

A Resolution to Encourage Faculty to Differentiate Between Required and Recommended Textbooks in the Course Syllabus

Salma Shire (for herself, Chase Barnett, Kate Greer, Amraha Nadeem, Leah D’Astolfo, and Nate Smith) introduced the following resolution to the 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 the average Full-Time Undergraduate Student spends an estimated \$1,500 on books and supplies alone,¹ and

Whereas during the 2017-2018 school year, the College Board estimated that tuition and fees constitute 39% of the total budget for in-state students living on campus at public four-year institutions,² and

Whereas the U.S. Public Interest Research Group found in a survey that 65% of college students had at some point decided against buying a college textbook due to its high price,³ and

Whereas required textbooks are essential for success in a course and recommended textbooks supplement the course topic,⁴ and

Whereas numerous first-year students are unfamiliar with the distinction between required and recommended textbooks,⁵ thus resulting in students misinterpreting supplemental course materials as necessary ones, and

Whereas numerous General Education courses will list textbooks as recommended for the course, and

¹ <https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/average-estimated-undergraduate-budgets-2017-18>

² <https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/average-estimated-undergraduate-budgets-2017-18>

³ https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/27/textbooks-prices_n_4675776.html

⁴ https://admissions.msu.edu/planner/academic_resources/textbooks.aspx

⁵ https://usg.osu.edu/initiatives_updates/projects

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36 **Whereas** many students believe that books listed on the course syllabus are required, and

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38 **Whereas** a syllabus is an academic document that communicates course information

39 including required, recommended, and optional studying materials, and

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41 **Whereas** many professors provide students additional printed or scanned material from

42 the course textbooks to aid in their learning experience, and

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44 **Whereas** lack of transparency can result in students purchasing textbooks they will not

45 use, and

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47 **Whereas** students can save hundreds of dollars by being made aware of which textbooks

48 are essential for success in a course and can thus be given the chance to consider more

49 alternative options like rentals and used books,⁶ and

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51 **Whereas** the Undergraduate Student Government has previously taken decisive action on

52 the matter of textbook affordability with the passage of “A Resolution to Increase

53 Textbook Affordability by Encouraging Timely Ordering” through University Senate⁷ in

54 March 2017 and through our partnership and grant distribution with the Affordable

55 Learning Exchange,⁸ and

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57 **Whereas** the clear differentiation between required and recommended learning materials

58 on course syllabi is a next step in the path for greater textbook affordability;

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60 **Therefore, Let it Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government supports

61 affordability initiatives for higher education and will continuously strive to help students

62 save money on their course materials while at The Ohio State University, and

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64 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government encourages

65 consumer awareness for students in regards to textbooks during the rest of their studies,

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68 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government calls upon

69 faculty to set a comprehensive distinction between required, recommended, and optional

70 academic materials in their course syllabi, and

⁶ <https://studentpirgs.org/resources/textbook-price-disclosure-law>

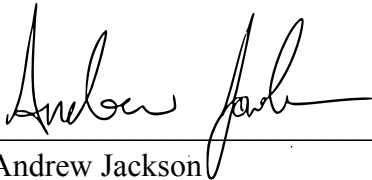
⁷ <http://senate.osu.edu/materials/senate/2017-03-09/RevisedUSGTextbookOrderingWhereas.pdf>

⁸ <https://affordablelearning.osu.edu/news/2017/11/02/affordable-learning-exchange-fund-19-projects-2017-2018>

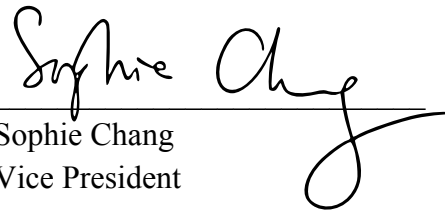
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Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government would also be in favor of a definition guide for students and faculty to determine the distinction between the aforementioned materials.

Floor Vote: Passed with unanimous consent



Andrew Jackson
President



Sophie Chang
Vice President

Date Adopted: February 7, 2018

Date Terminated: _____