

## REDUCING TEXTBOOK COSTS

Whereas, The Ohio Faculty Council represents the faculty at all of the four-year public universities in the State of Ohio;

Whereas, The Governor's Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency in Higher Education<sup>1</sup> has recommended that all institutions of higher education in Ohio explore means of reducing the cost of textbooks and report annually on their progress in that area;

Whereas, Title I, Section 133 of the federally enacted Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008)<sup>2</sup> requires institutions receiving federal financial aid to disclose required and recommended textbooks as soon as practicable upon the request of a contractually affiliated college bookstore and not later than the time at which students can first begin to register for a course;

Whereas, The timely adoption of textbooks, can allow students to purchase textbooks at a significantly lower cost (e.g. by affecting the supply of used textbooks through the purchase of used books) without compromising quality of instruction;

Whereas, The timely ordering of textbooks would complement other efforts faculty have already embraced to reduce textbook costs (e.g. the adoption of open source/on-line textbooks, the use of earlier editions of textbooks, making textbooks on course reserve through university libraries more accessible, maximizing the possibility that a student could use the same textbook for multiple courses, ensuring that individual faculty know the cost of the books used in their classes);

Whereas, Cleveland State University has found that adopting an "opt-out" policy for textbook ordering (one in which the textbook that has been used by a faculty member for a class in a previous term is selected as the book used by the same faculty member teaching the same class in a subsequent term unless that faculty member affirmatively chooses to use a different text) has resulted in a significant increase in compliance with the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act;

Whereas, An amendment has been added to H.B. 49 (the Main Operating Budget of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Ohio General Assembly) that would require all faculty responsible for assigning textbooks for classes in Ohio's public institutions of higher education to annually file with the Ohio Ethics Commission a disclosure of any benefits (or lack thereof) they receive from textbook publishers;

Whereas, The annual disclosure of benefits that faculty receive from textbook publishers is very unlikely to have any effect upon the cost that Ohio students pay for textbooks.

*Resolved*, The Ohio Faculty Council respectfully requests that the requirement that faculty annually disclose benefits they receive from textbook publishers be removed from H.B. 49 and that institutions instead be encouraged to develop strategies that would make it easier to comply with the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act and for faculty to be aware of the cost of the textbooks used by their students.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohiohighered.org/affordability-efficiency/task-force>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ315/pdf/PLAW-110publ315.pdf>

