



EASTERN OREGON  
UNIVERSITY

## EOU Textbook Affordability Plan

### **A. Plan Goals and Activities:**

#### **Goal 1**

It should be simple and straightforward for students to find out how much their textbooks are going to cost.

#### **Actions:**

1. Develop and maintain a low cost/no cost course materials designator that shows up in the class search.
2. Establish and occasionally review a complete and transparent definition and context for low-cost / no-cost course materials
3. Encourage timely reporting of designated textbooks so that textbook cost information for the upcoming term is available by the time of registration.

**Responsibility:** Action 1 is the responsibility of the Registrar; Action 2 is a responsibility taken on initially by the Textbook Affordability Committee, and continued by the Office of Institutional Research; Action 3 is the responsibility of the College Deans.

## **Goal 2**

Whenever practicable and In keeping with the principles of academic freedom, faculty should be encouraged to use low cost or no-cost course textbooks.

### **Actions:**

1. Faculty will be encouraged to seriously consider using OER or other low cost textbooks for their classes. They will have access to information on the impact of textbook prices on students, and the low cost or no-cost alternatives that are available. Resources for faculty will include -- a) up to date web page with links to resources; b) designated librarian contact; c) regular update as part of professional development series.
2. Faculty will be informed about and encouraged to take advantage of HECC programs that support a migration to OER (eg textbook review, course redesign programs)
3. All actions undertaken will be in keeping with EOU's Academic Freedom Policy and the broader principles of academic freedom (see Part B. Support for Academic Freedom).
4. Progress on this Goal will be measured by collecting data on the number of courses each year that use low cost or no-cost materials designation. The target goal is to have 60% of courses using low cost or no cost materials by 2025.

Responsibility: The Library and the Senior Instructional Designer share responsibility for these actions.

## **Goal 3**

Progress towards plan goals should be regularly reviewed and communicated to students and faculty.

### **Actions:**

1. Achievements related to textbook affordability and progress towards plan goals will be reviewed annually, and presented to ASEOU, Teaching Faculty, and Faculty Senate.
2. The annual review will include ongoing plans to evaluate and mitigate any negative effects of reduced bookstore revenue (see Section C. below)
3. ASEOU will designate a textbook affordability liaison to communicate with and involve students in activities related to textbook affordability.

Responsibility: Responsibility for Actions 1 and 2 will be shared by The Library and the Senior Instructional Designer; ASEOU will take responsibility for Action 3.

## **B. Support for Academic Freedom:**

EOU's Academic Freedom Policy reads as follows:

### **6.15.05 Academic Freedom**

**A. All teachers at the University are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject. Teachers should avoid introducing material into the curriculum and classroom that has no relationship to the subjects they teach.**

**B. As a matter of policy, the University neither attempts to control, sway, nor limit the personal opinion or expression of that opinion of any person on the faculty or other university employee. In the exercise of this freedom of expression, faculty members should manifest appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they do not speak on behalf of the University.**

The EOU policy does not directly address textbook choice, but statements have been made concerning the important role that academic freedom plays in textbook choice. In "[Defining Academic Freedom](#)," former president of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Cary Nelson articulates academic freedom in this way as relates to instructor choice of subject matter and course material:

"Academic freedom establishes a faculty member's right to remain true to his or her pedagogical philosophy and intellectual commitments. It preserves the intellectual integrity of our educational system and thus serves the public good... Academic freedom gives faculty members substantial latitude in deciding how to teach the courses for which they are responsible."

Decisions concerning course materials may not always rest upon an individual instructor, but could be the collective responsibility of faculty, program directors, and department chairs. The deliberations leading to such decisions ought to involve substantial reflection and discussion by all those who teach the courses. As explained in the AAUP's [Statement of Freedom to Teach](#), such collective decisions may prevail over the dissenting position of a particular individual.

In the context of this document, the Academic Freedom Policy ensures that efforts to make affordable learning materials available to students do not abridge the right for faculty to select high-quality course materials for the classes they teach.

## C. Economic Impact on Bookstore Revenue

Bookstore revenues and the textbook market have changed rapidly in many ways over the past decade, making it difficult to demonstrate a causal relationship specifically between OER adoptions and reduced Bookstore revenue. Nevertheless, the possible impact of a shift away from commercially published textbooks could be mitigated via a number of strategies.

EOU currently has a contract with Barnes and Noble to provide bookstore services, and will be evaluating this contract for potential renewal. The institutional emphasis on textbook affordability increases the likelihood of possible alternatives to this traditional for-profit bookstore model. Alternatives may include cooperative or student-run models, textbook procurement services run by the University, or equity-based models that charge students a flat fee for textbooks. In general, such models will rely on cost-saving strategies such as reducing physical inventory by moving products online, embracing lower cost digital textbooks such as OERs, consolidating services where possible, and re-inventing current processes to take advantage of the efficiencies inherent in digital textbooks.

Recommending more specific courses of action to mitigate the potential impact of textbook affordability initiatives on Bookstore revenues will require input from a variety of stakeholders, and is beyond the purview of the current committee. The [Campus Bookstore Future Committee](#) will be investigating and recommending possible alternatives to the contract, taking into account the impact that various alternatives could have on both bookstore revenues as well student financial burdens.

## D. Plan Authorship

This plan was developed by the Textbook Affordability Committee, an ad hoc committee comprised of the following members:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Cora Beach         | Bookstore Contract Manager                |
| David Bentz        | Senior Instructional Designer             |
| Karen Clay (Chair) | Library Director                          |
| Kylie Evans        | Student Advising                          |
| Michael Fields     | Faculty, College of Business              |
| Julia Luty         | Student, ASEOU Justice                    |
| Lynn Paulson       | Campus Bookstore Manager (Barnes & Noble) |

The following groups were consulted and contributed to the development of this plan:

ASEOU

EOU teaching faculty (via college meetings and roundtable professional development talks)

Faculty Senate