Cut it Out!
Slashing Course Material Costs in Higher Ed without Sacrificing Quality

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Who We Are

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Learning goals for this session:

- Discuss the average cost of course materials in college courses.
- Examine ways in which institutions are approaching cost reduction in course materials.
- Assemble a list of resources available to faculty and designers to help design high-quality courses with cost in mind.
Numbers at FIU

54,000 Number of students attending FIU in Spring 2016

1 in nation in awarding bachelor's and master's degrees to Hispanic students

10 among the 10 largest public universities in the United States

#1 Passing rate for the College of Law on the Florida Bar Exam in 2015 and 2016

200,000 Number of Panther alumni around the world
Numbers at FIU Online

833 Faculty

35,253 Students

39 Degree Programs
- 21 Undergraduate
- 18 Graduate

970 Unique Online Courses

26% Student Credit Hours
300+ Quality Matters certified courses

Ranked 2nd in the U.S. in certified courses

1st among all public institutions
FIU Online Teams

- **Instructional Design Teams**: Faculty collaboration
- **Multimedia Team**: Creation of video, graphic design, and other multimedia elements
- **Support Services Team**: Student and faculty technical support
- **Technology Team**: Online learning technology support and maintenance
- **Marketing and Recruitment Team**: Market programs and enroll students for fully-online programs
Faculty:
How much does your course textbook(s) cost?
$200.00

What does this get you?
Dell - Inspiron 11.6" Laptop - Intel Celeron - 4GB Memory - 32GB eMMC Flash Memory - Bali blue

Model: I31620003BLU   SKU: 5618116   3.8 (8)   17 Questions, 18 Answers

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What’s the highest textbook cost you’ve seen?

https://padlet.com/lolivo/textbookcosts
New survey finds nearly half of college students go hungry

PAT SCHNEIDER | The Capital Times | pschneider@madison.com  Oct 7, 2016

Ron Johnson says he will make any Clinton Supreme Court picks 'strongly vetted'

Resolution would allow residents to vote on sidewalk construction in Madison neighborhoods

Issue advocacy groups pour into Wisconsin's 14th Senate race

Tammy Baldwin says FBI director nominee has 'skeletons in closet'
Survey Highlights

- **3,765** students, across 8 community colleges and 26 four-year colleges in 12 states
- **48%** of respondents reported food insecurity in the previous month.
- Of these, **22%** reported circumstances that qualify them as hungry.
We know there’s an affordability problem...
FIU’s 2020 & Florida’s 2025 Plans

- FIU’s Beyond Possible 2020 Plan calls for an improvement and increased enrollment in online education, with an emphasis on incentivizing the adoption of low-cost textbooks (Strategy 3B, pg. 20).

- State of Florida’s 2025 Strategic Plan calls for a reduction on the cost of educational materials for students (Strategy 2.1, pg. 13).
Affordability Counts Framework
What is Affordability Counts?

- It’s an initiative to recognize faculty who are actively making changes to reduce the cost of course materials to students.
- Faculty self-identify as teaching courses that contain course materials that are $60 or under (total out-of-pocket expenses for students).
- A committee then reviews the course syllabus to ensure that total cost of materials are at or under the $60 threshold.
- Courses that meet the target price and the selection criteria then receive a recognition known as the ‘Affordability Counts’ medallion.
Affordability Counts Goals

- Respond to rising costs of higher education and course materials
- Address FIU’s 2020 and Florida’s 2025 plans
- Recognize faculty actively making efforts to reduce costs
- Provide a searchable database of “affordable” course materials
How is it different?

- **Other affordability initiatives usually require the use of OERs**
  - OERs are the best...however, obtaining a completely free course is hard to do.

- **You can have materials that cost up to $60**
  - What if there’s a GREAT course material that you want to use, but it costs a couple of bucks?
    - $60 is still affordable for students
  - Gives faculty a little bit of leeway (ability to use low-cost publishers)

- **No incentives** - $0.00 spent on stipends to faculty

- **Builds up a database of affordable course materials**
  - Affordable materials are shared with others on a searchable website.
History of Affordability Counts

- April 2016: Program ‘sneak peak’ at distance education conference
- June 2016: Official launch of Affordability Counts program
- August 2016: 1st Award Session
- October 2016: Affordability Counts Day
- January 2017: 2nd Award Session
- June 2017: 3rd Award Session
- June 2017: OpenStax Partnership Begins
- August 2017: 4th Award Session
Stats

- Program kicked off June 2016
- We’ve held 3 award sessions
  - Fall ’16
  - Spring ’17,
  - Summer ’17
- Since then, 155 courses now carry the Affordability Counts Medallion
Faculty’s course total cost is $60 or less
Faculty submits course on lowcost.fiu.edu
Committee reviews course
Faculty receives recognition and can display Medallion in syllabus & LMS
Selection Criteria

- The total cost of course materials must be $20 per credit hour or less (e.g., 3-credit courses must not exceed $60).
- The total cost must cover all required course materials (i.e., textbook, course pack, lab materials, etc.).
- The total cost is determined by what it costs to purchase the course material in new condition.
  - If the course materials are not purchased through the FIU Bookstore, links to the applicable retailer must be clearly present on the course overview page and the syllabus.
  - If the course materials have been officially placed on course reserve at the FIU Library and are available at no cost to the student, purchase of these materials is not required to meet the selection criteria.
- The course cannot have been recognized for the Affordability Counts medallion previously with the same course materials.
Average cost of materials

- Out of the 155 courses with the Medallion...
- Average costs of materials: $21.28
Faculty Highlights
What are faculty doing to reduce costs?

- Post journal articles (links from library) to replace/eliminate textbook chapters ($0.00).
- Use free-to-use videos and other media resources (NBC Learn, Lynda.com).
- Incorporate publisher access codes (varying from $45 to $60).
- Talk to your textbook publisher and ask them to lower the cost for students.
- Self-publish (use open resources and remix it).
- Use OER and low-cost books: [http://lowcost.fiu.edu/learn/](http://lowcost.fiu.edu/learn/).
Dr. Michael Brown

- PAD5934, PAD3438
- Published his own book after being unhappy with the available options for textbooks in his subject
- Cost: $24.95
- Supplemented with web resources

http://insider.fiu.edu/achieving-tailored-lower-cost-learning/
Prof. Rodolfo Rego

- EVR1001L (Lab Section)
- Content on government site, which has no copyright restrictions
- Compilation of this with his own content, packaged for students
- Cost: FREE
Prof. Lorena Canelon

- PET3325L (Lab Course)
- BYOB
- Cost: Varies

Textbook

In an effort to reduce expenses, you can use ANY anatomy textbook (even the same one you are using for the lecture); any author, any edition. If you want to check a book you have with me, please let me know. What you have, it will work perfectly most of the times!

You must have an anatomy textbook for this course.

The following, is the recommended (but not mandatory) textbook but remember ANY anatomy textbook will do the job!
Prof. Maikel Alendy

- IDH3034/3035
- Course materials used: videos, webpages, podcasts and PDFs
Discussion:
What happens when you lose your publisher resources?
What we found:

- Faculty really care about how much students are spending and will go to great lengths to make their courses affordable
- Publishers will negotiate and lower prices
- Faculty like (love?) to display their Affordability Counts Medallion on their syllabus and LMS
Key Components of the Program

- Website
- Committee
- Recognition
- Communication
- Partners
OpenStax Partnership

[FIU Online logo] + [OpenStax logo]
OpenStax Partnership

- June 2017: FIU was 1 of 11 schools selected for the 2017-2018 OpenStax Institutional Partnership Program
- OpenStax is a nonprofit organization based at Rice University that publishes openly-licensed books
- Over 30 titles, completely free to use, remix, redistribute
- FIU will receive consulting services to assess and improve our OER efforts, tech support for adoption of OpenStax content, webinars, and more.
New OER Medallion

AC Medallion - $60 or less

OER Medallion - FREE
Website: lowcost.fiu.edu

- Lists all medallion recipients using SUS common course numbering system
- Outlines research about importance of affordability in higher education
- Contains resources for finding OER and low-cost course materials
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Questions?
THANK YOU!