

April 2008

Report No. 08-29

Options Exist to Address the Rising Cost of Textbooks for Florida's College Students

at a glance

The cost of college textbooks and required course materials has increased faster than inflation, and averages about \$120 per course for common undergraduate classes. Textbook costs vary by discipline, and are highest for life sciences, physical sciences, business, and mathematics courses. Prices are typically a little lower from on-line and privately owned bookstores than on-campus stores.

Most of Florida's community colleges and universities have taken steps to address textbook costs, including providing faculty guidelines, providing library access to required books, and sponsoring buy-back programs. Some states have also enacted legislation to help contain textbook costs, including mandating disclosure of prices and edition changes, requiring postsecondary institutions to adopt textbook policies, and prohibiting faculty from receiving payments from publishers for requiring specific textbooks and course materials.

Scope

As directed by the Legislature, OPPAGA examined the costs of college textbooks and course materials. Our review focused on two questions.

- How much do textbooks cost students attending Florida's public community colleges and universities?
- What cost-savings practices have been identified to help reduce student textbook costs, and are Florida's postsecondary institutions using them?

Specifically, we examined the cost of required course materials, how campus bookstore prices compare to alternative retailer prices, and textbook-related policies and procedures at Florida's public postsecondary institutions.

Background

Rising college textbook costs have garnered national attention. The United States Government Accountability Office reports that over an 18-year period (December 1986 to December 2004) the costs of college textbooks increased at double the rate of inflation.¹

Several factors contribute to the high cost of college textbooks. New editions are generally released every few years to reflect new information, which restricts the availability of less expensive used copies. Also, publishers have increasingly provided instructional editions of textbooks that are packaged with additional materials such as lesson plans, homework sets, and multimedia presentations to support lectures. While these materials are provided at no cost to instructors, their cost is included in textbook prices.

In general, decisions on what textbooks to require for college classes are made by the course instructor. However, some community colleges and universities use faculty committees to select texts for some courses. Students may buy selected textbooks from a variety of sources, including on-campus

¹ College textbooks increased at an average rate of 6% per year while general inflation, over the same period, was 3%.

bookstores, private bookstores, and internet retailers. If available, students may purchase used copies of textbooks and materials at a lower price from these sources. Additionally, some retailers offer book leasing services in which students pay a reduced price to use a book during a course and then return the book at the end of the term.

Questions and Answers

How much do textbooks cost students attending Florida's public community colleges and universities?

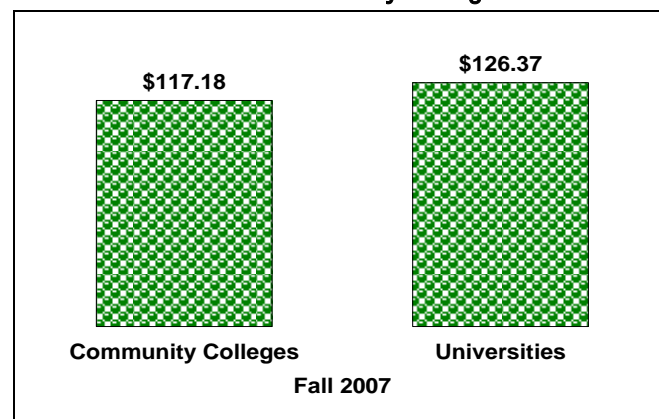
The cost of required textbooks and course materials in Florida varies by subject area, and is highest in the sciences. Costs tend to be higher for university courses than community college classes; prices ranged from \$74 to \$188 for the courses we examined.

To identify college textbook costs in Florida, we examined a sample of 53 undergraduate courses in 13 disciplines at the state's community colleges and public universities. As different instructors may require different textbooks and instructional materials, we obtained information from on-campus bookstores on the specific course materials required for course sections that had the highest and lowest total textbook and material costs. In total, we examined textbook costs for 3,922 course sections. We then obtained prices for a subset of these materials at alternative sources including private college bookstores, on-line retailers, and textbook leasing companies.²

Students paid approximately \$120 per course for textbooks and required materials. As shown in Exhibit 1, community college students paid \$117 on average for textbooks and instructional materials per course in our sample, while university students

paid an average of \$126 per course.³ Prices for required textbooks and instructional materials varied substantially, ranging from zero (no textbooks were required for the course) to \$375.⁴

Exhibit 1 College Course Textbook Costs Are Slightly Higher at Universities Than Community Colleges



Note: Figures are the midpoint price between average high and low required material costs per course.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of community college and university required course material cost data.

Textbook costs varied by academic area. As Exhibit 2 shows, the costs of required textbooks and course materials were the highest for courses in life sciences, physical sciences, business, and mathematics at both community colleges and universities. Costs per individual textbook required for the classes we examined varied substantially, ranging from \$19 for a music appreciation text to a high of \$375 for an anatomy and physiology text and materials. Mirroring the national trend, institutions reported that required course material costs have increased in recent years at both community colleges and universities.⁵

² To compare campus bookstore to alternative retailers' prices, we selected 24 courses based on highest student enrollment and compared the campus bookstore price to the price at 21 alternative retailers: 5 online retailers, 14 local bookstores, and 2 online rental sites. Where applicable, we included standard shipping charges, as applied by the retailer, in our online price comparisons. Our analysis is based on 51 textbooks or other required course materials and resulted in 320 price comparisons of online retailers, 64 price comparisons of private bookstores, and 58 price comparisons of online rental sites. The analysis is limited to new textbooks because while used textbooks are available, quantities are limited and book condition can vary substantially.

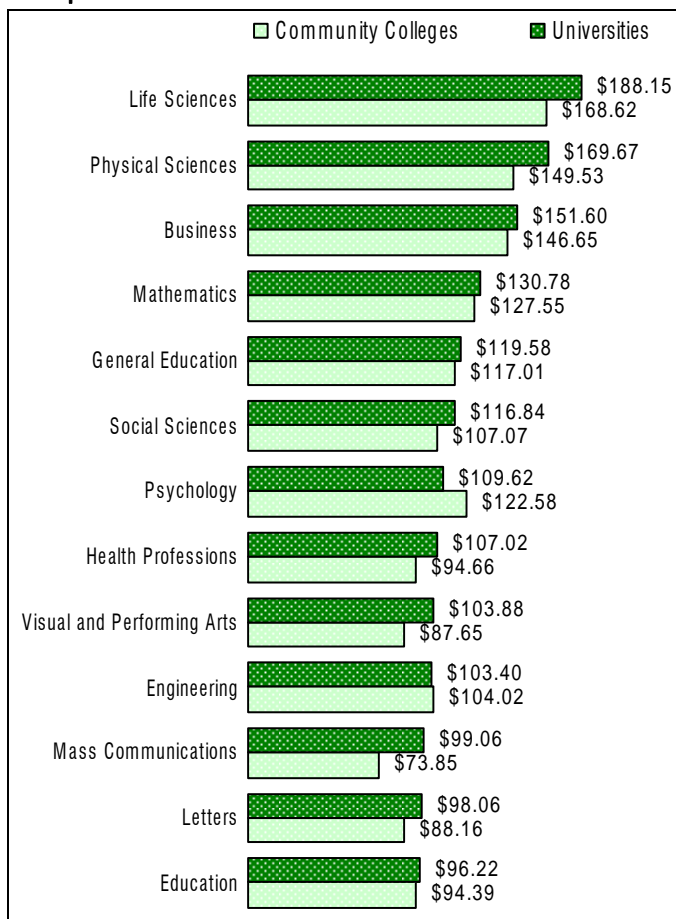
³ The price for required course materials is the midpoint price between average low and high material costs for all 13 disciplines we examined.

⁴ Twenty-one (1%) of the 3,922 course sections we examined did not require students to purchase course materials because instructors posted materials online or used customized course packets that were available at a minimal cost to students.

⁵ Costs for the course materials in our sample grew by approximately 6% a year at community colleges and by about 2% per year at universities. These data were reported by 12 community colleges for a four-year period and six universities for a three-year period.

Exhibit 2

Required Course Material Costs Vary Across Academic Disciplines



Note: Figures are the midpoint price between average high and low required material costs per course.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of community college required course material cost data.

Textbook costs were slightly lower from online retailers. Our price comparison of textbooks and other required course materials at college bookstores to those offered by online retailers found that students could achieve savings through online purchasing, although these savings were often relatively minor. We compared prices for required items for 24 courses and found that, on average, students could save \$2.15 per item by purchasing from online retailers, with savings ranging from \$0.05 to \$103.65 per item. However, online prices were higher for 27% of the textbooks and required course materials we examined. A primary disadvantage of online purchases is that students may have to wait up to three weeks for delivery.

Textbook costs were slightly lower from local privately operated bookstores. Our analysis also found that, in general, prices were slightly lower from locally owned private bookstores than on-campus stores. We found that while prices were often identical, private bookstores offered lower prices on 41% of the required textbooks and course materials we compared. On average, students would have saved \$2 by purchasing textbooks and required materials from private bookstores.

Online textbook rental prices were substantially lower than purchase prices, but rental has disadvantages. Our comparison found that students can save, on average, \$41.11 per item by renting course materials from online vendors in lieu of purchasing new materials from campus bookstores. However, rental materials are not available for all courses, students may have to wait for up to three weeks for delivery, and they could be required to pay the full new purchase price if the materials are damaged.

What cost-savings practices have been identified to help reduce student textbook costs, and are Florida's postsecondary institutions using them?

Several policies and practices have been suggested to help reduce college textbook costs. As shown in Exhibit 3, these fall into six major categories.

- Providing faculty guidelines for textbook selections
- Providing student access to textbooks at libraries or on-line sources
- Sponsoring buybacks of used textbooks
- Requiring publishers to disclose prices and planned textbook revisions
- Requiring publishers to offer unbundled textbooks and instructional materials in those cases in which materials are sold together as a package
- Offering textbook rental or financing

Exhibit 3 shows the number of state community colleges and universities that are using these policies and practices for at least some of their courses. In general, community colleges are making greater use of these options than are universities.

Exhibit 3 Florida's Postsecondary Institutions Are Using Some Mechanisms to Contain Textbook Costs

Potential Cost Savings Mechanisms	Number of Institutions Using this Mechanism	
	Community Colleges	State Universities
Providing faculty guidelines for textbook selections	27	7
Providing library or on-line access to textbooks	28	11
Sponsoring book buyback programs	26	11
Requiring publishers to disclose prices and revisions and/or unbundled instructional materials	22	8
Using customized texts	8	1
Offering textbook rental or financing	4	1

Source: OPPAGA analysis.

Providing faculty guidelines. Most community colleges and some state universities have provided guidelines for faculty in their textbook selections. These include suggesting that instructors take student costs into account (32 institutions), creating faculty committees to select books that will be used in all sections of a course (17 institutions), and identifying texts that will be used for multiple semesters which increases the market for less expensive used books (15 institutions). Several community colleges and universities (13 institutions) have also established policies encouraging or requiring faculty to make textbook selections available well ahead of classes so bookstores can order new and used course materials.

Providing access to texts. Most community colleges and universities take steps to make textbooks and course materials available to students who cannot buy them by placing texts on reserve at the college library (used by 38 institutions for at least some classes). In some cases, institutions provide electronic access to textbooks through electronic subscriptions (22 institutions) but students are generally responsible for paying for the e-text. Electronic textbook titles, however, are typically available for only some classes. There is a limited selection of electronic texts and students may prefer to use hard copy texts because of their portability. One Florida community college reported that it attempted to use electronic texts but discontinued the practice after student interest proved low. However, Brevard Community College reported

that it uses only electronic texts and materials for many of its online math courses.

Sponsoring book buyback programs. Almost all (26) community colleges and all state universities sponsor textbook buybacks at their campus bookstores that allow students to sell used books at the end of the term. Students may receive up to 50% of the price of books, depending on their age, condition, and whether a new edition has been issued. A few (3) institutions have had student run textbook buy back programs in the past, but the institutions indicated that these efforts were generally not successful and have been discontinued.

Requiring publisher disclosure and unbundling of materials. Some institutions have adopted policies that either request or require publishers to disclose when a new textbook edition will be published or disclose what changes have been made when a new edition is published. This information is important, as it can inform faculty and students whether there will be a buy-back market for the text at the end of the semester. Disclosure of new edition changes allows faculty and students to determine whether purchasing a new edition is needed or whether an earlier, used, and cheaper edition will suffice. However, some institutions reported that publishers did not provide such information when requested.

Some institutions have tried to offer 'unbundled' materials that allow students to purchase textbooks and related instructional materials separately. However, they reported that in some cases, publishers have refused to sell bundled materials separately.

Using customized texts. Eight community colleges and one university reported using customized course materials for some classes. Customized course materials can include information that professors compile into a manual that acts as the course textbook, materials authored by faculty members for a specific course, and selected chapters from published textbooks that faculty may request that publishers print and bind in lieu of an entire textbook. These materials may be sold to students at a lower price than full textbooks. In addition, the United Faculty of Florida has encouraged the on-line use of faculty-authored course materials available free to students.

Textbook rental and financing. While used in some other states, only one community college and no state universities have established internal textbook rental programs. Three community colleges and one university have established textbook financing programs that allow students to pay for their books over the course of a semester. The other institutions reported that these options were too resource intensive and were available from the private sector.

The Florida Association of Community Colleges recently adopted textbook cost-saving guidelines. In January 2008, the Florida Association of Community Colleges' Council of Presidents adopted five guidelines aimed at increasing textbook affordability. The association recommends that each community college adopt these guidelines. The guidelines

- prohibit faculty from receiving compensation for using a specific text;
- require publishers to disclose textbook prices (wholesale, retail, and bundled), textbook revisions, and availability of materials;
- suggest use of a textbook buy-back program;
- suggest a two-year textbook adoption standard; and,
- require disclosure of textbook identification information to students.

Legislative Options

In addition to actions taken by postsecondary institutions, legislatures in many states have considered actions to address rising college textbook costs. Over the past two years legislatures in 32 states have considered bills related to college textbooks, and 12 states have passed textbook-related laws. (See Appendix A for an overview of adopted postsecondary textbook legislation across the nation.)

The Legislature may wish to consider similar policy options including those described below.

- Encouraging or requiring publishers to offer unbundled texts and instructional materials.

This step would help ensure that students are not required to pay for materials that will not be used in a course.

- Encouraging or requiring publishers to disclose when new editions will be published and what changes constitute a new edition. These steps would allow faculty choosing textbooks to better assess the potential for a future buy-back market and the need for a new textbook.
- Requiring instructors to certify that all required texts and materials will be used for the course.
- Requiring community colleges and universities to
 - consider alternative textbook options such as electronic textbook subscriptions and customized textbooks where these options are cost-effective;
 - require, where feasible, that textbooks be used for a specific period of time, e.g., two or three years, to ensure a buy-back market and students' ability to recoup some of their investment;
 - establish textbook advisory committees to provide input on textbook selection and the need for supplemental materials;
 - establish deadlines for student notification of required textbooks to enable them time to obtain required materials from alternative sources; and
 - prohibit faculty from receiving remuneration from publishers in exchange for requiring specific textbooks and course materials, other than normal author royalties.

Agency Response

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was provided to the Commissioner of Education and to the chancellor of the Board of Governors to review. Responses from the Commissioner of Education and the chancellor of the Division of Community Colleges have been reproduced in Appendix C.

OPPAGA supports the Florida Legislature by providing evaluative research and objective analyses to promote government accountability and the efficient and effective use of public resources. This project was conducted in accordance with applicable evaluation standards. Copies of this report in print or alternate accessible format may be obtained by telephone (850/488-0021), by FAX (850/487-3804), in person, or by mail (OPPAGA Report Production, Claude Pepper Building, Room 312, 111 W. Madison St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-1475). Cover photo by Mark Foley.

Florida Monitor: www.oppaga.state.fl.us

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Appendix A

Textbook Legislation in Other States

In calendar years 2006 and 2007, 32 states considered textbook-related legislation and 12 passed related legislation. Table A-1 profiles the legislation enacted in these 12 states.

Table A-1
Several States Have Adopted Legislation Aimed at Reducing Rising Textbook Costs

State	Bill	Description of Bill	Year Passed
Arkansas	Senate Bill 24	Requires booklists to be posted at the bookstore and on the school's website by November 1 for spring term and April 1 for fall and summer. Late adoptions require special permission.	2007
Arkansas	Senate Bill 27	Prevents state employees from receiving inducements to adopt textbooks. Faculty may receive sample copies and instructor's copies, and may earn royalties on materials not adopted for their own classes.	2007
Arkansas	Senate Bill 30	Regulates royalties earned by faculty on materials adopted for classes at their institution. Such royalties would be considered property of the school and placed in a scholarship fund.	2007
Arkansas	Senate Bill 31	Faculty are not prevented from referring students to any sources for textbooks.	2007
California	Assembly Bill 1548	Requires publishers to print on or in each textbook a summary of substantive differences between new and prior editions. Requires campus bookstores to post on the store shelf or online its retail pricing policy for new and used books. Encourages faculty to place orders with sufficient lead time. Prohibits acceptance of inducements and donations of equipment or goods for adoptions. Prohibits resale of complimentary copies.	2007
Colorado	House Bill 1024	Mandates that state institution governing boards consider creation of an "online textbook library" to enable students to buy only those materials needed for course work.	2006
Connecticut	House Bill 5527	Requires publishers to provide a complete list of all products, their wholesale prices, and estimated length of time the products will remain on the market. The same information must be placed on the publisher's website. Also requires the boards of the public college and university systems to develop policies allowing financial aid students to buy textbooks at campus stores until their aid arrives.	2006
Florida	House Bill 721	Provides tax exemption for payments to higher education institutions from operators of bookstores on institutional property.	2007
Maryland	House Bill 204	Requires the Department of Legislative Services, with help from committees, to study and compile information on retail textbook prices, including factors that impact pricing, how professors choose books, retail margins, how publishers set prices, barriers to competition, and marketing. Also asked to explore posting textbook information online and including book costs in tuition.	2007
Minnesota	House File 1063	Directs the Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to study and explore textbook rentals and other programs. Directs the Minnesota Office of Higher Education to work with institutions to develop course materials based on recommendations for reducing costs. Asks faculty to attempt to provide adequate notice of their intention to adopt course materials. Asks stores to make reasonable efforts to obtain information about textbooks (including authors, ISBNs, prices, bundles, alternative options, plans for revisions, current and future availability, edition changes). Asks instructors to submit booklists at least 30 days before the start of the term. Asks stores to notify students of book adoptions (including ISBNs) at least 15 days before the term's start. Requires publishers to disclose ISBN, price, bundles, alternative formats, summary of revisions, and returns policies, and that institutions allow students to pay for books through tuition plans or waivers.	2007

State	Bill	Description of Bill	Year Passed
Oklahoma	House Bill 2103	Creates a tuition rate lock; includes a section requiring campus bookstores to sell bundled components individually; disclose prices and edition changes to faculty and students; and promote buyback. Encourages faculty to consider cost in choosing textbooks. Requires publishers to provide information to faculty on prices and revision history. Prohibits employees from receiving inducements for textbook adoptions. Bans campus bookstores and contractors from buying back or reselling complimentary copies.	2007
Oregon	Senate Bill 365	Requires publishers to provide a list of products with wholesale prices and provide dates of previous editions. The list must be posted in a public area of the publisher's web site. Also requires publishers to sell individual bundled components.	2007
Tennessee	House Bill 1257	Requires the university system and board of regents to develop policies requiring faculty to submit booklists in a timely manner; to consider the least costly options for course materials; campus bookstores to disclose retail pricing of books to faculty on a per-course basis; campus stores to sell bundled components individually; campus stores to promote buyback programs. Copies of complimentary textbooks must be made available to students at no charge through the academic department or library. All inventory and monitoring required by new policies must be accomplished by existing bookstore staff.	2007
Virginia	House Bill 1478	Requires boards to encourage efforts to minimize costs. Requires stores to sell unbundled items only when cost-effective and available from publishers.	2006
Washington	House Bill 3087	Mandates that boards develop the rules in collaboration with affiliated bookstores and student and faculty representatives.	2006
Washington	House Bill 1224	Amends a 2006 law requiring the boards of state and regional universities to develop policies on textbook bundling, promoting buyback, disclosing book costs to faculty, and encouraging faculty to consider price in selecting course materials, to apply to community college districts.	2007
Washington	House Bill 2300	Requires publishers to inform faculty of wholesale prices and revision history	2007

Source: National Association of College Stores.

Appendix B

Institutional Use of Potential Cost Saving Mechanisms and Policies and Procedures

Table B-1 provides information on Florida community colleges and universities' use of specific cost-saving mechanisms that other states have used to address textbook costs and outlines institutional policies and procedures adopted to address rising textbook costs. Some of the potential cost-saving mechanisms have been adopted by most of Florida's public postsecondary institutions, while others are being used by few or no community colleges and universities. Likewise, while most institutions have adopted some textbook-related policies and procedures, their scope and focus varies. Overall, more community colleges than universities have adopted textbook related policies and procedures.

Table B-1
Florida's Colleges and Universities Vary in Their Use of Potential Cost Saving Mechanisms and Textbook-Related Policies and Procedures

Potential Cost-Saving Mechanism	Number of Institutions Reporting Use		Option Description
	Community Colleges	State Universities	
Place textbooks on reserve at the library	27	11	Library reserve systems allow faculty to place assigned textbooks on reserve for student use. Institutions report that this practice is not restricted to certain departments, types of student, or types of course material, making this option available for any course, faculty member, or student.
Provide a campus buyback program	26	11	Textbook buyback programs allow students to sell their used textbooks back to the bookstore for a partial refund. In most cases, the refunds are calculated using a buyback rate that can change throughout a semester. The buyback rate is generally highest at the end of the semester, when it is typically about 50% of the new textbook list price. The buyback market depends, however, on whether the textbook will be used in subsequent semesters. Textbooks that will not be used in subsequent semesters will, most likely, not be bought back by the bookstore or will be purchased at a much lower price.
Encourage faculty to consider textbook costs before selecting and assigning materials	26	5	Some of the state's public postsecondary institutions encourage faculty to consider textbook costs before assigning course materials. Textbook cost information is frequently included in new faculty orientations and, on many campuses, bookstore managers hold receptions for faculty and department assistants to alert them to textbook issues.
Provide unbundled course materials	19	8	In some cases, course materials are bundled to include not only the course textbook but supplemental materials such as workbooks and/or CDs. Many institutions have unbundled these materials for some courses to sell the components separately, thus saving students money by allowing them to purchase only select items. However, not all bundled packages can be broken. Some packages contain items with online access codes that allow students to participate in online practice tests and/or homework assignments specific to a course. In these cases, the items must be purchased as a package and, since they are good for only the current semester, there is no buyback market.
Provide electronic textbook subscriptions	16	6	For some courses, instructors may be able to use an electronic textbook subscription program, allowing students to view required course materials online. The number of e-texts, however, is limited and is significantly smaller than the number of printed materials. Twenty institutions (51%) reported using an e-textbook at some point in the last five years. At most institutions (15 of the 22), students were required to pay for the e-subscription.

Potential Cost-Saving Mechanism	Number of Institutions Reporting Use		Option Description
	Community Colleges	State Universities	
Provide money-saving tips to students	9	8	Some of the state's public postsecondary institutions provide students with tips on how to reduce their textbook costs such as how to obtain used textbooks, alternative sources to the campus bookstore, and how to access course information online. The earlier a student knows what course materials are required, the more likely they are to identify opportunities to purchase cheaper used materials. Required course material information is typically distributed to students at the start of each semester. It is important to note, however, that while these tips may save students money, they may also reduce campus bookstore sales. Since college bookstores provide a profit to the institution, any reduction in sales reduces institutional funds.
Request publishers to disclose textbook shelf life	10	0	Shelf-life information is important to the overall cost of textbooks since it determines whether there will be a buy-back market at the end of the semester. No universities reported requesting shelf life information from publishers.
Request publishers to disclose textbook revisions	8	0	Disclosure of new edition changes allows faculty and students to determine whether purchase of a new text is worth it or whether an earlier, used, and cheaper edition will suffice. No universities reported requesting textbook revision information from publishers.
Use customized textbooks	8	1	Customized textbooks can allow professors, with the assistance of the publisher, to alter the content of a textbook to produce a lower-cost textbook with only the specific chapters or information that will be needed for the course. In some cases, however, a customized textbook may be more expensive to produce than the standard course text. These texts are printed in small quantities (reflecting the needs at a single campus as opposed to a national need) so costs may be higher. In addition, there is no national used book market for these texts which could limit students' ability to sell used books back to the bookstore.
Implement a textbook advisory committee	6	2	These committees, in addition to potentially selecting course textbooks, may address a variety of text-related issues including identifying cost-saving tips for students, assessing the need for a new textbook edition, assessing the quality of new textbooks, and assessing the need for supplemental materials. ¹ Some institutions reported that a formal textbook advisory committee is not necessary because administrators and faculty already engage in ongoing, informal discussions about the rising costs of textbooks and the need for intervention efforts.
Provide faculty adoption incentives	1	4	Providing faculty incentives to submit material selection information early was deemed unnecessary by some institutions since they already require faculty to submit their lists in a timely manner as a condition of employment. Nevertheless, there are five institutions that provide faculty adoption incentives; three have been doing so for five years or less while two have provided faculty incentives for more than five years.
Allow textbook financing	3	1	These programs allow students to pay for required materials over the course of the semester. Institutions indicated that textbook financing programs have generally not been used due to related implementation costs such as personnel demands.
Organize student-operated buyback programs	1	2	In some cases, students may organize and operate a buyback program, eliminating the campus bookstore. Student interest, however, is limited and financial record keeping can be difficult for students to accurately maintain.
Provide a textbook rental program	1	0	Institutions indicated that textbook rental programs have generally not been used due to related implementation costs such as storage space and personnel demands. Hillsborough Community College has implemented a textbook rental program on a pilot basis with a small number of courses.
Set price limits on course materials	0	0	While placing per-course price limits on course materials was identified in the literature as a potential cost-saving measure, institutions expressed concern that such a policy may infringe on faculty's academic freedom rights.

Policy or Procedure	Number of Institutions Reporting Use		Option Description
	Community Colleges	State Universities	
Uniform text adoption	16	1	Faculty establishes committee to review textbooks for a course and adopt a common textbook for multiple sections of the same course. In most cases, such committees are comprised of full-time department faculty.
Length of time required text and/or supplemental material must be used	15	0	Faculty must use the required course materials, including supplemental materials, for a minimum number of years; typically, one to three, before new course materials can be selected.
Textbook deadlines for faculty and departments	9	4	Require faculty and departments to submit required materials list to the campus bookstore at specified times; typically 10-12 weeks prior to the start of the semester.
Availability of textbooks at campus bookstore	6	4	These policies require that course materials be available for student purchase from the campus bookstore at the start of each term.
Faculty authored textbooks	6	4	These policies include requiring faculty to receive department-level permission to use self-authored materials; requiring faculty to report to the provost any earnings greater than \$500 from the required use of self-authored materials; and, prohibiting faculty who have self-authored textbooks under consideration for a course to participate in textbook selection for that course.
Use of supplemental materials	9	0	Some institutions have policies that permit faculty to select supplementary materials for their courses. One institution requires that the cost of supplemental texts for a course not exceed \$40.
Instructors' use of desk copies	8	0	Faculty are permitted to accept desk copies of textbooks from publishers but, in some cases, are not permitted to sell their desk copies.
Selection of texts for distance learning, virtual, or hybrid courses	4	0	These policies require that the texts for distance learning or hybrid courses be jointly selected by faculty teaching those courses.
Campus bookstore operations	3	0	Outlines the campus' policy for textbook return.
Textbook and bookstore advisory committee	2	0	Committees that meet periodically to review textbooks that have been used. Another institution has a bookstore advisory group that meets twice yearly to discuss the successes and shortcomings of the bookstore.
Disposal of unwanted textbooks	2	0	These policies instruct faculty to donate unwanted textbooks to either the college library or a non-profit institution.
Textbook information made available to students	1	1	These policies require information on title, author(s), publisher, edition, and ISBN be made available to students via online syllabi or the campus bookstore website.
Faculty textbook orders	0	1	This policy requires faculty members to adopt textbook orders that will aid students in obtaining textbooks at lower prices.

¹ The textbook advisory committee is different from the textbook selection committee included in institutions policies and procedures. A textbook selection committee is specifically designed to select textbooks for one or more courses while the broader advisory committee would be designed to address textbook affordability.

Source: OPPAGA survey of community colleges and universities and analyses of institutional policies and procedures.

Appendix C

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education



April 22, 2008

Gary R. VanLandingham, Ph.D.
Director
Office of Program Policy Analysis
and Government Accountability
111 West Madison Street, Suite 312
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

Dear Dr. VanLandingham:

The enclosed response to the draft report, *Options Exist to Address the Rising Cost of Textbooks for College Students* is for your information.

If you have any questions, please contact Ed Jordan, Acting Inspector General, at 245-9418 or ed.jordan@fldoe.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eric J. Smith

EJS/ej/br

Enclosure

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Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education

Dr. Willis N. Holcombe, Chancellor
Division of Community Colleges

April 17, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ed Jordan
Office of Inspector General

FROM: Willis N. Holcombe, Chancellor *WJH*

SUBJECT: OPPAGA Draft Report: Options Exist to Address the Rising Cost of Textbooks for College Students

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft of OPPAGA's report on the rising cost of textbooks. This issue is of great interest to the Florida Community College System since the ability to afford instructional materials is closely tied to educational access for students, one of our highest priorities. As you are aware, 80% of Pell grant recipients in higher education in Florida are enrolled in a community college, a reflection of the need to continually assess avenues by which we can contain costs for students without adversely impacting academic quality. I was pleased to note that OPPAGA's draft report recognized the efforts of the Community College Council of Presidents and our colleges to address and minimize increases in textbook costs. As a System, we will continue these efforts, and we will share your final report and recommendations with our colleges.

WNH/jbs

