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How Faculty Can Help Reduce Student Costs

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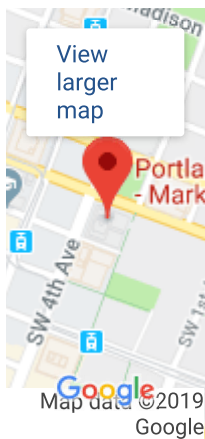
Sona Andrews' Blog

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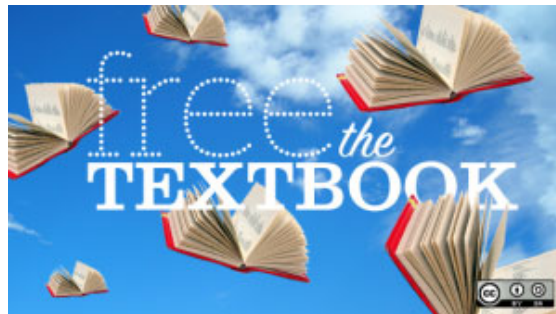
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How Faculty Can Help Reduce Student Costs

Posted on [September 21, 2016](#) by [Sona Andrews](#)



Goal #1 of PSU's Strategic Plan is to *Elevate Student Success*. The first

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initiative is to put students first by reducing the cost of completing a PSU degree.

I blogged two years ago about how the [cost of course materials impact the cost of a degree](#). At that time, the College Board estimated the 2013-14 cost for textbooks and supplies for the average undergraduate to be \$1,207. That cost increased to \$1,298 for FY 2015-16. In some cases, the cost of course materials exceeds a course's tuition.

PSU's efforts to reduce cost

PSU has been hard at work the past two years with a number of initiatives designed to reduce the cost of course materials. In fall 2014, Library Dean Marilyn Moody, the Faculty Senate, [ASPSU](#), and Academic Affairs created "[The Task Force on Textbook Affordability](#)".

Their comprehensive report, [Textbooks and Course Materials: Reducing Student Costs](#) served as a roadmap for PSU. I have periodically reported on the progress of this work through [my blogs](#) and reports to the Faculty Senate.

Checklists for Faculty and Department Chairs

As part of the initiative, I asked department chairs and staff to

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volunteer to discuss and develop guidelines that faculty and departments can adopt to reduce the cost of course materials.

A **big thank you** to Civil Engineering Chair, Chris Monsere; SBA Executive Director of Graduate Business Programs, Pamela Dusschee; Library faculty member, Sarah Beasley; and PSU Bookstore Manager, Cory Adamski, for agreeing to work with me to develop strategies and a [checklist for faculty](#) and for [department chairs](#) on how to reduce the cost of course materials.

While it is a faculty member's decision on what materials are required in a course, the [faculty checklist](#) has information, strategies and resources on low-cost adoptions and how to work with the Library and the PSU Bookstore to understand more about the pricing of bundles, selection of content, age of materials, customization, OERs (Open Educational Resources) and sell backs by students. Submitting required course materials to the Bookstore on time is one of the easiest and biggest cost saving measures for students. For **[Winter term, orders are due to the Bookstore by October 15.](#)**

The [checklist for chairs](#) has information on assessing the total

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required textbook costs of a department, how to streamline the textbook ordering process, and the suggestion to encourage faculty to discuss pedagogy and the course materials.

Legislation requiring designation of low-cost or no-cost course materials

In 2016, the Oregon Legislature passed **Oregon House Bill 2871** (SECTION 4): *Each public university listed in ORS 352.002 and community college shall prominently designate courses whose course materials exclusively consist of open or free textbooks or other low-cost or no-cost course materials. The course designation required by this section must appear in the published course descriptions that are on the Internet or are otherwise provided to students at the time of course registration, including on the campus bookstore course materials list that is provided for the course.*

PSU needs to comply with HB 2871. The good news is that Registrar, Cindy Baccar, has been working with the Academic Leadership Team (ALT) and others to establish basic principles for PSU's implementation of HB 2871.

- We have defined low-cost as \$50 or less. The *Low-Cost Icon*

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will be used in the class schedule when the total cost of all required textbooks and/or course reading materials, excluding such things as calculators, software, lab equipment, etc.

- We will have a plan to prepare chairs and faculty for the change. This blog is the first of a number of notices.
- PSU will first begin using the designation in **Summer 2017**. Summer 2017 scheduling drafts sent to units in January will include instructions on when/how to add the *Low-Cost Icon*.
- **April 24, 2017**: Summer schedule goes live with the new icon.

Additional Progress in FY16

Faculty, staff and administrators continue to make progress (See the Reducing Student Costs [Implementation Status Update as of June 2016](#) for more information):

- PSU [joined the Open Textbook Network](#) and two PSU librarians have participated in the [Open Textbook Network Annual Summit](#) and will provide workshops for PSU on an ongoing basis.

- Eleven PSU Faculty-Authored [Open Textbooks](#) have been created and are accessible worldwide. An additional [seven faculty proposals](#) have been funded and in the process of being authored and published.
- PSU received a [\\$515,000 grant](#) from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), which focuses on personalized learning using adaptive courseware that is free or low cost.
- A brochure, "[What can you do to reduce the cost of a university education](#)" and two online guides for faculty, [Open Educational Resources \(OERs\)](#) and [Guide for SBA Faculty: Textbooks/Course Reserves/Permanent Links](#) were authored.
- The Library made copies of required textbooks for PSU's largest enrollment courses available on [Library course reserves](#) for short-term checkout to students.
- The [Copyright Task Force](#) is in the process of revising our copyright ownership policy and copyright guidance documents.

I have no doubt that our students will appreciate everything faculty members can do to reduce the costs of course

materials. Doing so contributes to lowering the bottom line on college affordability.

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