

# **Textbook Ordering Policies at Ohio Faculty Council Institutions**

## **Executive Summary**

During the months of March and April, 2016 representatives of the Ohio Faculty Council were asked: 1) if their institution had a textbook ordering policy, and 2) for what fraction of the courses at their institution was the textbook made known at the time that students could begin to register for the class? Responses were received from most of the OFC institutions. No on-line textbook ordering policies were found for OFC institutions.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008 (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html>) requires that institutions of higher education provide a list of required and recommended textbooks for each course at the time that students can first begin registering for a class. The list must include the following information: 1) ISBN or author, title, publisher, copyright date, 2) retail price, and 3) the phrase “To Be Determined” if the information is unavailable. Colleges may choose the manner in which they present the information but they must comply with this provision to the maximum extent practicable. The HEOA states “Nothing in this section shall be construed to supersede the institutional autonomy or academic freedom of instructors involved in the selection of college textbooks, supplemental materials, and other classroom materials.”

The Governor’s Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency specifically (in recommendation 6 of its October, 2015 report) identified textbook ordering practices as an opportunity to reduce the cost of higher education to students.

Textbook ordering policies and practices can reduce student expenses significantly by giving them time to search for lower cost alternatives (e.g. rentals, e-books, used books, book-swapping facilitated by social media, libraries). They can also make textbook costs more manageable by allowing students to better plan ahead for the full cost of attendance.

Indiana State University (at Bloomington) has adopted a formal textbook ordering policy (310.1.12) that makes the departmental chairperson responsible for selection facilitation and implementation (including 310.1.12.6, “Chairpersons shall similarly order default texts for faculty who fail to submit orders by established deadlines.” and 310.1.12.7, “Faculty shall be precluded from changing textbook orders made under (5) – (6) for that term.”). The Indiana State University policy also addresses selection processes, ordering, and conflicts of interest.

Compliance with the HEOA provisions regarding textbook ordering by Ohio Faculty Council institutions appears to be uniformly low (less than 50% of courses have a textbook listed at the time that students can first register for the class). Some institutions (e.g. Cincinnati and Ohio State) have initiated formal efforts to help

faculty reduce the cost of textbooks. Ohio Faculty Council institutions do not have formal policies that address the selection and ordering of textbooks or the resolution of conflicts of interest in the area of textbook recommendations.

## **Summaries of institution-specific answers to questions about textbook ordering policies:**

### **Akron**

The institution does not have a university-wide textbook adoption plan. Textbook adoption is left to individual faculty members or departments.

### **Bowling Green**

The institution does not have a university-wide textbook adoption plan. Textbook adoption is left to individual faculty members or departments.

### **Central State**

### **Cincinnati**

The institution does not have a university-wide textbook adoption plan. Textbook adoption is left to individual faculty members or departments. To meet affordability guidelines, the administration has worked directly with the campus bookstore to reduce costs. Information for faculty on reducing textbook costs is provided online at <http://www.libraries.uc.edu/services/textbooks.html#faculty>

### **Cleveland State**

The institution does not have a university-wide textbook adoption plan. Textbook adoption is left to individual faculty members or departments. Faculty within a single division are typically in agreement about changes to textbooks and departments generally adopt the recommendations of their division. Any part-time faculty, term-lecturer, or appointed lecturer has to use the texts adopted by the division/department.

Presentations and discussion sessions have been led by the university's library about the opportunity to use free (or partially free) textbooks from sources such as Flatworld and OpenStax.

### **Kent State**

The institution does not have a university-wide textbook adoption plan. Textbook adoption is left to individual faculty members or departments.

### **Miami**

### **Ohio State**

The university has an Affordable Learning Exchange Initiative (<https://affordablelearning.osu.edu>). Many courses are developing free online or open source textbooks. The university's Office of Distance Education and eLearning is partnering with faculty to implement open, free and low-cost alternatives to conventional textbooks, lab manuals and other learning materials in classes of all

sizes. At present, individual Ohio State students will spend an average of \$1,200 each year on textbooks.

### **Ohio University**

### **Shawnee State**

### **Toledo**

The institution does not have a university-wide textbook adoption plan. Textbook adoption is left to individual faculty members or departments.

### **Wright State**

The institution does not have a university-wide textbook adoption plan. Textbook adoption is left to individual faculty members or departments.

Only 40% of Fall 2015 courses had textbook listed for the class at the time that students could begin registration. The institution is attempting to improve compliance by encouraging (with frequent emails) faculty to use FacultyEnlight (<https://www.facultyenlight.com>) to place orders and evaluate the cost of alternative textbooks. Enrollment numbers and previously ordered materials are automatically taken from the university's system in a way that allows faculty to determine if new editions and lower cost alternatives are available.

### **Youngstown State**

The institution does not have a university-wide textbook adoption plan. Textbook adoption is left to individual faculty members or departments.