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Resolution of Support for Open Educational Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

WHEREAS, around the country and at UWM, students are not purchasing course materials due to an inability to pay for them.

WHEREAS, in a survey conducted by the Florida Virtual Campus (FVC) in 2018 consisting of more than 21,000 students, “43.8.% reported spending more than \$300 on textbooks” and “13.8% spent over \$500 in only one semester.”¹

WHEREAS, in the same FVC survey, it was found that—in addition to textbooks—“8.3% of students reported spending another \$300 or more on required course materials.”^[1]

WHEREAS, in a survey of 770 students at UWM, it was found that 55% of UWM students have been unable to purchase a textbook required for a class.

WHEREAS, in the same survey, it was found that nearly half of UWM students have delayed purchasing a textbook for at least two weeks because they had to pay tuition, had to pay rent, had to pay bills, needed to get paid, etc.

WHEREAS, around the country and at UWM, those students who are unable to pay for course materials inevitably don’t buy them, turn in less homework, receive worse grades, and/or fail classes, leading to lower retention rates for those students.

WHEREAS, in the same FVC survey, “the top five highest percentage answers as a result of the high cost of textbooks were: not purchasing the required textbook (64.2%); taking fewer

¹Colvard, N. B., Watson, C. E., & Park, H. (2018). The impact of open educational resources on various student success metrics. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 30(2), 262-276.
<http://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/pdf/IJTLHE3386.pdf>

courses (42.8%); not registering for a specific course (40.5%); earning a poor grade (35.6%); and dropping a course (22.9%).”²

WHEREAS, in the textbook survey at UWM, out of the more than three fourths of UWM students that either could not afford a textbook or had to delay purchasing it because they could not afford it, 47% performed worse on exams, 41% missed their homework assignments, 29% picked classes differently to avoid textbook costs, 14% felt treated differently by professors, 6% had to drop out of their class, and 5% failed their class.

WHEREAS, around the country and within the University of Wisconsin System, students are using a variety of means to save money on textbooks.

WHEREAS, in the same (FVC) study, “the most-used cost-saving measure reported by students was purchasing books from a source other than the campus bookstore (66.0%). Buying used copies from the campus bookstore (53.0%), renting printed textbooks (47.8%), and renting digital textbooks (41.4%) ranked second, third, and fourth respectively.”³

WHEREAS, multiple UW institutions, such as UW-Whitewater, UW-Lacrosse, UW-Parkside, UW-Eau Claire, UW-Stevens Point, and UW-Platteville have recognized the value of ensuring that students have access to course materials and have instituted segregated fees to maintain textbook rental systems for their students.

WHEREAS, around the country and within the University of Wisconsin System, there is growing awareness for Open Educational Resources (OERs), “teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others.”⁴

WHEREAS, in a survey conducted of more than 3,288 faculty and 812 chairpersons around the US, “the proportion that reported no awareness of OERs dropped from nearly two-thirds (66%) in 2014-15 to just over 50% (54%) for 2017-18.”⁵

WHEREAS, recently, the Community for Open Wisconsin formed with the mission to “help learners accomplish their educational goals while minimizing their cost burdens... by supporting the strategic and cooperative design of open education initiatives across all levels of education in Wisconsin and by advocating for equitable access to high quality open educational resources (OER) or other low-cost alternatives.”⁶

²ibid

³ ibid

⁴ Seaman, Julia E. and Seaman, Jeff. Freeing the textbook: Educational resources in U.S. higher education, 2018. Oakland, CA: Babson Survey Research Group. Retrieved from <http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/freeingthetextbook2018.pdf>

⁵ ibid

⁶ <https://www.wils.org/cow/>

WHEREAS, students in courses that use OERs have been proven to perform as well or better than their peers using commercial textbooks.

WHEREAS, in a study conducted of more than 5000 post-secondary students using OER and over 11,000 control students using commercial textbooks, it was found that “in three key measures of student success—course completion, final grade of C- or higher, course grade—students whose faculty chose OER generally performed as well or better than students whose faculty assigned commercial textbooks.”⁷

WHEREAS, in another 67 course, four semester-long study comparing Z courses (courses utilizing OERs) and non-Z courses, “students in Z courses were significantly less likely to withdraw from a course and more likely to receive a C or higher in the course than their peers who took non-Z courses. Overall, these students enrolled in face-to-face Z courses were almost 7% more likely to succeed than those who took non-Z courses.”⁸

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; the Student Association at UWM supports the increased use and adoption of OERs.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; the Student Association at UWM recognizes the OER Project staff at UWM and commends them on the work they do for UWM students and faculty, with over 11,536 students impacted and \$1,366,352 saved as of Spring 2019.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; the Student Association at UWM supports the expansion of the Open Educational Resources project.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; the Student Association at UWM supports increasing the capacity of the UWM OER Project from transitioning 2-3 large classes per year transition to OERs to 4 to 5 large classes per year.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; the Student Association at UWM supports grants or other funds being made available to assist in efforts to help faculty engaged in OER adoption and related course design adjustments. (i.e. grants to professors/graduate assistants to remake courses, funding professors within UWM to write OERs for widespread use, etc.)

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; the Student Association at UWM supports funding the

⁷ Fischer, L., Hilton, J., Robinson, T. J., & Wiley, D. A. (2015). A multi-institutional study of the impact of open textbook adoption on the learning outcomes of post-secondary students. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 27(3), 159-172. doi:10.1007/s12528-015-9101-x
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12528-015-9101-x>

⁸ Hilton, L., Fischer, L., Wiley, D., & William, L. (2016). Maintaining momentum toward graduation: OER and the course throughput rate. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 17(6) doi:10.19173/irrodl.v17i6.2686 <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/2686>

OER Project at UWM through base budget funding, while acknowledging the benefits the Ed Tech Grant has afforded during the start-up phase of the project.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; the Student Association at UWM supports funds being made available to purchase software, Internet sharing platforms, and/or any technological infrastructure needed to support OERs.

THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED; this resolution will be forwarded to the Chancellor, the Provost, the UWM Faculty Senate, the Chief Student Affairs Officer, related UWM administrative officials, and UWM students.

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Alyssa Molinski	Date	AYE	NAY
. UWM Student Association President			

Legislative History

April 28th, 2019 - Introduced by Senator Mathias. Cosponsored by Senator Bavisotto.

April 25th, 2019 - Passed by the Student Life and Interest Committee.