy, Francophone OER, and Indigenous OER.

## Summary

As part of the *Open Educational Resources (OER) National Strategy*, the University of Ottawa Library, with support from the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL), hosted the Francophone OER Summit on April 27, 2023. The second of three summits, this one-day event enabled more than 30 student leaders, faculty members, librarians, academic advisers, and open education experts from La Francophonie in Canada and Quebec to have discussions and develop OER-related requests intended for the federal government.

To kick off those discussions, six panelists representing student associations and professional and community organizations shared their experiences and suggestions for a successful advocacy campaign. Inspired by that advice, the participants worked to develop common requests specific to OER in French and to francophone realities.

They identified six priorities:

- Add an “open” component as an evaluation criterion for research grants in order to encourage science sharing and popularization and knowledge mobilization among Canadian citizens;
- Investments in artificial intelligence for the creation and translation of OER in order to reduce costs;
- Financial incentives for collaborating in the production and use of OER in French (including translation);
- Coordinated pan-Canadian repository and/or search engine to house OER, foster discoverability of Canadian content, and develop harmonized metadata (and mandate Library and Archives Canada with creating and maintaining a long-term repository platform for OER and collection at the national level);
- Provide ongoing financial support for the creation, adaptation and publication of OER in French in order to reduce the gap in educational publishing in Canada;
- Draft a Canadian statement on open educational resources that draws on UNESCO’s Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER).

The priority requests from the three meetings will be compiled after the last summit in 2024 in order to proceed with drafting the advocacy messages intended for the federal government and with implementing the *National Strategy*.

## Acknowledgements and Sponsors

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### CARL’s Open Education Working Group (OEWG)

- Sarah Coysh, Librarian, York University / Francophone Open Education Task Group
- Joy Kirchner, Dean of Libraries, York University / Chair
- Catherine Lamy, Librarian, Université Laval / Francophone Open Education Task Group
- Karen Nicholson, Librarian, University of Guelph / Senior Program Officer, CARL

- Sarah Shaughnessy, Librarian, University of Alberta / Francophone Open Education Task Group
- Victoria Volkanova, Librarian, Université de Moncton / Francophone Open Education Task Group

## Advocacy Panel

- Frédéric Beaudet, Vice-President, Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ)
- Marianne Dubé, Coordinator, fabriqueREL / Educational Adviser, Université de Sherbrooke
- Susan Haigh, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL)
- Cyrielle Ngeleka, Francophone Students' Representative, Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)
- Louis-Alexandre Pen, Policy Analyst, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA)
- Chelsey-Lynn Rouselle, Student and former Advocacy Commissioner, University of Ottawa Students' Union (UOSU)
- Anne-Marie Roy, Senior Organizing and Education Officer, Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)
- Marc-Antoine Tourville, Academic Affairs Coordination, Union étudiante du Québec (UEQ)

## Volunteers (University of Ottawa Library)

- Caroline Boudreau, Acquisitions Clerk
- Victoria Cole, Research Librarian (Health Sciences)
- Marie-Cécile Domecq, Research Librarian (Health Sciences)
- Kathleen Gravel, Metadata and Cataloguing Technician
- Liz Hayden, Associate Librarian (Content and Access)
- Patrick Labelle, Research Librarian (Education, Psychology, Social Service)
- Marie Noël, Archivist
- Julie Rochon, Technician, Design and Awareness
- Thomas Rouleau, Senior Manager, Copyright Services

- Alison Smedley, Co-op student in digital skills
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### **Technical and logistics support (University of Ottawa Library)**

- Eric Charron, Physical and Material Resources Assistant
- Luc Clément, Physical and Material Resources Officer
- Josée-Anne Cyr, Executive Assistant
- Christophe Gallisaires, Physical and Material Resources Clerk
- Julien Leblanc, Senior Information Technology Technician
- Marianne St-Jacques, Intermediate Adviser, Communications and Marketing
- Louis Tremblay, Physical and Material Resources

### **The Francophone OER Summit received financial support from the following libraries and organizations (in alphabetical order):**

- Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL)
- BCcampus
- Bibliothèque de l'Université Laval
- Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL)
- Council of Atlantic Academic Libraries (CAAL)
- eCampusOntario
- fabriqueREL
- Manitoba Campus
- McMaster University Library
- University of Ottawa Library
- University of Ottawa Student Union (UOSU)
- York University Libraries

## Introduction

As a follow-up to the [Open Educational Resources \(OER\) National Strategy](#), a second summit, the Francophone OER Summit, was held on April 27, 2023. Organized by the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) in cooperation with the University of Ottawa Library, the summit was held in person and online on the Library's premises.

Over 30 experts gathered, including student leaders, faculty members, librarians, academic advisers, and members of the community of practice from La Francophonie in Canada and Quebec ([Appendix 1](#)), to promote the development of open educational resources in French in Canada.

The day began with an advocacy panel. Moderated by Marianne Dubé of fabriqueREL, the panel consisting of student leaders and government relations experts shared their perspectives and recommendations for a successful advocacy campaign.

The participants then came together to work on developing common requests specific to OER in French and to francophone realities. After active discussions, each group presented their requests to all the experts present. A voting exercise of the “dotmocracy” type, where each person was invited to place dots on the sheets next to the requests deemed most relevant, enabled us to identify common priorities.

Further to that exercise, we worked on drafting advocacy statements following the advice from our panelists for strong, compelling messages to stakeholders and the federal government. Finally, at the end of the day, we discussed those statements and the way forward for the national advocacy strategy.

To view the agenda for the day, see [Appendix 2](#).

## Objectives of the Summit

The objectives of the second summit were to bring together students, members of the community of practice, and experts in order to rework the statements developed at the first summit on infrastructure and policy in Toronto in November 2022, and to develop new statements that incorporate the francophone context and realities to better target requests that will be submitted to the federal government during the pre-budget consultations.

That exercise enabled us to develop a common vision and message in order to better focus our OER awareness efforts with the federal government and to better define the

funding requests intended for it for advancing OER in Canada. These requests will also be able to serve as a model for advocating with other levels of government, granting agencies, and educational institutions.

As was the case for the first summit, it was not a public conference open to all people interested in OER, but rather a working meeting that brought together individuals already heavily involved in OER.

## Outcomes

### Advocacy Panel

In response to four questions (see [Appendix 3](#)), the six panelists shared their experiences and suggestions for a successful advocacy campaign.

All of them mentioned the critical importance of a clear, simple and concise message in order to attract the attention of spokespeople, be they parliamentarians, policy advisers, or public servants. Thousands of requests are submitted to these individuals. Therefore, what is needed is a message that stands out and can be easily understood by someone who isn't familiar with the matter raised. It is also essential to identify in advance the people who are best suited to take an interest in the matter in order to properly target their advocacy efforts. This message can stand out by clearly aligning with government priorities, but also with the message of other stakeholders in order to represent a unified voice. In fact, the primary objective is for the issue that is central to the requests to also become that of the intended federal groups, by demonstrating why and how these requests are important to the communities and the electorate.

To have a clear message, the objectives of the advocacy campaign and the criteria for success must be well defined. Are we seeking a meeting with a minister, a new policy, a bill, or some other tangible action by the government? That message must answer this question and also explain why, using qualitative and quantitative evidence. As one of the student leaders explained, there is a personal “why”, a story that puts a human face on the matter, and a statistical “why” supported by numbers, including the associated costs. The objective, the why, and the supporting data should be summarized in a short document that will be used for the initial contact. A more substantial document should also be prepared for providing additional information upon request.





Panelists. At the front: Susan Haigh (CARL), Frédéric Beaudet (FECQ), Marc-Antoine Tourville (UEQ), Louis-Alexandre Pen (FCFA), Chelsey-Lynn Rouselle (UOSU). On the screen: Cyrielle Ngeleka (CFS), Anne-Marie Roy (CAUT). Photo by Marianne St-Jacques.

In fact, the panelists also emphasized constancy in the relationships with the intended audiences and other stakeholders in order to build bridges, maintain ties, and keep the matter in the political and parliamentary conversation. The importance of developing ties with ministers' staff members, members of parliament (of the government and the opposition), and areas of the public service relevant to the matter cannot be underestimated. They are the people who will ask for more details and put the matter and the message on the agenda.

## Priorities Identified

The participants developed over 25 requests intended for the federal government in connection with open educational resources and open education. In brief, here are the requests identified. Some have been condensed to prevent repetition.

- Draft a Canadian statement on open educational resources that draws on UNESCO's Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER) (2019)

- Grants for translation and dissemination of OER in French in connection with the Action Plan for Official Languages (Canadian Heritage, 2023)
- Financial incentives for collaborating in the production and use of OER in French (including translation)
- Collaboration and coordination among the provinces and territories for federal OER initiatives
- Coordinated pan-Canadian repository/search engine to house OER, promote the discoverability of Canadian content and develop harmonized metadata. Mandate Library and Archives Canada with creating and maintaining a long-term repository platform for OER and collection at the national level.
- Development of a toolkit-style repository for the creation of open educational resources
- Creation and coordination of a specialist guide network
- Grants and support to facilitate the accessibility of existing and future resources
- Funding for each interaction ‘cycle’ with OER (creation, adoption, update, adaptation) in French and in Francophone settings
- Establishment of a national community of practice and communities of practice specifically focused on certain topics (accessibility, Francophonie, Indigenous OER, etc.). REFAD is a model of such a network.
- Awareness campaigns to promote OER in Canada, highlighting OER as a Canadian value
- Support for the designing of OER that factor in gender issues and are culturally and linguistically relevant, including the creation of OER in local languages, especially Indigenous languages, which are less used, threatened, and the resources for which are scarce
- Promotion of the use of OER in vocational training, for example, for newcomers.
- Grants for adapting resources to the various cultural communities
- Investments in artificial intelligence for creation and translation of OER to reduce costs
- Establish a consistent policy for the use of open licences that allows reuse of all publicly funded publications and resources.
- Partner with the CMEC (Council of Ministers of Education Canada) to support the creation of OER at the post-secondary level
- Develop a federal OER leadership mandate for active participation in the discussions and coordination of international efforts and actions with La Francophonie.

- Provide ongoing financial support for the creation, adaptation and publication of OER in French to reduce the gap in educational publishing in Canada, for example through the Book Fund or the three councils (see ACUFC and FCFA, 2022)
- Add an “open” or “OER” component as an evaluation criterion for research grants to support science sharing and popularization and knowledge mobilization with Canadian citizens
- Develop programs marked as 100% OER where the costs associated with textbook purchasing are zero in CEGEPs, colleges, and universities (example of Zero Textbook Cost at Kwantlen Polytechnic University)
- National bibliometric standard, similar to COUNTER, for quantifying the use of OER
- Establish methods in the promotion and permanence processes to recognize the value of OER just like a scholarly publication



Participants in action. Photo by Catherine Lachaine.

After compiling the requests from each group (we worked in groups of 5 or 6 people), we conducted a voting exercise to identify the requests that we felt were priorities. Every participant had three votes that they could place on the requests that resonated most with them. Ultimately, six priorities were identified:

1. Add an “open” or “OER” component as an evaluation criterion for research grants to support science sharing and popularization and knowledge mobilization among Canadian citizens
2. Investments in artificial intelligence for the creation and translation of OER in order to reduce costs
3. Financial incentives for collaborating in the production and use of OER in French (including translation)
4. Coordinated pan-Canadian repository and/or search engine to house OER, drive discoverability of Canadian content and develop harmonized metadata. Mandate Library and Archives Canada with creating and maintaining a long-term repository platform for OER and collection at the national level.
5. Provide ongoing financial support for the creation, adaptation and publication of OER in French to reduce the gap in educational publishing in Canada (e.g., through the Book Fund or the Tri-Council)
6. Draft a Canadian Statement on Open Educational Resources that draws on UNESCO’s *Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER)* (2019)

## Priorities for Francophone OER

During this summit, we focused on the priorities for Canada’s francophone communities. The *National Advocacy Framework for Open Educational Resources in Canada* (CARL, 2023) strongly maintains that Canada’s bilingual status puts it in a unique position for supporting the creation of OER in both English and French (pg. 24). In more detail, the Framework indicates that, in Quebec, over 100 post-secondary institutions offer programs in French (Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire, n.d.; ACCQ et al., n.d.). Elsewhere in Canada, the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC) represents the collective interests of the 22 post-secondary minority institutions that offer programs in French. In its strategic plan, the ACUFC (2020) suggests that it has a role to play in Canada’s economic growth and the well-being of francophone communities by ensuring the training of a skilled bilingual workforce; by contributing to the vitality of francophone minority communities, an area of both federal and provincial jurisdiction; by helping to make Canada a leader in innovation through research in French and on La Francophonie in colleges and universities and in francophone minority communities; and finally, by increasing the supply and accessibility of post-secondary education in French in order

to establish a true continuum of education in French, an essential aspect of the vitality and viability of La Francophonie Canadienne.

Therefore, these are strong arguments for advocating with the federal government to develop policies, infrastructure, and support for the creation of OER in French. Several of the priorities presented above specifically target La Francophonie:

- Grants for the translation and dissemination of OER in French
- Financial incentives for collaborating in the production and use of OER in French (including translation)
- Grants for adapting the resources to the various cultural communities
- Investments in artificial intelligence for the creation and translation of OER to reduce costs
- Funding for each interaction ‘cycle’ with OER (creation, adoption, updating, adaptation) in French and in francophone settings

It is also important to point out that, even though the federal government is not directly responsible for education, it is responsible for matters pertaining to official languages and bilingualism. So, the requests could be made by targeting some specific legislation and departments.

For example, Canadian Heritage is the main department responsible for official languages. It supports minority-language education in Canadian post-secondary institutions by providing investment funds. Canadian Heritage is also responsible for the *Official Languages Act* program, which includes quality post-secondary education opportunities for official language minority communities.

The *Official Languages Act* (1985) specifically empowers the Minister of Canadian Heritage to: (d) encourage and assist provincial governments to support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities in general and, in particular, to offer provincial and municipal services in both English and French, and to provide opportunities for members of English and French minority communities to be educated in their own language; (e) encourage and assist provincial governments to provide opportunities for all Canadians to learn both English and French.

This is a particularly important point for Canada as a member State of the United Nations. The UNESCO declaration (2019) aims to incorporate OER to help all member States build inclusive knowledge societies and carry out the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), especially Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 - Quality education, and SDG 10 - Reduced inequality in and among countries.



Canada's multiculturalism policy (*Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, 1985) also sets out the federal government's role in promoting the cultural heritage of Canadian society, including the preservation and enhancement of languages, through social, cultural, economic, and political institutions. By funding Canadian content creation programs, such as those for media and publishing, the federal government promotes and strengthens Canada's knowledge for Canadians and the world. We believe that this approach could be applied to OER for promoting our culture and languages.

## Moving Forward

Even though a convergence of challenges, needs and priorities was identified during the first two summits, particularly regarding Canada's commitment to open education at the international level, coordination among the provinces and territories, the creation of a pan-Canadian OER repository with standardized metadata and ongoing financial support to create or adapt OER and encourage research in the field, open education in a francophone context has separate concerns:

- Translation and localization of existing OER and how artificial intelligence could facilitate these processes to promote the production of resources in French
- The establishing of a Canada-wide francophone community of practice
- Ongoing financial support for the production of OER in French for reducing the gap in educational publishing in that language in Canada, especially outside Quebec
- Leadership by the federal government internationally in the discussions and the coordination of OER initiatives within La Francophonie

The Francophone OER Summit was intended as the second in a series of three CARL-supported summits stemming from the main areas identified in the *National Advocacy Framework for Open Educational Resources in Canada* (CARL, 2023). An Indigenous OER Summit is scheduled for 2024 and aims to bring together open education experts, elders, and other Indigenous knowledge experts in order to identify the specific needs and challenges and to develop advocacy specific to these contexts.

After the final summit, the members of the group responsible for the *Open Educational Resources (OER) National Strategy* will compile the priority requests from the three meetings and will prepare the advocacy messages intended for the federal government. Then comes implementation of the national strategy by putting forward in a timely manner the advocacy developed, factoring in the priorities of the government in power and developments in terms of official languages, open government, support for publishing, support for training and development, and investments in technology infrastructure, among other things.

Since the Francophone OER Summit, the two authors of this report have had the opportunity to share the main themes of the national strategy at the [OER symposium](#) (organized by [fabriqueREL](#)) as part of the 90<sup>th</sup> Acfas congress in Montreal on May 12, 2023. They took part in a panel on the development of an OER support policy along with Colin De La Higuera of Nantes University and Stéphane Roux of the Université de Sherbrooke and fabriqueREL, thereby making it possible to reconnect with some Summit participants and speak with creators of OER in French who are directly or indirectly involved in policy development and capacity building.

A similar exercise is planned for the OE Global international conference in Edmonton in October 2023, with a presentation on the role of La Francophonie Canadienne in developing a national OER strategy.

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UNESCO. (2019, November 25). *Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER)*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-open-educational-resources-oer>

## Appendix 1 – List of Participants

Name	Institution/Organization
Frédéric Beaudet	Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec
Myriam Beaudet	Université de Sherbrooke
Nicolas Boivin	Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières
Marilou Bourque	Université Laval
Lise Brin	Université de Saint-Boniface
Mélanie Brunet	University of Ottawa
Sarah Coysh	York University
Marianne Dubé	fabriqueREL / Université de Sherbrooke
Alexandre Enkerli	Collecto, Services regroupés en éducation
Siri Gauthier	eCampusOntario
Susan Haigh	Canadian Association of Research Libraries
Rachel Harris	Concordia University
Catherine Lachaine	University of Ottawa
Hubert Lalande	University of Ottawa
Jean-Michel Lapointe	Université du Québec à Montréal

Catherine Lamy	Université Laval
Graham Lavender	Canadian Association of Research Libraries
Laurence Mallette-Léonard	Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec
Marie D. Martel	Université de Montréal
Muriel Mignerat	University of Ottawa
Mouna Moumene	École de technologie supérieure
Cyrielle Ngeleka	Canadian Federation of Students
Karen Nicholson	University of Guelph / Canadian Association of Research Libraries
Boris Nonveiller	Université du Québec à Montréal
Virginie Paquet	Université de Montréal
Louis-Alexandre Pen	Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada
Claude Potvin	fabriqueREL / Université Laval
Anne-Marie Roy	Canadian Association of University Teachers
Chelsey-Lynn Rousselle	University of Ottawa Student Union
Sarah Shaughnessy	University of Alberta
Marc-Antoine Tourville	Union étudiante du Québec

Lucie Vincent Leblanc	Consortium national de développement de ressources pédagogiques en français au collégial
Victoria Volkanova	Université de Moncton

## Appendix 2 – Agenda of the Francophone OER Summit

8:00 to 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30 to 8:45 a.m.	<p>Welcome and Indigenous Affirmation</p> <p>Opening address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talia Chung, Chief Librarian and Vice-Provost (Knowledge Management), University of Ottawa</li> </ul> <p>Welcoming remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yves Pelletier, Associate Vice-President, Francophonie, University of Ottawa</li> </ul>
8:45 to 9:30 a.m.	<p>Announcements</p> <p>Brief introduction of the participants</p> <p>Presentation of the national framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mélanie Brunet and Catherine Lachaine</li> </ul>
9:30 to 9:45 a.m.	<p>“Climbing the Mountain” framework and how the Summit will run</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Karen Nicholson and Catherine Lachaine</li> </ul>
9:45 to 10:00 a.m.	Break
10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	<p>Advocacy Panel with student leaders and government relations experts</p> <p>Moderator: Marianne Dubé, fabriqueREL / Université de Sherbrooke</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frédéric Beaudet, Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susan Haigh, Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL)</li> <li>• Cyrielle Ngeleka, Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)</li> <li>• Louis-Alexandre Pen, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA)</li> <li>• Chelsey-Lynn Rouselle, University of Ottawa Student Union (UOSU)</li> <li>• Anne-Marie Roy, Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)</li> <li>• Marc-Antoine Tourville, Union étudiante du Québec (UEQ)</li> </ul>
11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Development of requests (group work)
12:30 to 13:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 to 2:00 p.m.	Exercise for voting on the requests
2:00 to 3:30 p.m.	Exercise for drafting advocacy statements (working in groups)
3:30 to 3:45 p.m.	Break
3:45 to 4:30 p.m.	Sharing the advocacy statements
4:30 to 5:00 p.m.	<p>Moving forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catherine Lachaine and Mélanie Brunet</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3 – Questions for the Advocacy Panel

1. Based on your own experience, could you tell us the main aspects of a successful advocacy campaign? Can you give us an example of a campaign with the federal government that you consider particularly effective?
2. Most of the people gathered for this event have little or no experience in advocacy and in making requests to government (or even institutional) authorities. If you could give one or two pieces of advice for running a successful advocacy campaign with government authorities (especially the federal government), what would they be?
3. The potential and the benefits of open educational resources are obvious to the participants at this Summit. However, that is not necessarily the case for our spokespeople. In your opinion, what are the essential aspects of an effective advocacy message to government authorities who are not familiar with OER?
4. From what you know about OER, what do you think is the best strategy for convincing governments to invest in open educational resources? How do OER (especially in a francophone context) align with the federal government's areas of jurisdiction and priorities?