

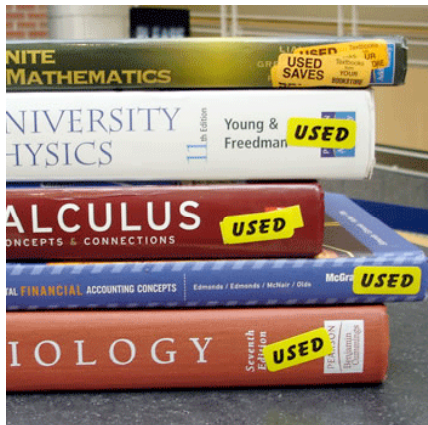
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REDUCING THE COST OF TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks can account for an additional 11% of the cost to pursuing a higher education degree. Already, students from working class families struggle to pay for tuition and adding an extra significant cost, limiting their chances of staying in school for financial reasons. It is important for our state legislators to work to reduce the costs of textbooks through legislative means such as early releases of ISBN numbers to increase competition and decreasing unfair tactics used by publishing companies such as bundling items together and restricting the used book market.

Textbook prices are increasing at 4 times the rate of inflation



- The average student spends \$900 on textbooks, annually, which is approximately 11% of in-state tuition.
- The used book market is heavily restricted by current publishing practices, not allowing students to buy cheaper used books.
- Textbook costs are inflated and add a significant extra expense that students do not anticipate when coming to college.
- Students have very little market power in buying textbooks.

The economy for textbooks is not driven by student demand, as Professors select the books to be purchased by the student, creating an unusual market.

- The number of “major players” in the textbooks publishing market has declined significantly, creating a less competitive market.

Publishing companies use unfair tactics to sell textbooks

- Publishers will release a new edition of a textbook before any significant information has changed. The average book is changed every 3 and a half years.

- Publishers will insist that professors use only the newest edition, which eliminates a market for used books
- Publishers will encourage professors to buy unique books with a special “University of Maryland” cover or with only selected chapters, which students are virtually unable to resell, elevating the overall cost of the book.
 - Publishers will disguise the cost of the book to make these new books appear to be cheaper for the student consumer.
- Publishers “bundle” books together, meaning that they shrink-wrap unnecessary items that go unused in a course with the textbooks. Students usually find this supplemental material in the form of Internet access codes to online courses or a CD-Rom.

What you can do to reduce the cost of your books

- Students must demand that their state representatives legislate a timeline for the University to release information to find alternative sources for purchasing textbooks:

- Universities should be obligated to release the title, author, publisher, edition, copyright date, publication date when available, ISBN number, and the ISBN number of the previous edition of the textbook.

- Textbook information should be available as instantly as possible in order to give students the opportunity to buy books from a variety of sources.

- The more competition in the market, the more students will be able to buy cheaper textbooks.

- Students must support implementation of recent federal legislation, HR 4137 – The Higher Education Reauthorization Act, which mandates that publishers do not “bundle” materials together and encourage the state legislature to pass even more extensive measures.

- Students must encourage campus administration and professors to educate themselves regarding the unfair practices of textbook publishers and assure that professors are finding the most appropriate, but cost effective books.



Learning more about the cost of textbooks

- To learn more about state legislation, which mandates textbook reform, check back frequently on the SGA website, www.sga.umd.edu
- For a more in-depth study on the unfair practices of textbook publishers, visit www.maketextbooksaffordable.org/
- For more information on federal textbook reform, visit www.maketextbooksaffordable.org/newsroom.asp?id2=36865