

To: University Senate
From: Jenna Gravalis, University Senator
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A RESOLUTION to Increase Textbook Affordability by Encouraging Timely Ordering

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WHEREAS Section 3335-5-41-B of the University Faculty Rules states that “The university senate, subject to the authority of the board of trustees, shall have the power [t]o consider, to make recommendations concerning, and (in pursuance of rules pertaining to the university) to act upon matters relating to the rights, responsibilities, and concerns of students, faculty, administrators, and staff”¹; and

WHEREAS the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) recently authored a call to action on textbook affordability, with the following recommendations: improving timely textbook orders, clarifying the distinction between required and recommended textbooks, replacing expensive online access codes with Carmen quizzes, reviewing the necessity of newer textbook editions, reevaluating the merit of OSU special edition textbooks, and expanding the Affordable Learning Exchange (ALX) to reach more faculty²; and

WHEREAS this first action step, timely textbook ordering, can generate prompt and significant student savings without drawing revenue away from the university, making it an ideal target to reduce costs and catalyze further discussion on affordable learning; and

WHEREAS Title I, Section 133 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008) requires institutions receiving federal financial aid to disclose required and recommended textbooks as soon as practicable upon the request of a contractually affiliated college bookstore³; and

WHEREAS Barnes & Noble - The Ohio State University Bookstore (B&N - OSU) requests that faculty textbook orders shortly precede the opening of the course registration window for each term and prefers that orders be received no later than the close of registration⁴; and

¹ <http://trustees.osu.edu/rules/university-rules/chapter-3335-5-faculty-governance-and-committees.html>

² USG Report: Call to Action on Textbook Affordability: goo.gl/xGEupa

³ <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ315/pdf/PLAW-110publ315.pdf>

⁴ Kathy Smith, General Manager, Barnes & Noble - The Ohio State University Bookstore

WHEREAS B&N - OSU receives many faculty orders for Fall courses over the summer, well after their deadline; and

WHEREAS two contributing factors to late textbook orders are a lack of knowledge about the deadline's importance and incomplete Department teaching schedules; and

WHEREAS the shorter timeline for these late orders affects the supply of used textbooks by reducing the window to shop used markets and buy back books from OSU students; and

WHEREAS estimates by B&N - OSU indicate that improved success in meeting the deadline could save students upwards of \$2.5 million annually through a combination of buyback proceeds and greater used textbook availability⁵; and

WHEREAS the state government emphasized textbook affordability in both the proposed FY 18-19 biennial budget⁶ and the recommendations of the Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency in Higher Education⁷, meaning that independent action by OSU could be well received; and

WHEREAS timely ordering efforts would complement ongoing university commitments to textbook affordability, including innovative work by the Council on Distance Education, Libraries, and Information Technology (DELIT) and ALX, which will save students approximately \$1 million by the end of 2017⁸; and

WHEREAS The Association of Big Ten Students (ABTS) recently passed a Resolution Supporting Action on Textbook Affordability, which elevated open source technology and cost transparency⁹; and

WHEREAS USG acknowledges the need to realize short-term cost reductions while also initiating university-wide conversations on long-term solutions to textbook affordability; and

⁵ Methodology, per Smith: For the 2015-2016 academic year, 16% of faculty submitted orders by the beginning of the course registration window. By the end of registration, 24% had submitted. This compliance level yielded \$1.8 million in student savings. Estimates indicate that, *ceteris paribus*, an additional \$2.5 million (for a total of \$4.3 million) in annual student savings could be captured if the compliance rates increased to 70% by the beginning of the registration window and 90% by the close.

⁶ <http://budget.ohio.gov/CollegeCareers.aspx>

⁷ <https://www.ohiohighered.org/affordability-efficiency/task-force>

⁸ <https://affordablelearning.osu.edu/about>

⁹ ABTS Winter Legislative Docket: goo.gl/CskHVH

WHEREAS USG has initially moved to unlock the savings from timely textbook ordering by partnering with faculty leadership, senior administrators, and University Senate Committees;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the University Senate hereby encourages faculty to submit timely textbook orders as soon as practicable and recommends appropriate incentive structures to ensure broad cooperation; and

LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University Senate recognizes the importance of additional action on textbook affordability, including but not limited to open educational resources, and requests a presentation in Fall 2017 by ALX and DELIT to explore appropriate policies.