

Lower Textbook Costs for Students

Affordable Alternatives

Open Educational Resources (OER): Openly-licensed digital resources available for free online

Open Access Textbooks: Free textbooks, available online

Ebooks/ Digital Textbooks: Growing more popular among publishers because Gen Z is comfortable navigating digital materials, digital textbooks can be up to 60% cheaper than hardbacks

Inclusive Access Programs: Course materials are included in the overall course cost; students automatically receive access to digital course materials at a discounted rate

Rental Textbooks: Used textbooks that students can rent for one semester at a fraction of the price of ownership

Textbook Costs Pose a Financial Hurdle

43% Of current and former university students say they've skipped meals to save money to afford course materials.

85% Of current and former students say their textbook and course material expenses are financially stressful.

\$415 Average amount students spent on course materials in the 2018-2019 academic year.

Three Ways to Increase Textbook Affordability



Include Textbook Prices in Course Descriptions

UMass Lowell **highlights courses as no- or low-cost** in the student registration system if required course materials cost less than \$40, incentivizing professors to adopt cheaper materials.



Leverage Vendor Partnerships to Reduce Prices

New York University put affordability first in its partnership with Follett, a retail college bookseller, **forgoing commission** and requiring Follett to adopt less than a 10 percent commission on new textbook sales.



Build Awareness of Low-Cost Textbook Alternatives

USF's Textbook Affordability Project builds support for its initiatives through targeted recommendations and reports that hold faculty accountable for the cost of course materials. Learn more about this initiative on **the next page**.

Incentivize Faculty to Adopt Affordable Alternatives

USF Lowers Textbook Costs through Education and Transparency

Media scrutiny of exorbitant textbook prices and opposition from students have made the costs of course materials a growing concern for institutions. However, faculty have the most control over course materials, but don't always have the awareness or motivation to provide affordable alternatives.

The University of South Florida's Textbook Affordability Project (TAP) aims to tackle this problem head-on with its [easy-to-navigate website](http://tap.usf.edu/) on textbook affordability. The website educates faculty about textbook affordability, recommends ways to reduce cost, and highlights affordable alternatives. The site also compares the cost per credit hour of different academic departments, challenging faculty to offer more affordable materials. **TAP has saved students over 24 million dollars** since its launch in 2010.

► TAP's Three Key Strategies to Lower Textbook Costs



Raise Awareness of Textbook Affordability Concerns

- [Average textbook costs](#) for each department are posted online to motivate faculty to choose cheaper course materials.
- The digital "Faculty Toolbox" provides best practices, report cards, and a guide on how to adopt more affordable materials.
- TAP recommends faculty do not require coursework that costs students more than \$20 per credit hour.



Educate Faculty about Course Material Alternatives

- TAP staff review faculty's bookstore orders from the previous semester and [recommend cheaper course materials](#).
- Open-access textbook providers deliver presentations to faculty and staff on affordable alternatives.
- TAP's website provides a [glossary](#) of key textbook affordability terms.



Foster Accountability for Long-Term Progress

- Faculty receive a "report card" on the cost of their required course materials that is reviewed by university administrators to evaluate departments' progress in lowering costs.
- New general education course proposals must include information on the overall cost of required course materials.
- USF libraries provide institutional leadership with an [annual report](#) on money saved through TAP initiatives.