

A Resolution To Encourage the Adoption of Affordable Practices Regarding Textbook Selection

Kimmy Sullivan (for herself, Samer Abusway, and Maria Vargo) introduced the following resolution into Steering Committee where it passed.

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Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government represents all undergraduate students at The Ohio State University, and

Whereas 67% of Ohio State undergraduate students agree that they feel stressed about their finances,¹ and

Whereas the core goals of President Drake's 2020 Vision are to achieve and maintain access, affordability, and excellence at Ohio State,² and

Whereas undergraduate students at Ohio State, on average, spend \$1,234.00 per year on textbooks and supplies,³ and

Whereas the high price of textbooks places a significant financial burden on students, and

Whereas many newer textbooks include access to online resources where students can complete homework assignments, review problems, and tests, and

Whereas an online access code costs an average of \$100.24 alone, in addition to the cost of the print textbook,⁴ and

Whereas in many cases paying for an access code is a necessity for good performance in the class, as a student who cannot afford access to online materials will be unable to complete assignments, and

Whereas the difference between recommended and required textbooks is often unclear, and

Whereas students often purchase all listed textbooks in order to adequately prepare for classes, but later realize that only a subset are essential to their success in the course, and

¹ <http://cssl.osu.edu/posts/documents/ohio-state-university.pdf>

² <http://president.osu.edu/presidents/drake/speeches-and-statements/investiture-address-march-31-2015.html>

³ <https://sfa.osu.edu/graduate-students/about-aid/financial-aid-eligibility>

⁴ <http://www.studentpirgs.org/news/sp/report-new-trend-college-textbook-market-presents-danger-students>

Whereas the price of required textbooks that are in reality inessential places an extra financial burden on students, and

Whereas students are often required to purchase the latest version of a textbook, and

Whereas over half of faculty believe that the newer versions of textbooks are rarely justified to never justified,⁵ and

Whereas an older version of a textbook frequently provides comparable information at a much lower cost than the new version, and

Whereas professors can require students to purchase special edition textbooks produced specifically for Ohio State, and

Whereas the content of a specialized textbook is in most cases very similar, or even identical, to the general edition, and

Whereas the price of special edition textbooks is often much greater than the general edition with no school name attached,⁶ and

Whereas Barnes and Noble requires professors to request their books for autumn semester by the preceding April 13th, and

Whereas requesting books at a later date unintentionally drives up the cost for students to purchase a textbook, and

Whereas estimates of the overall financial impact on undergraduate students range up to \$2.5 million,⁷ and

Whereas to address issues of textbook affordability the University currently invests in the Affordable Learning Exchange (ALX), and

Whereas ALX is a partnership between USG, University Libraries, the Office of Distance Education and eLearning, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching, and

Whereas one goal of ALX is to save students \$1 million by the end of 2017,⁸ and

⁵ <http://www.studentpirgs.org/news/new-report-shows-college-textbooks-are-ripoff-101>

⁶ <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121565135185141235>

⁷ Geoff Chatas, Chief Financial Officer at The Ohio State University

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

Whereas the goals of ALX coincide with President Drake's 2020 vision,² and

Whereas ALX is a distinguished program with clearly defined goals, but it is not being utilized by enough faculty members;

Therefore Let it Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government advocates for the replacement of online learning materials that require expensive access codes with Carmen quizzes created by professors, and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government supports the adoption and communication of a clear-cut policy recognizing the distinction between recommended and required textbooks, and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government recommends that administration encourage professors to accommodate students purchasing the older version of a textbook if the information in both the newer and older version is the same, and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government recommends that administration encourage professors to reevaluate the necessity of special edition textbooks if the content is comparable to a more cost-friendly option, and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government encourages administration to work with departments and colleges to incentivize professors to submit their Barnes and Noble book orders on time, and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government recommends that administration expand the Affordable Learning Exchange to improve faculty interest in applying for grants through the program.

Floor Vote: Aye: _____ Nay: _____ Present: _____

Gerard Basalla
President

Danielle DiScala
Vice President

Date Adopted: _____

Date Terminated: _____