



To the members of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission Subcommittee on Textbook Affordability,

Thank you very much for making yourselves available to hear testimony from students on this important issue. The Oregon Student Association, representing over 100,000 students across the state, advocated intensely for the formation of this group through the 2012 House Bill 4058. Furthermore, student leaders from 6 public universities and 15 community colleges unanimously supported the bill that outlined the important work of this committee. As many students are away from campus at this time we would like to take this opportunity to submit written testimony and intend to come for public testimony at one of your future meetings.

Today we would like to share with you a few stories that best reflect how textbook unaffordability affects students around the state. The average student pays over \$900 a year on textbooks.¹ These stories are a small reflection of the epidemic that is the rising cost of textbooks for students in post-secondary education. Our first story is from Riley Griffin from Eastern Oregon University.

My name is Riley Griffin I am a part of Eastern Oregon University's Student Government. EOU plays a very important role in this state. We educate a key region of our state and allow students who work on family farms and family business to stay in this vital region. EOU students are very price sensitive and we know that a disproportionate cost of our education is the ever growing cost of textbooks.

Last term I spent at least \$200 on textbooks and course materials. That is roughly 10% of my tuition. With the risk of deeper budget cuts and increasing tuition I want our state to address the rising cost of textbooks. The 2007 Legislature passed Senate Bill 365. SB 365 ban companies from bundling textbooks together. Unfortunately, this bill is not well enforced and we could be doing more. This is just one example of the many solutions out there to lower the cost of textbooks.

Our next story is from Kevin Cronin a student from Lane Community College.

¹ College Textbooks: Enhanced Offerings Appear to Drive Recent Price Increases, page 2, US Government Accountability Office, 2005

My name is Kevin Cronin. I am a history major and dually enrolled student at Lane Community College and the University of Oregon. As a student trying to pay for school I am also desperately looking for a job. A student cannot survive on financial aid alone, particularly when the need-based aid I qualify for, the Oregon Opportunity Grant, is not awarded to me. My textbooks cost me nearly three hundred dollars each term, for three classes. The 300 dollars I pay each term could be used to enroll in a fourth class, so I'd finish my bachelor's degree in four years, but instead I use that money for books.

I have been going to school for four years already, and I have only recently attained junior status. I have been attending school at 12 credit hours which is considered full time, but in order to finish a degree in the four years a student should be taking a minimum of fifteen credits a term.

The greatest cost of my education outside of constantly raising tuition is textbook costs. I make it a point to purchase used and second hand books, but publishers are printing new versions and professors are choosing to teach from the newer versions, which means student like me must brand buy new books every quarter and I continue to lose out on the ability to sell my books back.

I know that these new textbooks don't have dramatically different content, however the work that is required by the university changes, thus making a used textbook inadequate for the course. OSA and I feel the students we represent are being exploited by the text book publishers. We also feel that our schools could be doing more to address the rising costs of textbooks.

Thank you for taking the time to hear from students on just a couple of examples of the impact that overpriced textbooks can have. The student stories we shared with you provide some suggestions for reducing the cost of textbooks to students. We hope this committee will dive into the specifics of what policies and/or programs should exist to reduce the cost of textbooks for students in Oregon. It is time we execute real solutions to address textbook affordability and we are very happy to see a HECC subcommittee to do just that. We look forward to engaging with all of you as we search for solutions to stop the rising cost of textbooks and make real and tangible improvements for students and Oregon families.

Thank you.