

Rogue Community College | Textbook Affordability Plan

Introduction

Creating a textbook affordability plan for college education is extremely important. Such a plan paves the way for equitable access, innovation, and adaptability within course materials. By making educational materials more affordable, we strive to eliminate barriers to accessing knowledge. This endeavor provides students with not only cost savings but also continuous and adaptable access to course materials.

On the faculty side, an affordability plan empowers instructors to exercise choice and customization when it comes to course materials and ancillaries. It encourages the free exchange of knowledge for the benefit of individuals and the community.

Oregon House Bill 2213¹, passed in 2019, requires each community college and public university to establish a textbook affordability plan.

This plan must satisfy the following requirements from House Bill 2213:

- Contain measurable goals to increase textbook affordability.
- Set forth the steps RCC (Rogue Community College) will take to advertise the availability of academic courses designated as using low- or no-cost course materials.
- Contains a statement of support of academic freedom.
- Establish a process for faculty and instructors to be informed about available low- and no-cost course materials.
- Address how to mitigate the economic impact of decreased academic bookstore revenue from the increased adoption of low- or no-cost open educational resources.
- Include and consult with a student representative in the development of this plan.

The Textbook Affordability Group (TAG) at Rogue Community College (RCC) has developed the following plan to support and promote:

- The development and use of Open Educational Resource course materials and low cost/no cost course materials.
- RCC compliance with Oregon legislative requirements including no cost/low-cost course designations, on-time adoptions, estimated course material cost availability, etc.
- Development and implementation of RCC Textbook Affordability Plan and monitoring of measurable goals and progress.
- Progression of course material platforms offered that improve equity through an affordability lens (e.g., OER, digital materials, inclusive access, equitable access, etc.)

¹ [Oregon HB 2213](#)

Measurable Goals:

Oregon's existing state House Bill 2871² passed in 2015, mandates that all colleges in the state must identify, on the course schedule, classes that have required course materials available either for free (no cost) or at a cost of \$40 or less (low cost). According to a 2023 state report, roughly 41% of RCC courses were designated as No-Cost/Low-Cost on the course schedule in the 2021-2023 biennium³.

Goal: A minimum of 60% of RCC course sections will qualify for the no cost/low-cost designation by the end of the 2023-2025 biennium.

Oregon's House Bill 2919⁴ requires that colleges display or link to the estimated costs of required course materials at the time of registration, with a target of 75% of the courses offered. The on-time course materials adoption policy aims to offer students clear and transparent cost information at the time of registration, enabling them to effectively plan their budget for the term. During the summer, fall, and winter terms of the 2023-2024 academic year, on-time adoptions at RCC were approximately in line with the targeted percentage.

Goal: Achieve a 90% on-time adoption rate for the summer, spring, and winter terms, while adhering to the House Bill requirement of maintaining a 75% on-time adoption rate for the Fall term, given the early registration period for Fall term by the end of the 2023-2025 biennium.

Action Items:

- Consistently promote faculty professional development and grant opportunities provided by Open Oregon.
- Recognize departments that proactively enhance textbook affordability, thereby raising awareness of the cost savings for students.
- Identify courses mandated across the majority of RCC programs and assess the potential cost savings for students if these courses were to adopt no-cost or low-cost course materials in all sections.
- Collect data on enrollment and completion rates for course sections implementing no cost/low-cost materials versus sections utilizing more expensive resources.
- Explore the functionalities of the new ERP system for the integration of filtering, displaying, and pricing course materials and pricing within the current course description, in addition to no-cost and low-cost designations.
- Examine features within the bookstore adoption tool that can enhance efficiency and productivity for adopters, streamline communication processes, and provide the ability to view current prices of textbooks and course materials in various formats and conditions (e.g., digital, rental, new, used). This ensures affordability considerations when selecting materials. Additionally, assess the tool's capability to search for open educational resources (OER) and easily retrieve information on textbooks or course materials used in the past for seamless re-adoption

² [Oregon HB 2871](#)

³ [RCC Textbook Affordability & Open Education Report, Fall 2023](#)

⁴ [On-Time Course Materials Adoption Report](#)

Communication about available low- and no-cost course materials

Action Items:

- Provide current professional development and grant opportunities in the Rogue Report and on the TAG website.
- Submit Articles to the Rogue Report recognizing textbook affordability efforts and accomplishments. Provide links to articles and TAG webpage.
- Provide source information, presentations and links to existing OER (Open Educational Resources) materials on the TAG webpage and in the Rogue Report.
- Examine the possibility of the college and/or grant funds being allocated towards faculty compensation for the adoption or creation of Open Educational Resources (OERs) and other no cost/low-cost options.

Academic Freedom Statement

As stated in the 2021-2024 Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement:

“The Board and the Association agree that academic freedom is essential to the fulfillment of the purposes of education, and they acknowledge the fundamental need to protect employees from any censorship or restraint which might interfere with their obligations to pursue truth in the performance of their teaching functions.”⁵

Campus Bookstore Statement

- RCC has addressed the economic impact of reduced academic bookstore revenue resulting from the growing adoption of low- or no-cost open educational resources by outsourcing this service to a third-party vendor.

Student Representation in the Textbook Affordability Plan

Action Items:

- TAG will work closely with the ASGRCC Advisor to extend invitations to ASG (Associated Student Government) members for their involvement in shaping the affordability plan, participating in TAG meetings, and contributing to actionable tasks. Student employees may also be eligible for TAG membership with the approval of their supervisors.
- Gather student feedback on the quality of no-cost/low-cost course materials and their assessment of the savings' impact.

⁵ [RCC Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)

Conclusion

In recent surveys from the Oregon Student Association, students report that the cost of tuition and textbooks are their top two concerns⁶. Oregon's investment of statewide funding for textbook affordability has resulted in successful efforts by community colleges to reduce the costs of course materials since 2015⁷.

With this plan, RCC can aim to steadily decrease the cost of course materials for students and increase transparency. Achieving the Dream's *OER at Scale* report states that decreasing course material costs by adopting OER can positively impact student retention and completion: ". . . cost savings may influence students' academic trajectories and progress toward degrees, for example by enabling students to enroll in more courses or work fewer hours outside of school."⁸

Supporting OER and accurate, on-time course adoptions aligns with RCC's own core themes of Access to Educational Opportunities, Student Success, and Collaborative Partnerships, as well as our core values: Integrity, Collaboration, DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), Sustainability, and Courage.⁹

⁶ [Advice:Student Turnover](#)

⁷ [Four Years and falling: Impact of statewide funding for textbook affordability](#)

⁸ [OER at scale: The academic and economic outcomes of the OER Degree Initiative](#)

⁹ [RCC's Strategic Plan](#)