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Executive Summary

Governor Scott’s College Access and Affordability bill passed during the 2016 legislative session addressing textbook affordability. The law went into effect July 1, 2016, and required colleges to expand efforts to reduce textbook and instructional materials costs. Primary changes to legislation included increasing the number of days colleges are required to post textbooks and instructional materials information prior to the beginning of a course from 30 to 45 days, allowing students additional time to secure the most affordable option and the format best suited to the student’s learning preferences. The accompanying State Board of Education rule, 6A-14.092, was revised in October 2017 to extend the number of days Florida College System institutions must submit textbook and instructional material information to bookstores from 45 to 75 days prior to the first day of classes. The rule also made changes to align with the revised statute including specifying factors to consider when selecting texts through a cost-benefit analysis and identify a process to ensure publishers provide a description of the content revisions made between the current edition and a proposed new edition of required textbook and instructional materials.

Florida College System (FCS) institutions continue to remain an affordable option for students wishing to pursue a postsecondary education. The FCS provides a cost-effective and efficient avenue for raising the educational and economic well-being of the state. The average cost of tuition and fees in 2016-17 for 30 credit hours was $3,200. In an effort to keep college affordable, FCS institutions have developed multiple initiatives to defray textbook and instructional materials costs. This report has been developed in accordance with s. 1004.085 (8), F.S. to provide a review of selection processes, college initiatives, posting information for students and factors considered in cost-benefit analyses when selecting course materials.

- FCS institutions examined and submitted details for the selection process for textbook and instructional materials with a wide cost variance for general education courses and high enrollment courses.
- All FCS institutions employ at least one initiative designed to reduce the cost of textbooks and instructional materials.
- Each college listed policies for posting lists of required and recommended textbooks and instructional materials.
- All FCS institutions select textbook materials through a cost-benefit analyses.
- FCS institutions were required to report the number and percent of course sections that were not able to meet the 45 day textbook and instructional materials posting deadline. Colleges posted textbook and instructional materials on the college website, the bookstore website, a student portal, and a course registration system or course catalog. Section 1004.085(6), F.S., required FCS institutions to post at least 45 days before the first of class for each term, a
hyperlink to lists of required and recommended textbooks and instructional materials for at least 95% of all courses and course sections.

Additionally, the report highlights best practices on course-wide adoption, committees focused on reducing costs, open education resources, and other innovative strategies ensuring access to educational materials and resources.

Moving forward, FCS institutions continue to ensure students have access to affordable textbooks and course materials so they may successfully reach their goals. In the reports, colleges described next steps for addressing affordability and access issues. Standing textbook committees are exploring strategies such as student fee models. Student fee models include the cost of the textbooks and instructional materials in order to ensure students have access to the materials on the first day of class. Fee models may be structured in a variety of ways to allow the student to retain the materials or essentially to provide a textbook on loan or access to technology. Colleges are also utilizing librarians to conduct research and provide resources to faculty for their selected courses. Many colleges are offering focused professional development to faculty on how to build open educational resources and a handful provide stipends to faculty for the development of open educational resources.

FCS Council of Instructional Affairs, whose members represent each FCS institution, convene three meetings a year which provides opportunity to expand discussions on textbook and instructional materials affordability to a statewide stakeholder audience. Chief academic officers in the FCS and other interested attendees will share strategies, initiatives and best practices that could result in the basis for future policy recommendations. The Division of Florida Colleges will research national grant opportunities designed to promote open educational resources opportunities at a state and institutional level. Additionally, the Division will partner with the Florida Virtual Campus on the promotion of open educational resources in the Florida College System.
Background and History

In 2008, Florida enacted legislation to address the rising costs of textbooks by creating section (s.) 1004.085, Florida Statutes (F.S.), charging colleges with implementing policies to promote the availability of textbooks to students unable to afford the cost of required course materials.1 The State Board of Education approved rule 6A-14.092, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), to implement the statute. The rule established a workgroup consisting of members from eight Florida College System (FCS) institutions. The workgroup surveyed the colleges and determined that more than half had a textbook affordability policy in place. Other colleges indicated the use of procedures and guidelines to reduce the costs of textbooks.

Rising costs force many students to forego college textbooks or reduce the number of courses taken per semester in order to meet other competing obligations. Currently, the cost of textbooks and supplies for students at public two-year institutions is approximately $1,390 per year.2 A survey by e-textbook provider VitalSource has found that 50 percent of students who delayed buying textbooks because of high prices saw their grades suffer as a result3.

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1 s. 1004.085, F.S. found at https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2016/1004.085
Enhancing Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability

Florida Colleges System institutions historically focused on college affordability through the development of policies and procedures for textbook adoption and the implementation of initiatives to reduce the cost of textbook and instructional materials for students. This report has been developed in accordance with s. 1004.085 (8), F.S., which states:

The board of trustees of each Florida College System institution and state university shall report, by September 30 of each year, beginning in 2016, to the Chancellor of the Florida College System or the Chancellor of the State University System, as applicable, the textbook and instructional [1] materials selection process for general education courses with a wide cost variance identified pursuant to subsection (4) and high-enrollment courses; [2] specific initiatives of the institution designed to reduce the costs of textbooks and instructional materials; [3] policies implemented in accordance with subsection (6); [4] the number of courses and course sections that were not able to meet the textbook and instructional materials posting deadline for the previous academic year; and any additional information determined by the chancellors. By November 1 of each year, beginning in 2016, each chancellor shall provide a summary of the information provided by institutions to the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors, as applicable.

Each institution was provided with a report template to complete delineating the strategies implemented by the colleges to reduce the cost of textbook and instructional materials. The following is a summary of college responses for each category.

1. Materials Selection Process
FCS institutions submitted details for the selection process for textbook and instructional materials with a wide cost variance to general education courses and high enrollment courses. Many FCS institutions documented Board of Trustees policy identifying the factors utilized in the selection process for general education and high enrollment courses. These factors include certifications from course instructors or academic departments that all textbooks and instructional materials will be used, the extent to which a new edition differs from earlier versions and the value of changing to a new edition. Seven institutions adopted college policies require that all sections of the same course must adopt the same textbook and other course materials unless the instructor opts for open educational resources (OER) or does not require students to purchase course materials opting for other no-cost options of providing access to course materials. Twenty colleges may require faculty to request exceptions from a dean and provost in instances where cost variance for textbook costs exceed a designated level. One FCS institution charged its institutional research department with conducting an analysis of courses with a wide cost variance and the data was shared with academic leadership to pursue targeted conversations on how to lower the cost variance among course sections. As a result, these processes focused on keeping college affordable are ensuring that FCS students have access to the most affordable classroom materials.
2. College Initiatives
All FCS institutions employ at least one initiative designed to reduce the cost of textbooks and instructional materials. Twenty-four college utilize open educational resources (OER) to reduce the textbook costs to students and provide quality and affordable textbook solutions. Eighteen FCS institutions have established committees and/or task forces charged with monitoring textbook cost and ensuring awareness of quality and affordable textbook options available to faculty and students. Twenty-six institutions indicated that they provide textbook rentals as another means of ensuring access to low cost textbook options.

One of the most innovative initiatives included in the reports was offering entire programs with no textbook costs. Eleven colleges are facilitating this strategy by paying for textbooks through grants or offering all textbooks and materials in a digital open format. Other colleges are working with faculty to develop course materials to reduce costs to students. Grants to support these efforts include the Achieving the Dream Open Educational Resources Degree Initiative. A strategy commonly used by FCS institutions is the implementation of two or three year adoption periods for textbook and instructional materials. All colleges participate in at least two strategies designed to reduce the cost of textbooks and instructional materials. Eleven institutions employ four or more strategies.

Some colleges offer workshops to guide faculty on how to effectively select, create and use technology-based resources, while some utilize LibGuides designed to organize online resources for classes. Other cost saving measures are book loans and using one textbook for a sequence of courses such as one book for ENC 1101 English Composition I and ENC 1102 English Composition II.

3. Colleges Posting Deadlines to Websites
Colleges posted textbook and instructional materials on the college website, the bookstore website, a student portal and a course registration system or course catalog. All colleges establish benchmarks to identify courses still pending adoption. Colleges work closely with bookstores to ensure materials are properly posted. Ten institutions utilize this practice. Many institutions also set adoption deadlines well before the first day of classes in order to ensure textbooks are posted in order to meet the posting deadline. In the spring 2017, 23 of 28 FCS institutions met the posting requirement of 45 days before the first day of class for at least 95 percent of all courses and course sections offered at the institution. Three colleges reported 100 percent of courses and course sections met posting requirements. Of the five institutions that did not meet the 95% posting deadline, the stated reasons for not meeting the deadline include: adding the course after the posting deadline; delayed assignment of faculty to course; and utilization of a new bookstore vendor. All colleges that did not meet the posting requirements noted efforts to ensure courses and course sections meet posting requirements in the future.

4. Factors Considered when Selecting Materials Through a Cost-Benefit Analyses
Colleges considered multiple factors when selecting textbooks and instructional materials through a cost-benefit analyses. FCS institutions considered the following factors when selecting materials: purchasing digital textbooks in bulk (12 institutions), expanded use of open-access materials (26 institutions), rental options (26 institutions), increase availability of digital texts and learning objects (26
Institutions) and extending the length of time textbooks remain in use (27 institutions). The goal of all FCS institutions when conducting a cost-benefit analyses is making textbooks and instructional materials more affordable and reducing students’ educational costs.

**Best Practices in Florida**

College practices are innovative and offer a variety of formats and options for students. Bookstores, most of which are third-party entities, work closely with colleges to ensure student access to textbooks and instructional materials and to provide affordable options. Libraries and sometimes tutoring centers offer free access to textbooks and instructional materials for students. Addressing student access to textbooks and instructional materials is critical to continue to make the FCS an affordable option for students and assisting students with achieving their dreams. When they enter the classroom, college students have access to faculty members, desks and technology, but they have to spend time, money and effort to acquire some of the most important resources for learning.

The following collection of practices is by no means comprehensive, but the list is indicative of the local opportunities colleges develop and implement and the many ways in which they lead textbook affordability initiatives.

**Coursewide Adoption**

To address the issue of cost variances between course material selections for the same course, FCS institutions have implemented multiple strategies. Many institutions have selected coursewide adoption for general education courses. Another common strategy utilized by FCS institutions is tracking forms that faculty must complete to track and identify any variance in the cost of General Education textbooks and instructional materials among different sections of the same course and the percentage of textbooks and instructional materials that remain in use for more than one term.

**Standing Textbook Affordability Committees**

Many colleges have standing textbook affordability committees to explore the best means of reducing costs while providing quality materials for students. Committees consist of faculty, administrators, bookstore personnel, librarians and students. The priorities of the committees focus on responding to specific concerns and undertaking proactive projects to achieve outcomes.

**Increased Open Educational Resources**

Open Educational Resources is one of the most commonly reported methods for reducing and sometimes eliminating the cost of textbooks and instructional materials. The increased availability of OER allows faculty more options from which to select appropriate high-quality resources. In addition to reducing costs, this format gives students access to a variety of tools including videos, audio clips and other interactive media. Some colleges are participating in Rice University’s OpenStax, which are free, peer-reviewed collections of online and digital materials and allows students the opportunity to also access print copies for a small fee. Another college developed a faculty materials repository that can be used by any faculty to create open source. One college reported saving students $4 million over a three-
year period by transitioning up to 70% of its open campus to digital only texts. The open campus of the college developed master courses used by all students enrolled in the course and fourteen programs in the open campus have no textbook costs. Another institution has saved students over $575,000 over the last two years through the development of open educational resources. Both the college’s faculty and student government council passed resolutions asking faculty to consider OER when developing courses and over 48% of faculty have adopted OER. Additionally, when students register for a course they are notified of whether a course offers an OER option.

Five FCS institutions transitioned more than 20 percent of their general education core courses to an open educational resources format and an additional seven institutions transitioned between (10 and 19 percent) of their general education courses to an open educational resources format.

**Bulk Purchasing**
In addition to price matching in the form of store credit, bookstores are also purchasing textbooks in bulk to reduce costs, which is most feasible in situations where colleges have policies requiring all sections of a course use the same materials. Bulk purchasing is also a useful strategy for establishing a rental inventory.

**Rental Options**
Bookstores and online sites offer textbook rental options for students. The advantage of book rentals is the reduced pricing. Some of the disadvantages include a limitation of the time the student may use the book and the pricing may not be as inexpensive as purchasing a used book and selling it to a friend who will take the course a following semester.

**LibGuides**
LibGuides also known as Research Guides, one of the newer strategies for instructional materials access, are curated by librarians who work closely with faculty to identify the resources needed for a course. These resources are free to the student and may be easily updated to meet the needs of a changing discipline such as information technology.

**Reserves and Loans**
Desk copies of textbooks may be placed on reserve by faculty members for students to review at the library or checkout on loan. This no-cost option may place the student at a disadvantage if the textbook is required during face-to-face course meetings. Libraries may also offer access to e-books and textbooks through a password protected site where students may use the needed materials as long as they have an internet connection. Learning centers may also offer reserved copies of textbooks and instructional materials.
Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability in the Future

FCS institutions continue to implement innovative strategies to provide access to textbooks and course materials and maintain cost saving strategies.

Colleges Initiatives
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