



**STUDENT ASSOCIATION**  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MILWAUKEE

-----SB1819-XXX-----

## UWM Course Materials

1 **WHEREAS**, students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) are not purchasing  
2 course materials due to an inability to pay for them (see Textbook Survey Report Section  
3 *Textbook Survey Purchasing* on page 7).

4 **WHEREAS**, students within UWM who are unable to pay for course materials inevitably turn in  
5 less homework, receive worse grades, and/or fail classes, leading to lower retention rates for  
6 those students (see Textbook Survey Report Section *Effect on Academics* on page 8).

7 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**; the Student Association at the University of Wisconsin-  
8 Milwaukee recommends that UWM adopts a policy requiring UWM to have 15 required credits  
9 of every degree program that do not have any course material costs to the student.

10 **THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**; within the above policy, each student must be given  
11 their own course materials to use for the entirety of the time enrolled in the course (UWM can  
12 require that students return these after the course has completed to be reused by other  
13 students in future semesters).

14 **THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**; within the aforementioned policy, students should  
15 have access to the course materials both on and off campus.

16 **THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**; within the aforementioned policy, a note must be  
17 made on the school's enrollment platform that the course does not require course materials to  
18 be purchased.

19 **THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**; within the aforementioned policy, the set-up fees for  
20 online courses would not count toward course material costs.

21 **THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**; within the aforementioned policy, segregated fee  
22 charges to the student would be excluded from course material costs, but any and all  
23 segregated fee charges to students regarding the aforementioned policy must be reviewed and

24 approved by the the Student Association at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s Student  
25 Finance Committee charged with reviewing segregated fees.

26 **THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED;** this legislation will be forwarded to the Provost at the  
27 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the UWM Faculty Senate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Alyssa Molinski  
Student Association President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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NAY

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**Legislative History**

Month, Date, Year – Introduced by \_\_\_\_\_. Cosponsored by \_\_\_\_\_.  
Month, Date, Year – Passed by whatever SA committee passed it (if applicable).  
Month, Date, Year – Passed by the 2018-2019 Student Association Senate.



# **STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MILWAUKEE

## *Textbook Survey Report*

Presented by the Student Association at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

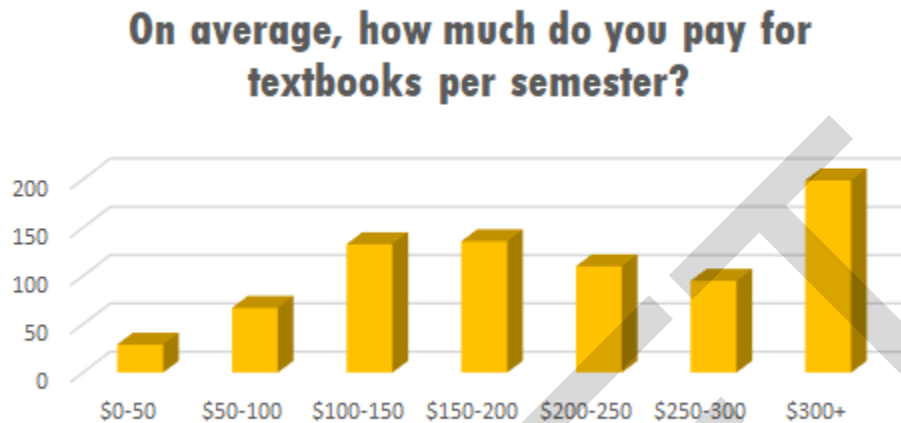
Survey Conducted Spring 2018

# *Executive Summary*

Survey results collected at UWM from students of every school and college at the undergraduate level and many at the graduate level indicate that textbook costs are placing a heavy burden on students. Academic success and financial stability are both negatively affected by students' inability to afford textbooks, and the problem needs the support of students, faculty and staff, and administration to solve.

In this report, the severity of the problem of textbook unaffordability is established and additionally, how many people are being affected by it at UWM. The Media Reserve Library at UWM is described and its usage by students is explored.

## *Current Textbook Costs*



**More than half of UWM students are paying more than \$200 per semester on textbooks.**

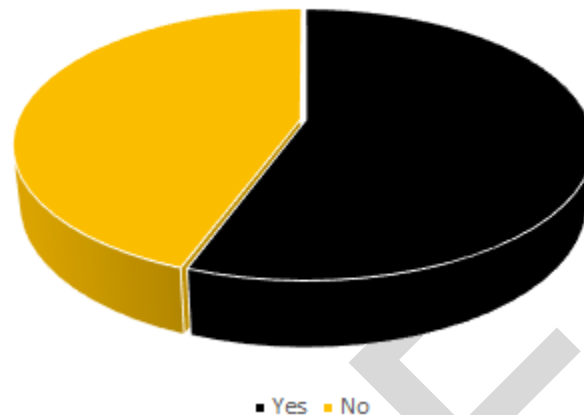
**More than a quarter of UWM students are paying more than \$300 per semester on textbooks.**

Despite the increase in technology, e-books, and non-printed instructional materials, the costs of textbooks for students remain high. To be able to buy online textbooks, many publishers are requiring the additional purchase of online homework problems. Online homework is heavily utilized, giving students few options to find cheaper alternatives e.g. used copies, friend's copies, or older editions.

*“Very difficult to pay for classes (especially earlier on in my studies) when each class required a \$100+ online access code while I was taking 5-6 classes at a time.”*

## *Textbook Purchasing*

**Have you ever not purchased a textbook because you could not afford it?**



**55% of UWM students have been unable to purchase a textbook required for a class**

As this question makes clear, not purchasing a textbook for many students is not a choice. From the responses to this survey alone, we know that at least 424 UWM students have not had enough money to purchase a textbook at at least one point.

**Have you ever delayed purchasing a textbook because you had to pay tuition, had to pay rent, had to pay bills, needed to get paid, etc.?**



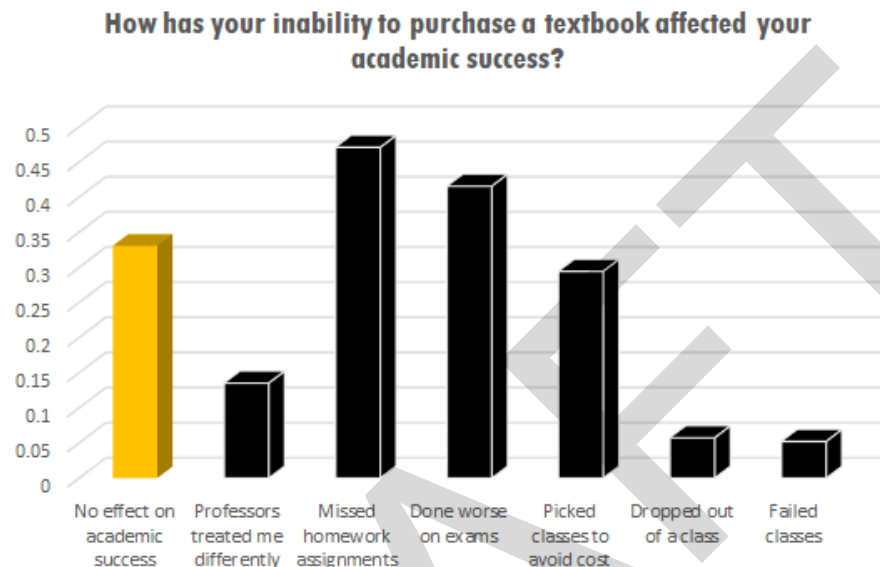
**Nearly half of UWM students have delayed purchasing a textbook for at least two weeks**

At the beginning of the school year, students take on heavy financial pressure: paying for tuition, covering rent, buying school supplies, and buying textbooks. Out of those initial costs, textbooks are typically the most flexible in terms of when to purchase them. Unfortunately, this means that half of students are essentially starting at least half a month late in their classes. They have to work extra hard to make up for lost time when they didn't have access to the material.

**All told, more than 3 out of 4 students at UWM have either had to delay purchasing a textbook or forego paying for it altogether because they could not afford it**

## Effect on Academics

Of the 75% of students that either had to delay purchasing a textbook or forego it completely because they were unable to pay for it...



**47% of UWM students performed worse on exams**

**41% of UWM students missed their homework assignments**

**29% of UWM students picked class to avoid textbook costs**

**14% of UWM students felt treated differently by professors**

**6% of UWM students had to drop out of their class**

**5% of UWM students failed their class**



*In examining the effect that textbooks are having on academic success of UWM students, the conversation becomes more than simply reducing costs.*

### **Making textbooks accessible to students would...**

- Improve professor's average class grades*
- Improve the relationship between professors and students*
- Reduce time to graduation*
- Reduce failure rates*
- Increase student retention*

## *Media and Reserve Library*

The Media and Reserve Library is a space that professors can put books on reserve specifically for the students in their classes. Those books are able to be checked out for two-hour periods and must remain in the library. Students can re-checkout the book for as many two-hour periods as they need unless another student asks for the same book.

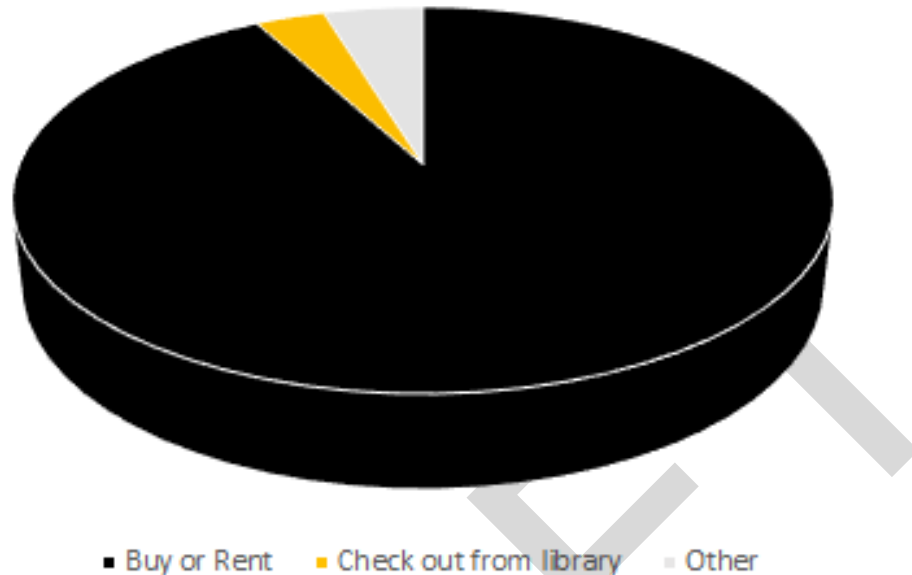
**Have you checked out textbooks for two hours from the basement of the West Wing of the library? Are you aware of this resource?**



- No, and I am not aware of this resource
- No, and I am aware that this is a resource
- Yes, and I am aware that this is a resource

**59% of UWM students know about this resource, but less than half of those students are utilizing it**

## How do you typically get your textbooks?



**Despite having the Media and Reserve Library, professors getting free desk copies, and prior classes all purchasing the textbook, over 92% of UWM students still have to pay money for textbooks**

Only some professors utilize the media reserve library as a resource for students, making it an unreliable place for many students to find their texts.

*“I have had only one semester where I did not have to buy or rent a textbook because the professors readily had them available in the library for a 2-hour reserve, something that helped my finances greatly as I have to already worry about gas, food, car insurance, and other bills.”*

*Of the UWM students whose academic success was affected by an inability to afford textbooks...*

**More than 60% agreed that having textbooks on reserve in the library would benefit them financially and/or academically**

*"It would make it so there was an option for me to get work done and pass the class rather than dropping it and waiting, prolonging my graduation."*

*"Not only would it save me money, but I would greatly appreciate dedicated resources like these. Just because we are ready to pay for tuition does not mean we are ready to pass the class by ourselves."*

**Another 8% of UWM Students agreed that this would benefit them if there were enough textbooks available for checkout to be a reliable resource**

*"It would help, but I've tried before and they didn't have the textbook for the particular class that I needed at the time. If they had it then, I would have been able to finish my earlier assignments on time. I had the time and was ready to do them, but I was without the text that had the problems in them."*

**Another 13% of UWM Students agreed that this would benefit them if they were able to check out the textbook for longer than two hours**

*"It would benefit me greatly, but two hour time windows are not long enough."*

## **Quotes from UWM Students**

*“I think the cost of textbooks is ridiculous, and nobody is taking it seriously...”*

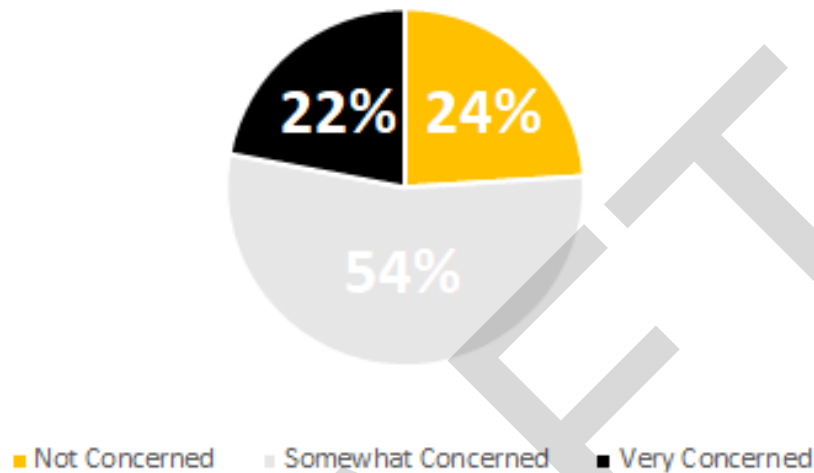
*“I would like for all teachers be required to have their textbook in the library. And for fewer teachers be allowed to use outside materials needing course codes such as cengage online. These are expensive. I typically buy a used book or an older edition to save money but needing an online code of \$200+ for one class is too much.”*

*“Would actually do the homework.”*

*“Save money, better grades.”*

## Next Steps

Are you concerned about your own ability to pay for textbooks in the future?



**75% of UWM students are concerned about their ability to pay for textbooks in the future**

Unfortunately, this problem is not going away anytime soon. In order to support our students and improve academic success of the university, textbooks need to be made accessible to students.

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