Advancing Access Through Open Educational Resources: The Syllabus Review Service

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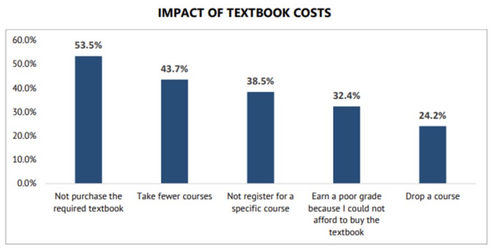
I. Introduction

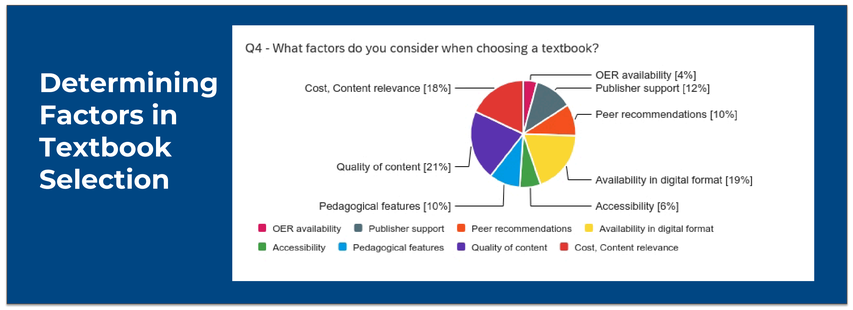
The Cost of Course Materials Impacts Student Success

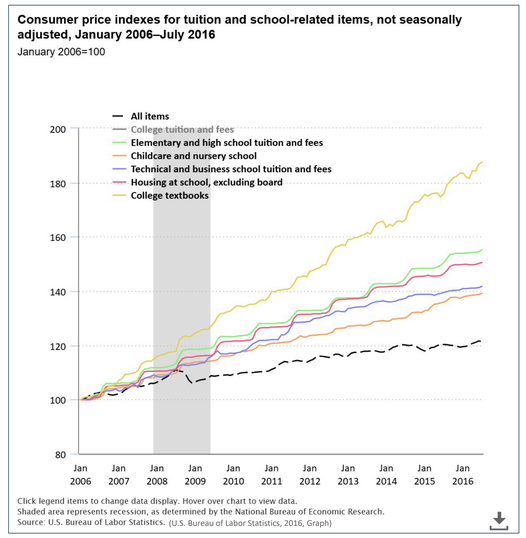
- A 2020 report by the *National Association of College Stores* found that students often:
  - Delay purchasing required materials
  - Buy only some of the assigned resources
- These behaviors were confirmed by Florida Virtual Campus studies (2016, 2018 & 2022), which linked them to negative academic outcomes:
  - Taking fewer courses
  - Avoiding certain classes due to cost
  - Lower grades
  - Withdrawals and course failures
  - Rising costs are a barrier to student persistence and degree completion.

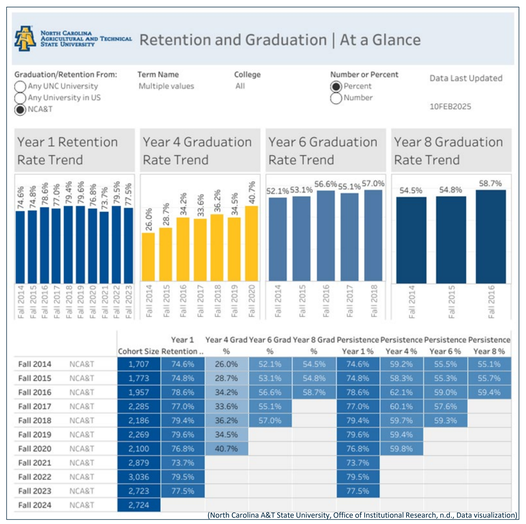


A Sustainable Path Forward

- A long-term affordability solution is needed to replace CARES Act funding.
- Open Educational Resources (OER) are viable alternatives to textbooks.
- Develop a syllabus review service to help faculty transition to OER and build long-term, affordable course design strategies.







		Cohort Size	Year 1 Retention ..	Year 4 Grad %	Year 6 Grad %	Year 8 Grad %	Persistence Year 1 %	Persistence Year 4 %	Persistence Year 6 %	Persistence Year 8 %
Fall 2014	NCA&T	1,707	74.6%	26.0%	52.1%	54.5%	74.6%	59.2%	55.5%	55.1%
Fall 2015	NCA&T	1,773	74.8%	28.7%	53.1%	54.8%	74.8%	58.3%	55.3%	55.7%
Fall 2016	NCA&T	1,957	78.6%	34.2%	56.6%	58.7%	78.6%	62.1%	59.0%	59.4%
Fall 2017	NCA&T	2,285	77.0%	33.6%	55.1%		77.0%	60.1%	57.6%	
Fall 2018	NCA&T	2,186	79.4%	36.2%	57.0%		79.4%	59.7%	59.3%	
Fall 2019	NCA&T	2,269	79.6%	34.5%			79.6%	59.4%		
Fall 2020	NCA&T	2,100	76.8%	40.7%			76.8%	59.8%		
Fall 2021	NCA&T	2,879	73.7%				73.7%			
Fall 2022	NCA&T	3,036	79.5%				79.5%			
Fall 2023	NCA&T	2,723	77.5%				77.5%			
Fall 2024	NCA&T	2,724								

II. Methods

Extended Campus Syllabus Review Process

- The project team will review syllabi for Extended Campus courses.
- Extended Campus will recruit faculty to participate by submitting their syllabi.

Faculty participation includes:

- Submitting a syllabus to be evaluated for material costs
- Completing a survey and/or joining a meeting about criteria for free or lower-cost resources
- Meeting with the project team to explore affordable alternatives to required texts.
- Submitting a revised syllabus if lower-cost materials are adopted

Creation of a Repository

- Revised syllabi archived in Aggie Digital Collections & Scholarship, N.C. A&T's institutional repository.
- The project team collaborated with the Bibliographic, Metadata, and Discovery unit to:
  - Create the syllabus collection
  - Upload documents
  - Assign appropriate metadata
- Repository is freely available to the public.
- Enables faculty and students to find affordable materials.

III. Results

- 365 syllabi analyzed from across all colleges in the university.
- 120 syllabi uploaded to the digital collection "Open Educational Resources Syllabus Review"
- Potential savings estimated at $102.00 per course textbook.
- Increased librarian-faculty collaboration and awareness of OER initiatives.
- OER Toolkit research guide.

Links to OER Research Products

IV. Conclusions

- Identified faculty currently using or creating OER.
- Build strong relationships with department heads to promote initiatives effectively.
- Develop student-focused programming to support project success and foster dialogue between students and faculty.
- Future initiatives will build on outcomes to improve the review service and enhance affordability efforts.
- Project workflows will be integrated into regular staff and liaison duties to ensure sustainability.
- Workshops and consultations on OER and low-cost materials will continue to be offered.
- Additional syllabi will be added to the library's digital collection in the institutional repository.

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