

Textbook Affordability at Carleton College: An analysis of resources, processes, and practice

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Textbook Affordability at Carleton College

Carolyn Livingston, Vice President and Dean of Students; Art Rodriguez, Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid; and Eric Runestad, Vice President and Treasurer, convened a working group to explore textbook resources, processes, and affordability at Carleton College. The purpose of the working group was to document the narrative regarding textbook affordability to better understand and improve alignment of Carleton's processes that address textbook resources. The White Paper frames the general landscape, key challenges, current practices as well as gaps in practice, and provides ideas and recommendations for improvement.

How is financial aid being used to purchase books? What processes are in place now?

Books and supplies are a mandatory part of the Cost of Attendance (COA) for students who apply for financial aid. Carleton determines the books and supplies allotment through a question on the Senior Survey. Data is typically collected every three years to update the COA as appropriate based on the feedback from graduating seniors. The most recent survey data was collected in 2020. Students were asked: "How much on average did you spend each year on books and supplies (e.g., copies, printing, pens, paper, pencils, etc.) each year while attending Carleton?" with a response slider starting at \$0 and topping out at \$1,800. Appendix A provides the cumulative responses. In short, "44% of seniors reported spending between \$0 and \$300 on books and supplies. 79% said they spent less than \$600, and 93% said they spent less than \$900. Using the midpoint from each interval, the average student said they spent \$410 on books and supplies each year."

Since books are part of the COA, this expense is considered in Carleton's commitment to meet 100% of a student's demonstrated need. If a student accepts financial aid (grants/scholarships or loans) in excess of their comprehensive fee charges, then they will have an available refund. Access to this refund is dependent upon the timing of the financial aid disbursement process. Financial aid is not fully disbursed until the census date (typically the Monday of the second week) each term so that the College can confirm how many hours a student is enrolled in and pay aid on the appropriate enrollment level. The delayed disbursement means any refund is not available until after the second week of classes has begun. Furthermore, a student must contact the Business Office by email to request the refund as Carleton does not automatically process excess aid. The current disbursement and refund process timeline means that students may not receive textbooks until the third week of classes depending on where the textbooks are purchased. Additionally, any student employment earnings are not available at the beginning of fall term so this resource is unavailable to assist with textbooks until winter term. Based on the survey conducted by the Student Employment Sub-Committee, 107 students out of the 570 who completed the survey indicated that books are generally how they spend their employment earnings. The following data provide an estimate of how many students may have an available refund based on the initial financial aid offer.

	Total Grant Greater than Comp Fee	Total Aid (Grant, Work, Loans) Greater than Comp Fee
Total Students	47	147
Average Amount	\$2,700	\$3,166
Median Amount	\$2,714	\$2,840

There is also a selection of students who receive an "Actual Book Scholarship", which is disbursed to them the week prior to the start of the term. Those students are emailed by the Student Financial Aid Office about the scholarship, and are required to contact the Student Account Manager in the Business Office to receive those funds to purchase textbooks. The Business Office estimates that they receive around 5-10 requests per term as the majority of students use these funds to decrease their overall balance due.

How does the timing of financial aid disbursements impact a student's ability to afford books?

The current financial aid disbursement process prevents students from accessing their refund to purchase textbooks until after the first week of classes. This delay means that students are already one week behind, or have gone 10% of the course without a textbook. It could be delayed even further depending upon when the textbook is ordered and received. The alternative option is that students will purchase textbooks with other funding (i.e., savings, credit cards, etc.) and then reimburse this payment method using the refund. Students who utilize student employment earnings for textbook purchases also do not have access to this funding until two or more weeks into the term based on their start date and payment date.

The current disbursement and refund policies were created to support previously observed student behaviors. The prior disbursement policy paid aid 10 days before the start of the term, which meant that students had the opportunity to receive access to a refund prior to starting classes. There were situations when a student received a refund and did not enroll, which meant that the student was asked to immediately repay the refund back to the college. The current disbursement policy prevents this situation from happening since enrollment is confirmed prior to fully paying financial aid. Additionally, financial aid is not automatically refunded because the federal financial aid allocation does not exceed Carleton's tuition charge, which means that a refund amount can be withheld unless a student requests it. Carleton families prepay for future terms, either out-of-pocket or through accumulation of student employment earnings. By not refunding the excess amount, it will automatically apply to the bill next term.

What kind of an impact would allowing students to charge books at the bookstore make?

Carleton currently does not have an interface built between the bookstore (Barnes and Noble) and student accounts. The interface would have to be built into the new Workday system once the implementation phase is complete. Please refer to Appendix B to review the total cost and volume of books sold on-campus over the last two years.

Allowing students to charge textbooks to their student accounts could result in large “balance due” on their accounts, since a majority of students do not have a credit to cover books and supplies. However, it would also allow students to pay their book charges throughout the term by using their student employment earnings.

What internal aid is available for students to purchase books (e.g., Class of 1972 startup fund, DOS emergency funding, etc.)?***DOSO Emergency Funding***

The Dean of Students Office (DOSO) provides financial support to full-time Carleton students who need assistance purchasing textbooks or are experiencing financial hardship due to an unanticipated event. Emergency funds are distributed on a case-by-case basis and do not need to be repaid. Students must have exhausted all other possible financial resources before applying to receive funds. The amount given is determined by the need of the student and subject to the availability of the funds.

Textbook vouchers are distributed using the following guidelines:

- First-year students: first term, up to \$200; second and third terms, up to \$150
- Sophomores: Two terms of up to \$100 each
- Juniors: One term of up to \$100
- Seniors: One term of up to \$100

Class of '72 “Get Started Fund”

The Get Started Fund provides \$500 grants to students with high financial need for any startup expense incurred by the student. Funds can be used to purchase textbooks or other related costs and are disbursed to eligible students via grants, not loans. Students who meet the criteria of the program are informed before they arrive on campus that they are eligible for this assistance. The aid is provided through the Admissions Office and paid from the Business Office. In the initial year of the program, roughly 120 domestic and international students received support through the Get Started Fund.

Students with the most financial need automatically qualify for the grant, which they receive 2-3 weeks before the fall term. The funds are disbursed via direct deposit to the student's bank

account on file with the Business Office. If a bank account is not set-up, then students will receive a paper check when they arrive on campus.

Based on conversations with TRIO students, it was shared that some of the TRIO students who received the grant used it to purchase course workbooks, which the College was not permitted to purchase through TRIO's Lending Library until recently. The recipients of the Get Started Fund were not formally asked how the grant was spent because the intention of the funding was to allow students to best support their individual needs as they determined appropriate.

Where are the textbook libraries on campus? Who is managing those?

The College provides the following textbook libraries on campus:

- TRIO Textbook Lending Library (for TRIO students only)
- Office of Intercultural Life Library
- Gender and Sexuality Center Library
- Center for Community and Civic Engagement
- Various academic departments (e.g., Math/stats, Spanish)
- Limited textbooks in Gould Library (library reserves)

Gould library provides materials for course reserves and the general collection. Course reserves include any required course materials, such as textbooks, DVDs, and CDs. Electronic sources are placed in Moodle by faculty. As standard practice, Gould library will place course materials on reserve regularly and the number of available copies varies depending on the course (typically 1-2 copies per course). The library staff will place workbooks and solution manuals on reserve if these materials are available for purchase from the publisher. However, space and budget constraints limit the number of available textbooks on reserve. Additionally, materials can be hard to obtain if access codes are specific to the textbook and/or the publisher refuses to sell ebooks to libraries. The average allotted checkout limit is 2-hours up to 2-days depending on the material.

Gould Library Course Reserve Usage

Year	2-Day Reserve Checkouts (Books)	2-Hour Reserve Checkouts (Books)	4-hour Reserve Checkouts (Media/Tech)
2019	364	7978	2181
2020	68	2438	1014
2021	101	992	466

2022	100	2012	1907
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The Gould Library also provides the [Open Textbooks and Open Educational Resources](#), an online guide for faculty members seeking to incorporate open textbooks and educational resources into their courses. Resources include:

- Open Textbook Library from the University of Minnesota
- Openly Available Sources Integrated Search (OASIS)
- Libre Texts
- Open Educational Resources (OER) Commons
- OpenStax
- BC Campus OpenEd
- The California State University Open Resources related to a specific book
- GALILEO Open Learning Materials

How could TRIO or the library advance or inform this work?

The TRIO Lending Library could serve as a model for the College, which could be expanded to include all students with high financial need. Through generous financial support from the College, the TRIO library provides textbooks, workbooks, and access codes to TRIO students for a nominal fee (\$25/term). Money generated from the student fee is deposited into the Lending Library budget to purchase new or additional books. Before the start of each term, TRIO staff contact students about required textbooks. TRIO students complete a brief questionnaire that includes information about their courses and required books. Staff determine whether the required texts are currently available in the TRIO Lending Library. Students check-out available books at the Lending Library once they arrive on campus and are required to return the textbook(s) at the end of the term. If the textbooks are not currently available, students are instructed to purchase the books through the Carleton Bookstore using a coupon code. This specific code notifies the Bookstore that the books should be charged to the TRIO Lending Library budget. Before purchases are finalized, the Bookstore verifies that the students are TRIO students. Students then pick up their textbooks from the Bookstore. TRIO spent approximately \$24,000 on the Lending Library in 2022. The operating cost of the Lending Library increased in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID. TRIO spent just under \$33,000 and \$32,000 respectively due to increased shipping. In 2019, TRIO spent \$23,000 on the Lending Library. Some of the challenges of the TRIO Lending Library include the significant time spent managing and organizing the library, limited space, confidentiality for students, faculty's unwillingness to provide the Bookstore with a list of their course materials, and difficulty obtaining certain books.

Gould Library could advance this work in the following ways:

1. Educate the community about the vast number of resources Gould provides,

2. Educate the community about Open Education Resources and support faculty as they use OERs, and
3. Provide expertise with copyright, understanding OER landscape, and Carleton Digital Commons.

How aware are our faculty about textbook access and affordability concerns?

A survey was sent to all faculty to solicit feedback on textbook access and affordability. Of the entire faculty, 45 responses were received.

- 86.67% of faculty shared that fewer than 5 students per term ask for textbook accommodations.
- 86.96% of faculty shared that fewer than 5 students per term share concerns about textbook expenses.
 - When approached with concerns, 51.92% of faculty recommend students utilize the available resources on campus (TRIO/DOSO/CSA, department libraries, library copies) and 26.92% offer a PDF version or use of an older edition.
- 73.91% of faculty responded that textbook affordability is a major consideration when selecting textbooks each term.
- 58.97% of respondents have created a textbook library in their department and 86.96% offer alternative textbook options (journals, PDFs, free textbooks).

Coded responses from open ended faculty questions

What are some approaches you recommend to students who have concerns about accessing the required textbook(s)?

52 total responses; some responses included 1+ approach

Approaches	Total Responses	Percentage
Recommend available resources on-campus -TRIO/DOSO/CSA -Lending libraries within depts -Library copy	27	51.92%
PDF version/ask publisher for access prior to term	14	26.92%
Assign chapter titles, not page numbers (easier for older editions)	2	3.85%
Share with friends	4	7.69%
Dept uses free textbook(s)	4	7.69%

Dept uses OER	1	1.92%
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Please share any additional thoughts.

- Science/CS/some courses are expensive so limited options are available (2)
- No concerns have been directly raised.
- Campus-wide lending/loaning library ((Deanna Haunsperger suggestion, husband proposed it previously) / not limit # of books available per course (4)
- Buy textbooks for students using financial aid/wish that financial need didn't impact ability to purchase books; look at books COA component (6)
- Students may not understand reason that specific textbooks matter, so they opt to buy the least expensive version instead of the recommended one; use of PDFs impacts class due to reliance on computer and may be an ethical concern depending upon how PDFs are acquired (3)
- Sometimes vouchers on campus don't arrive timely so students are late to accessing materials
- OER may compromise quality of textbooks
- Working with publisher to reduce textbook prices, only to have the bookstore markup the discounted rate 25%
- Ask students to donate old textbooks to department; consider purchasing them from students
- Explaining to students the rationale for the structure of textbook funding would help make the process more transparent to students and convey to them a greater sense of fairness around textbooks.

How can the Provost's office help address these challenges?

Currently, communication between the Library, faculty, and the Bookstore is ineffective. Faculty fail to coordinate with the Library for books to be placed on reserve or communicate effectively with the Bookstore for required texts and materials. As a result, Library staff must manually review courses to find what texts are being used. Additionally, required materials are sometimes not available when students try to purchase materials from the Bookstore or checkout textbooks that should be on reserve. The Provost's Office could help increase communication between the Bookstore, Library, and faculty thus ensuring that required materials are placed on reserve and/or available in the Bookstore in a timely manner.

What are our peer schools doing in this area? What is working with those approaches, and what is not?

The peer schools who responded to our request for information provided a number of options for students to purchase or receive text books. The cumulative data is referenced in

Appendix D. These options include student account charges, text book libraries available for student use, and emergency funding programs that students can apply for to purchase books.

Some institutions such as Brown University have launched programs to cover textbook and course material costs for first year students with the highest financial need.

Another emerging option for institutions is to include text book expenses into each student's tuition or comprehensive fee. Some peer schools like Cornell recently implemented an academic materials program that provides undergraduate students at Cornell with access to their required textbooks and course packs for a single flat-rate cost, \$225 per semester.

All materials in the academic materials program are provided in a digital format through an online portal available for students to access no later than the first day of classes. All undergraduates are automatically enrolled in the program (there is an opt out option for students who do not want to participate).

Barnes and Noble offers a similar program for institutions called "First Day Complete". The First Day program also allows institutions to bundle course materials as part of a student's tuition or course charge.

Challenges related to these programs include requiring students to receive their materials through a single source (campus bookstore). Ensuring faculty course adoptions are completed well in advance for each term, so materials can be sourced and received prior to the start of classes. Concerns around the methodology used to calculate the universal fee for all students is also challenging as some students inevitably pay more and some pay less for the materials their individual courses require. The student cost for these programs are determined by finding the median cost for all enrolled courses.

The majority of our peer schools allow students to charge textbooks at the campus bookstore to their student accounts. Most schools limit aid fund usage to textbooks and supplies. They do not allow charges for food, clothing, or gifts.

Most schools limit the financial aid window to charge for textbooks as well:

- St. Olaf--eight weeks, opens August 1, closes Sept 30 (their term started on 9/7 this year)
- Concordia St. Paul--six-week window, four weeks pre-term start to 2 weeks after term start. Students with VA funds are allowed to charge at any time.
- Southern Minnesota State University (SMSU)-- four weeks total, 3 weeks pre-term start to 1 week after term start.

Some colleges do have issues with 2nd-half courses, as the window to charge books and supplies to student accounts is closed prior to the start of those courses. Communication to students regarding funds availability and when the program ends mitigates some of these challenges.

At Barnes and Noble (contracted) schools determine the criteria for charging materials, lists are provided to the college bookstore by the business office/student finance office in a file that loads into the Barnes and Noble accounting “Peoplesoft” software (just like department charges).

- St. Olaf allows all students to charge up to \$750 on their account, which is billed to the student or deducted from available aid funds after the charge period ends.
- Concordia limits financial aid charges as determined by the Financial Aid office. Funds are deducted from available aid prior to disbursement.
- SMSU-- any student that receives any type of financial aid, grant, or scholarship from any institution is allowed to charge to their university SFA account. The bookstore would guess over 90% of students have access to SFA charging.

Based on early discussions, the following information was collected from students through a survey sent to the entire student body. The responses reflect the information shared from the 211 respondents. Please note that some responses allowed 1+ selection.

- 60.19% of respondents do not consider textbook costs when selecting courses.
- Students purchase textbooks in a variety of ways, but the most common are purchase/rent from the bookstore, purchase/rent from Amazon, or borrow copies from friends. 94.59% of respondents are aware of the bookstore’s textbook rental program.
- 69.19% of respondents do not utilize the library course reserve system. When asked why students do not use the reserve system, 65.22% indicated they were not aware of the option and the remaining students indicated there are concerns with the current check-out policy and availability of book copies.
- 41.38% of students prefer a textbook because a majority of them learn better with a hard copy, while 40.39% said “it depends” when asked if they prefer textbook or PDF.
- 70.27% of students are aware that books/supplies are part of the indirect costs associated with the financial aid award and understand that they may have the responsibility to cover these costs.

Recommendations

After extensive review of the information gathered, the working group recommends the following ideas for improvement:

- **Clarify the financial aid refund process.** The current process, which is not clearly outlined on the Student Account website, in the Campus Handbook, or in Student Account communications, may serve as a barrier to students who need access to that money but do not understand that it is available or how to request it. Part of this clarification can include clear guidance on the financial aid availability and the expectation for book purchases. This recommendation may be supported through implementation of Workday.

- **Create a program that allows eligible students to purchase textbooks and limited materials at the campus Bookstore and charge the cost to their student account.** For example, Macalester offers the [Textbook Advance Program](#), which allows eligible students to purchase books at the campus bookstore and charge the cost to their Macalester student account. Students then have the entire semester to pay the charge, rather than requiring students to pay the cost immediately. This is particularly helpful to students who need to use their on-campus job earnings to pay for their books and/or materials. At Macalester, "eligible" students have been categorized as students who are Federal Pell eligible or have a Total Family Contribution of \$5,000 or less. We recommend aligning this eligibility criteria with other programs, such as the Get Started Fund.
- **Continue existing emergency and grant funding**, such as the Dean of Students Office Emergency Funding and the Get Started Fund. Increase awareness about these resources and encourage students to use these resources to offset the cost of textbooks. Collaboration with Student Financial Aid should be included in this recommendation to ensure that the process is within federal regulations.
- **Increase communication between faculty, the campus Bookstore, and Gould library** regarding required materials so that textbooks are placed on reserve and/or available in the Bookstore in a timely manner.
- **Revise the library course reserves.** Increase the number of copies available in the Library's course reserve for all required texts and ensure that there are multiple copies for all classes. Additionally, increase the loan periods for print reserve materials and allow students to take the print materials out of the library.
- **Explore expanding TRIO's Lending Library** to include all students with high financial need or explore creating a lending library model similar to TRIO's that is housed within Gould Library and open to all students.
- **Explore a partnership with the Computer Science program to create technology to support a textbook sharing-economy/app-based approach** in which students can list and request used textbooks anonymously. This resource could support reinstatement of the CSA lending library. Recommendation was shared by a faculty member and more details can be discussed if needed.
- **Increase awareness of existing on-campus resources.** Carleton offers several resources for students in need of affordable textbooks and faculty who wish to use alternative options. The College should increase awareness of the following:
 - Carleton Bookstore Textbook Rental Program. Through Carleton's Barnes and Noble Bookstore, students can [rent textbooks](#) for the term and save up to 50% compared to the cost of new, printed materials. The Bookstore accepts most forms of payment, including financial aid. However, students are required to provide a credit card which is kept on file to cover the cost of damages and late fees. Additionally, normal use of highlighting and writing in rented textbooks is

permitted. The College should promote and increase publicity of the Bookstore rental program as one affordable option for students.

- Gould Library resources, including but not limited to course reserves, electronic resources (e.g., available journals, research database and digital collections, ebooks, etc.), and Open Education Resources.
- Academic Departments' Lending Libraries.
- **Based on feedback from faculty, a college-wide policy is needed to detail what expenses are covered by departments/comprehensive fee**, whether it be supplies or textbooks. However, the faculty should maintain pedagogical integrity in their ability to choose textbooks. There seems to be inconsistencies in how departments support students with textbooks and supplies. Additionally, the requirement for low-income students to continually ask for textbook support in classes may continue to emphasize the poverty tax felt by our lowest income students who continually need to prove they need additional support.

Appendix A

The data in this report came from the 2020 Senior Survey, conducted in May 2020. 57% of seniors completed the entire survey and 59% completed at least half of the items. Students who were male, first generation, had an ethnicity that included “Black/African American”, or were International were significantly less likely than other students to respond to the survey. To correct for this bias in the sample, the results reported below have been adjusted to provide an estimate of what the results would have been, had 100% of graduating seniors completed the survey¹.

In an average year, how much did you spend at Carleton on books and supplies (e.g. printing, pens, etc.)?

Level	perc	cum.perc
\$0 - \$300	44%	44%
\$301 - \$600	35%	79%
\$601 - \$900	14%	93%
\$901 - \$1200	5%	98%
\$1201 - \$1500	1%	99%
\$1501 - \$1800	1%	100%

44% of seniors reported spending between \$0 and \$300 on books and supplies. 79% said they spent less than \$600, and 93% said they spent less than \$900. Using the midpoint from each interval, the average student said they spent \$410 on books and supplies each year. The plot below examines the distribution of estimated book expenses by major. Double-majors are counted separately for each major, and the means below are weighted to compensate for bias in the sample due to non-response.

Estimated annual expenses for books and supplies, by major

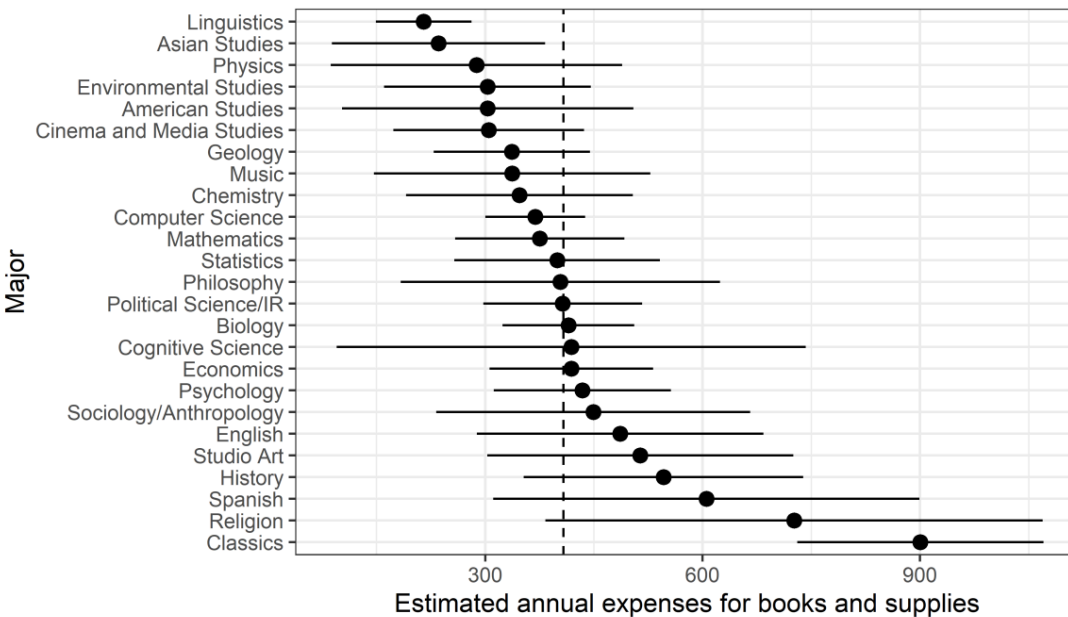


Figure 1: Estimated expenses for books and supplies, by major. Circles are means and horizontal whiskers are 95% confidence intervals. Dashed vertical line indicates the overall average.

In Figure 1, majors whose confidence intervals (the horizontal whiskers extending to the left and right of the mean) do not cross the dashed line (the overall mean) have means that are significantly above or below the overall mean. In this case, two majors have estimated book expenses that are significantly below the overall mean: Linguistics and Asian Studies. Only one major – Classics – had estimated book expenses that were significantly above the overall average.

Appendix B**Carleton Bookstore Sales from FY21 and FY22**

	FY21			FY22	
<u>Sales (in-store & online)</u>	\$	Units		\$	Units
New Textbooks	153,050	3,124		168,661	3,808
Used Textbooks	88,752	3,158		78,802	2,630
Publisher Rentals	2,701	33		4,695	58
Printed Access Cards	29,516	243		36,307	192
New Textbook Rentals	101,262	2,543		91,469	2,715
Used Textbook Rentals	80,949	3,649		80,024	3,261
Digital Textbooks	18,380	487		25,971	529
Total Textbooks	474,608	13,237		485,929	13,193

Appendix C

What research is out there that could guide our way in addressing this challenge?

Celick, O. & Peck, R. (2015). If you expand, they will come: Textbook affordability through expansion of course reserves: The case of UCLA library's course reserves via strategic partnership with the campus independent bookstore. *Technical Services Quarterly*, 33(3). 268 - 278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07317131.2016.1169788>.

Abstract

With the rising costs of textbooks, their affordability and accessibility in college and university campuses has emerged as a major financial obstacle for students. This challenge presents an opportunity for academic and research libraries in providing access to textbooks quickly without further straining student financial resources. Textbooks and purchases for course reserves have traditionally been excluded from the majority of academic and research libraries' collection-development policies. Encouraging libraries to re-evaluate and re-strategize this traditional approach to textbook purchasing and course reserves is critical. Embracing more textbooks and expanding the course reserves has the potential to significantly improve user services in learning and teaching across campuses. Ultimately, this evolving role for academic libraries provides another opportunity to demonstrate their value to campus administration and communities.

College Textbook Affordability: Landscape, Evidence, and Policy Directions. Policy Report Jaggars, Shanna Smith; Rivera, Marcos D.; Akani, Briana. Midwestern Higher Education Compact (not a peer reviewed source). [ERIC - ED598412 - College Textbook Affordability: Landscape, Evidence, and Policy Directions. Policy Report, Midwestern Higher Education Compact, 2019-Sep](#)

Across the Midwest, colleges and universities are saving students millions of dollars through textbook affordability initiatives, primarily through OER creation and adoption programs and Inclusive Access bulk-purchase discount programs. Notable examples of textbook affordability initiatives include Indiana University's eTexts Initiative and Ohio's Open Ed Collaborative. The two initiatives take very different approaches to addressing textbooks costs, and each serves as a potential model for other states and institutions to adapt. State legislation has played a role in bolstering textbook affordability initiatives, with states such as Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, North Dakota, and Ohio passing or introducing OER or Inclusive Access related legislation since 2013. For policymakers and others who wish to support affordable alternatives to high-cost textbooks, it is helpful to understand the range of available alternatives, how these alternatives are typically implemented, and how policy might enable or incentivize that implementation. This report discusses the ongoing escalation of college textbook costs, the benefits and challenges of more affordable options, implementation examples for two key options, and policy recommendations for supporting textbook affordability at scale.

Jenkins, J. J., Sánchez, L. A., Schraedley, M. A., Hannans, J., Navick, N., & Young, J. (2020). Textbook Broke: Textbook Affordability as a Social Justice Issue. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 1(3), 1-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/jime.549>

Abstract

In light of rising textbook prices, open education resources (OER) have been shown to decrease non-tuition costs, while simultaneously increasing academic access, student performance, and time-to-graduation rates. Yet very little research to date has explored OER's specific impact on those who are presumed to benefit most from this potential: historically underserved students. This reality has left a significant gap of understanding in the current body of literature, resulting in calls for more empirically-based examinations of OER through a social justice lens. For each of these reasons, this study explored the impact of OER and textbook pricing among racial/ethnic minority students, low-income students, and first-generation college students at a four-year Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in Southern California. Drawing upon more than 700 undergraduate surveys, our univariate, bivariate and multivariate results revealed textbook costs to be a substantial barrier for the vast majority of students. However, those barriers were even more significant among historically underserved college students; thus, confirming textbook affordability as a redistributive justice issue, and positing OER as a potential avenue for realizing a more socially just college experience.

Scott, Rachel E.; Jallas, Mallory; Murphy, Julie A.; Park, Rachel; and Shelley, Anne, "Exploring Faculty Perspectives on Text Selection and Textbook Affordability" (2023). *Faculty and Staff Publications – Milner Library*. 146. <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/fpml/146>

Abstract

This paper reports the results of a pilot project conducted Spring 2021 in which Milner Library licensed 75 assigned texts to 52 courses at Illinois State University. The authors used the pilot as a springboard to explore faculty perspectives on textbook selection, textbook affordability, and the role of the academic library in addressing the rising cost of textbooks. The results highlight the strong, and often deeply personal, beliefs faculty hold about textbook selection and textbook affordability, reveal several obstacles to achieving affordable access to course readings, and demonstrate the willingness of some faculty to partner with librarians and other institutional stakeholders to explore more affordable access to assigned resources.

Appendix D

The table below provides detailed information from peer and regional institutions, identifying the textbook resources and programs available to their students.

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Detailed Responses Provided</u>
Macalester	<p>At Macalester, we will buy any textbook a student requests/needs for the library so they can check it out. Additionally, we have an emergency fund that covers more than textbooks. We also hold an event at the beginning of every semester that is called Bingo for Books where they play bingo and can win bookstore gift cards.</p> <p>The Textbook Advance Program allows eligible students to purchase their books at the campus book store and charge the cost to their Macalester student account. They then have the entire semester to pay the charge. It's just allowing students to pay the textbook cost over several months, rather than having to pay the cost immediately. This is particularly helpful to students who need to use their on-campus job earnings to pay for their books. "Eligible" students have been categorized as students who are Federal Pell eligible or have a TFC of \$5,000 or less. Here is a link to more details about the Textbook Advance Program on our website! https://www.macalester.edu/financial-aid/textbookadvance/</p>
Barnard	<p><u>At Barnard students are packaged with textbooks taken into consideration; however, we will also help students through the Supplemental Academic Support Application.</u></p>
Smith	<p>At Smith emergency funding varies for textbook money. You will find the emergency funding grid here. You will find the general emergency funding page here. These are all endowed funds. https://www.smith.edu/sites/default/files/media/Available-Funding-Grid_2023.pdf https://www.smith.edu/about-smith/dean-of-the-college/funding</p>
Cornell	<p><u>Cornell does not have an emergency fund for books as it is factored into the cost of tuition.</u></p> <p><u>We just implemented an academic materials program that all undergraduates are automatically enrolled (there is an opt out option). The program provides access to digital materials for all classes at a \$225 fee per semester. For more info about the program.</u></p>

Bowdoin	<p>Bowdoin has books factored into student aid (\$420 per semester). If students spend more than \$420, they can come to our office, and we will assist with our emergency funds. Rarely do we have students who come to us for assistance. We also have a book fund that offers the neediest students \$150 each semester. This is not something students ask for, but rather we award it to students based on need level. From an endowed fund gift.</p> <p>I will also note that our faculty took a deep dive into textbook costs and made several changes including what is available online and via a host of platforms. There was a working group that made several recommendations, but I do not see it posted online, so I will see if I can track it down and share with the group. https://www.brown.edu/news/2019-04-03/textbooks</p>
Swarthmore	<p>At Swarthmore funding for textbooks and course supplies up to \$350 per semester is included in tuition for all students. Students almost never exceed the allowance but aided students who do work with the bookstore and the expenses are covered. We also have an emergency fund that aided students can access when needed.</p>
Augsburg	<p>Students who are registered for the upcoming term will be allowed to charge up to \$750 in bookstore purchases to their student account. These bookstore accounts are intended for students who have excess financial aid funds to cover their tuition, fees, AND their books or supplies. If you don't have enough aid to cover all bookstore purchases and your bookstore charges create a balance due on your account, you will need to pay for those charges in accordance with your statement due dates. Due to the financial aid cycle, you can only charge expenses to your bookstore account during the following specific periods. (Fall 2022 - June 1st: Charging Opens; September 5th: Last Day to Charge Web Orders to a Student Account; September 8th: Last Day to Charge In-Store Purchases to a Student Account.) If the cost of your textbooks and supplies are above \$750 in one term, you have enough financial aid to cover the additional costs, and you would like to charge the additional amount to your student account, please send the following information to Student Financial Services in writing.</p>

Grinnell	<p>Thanks for reaching out about this. I've provided a summary of our textbook-related programming below. A) The <u>Low-Income Lending Library (LILL)</u> is available to students who have an institutional family contribution of \$10,000 or less. Our office determines eligibility and sends an email to students notifying them of their eligibility. Students who choose to participate sign a release via a Qualtrics form, and then we provide them with the next step to request textbooks. The LILL it self is located in the Center for Religion, Spirituality, and Social Justice (CRSSI) and is largely run by student workers. They do the work of matching students to textbooks. The textbooks are lent out for the entire semester. B) Students who purchase textbooks through the <u>Pioneer Bookshop</u> (our campus bookstore) have the option to charge up to \$300 worth of books to their student account (bill). They must pay it off by the end of the semester. C) We have an <u>emergency fund</u>, but students who request assistance with textbooks are generally offered a loan from our office since the cost of textbooks is included in the cost of attendance we use to determine financial eligibility. In other words, it has already been considered in the financial aid process.</p>
Hamline	<p>Thanks for reaching out. Although we do not set aside aid specifically for books, we include an allowance for textbooks in our total cost of attendance. This means we are taking into consideration that cost when determining the maximum amount of aid students can get each year. Hamline has a unique book rental program for textbooks: students pay a fee each year and can just pick up their textbooks to rent at the bookstore. They are able to opt out of this program if they would like to purchase their books elsewhere.</p> <p>Hamline also has an <u>Emergency Loan</u> program that is administered by a different office. This was not created specifically for textbooks, but technically students could use the loan advance to pay for them if necessary.</p> <p>If you have further questions about our <u>textbook rental program</u>, please contact the Bookstore at hubookstore@hamline.edu. For the Emergency Loan, contact the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@hamline.edu.</p>

St. Thomas	We do a few things: A) Our Dean of Students Office has a small emergency fund. That fund is used for a variety of things (and there are more requests than funds), but it is an option. B) Students are allowed to charge their books to their Tommie Express Account (card). Of course, those charges are passed on to the student account and the student has to pay them off (and possibly incur finance charges if that balance isn't paid off). C) We advise students, they may need to consider another loan to help pay for their books. D) We are going to suggest to our Orientation folks that they consider having a session about "how to buy books and what to expect" to help those new to the college experience navigate this process. E) We suggest students consider renting books (vs. buying), check out books from cheaper sources and buying used vs. new books (I'm sure you do all of that too).
St. Johns	Saint John's has a designated Emergency Fund for students which can be used for books, travel, etc. (in cases of emergencies). The student reaches out to the Dean of Students for assistance and a form is completed. The number of students who use these funds annually is minimal. When these funds are used the amount is added to the student's financial aid award, the funds are disbursed, even if the student has a current outstanding university bill.
St. Scholastica	We allow students to charge up to \$600 in books to their student account via our textbook vendor Akadamos. They can use their financial aid or private pay to cover the charges.
St. Mary's U of MN Winona	We allow students to charge books to their tuition accounts only if they have a credit or pending credit from financial aid. The process is if the student comes in person, the bookstore calls the student services team while the student is checking out, and the team is able to look at the student's account and confirm whether or not they have a credit balance. If students are purchasing using the Financial Aid option on the website, they receive notice later on whether or not the transaction went through depending on whether or not there is a credit balance on the account. We do not have any emergency textbook funding at this time.
Bethel	If you need aid now to pay for books, contact the Business Office to request a check if you have extra funds on the student account.
Oberlin	In addition to what is factored as part of the cost of attendance, Oberlin offers an additional book voucher to Pell eligible students, and international students with a similar income index in the amount \$225