

University System of Maryland Policy on Textbook Affordability Measures

I. Purpose

The University System of Maryland Board of Regents recognizes that the rising cost of textbooks must be addressed in order to maintain access and affordability for USM students. Therefore each degree-granting institution shall implement the measures outlined in the following policy.

II. Policy

1. All University System of Maryland degree-granting institutions shall post on the institutional website ISBN, title, author, publisher, and edition for required course material as soon as faculty members and the bookstore have finalized the textbook selection but no later than May 1 for the fall semester and December 1 for the spring semester. In the case that a course has not been assigned a faculty member by the given deadline, textbook selection shall be conducted and communicated to enrolled students expeditiously upon selection of the materials.
2. Institutional bookstores shall provide faculty members who are placing book orders with current information about the retail price of selected course materials.
3. Faculty teaching the same course for multiple semesters are encouraged to use the same textbooks and course materials for multiple semesters to the extent practicable and educationally sound.
4. Faculty should be encouraged to order new editions of textbooks only if necessary and if older editions are not of comparable educational content. Faculty should list information pertinent to previous editions which are of acceptable use, as described in Section 1.
5. Institutions shall make faculty aware of the option to request unbundled versions of textbook and course materials and of the price differential.
6. Faculty should order textbook bundles only if the supplements included with textbooks are necessary to the curriculum and instruction.
7. In the case that a faculty member assigns bundled materials, the bookstore shall make available both bundled and unbundled versions of the materials for purchase. Institutions and bookstores shall clarify on the bookstore website that in the case of the assignment of bundled materials, students should purchase either the bundled package or all required portions of the bundle individually.
8. Faculty should permit students to purchase electronic versions of textbooks when available.

9. Faculty members should incorporate into course instruction the use of online resources wherever feasible and prudent.
10. Institutions shall seek ways to lessen the financial hardship of college textbook purchases, such as targeted scholarship and financial aid funds, consideration of textbook rentals for introductory courses, consideration of placing selected course materials on reserve in campus libraries when practicable, and development of customized course materials.

III. Implementation

This policy shall be effective beginning with the course materials assigned for the Fall 2009 semester.

Institutions shall include in course evaluations, questions concerning the use and value of assigned textbooks and other course materials.

Institutions should make faculty aware of the provisions in this policy each semester.

The Council of University System Presidents (CUSP), the Academic Affairs Advisory Council (AAAC), the University System of Maryland Student Council (USMSC), and the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) shall work together to provide to the Chancellor periodic reports on the impact and effectiveness of this policy.