

N.B.P.R. #3-2022

Introduced By: Antonio Mendoza, *At-Large Representative*.

Co-Sponsored By: Macy Trout, *Director of Academic Affairs*; Emily Loehmer, *Chief Internal Services Officer*.

Approved By: The Student Life & Academics Subcommittee of Parliament.

RESOLUTION NO. 5-2022: This Bill Calls Upon Temple University Administration To Support The Expansion Of Funding And Infrastructure For Open And Affordable Learning Materials At The University, With The Goal Of Reducing The Costs Of Course Learning Materials For Temple University Students.

(a) Recognitions.—

- (i) **KNOWING**, *Temple Student Government's (TSG)* purpose is to act as the official voice of students in academic, institutional, and campus affairs. As such, it will pass resolutions to promote changes that improve the educational equity of the student body; AND
- (ii) **UNDERSTANDING**, the cost of college textbooks, access codes, and learning materials are often a major affordability issue for students. According to TSG's Textbook Affordability Survey, many students do not purchase textbooks or access codes, which further perpetuates frustrating educational inequities; AND
- (iii) **KNOWING**, according to the *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, from January 2006 to July 2016, the Consumer Price Index for college tuition and fees increased 63 percent, compared with an increase of 21 percent for all items. Over that period, consumer prices for college textbooks increased 88 percent; AND
- (iv) **KNOWING**, The *U.S. P.I.R.G.'s* Third Edition of *Fixing The Broken Textbook*

Market (2021) found that 65 percent of college students have skipped buying a commercial textbook and 21 percent of students have skipped buying a learning portal access code due to cost; AND

- (v) **UNDERSTANDING**, TSG surveyed students on textbook affordability during Fall 2020-Spring 2021 and found that 55 percent of survey respondents decided not to buy a textbook or access code because they were not affordable to them despite feeling somewhat or extremely concerned that it would hurt their grades. 65 percent reported they had to work extra hours to afford the required materials and 40 reported that they skipped meals or missed paying a bill in order to afford their course learning materials; AND
- (vi) **KNOWING**, commercial textbook publishers have gained control of the market by creating online learning platforms for homework, learning activities, and quizzes with access codes that expire after the semester. They are often bundled together with textbooks, coercing students to purchase expensive bundles rather than other lower cost options; AND
- (vii) **UNDERSTANDING**, the relationship of access codes to grades is inequitable because it means that success in a course may depend on being able to afford the access code; AND
- (viii) **KNOWING**, *Course Syllabi Policy 02.78.13* states: “Temple faculty members are encouraged to select course materials that balance excellence and affordability, recognizing that the potential costs vary significantly across disciplines and courses. To help students anticipate costs as required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act, requirements for course materials must be reported to Temple’s Barnes & Noble Bookstore’s Adoption & Insights Portal”;
AND
- (ix) **KNOWING**, that cost information should be submitted to the Barnes & Noble University Bookstore even if the course has no required course materials that must be purchased or the required course materials for this course are open educational resources and are available at no cost to students; AND
- (x) **KNOWING**, Temple Libraries’ Textbook Affordability Project (TAP) provides funding and support for faculty to reduce or eliminate the cost of commercial

textbooks and learning materials. Syllabi from some projects can be found in TUScholarShare, a repository of Temple scholarship; as well as other scholarships and awards; AND

- (xi) **KNOWING**, Temple’s Textbook Task Force (TTF) did a survey of resources used by faculty members which resulted in Temple’s Open and Affordable Materials Inventory. Faculty members can use the list to learn about the open and affordable materials their colleagues are using in their courses and can explore such resources or contribute to it at <https://library.temple.edu/affordablematerials>; AND
- (xii) **CURRENTLY**, the continued faculty reliance on access codes for learning platforms and expensive commercial textbooks negatively impacts Temple University’s mission to provide “access to an excellent, affordable higher education that prepares students for careers, further learning and active citizenship;” AND
- (xiii) **KNOWING**, in addition, the first priority listed by the University Provost’s office is “Provide a world-class education at an affordable price;” AND
- (xiv) **CURRENTLY**, because both faculty and students are concerned about the affordability of textbooks and access codes and how the costs impact student success, the University should provide more financial support to faculty to reduce the costs of learning materials.

(b) Resolutions.—

- (i) **OPERATIVE-CLAUSE**, Temple Student Government calls on the University President, Vice-President, Provost, and administration to support the expansion of funding and infrastructure for open and affordable learning materials at the University;
- (ii) **OPERATIVE-CLAUSE**, in order to reduce the costs of course learning materials for a substantial segment of the student population, the Temple Student Government asks the Provost to charge the General Education Program with

reducing the costs of their course learning materials;

- (iii) **OPERATIVE-CLAUSE**, as representatives of all schools and colleges at the University, TSG encourages faculty, when selecting course learning materials, to:
 - (1) Consider using or creating Open Educational Resources (OER), AND
 - (2) Consider using library-licensed materials (articles, ebooks, streaming videos, etc.), AND
 - (3) Consider using free (non-OER) or low-cost internet resources (such as alternative homework platforms).
- (iv) **OPERATIVE-CLAUSE**, OER, library-licensed materials, and free non-OER resources offer accessible, affordable, equitable, comparable, and flexible alternatives to expensive, commercial textbooks. According to Creative Commons, an 'Open Educational Resource' is defined as an: online, free to access, easy to customize, and affordable to print textbook written by education professionals under an open license;
- (v) **OPERATIVE-CLAUSE**, faculty can work with a Temple Libraries subject specialist and Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT) specialist to find and integrate open and affordable learning materials into their course;
- (vi) **OPERATIVE-CLAUSE**, that this resolution acknowledges that it is faculty member's prerogative to choose what class materials are most suitable, and that it is appropriate for them to consider open educational resources, library-licensed materials, and free resources when available;
- (vii) **OPERATIVE-CLAUSE**, faculty can consider participating in the Temple Libraries Textbook Affordability Project (TAP). TAP has saved Temple students an estimated one million dollars since the program began in 2011;
- (viii) **OPERATIVE-CLAUSE**, faculty can utilize Temple's Open and Affordable Materials Inventory to explore the open and affordable materials other faculty are using in their courses;

- (ix) **OPERATIVE-CLAUSE**, the Higher Education Opportunity Act (Public Law 110-315) was enacted in 2008, TSG requests more compliance by faculty members in specifying the range of the cost of course learning materials in enough time to be available for student review during course registration periods;
- (x) **OPERATIVE-CLAUSE**, in order to impact a large portion of the student body, Temple Student Government's Department of Internal Affairs should immediately begin the process of presenting this resolution to the University President, Vice-President, Provost, Faculty Senate, Board of Trustees, Director of General Education, and the heads of the departments with the top ten high-enrollment courses.
- (c) Research.—
- (i) **National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). *Estimated Expenses For Full-Time Beginning Undergraduate Students Of Temple University*. [Web]. <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?q=temple&s=all&id=216339#expenses>.** The *National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)* is the part of the United States Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences that collects, analyzes, and publishes statistics on education, which includes higher education, and public school district finance information in the United States of America.
- (1) The *NCES* reported that the average cost of textbooks and other supplies for a full-time freshman attending Temple University in the 2020-2021 year is \$1,494 for students. This represents an increase of 34.4 percent from its starting documented year, 2016-2017, with a cost of \$1,112.
- (ii) **Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2016, August 30). *College tuition and fees increase 63 percent since January 2006*. [Web]. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2016/mobile/college-tuition-and-fees-increase-63-percent-since-january-2006.htm>.** The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is a unit of the United States Department of Labor. It is the principal fact-finding agency for the U.S. government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics and serves as a principal agency of the U.S. Federal Statistical System. Labor economics and statistics include the documentation of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), or the price of a weighted average market basket of consumer goods and services purchased by households, for college textbooks.

(1) The BLS documented a CPI of 100 for college textbooks during the month and year of January 2006. Over the course of a ten-year period, the CPI jumped to 187.5 during the month and year of July 2016. This calculates to an approximate and astounding 88 percent hike on the average market price for college textbooks.

(iii) **U.S. P.I.R.G. (2021, February 24). *Fixing A Broken Market, Third Edition.***

[Report]. <https://uspirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/Fixing%20the%20Broken%20Textbook%20Market%2C%203e%20February%202021.pdf>. The

United States Public Interest Research Groups (U.S. P.I.R.G.) are a federation of U.S. and Canadian nonprofit organizations that employ grassroots organizing and direct advocacy on issues such as consumer protection, transportation, and public health—public health that includes the wellbeing of college students. In a report to *Make Higher Education Affordable*, the *U.S. P.I.R.G.* surveyed more than 5,000 college students asking how the factor of textbook affordability has made it a difficult landscape for teaching and learning. Three essential key findings were found among the survey:

- (1) “Key Finding #1: Students continue to skip buying assigned textbooks despite concerns it will impact their grade. In 2020, 65 percent of students surveyed reported skipping buying a textbook because of cost; 63 percent skipped purchasing one during the same period the previous year. Students are still very concerned that not purchasing materials will negatively impact their grade, with 90 percent reporting being significantly or somewhat concerned in both years.”
- (2) “Key Finding #2: More students are skipping access codes during the pandemic. The number of students who report not buying an access code increased from 17 percent in 2019 to 21 percent in 2020. This might be driven by financial strain, or possibly an increased reliance on access codes as part of remote learning. Forgoing an access code means students miss out on homework, quizzes, and other important parts of their grade in a class.”
- (3) “Key Finding #3: [The ongoing] COVID-19 [pandemic] is hitting students hard and impacts course material affordability. Students were broadly impacted by the pandemic, with 79 percent of students reporting being impacted in some way (beyond, of course, largely staying at home). Those side effects of the pandemic were correlated with greater struggles to access

course materials. These numbers have almost certainly risen since this survey was taken in September [2020]. For example, 11 percent of students reported being quarantined with either a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19—and this was measured before the spike in cases that took over the country ahead of the holiday season. Furthermore, our survey is a snapshot in time for students, largely at four-year institutions, who were currently enrolled for the fall semester. Our survey likely missed out on the students who had struggled the most, who may have dropped out or transferred institutions beyond the reach of our volunteers.”

- (iv) **Sophia Tran, former Chief Internal Services Officer of TSG. (2020, October 22).** *Textbook Affordability Survey – HIGHLIGHTS. [Survey].* The TSG survey was sent to a list of 12,500 randomly selected undergraduate and graduate students. The survey start date was Thursday, October 22, 2020. The end date was Monday, November 2, 2020. The survey was done using Google Forms.

There are 31 questions. 13 questions are from TSG and Temple University focused. 18 questions are from the study used for the Second Edition (2020) of *Fixing The Broken Textbook Market*, written by Cailyn Nagle and Kaitlyn Vitez of the *U.S. P.I.R.G.* All of the questions were voluntary. There were 633 students that took this survey. The following questions (15, 16, 23, 30 and 31) provide some highlights of the resulting information provided by students. [The rest of the questions are listed at Section c, Clause v of this resolution.]

- (1) “Question #15. Indicate the ways that course materials costs have affected you THIS SEMESTER. Select all that apply.” This is a question from the *U.S. P.I.R.G.* survey. There were 628 responses.
- a) 41.1 percent say they worked extra hours to afford course materials costs this semester.
 - b) 35.8 percent say none of this applies to me.
 - c) 23.9 percent say they chose classes/sections based on cost.
 - d) 28.7 percent say they have had to prioritize access codes over other learning materials.

(2) FULL QUESTION #15 ANSWERS:

- a) “I’ve skipped meals in order to afford material: 14.2 percent.
- b) I’ve missed paying a bill (i.e. rent, childcare, cell phone) in order to afford my materials: 11.3 percent.
- c) I’ve worked extra hours in order to afford my materials: 41.1 percent.
- d) I’ve chosen which classes or class sections to take based on their relative cost: 23.9 percent.
- e) I’ve had to prioritize access codes over my other learning materials: 28.7 percent.
- f) I’ve dropped a class because I couldn’t afford the materials: 7.0 percent.
- g) I’ve failed a class because I couldn’t afford the materials: 2.1 percent.
- h) None of this applies to me: 35.8 percent.”

(3) “Question #16. Since March, how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you financially?” This is a *U.S. P.I.R.G.* question. There were 626 responses.

- a) 34.7 percent say: “I’ve worked extra hours.”
- b) 29.4 percent say: “A member of my household lost their job due to the pandemic.”
- c) 26.5 percent say: “I lost my job.”
- d) Only 12.5 percent say: “None of this applies to me.”

(4) FULL QUESTION #16 ANSWERS:

- a) “I’ve skipped meals due to financial hardship: 16.8 percent.

- b) I've missed paying a bill (i.e. rent, childcare, cell phone): 19.5 percent.
 - c) I've worked extra hours: 34.7 percent.
 - d) I lost my job: 26.5 percent.
 - e) I was furloughed from my job or had my hours/pay cut: 20.1 percent.
 - f) A member of my household lost their job or had their hours/pay cut, causing me hardship: 29.4 percent.
 - g) I've transferred to a new college to cut costs: 2.1 percent
 - h) I've reduced the number of classes I'm taking: 10.2 percent.
 - i) I've had to prioritize access codes over my other learning materials: 16.8 percent.
 - j) I've had to move out of my normal school year housing: 16.1 percent.
 - k) I've been quarantined with a suspected or diagnosed case of: 13.1 percent.
 - l) I lack reliable enough internet access to participate in class: 13.4 percent.
 - m) Course material costs have not affected me this semester: 13.3 percent.
 - n) I did not buy course materials: 11.5 percent.
 - o) None of this applies to me: 12.5 percent.”
- (5) “Question #23. During your time at Temple, have you ever tried to get a textbook through the library? Select all that apply.” This is a TSG question. There were 398 responses.

- a) Students are using mostly the Charles Library's reserve collection and material through Canvas.
- b) 41.7 percent Other, most likely not using the library to use textbooks

(6) FULL QUESTION #23 QUESTIONS:

- a) "Reserve Collection at Charles Library: 31.2 percent.
- b) Reserve material through *Canvas*: 31.4 percent.
- c) Requested book or material through *E-ZBorrow*: 18.6 percent.
- d) Requested book or material through *ILLiad*: 11.8 percent.
- e) Other: 41.7 percent."

(7) "Question #30. Please describe your strategies for saving money on textbooks." This is a TSG question. There were 477 responses.

- a) Common answers: "Renting; Purchasing used/cheapest/PDF; Not buying."
- b) Specific story: "Always double check on library first. If nothing there, then [the] local public library. If nothing there, download/pirate. If nothing there, buy from a friend/Temple student used or online used. Although if it is a cheap book (10-20 dollars), I'll probably just buy [it] online or in stores right away."
- c) Specific story: "Buying used from friends or through Facebook, using PDF versions, only buying the textbook a week or so into the course if [it's] absolutely required."
- d) Specific story: "Not purchasing from the Temple Bookstore—very overpriced!! I once spent \$240 on a new Bio textbook w/access code because it was required for class."

(8) “Question #31. Please share any other thoughts you have regarding the affordability of textbooks.” This is a TSG question requiring specific, individual stories. There were 391 responses. The following were 7 notable comments expressing the aggravation of current textbook costs:

- a) Taken from a graduate student perspective: “I think that during the course of my grad program the cost of books has been a struggle for me. I try to find the cheapest way possible and respect and appreciate that some professors get material from online sources or photocopies of their textbook to help reduce costs.”
- b) “My problem is that classes don’t use them. I have bought multiple textbooks that have remained unopened. And they are expensive. It is a waste of money.”
- c) “Professor[s] should be honest when telling students if the text book is essential to their success in the course. Professors should use the myriad of free readings that exist instead of expensive books that . . . further promote exclusivity in universities.”
- d) “I understand the cost of some textbooks, but access codes for things like business courses and *Tophat* should not come out of the student’s pocket.”
- e) “The affordability of textbooks will never be taken into account for Math/Chem students when it’s REQUIRED you purchase them as they’re bundled with online access codes. We’re basically forced to purchase through the bookstore as the access codes bought straight from a company’s website typically cost even more than the textbook+access code bundle alone from bookstores. The only ‘solution’ I see is to make the Uni give access to students of those classes for free (I’m paying 12K [dollars] a semester for online ‘watch this video’ learning and on top of that I’m required to spend more money for access codes? Give me a break).”
- f) Specific to the school: “I have friends/roommates in STEM majors of which consistently take out greater loans to pay for their textbooks.”

g) “I don’t think it is terrible. I think it is a problem with the educational system as a whole more than just Temple. The only time I’ve felt I was spending more than I should have . . . was in a class where I spent a little over \$100 to [buy] an access code that included an e-text that our prof said was unnecessary. Even though we use the platform regularly, I’m curious if not including the e-text would have lowered the cost of the access code. It is dismaying when you can find a print version of a book, but the prof wants you to spend extra money for an access code so they can use the software to make [homework] and tests. I’d rather them allow us to get the print copy to save us money and have us do homework on [C]anvas. But this only happened with a couple classes, and sometimes it’s not that much more money. Overall, I would obviously love to see prices go down, but there have only been a handful of times where I have felt the prices I paid were unfair.”

- (v) **Sophia Tran, former Chief Internal Services Officer of TSG. (2020, October 22). *Textbook Affordability Survey – ALL QUESTIONS*. [Survey].** The TSG survey was sent to a list of 12,500 randomly selected undergraduate and graduate students. The survey start date was Thursday, October 22, 2020. The end date was Monday, November 2, 2020. The survey was done using Google Forms. There are 31 questions. 13 questions are from TSG and Temple University focused. 18 questions are from the study used for the Second Edition (2020) of *Fixing The Broken Textbook Market*, written by Cailyn Nagle and Kaitlyn Vitez of the *U.S. P.I.R.G.* All of the questions were voluntary. There were 633 students that took this survey. The following are all the questions that the survey asked:

- (1) “I am a(n):
- (2) How many semesters have you been at Temple?
- (3) My Field of Study is:
- (4) My college or school is:
- (5) My expected graduation year is
- (6) Are you a full-time or part-time student?

- (7) How many classes are you taking this semester?
- (8) How many textbooks were you assigned this semester?
- (9) Of these textbooks, how many did you decide not to buy or rent?
- (10) To what extent were you concerned that not buying or renting the textbook would hurt your grades in the course?
- (11) How many access codes were you assigned this semester?
- (12) Of these access codes, how many did you decide not to buy?
- (13) Did you have the option to buy the access code separately from a hard copy?
- (14) How much did you spend on course materials this semester?
- (15) Indicate the ways that course materials costs have affected you THIS SEMESTER. Select all that apply.
- (16) Since March, how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you financially?
- (17) During your time at Temple, please identify the course names for which you have spent the most money on textbooks, access codes or other course materials: (Link to course descriptions at <https://bulletin.temple.edu>.)
- (18) During your time at Temple, please identify any course for which the learning materials used were available to you at no cost and the specific learning material: (Link to course descriptions at <https://bulletin.temple.edu>.)
- (19) How would you rate your understanding of how publishers collect data about you while using access codes? (1 = unaware and 10 = aware and able to explain to a peer)

- (20) During your time at Temple, Have your course materials ever been charged directly through your tuition via an automatic textbook billing?
- (21) If applicable, please let us know about your experience with this automatic textbook fee billing process. Select all that apply.
- (22) During your time at Temple, have you ever purchased a required textbook that you did not use?
- (23) During your time at Temple, have you ever tried to get a textbook through the library? (select all that apply.)
- (24) During your time at Temple, have you ever knowingly used an illegal digital (“pirated”) version of a required textbook?
- (25) During your time at Temple, have you ever dropped a course because the cost of the textbook was not affordable for you?
- (26) During your time at Temple, have you ever decided to not buy (or not buy access to) course materials because they were not affordable for you?
- (27) Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: I believe that having access to required textbooks, access codes or other course materials has a positive impact on my academic performance in my courses.
- (28) If you are required to purchase a textbook or other course materials, please indicate which format you typically purchase. (select all that apply.)
- (29) Your primary source for textbook purchasing or renting is (select all that apply.)
- (30) Please describe your strategies for saving money on textbooks:
- (31) Please share any other thoughts you have regarding the affordability of textbooks:”

(vi) **United States Congress. (2008, August 14). *Higher Education Opportunity Act*. [Congressional Act]. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-110publ315/pdf/PLAW-110publ315.pdf>.** The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) is a federal legislation designed to strengthen the educational resources of colleges and universities and to provide financial assistance for students in post-secondary education. The act enforces higher institutions such as Temple University to enforce the following criteria that tackles specificities of college textbook pricing. A publisher “in charge of selecting course materials at an institution of higher education” must include:

- (1) “The price at which the publisher would make the college textbook or supplemental material available to the bookstore on the campus of, or otherwise associated with, such institution of higher education[,] and, if available, the price at which the publisher makes the college textbook or supplemental material available to the public,” AND
- (2) “. . . other format[s] available to the bookstore on the campus of, or otherwise associated with, such institution of higher education[,] and, if available, the price at which the publisher makes such other format of the college textbook or supplemental material available to the public.”