

Textbook Adoption

During 2008, the State University System Task Force on Textbook Affordability developed the following set of suggestions for how institutions might minimize textbook costs.

Cost Awareness

- Faculty and bookstore personnel should work together to ensure that instructors have easy access to textbook cost information. Faculty and administrators should be aware that publishers can provide wholesale or suggested retail cost information; however, bookstore retail charges are based on recapture of overhead costs.
- Deadlines for buy back should be factored into the cycle of textbook adoption to ensure access to used books whenever possible.
- When possible, faculty should allow the use of previous editions of textbooks.
- When possible, faculty should not require students to buy bundled textbook materials; they make every effort to ensure that students are required to buy only materials that will be used in the course.

Course Scheduling and Textbook Adoption

- Course offering decisions for upcoming terms should be closely followed by textbook adoption. Institutions should set deadlines for finalization of course offering decisions for each term and maintain this schedule on a regular basis. For instance, if fall term schedules were to be finalized by March 15th, textbook adoption should be required by April 15-30.
- Each stakeholder in the textbook adoption and acquisition process should be aware of the roles of the other stakeholders and how these roles impact textbook cost (e.g., through a Textbook Affordability Information Brochure).
- Timely publication of textbook adoptions to a freely accessible university Web site would provide for greater competition among bookstores and would enable students to explore alternatives for textbook acquisition such as shopping online, rental, sharing with other students, etc.

Alternative Formats

- Faculty should work with their campus libraries to determine the comparative costs and feasibility of licensing e-Textbooks.
- Institutions and campus bookstores should explore textbook rental options for students.
- Complimentary desk copies of books should be requested in larger numbers and should be put on reserve for students who cannot afford textbooks.

- Institutions should arrange for financial aid distributions to be made directly to the bookstore in cases of late distribution of funds. This approach would ensure that students relying upon financial aid will have their textbooks in time for the beginning of classes.

Evolving Technologies: Future Options

- Faculty and administrators should be aware of evolving technologies that support low-cost digital textbook publication and should take advantage of these opportunities when practical.
 - Open educational resources (OER) represent an Internet-empowered, worldwide community effort to create an education common space.
 - Open educational resources are educational materials and resources offered freely and openly for anyone to use and, under some licenses, (e.g., Creative Commons, GNU) to re-mix, improve, and redistribute.
 - Open educational resources include:
 - *Learning content*: Full courses, course materials, content modules, learning objects, collections, and journals.
 - *Tools*: Software to support the creation, delivery, use, and improvement of open learning content, including searching and organization of content, content and learning management systems, content development tools, and on-line learning communities.
 - *Implementation resources*: Intellectual property licenses to promote open publishing of materials, design-principles, and localization of content.
 - Digital content repositories house OER. Materials are searchable by metadata tags and, depending on copyright, can be shared, used, revised, published, downloaded, etc.
 - In some cases, university presses are collaborating with digital repositories to enable custom, on-demand printing of low cost textbooks, usually in black and white. See <http://www.cnx.org> for an example of Engineering faculty collaborative textbook writing and publishing by the Rice University Press. Also, see <http://cccoer.wordpress.com/>.
 - OER can also enable course development that does not require the use of textbooks. Please see the Orange Grove Digital Repository <http://www.theorangegrove.org/> and the University Press of Florida <http://www.upf.com/>.

Monitoring, Compliance, Awareness

- Each university should appoint a Textbook Affordability Committee. This committee should include at least one:
 - member of the faculty,

- academic administrator,
- librarian,
- auxiliary enterprises staff member,
- student, and
- bookstore manager

The purpose of this committee would be to monitor university compliance with the Board of Governors Regulation on Textbook Adoption and to monitor changes in textbook access such as rentals, used textbooks, online texts, and digital publishing on demand. This committee would ensure that all stakeholders are kept aware of the most affordable options in order to maximize savings to students.

- The Board of Governors should request a yearly update on practices established in response to the Textbook Adoption Regulation.