

## TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY INITIATIVES

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, No law, policy or administrative action should in any way impinge upon an individual instructor's ability to choose whatever textbooks and other teaching materials (e.g. software, course notes, etc.) they have determined to be most appropriate for the classes that they are assigned to teach;

Whereas, Institutions that negotiate reduced prices for instructional materials with publishers and collect that money through their Bursar's Office using an "Inclusive Access" approach routinely provide course materials at dramatically less than list prices (and, by Department of Education Regulations, "below competitive market rates") for many courses while providing convenience to their students, improved learning, and an assurance to faculty that students will have all required course materials at or before the time of the first meeting of their classes without affecting in any way a faculty member's ability to choose an appropriate textbook;

Whereas, under Federal financial aid rules (and Ohio law), an institution may include the costs of books and supplies as part of tuition and fees, and use Title IV funds to cover those costs without obtaining authorization, if the institution: (a) has an arrangement with a book publisher or other entity that enables it to make those books or supplies available to students at below competitive market rates; (b) provides a way for a student to obtain those books and supplies by the seventh day of a payment period; and (c) has a policy under which the student may opt out of the way the institution provides for the student to obtain books and supplies under this provision;

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 without compromising the quality of instruction;

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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>

Whereas, Students at Ohio's public institutions of higher education pay approximately \$30 million in sales tax on textbook purchases each year and many states support higher education and reduce costs to students by exempting textbook purchases for secondary education from state sales tax (as proposed in the 131<sup>st</sup> Ohio General Assembly's HB 308<sup>3</sup> and in the 132<sup>nd</sup> Ohio General Assembly's HB 337<sup>4</sup>);

Whereas, Many public institutions of higher education in Ohio have realized significant savings to their students (on the order of \$10,000 to \$20,000 in annual savings for each one-time institutional investment of \$1,000) by instituting in-house grant programs that incentivize instructional faculty to create, adopt and/or adapt Open Educational Resources, particularly for high-enrollment courses and in a way that prioritizes: lowering costs to students, maintaining or improving student learning outcomes and satisfaction with course materials, and contributes to the growing body of resources available to the global higher education community; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, Registrars, Bursars, AVPs of Enrollment Management/Directors of Financial Aid, Chief Information Officers, faculty leaders, and campus bookstores at Ohio's public institutions of higher education should explore the possibility of voluntarily adopting a mechanism or mechanisms to reduce textbook costs such as those associated with the institutional negotiating that is the hallmark of an Inclusive Access model that is most appropriate to each individual institution while also exploring the possibility of negotiating in concert with other public institutions of higher education in Ohio; and let it further be

*Resolved*, Ohio's public institutions of higher education should each consider voluntarily creating a program that would facilitate timely textbook adoption that is specific to each institution like Cleveland State University's and Wright State University's "textbook auto adopt" policies that allow the institution's campus bookstore to assume that if an instructor: 1) has taught a course within the past two academic years, and 2) has not identified a textbook prior to the time that students can first enroll for the same course in an upcoming semester, that the instructor will use the same textbook (including edition and format) they had used the last time they taught the course; and let it further be

*Resolved*, The Ohio Faculty Council encourages and supports the adoption of legislation such as the 131<sup>st</sup> Ohio General Assembly's HB 308 and in the 132<sup>nd</sup> Ohio General Assembly's HB 337 that would exempt post-secondary textbooks from state sales tax; and let it further be

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-308>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation?5&pageSize=10&start=1&sort=LegislationNumber&dir=asc&statusCode&legislationNumber=337&generalAssemblies=132>

*Resolved,* The Ohio Department of Higher Education should initiate and administer a competitive grant program that incentivizes instructional faculty at public institutions of higher education in Ohio to voluntarily create, adopt and/or adapt Open Educational Resources particularly for high-enrollment courses.