

The City University of New York



Testimony of

Vita C. Rabinowitz, Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost

before the

New York City Council Committee on Higher Education

CUNY's Efforts to Reduce Cost Associated with Rising Textbook Prices

September 14, 2017

Good morning, Chair Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee. I am Vita Rabinowitz, the Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost. I very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss with this committee, the exciting work that we are doing at CUNY around Open Education Resources, and why that work is so important to CUNY's access and excellence missions. With me today on the panel are Greg Gosselin, Interim University Dean of the Libraries and Information Systems, Jean Amaral, Assistant Professor and Outreach Librarian who co-facilitates BMCC's Open/Alternative Textbook program, and Maura Smale, Chief Librarian and Professor from NYC Tech, one of CUNY's three comprehensive colleges.

Before delving into the focus of our panel, I want to take this opportunity to thank the City Council, the Higher Education Committee, and you, Chair Barron, for your extraordinary support of CUNY over the years, and in particular for your recent, very generous, support of CUNY's comprehensive remediation reform effort. The reform of our developmental education programs, to bring them in line with best practices nation-wide, is essential to achieving our goal of improving access and degree completion for the 57% of CUNY students who begin their college careers in remedial courses and I look forward to talking with you about how we are investing those resources and what we are achieving in the future.

As you well know, another barrier to access, equity and excellence in Higher Education, is the prohibitive cost of college, to which the exorbitant cost of textbooks is a major contributing factor. The issue of affordability is central to racial and socioeconomic disparities in academic achievement in the United States. By 2020, 65% of all jobs will require postsecondary education¹; yet, only 41% of the nation's 18-24-year-olds are pursuing the postsecondary

¹ Lumina Foundation, A Stronger Nation through Higher Education. June 2013. URL http://www.luminafoundation.org/stronger_nation/report/main-narrative.html#3 consulted June 30, 2014.

degrees that will prepare them for the high-skilled jobs that are in demand.² Students spend approximately \$1,200 a year on textbooks and supplies, which amounts to 14% of tuition for students in public four-year colleges nationally and 39% for students in two-year colleges, according to the College Board.³ The City University of New York's estimates are in line with these figures, with expected textbook expenditures of about 20% of tuition at CUNY's baccalaureate colleges and 27% of tuition at our community colleges. For many CUNY students, the cost of textbooks makes them unaffordable, and therefore, unattainable. Forty percent of CUNY's students come from households with annual incomes of less than \$20,000, and so spending an average of \$1200 per year on books and other supplies is simply not an option. Large-scale studies have reported that students choose not to register for courses with high textbooks and materials costs and as a result, may not pursue majors like the sciences that require expensive textbooks. Even if students start in these majors, they often end up withdrawing from or failing courses, and changing majors because they can't purchase the materials. Even for students who manage to borrow materials from libraries or other students, pass their courses and persist, challenges in paying for textbooks can lead to an increase in the number of years students spend in college, thereby reducing the likelihood of completing a degree.

As a professor for many years at Hunter College, I observed first-hand in the 1980s and 1990s the effects of not buying textbooks on my psychology students. They struggled to keep up their grades, and did less well than they otherwise might have. They simply did not get the same education as other students, as I did as an undergraduate. They were not able to excel in their

² National Center for Education Statistics, 2013 data. URL http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_302.60.asp consulted June 30, 2014.

³ The College Board. Trends in College Pricing 2013. URL <http://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/college-pricing-2013-full-report.pdf> consulted June 30, 2014.

studies and compete in their fields. Economically disadvantaged students need more supports, not fewer. Textbooks and other primary learning materials must be available to the students by the first day of class, and ideally before the start of the semester.

For the last several years, CUNY has aggressively taken action to help offset the burden of the high cost of textbooks for our students with a number of initiatives, including the Virtual Bookstore Initiative of which you are aware. In 2013-2015, as part of CUNY's Text Book Initiative and Student Financial Aid Initiative, \$3 million was allocated to purchase textbooks to place on reserve as well as electronic books and other materials. Many libraries quickly realized that simply buying additional copies of expensive textbooks for course reserves with a four-hour loan period was not an adequate long-term solution. One viable and scalable solution presented itself: Open Education Resources.

OER are teaching, learning, and research materials that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others. Awareness of OER began to take hold in academic libraries and among administrators and faculty at CUNY around 2011-12. I must cite the extraordinary leadership here of CUNY Librarians in sparking this movement and realizing its potential. Beginning in 2013, some CUNY libraries began to divert their textbook funds into nascent OER efforts primarily towards supports for faculty to adopt OER into their teaching practices. BMCC and City Tech were early adopters, among a few others. In what began as an offshoot of the textbook initiative, some libraries continued to fund OER initiatives, in some cases with additional campus funding. These local efforts created technological, logistical, and administrative know-how and policies and practices for converting existing CUNY courses to OER and laid the groundwork for more widespread awareness and adoption. That preparation set the stage for two recent game changers, that will be discussed in detail by Dean Gosselin: First, a prestigious grant by the

Hewlett Foundation and the Achieving the Dream organization to create whole degree programs with no textbook costs, and second, based in part on that success, a major investment, a \$4M allocation by the State of New York that is changing the landscape of textbook availability and college affordability at CUNY. Just this week, News12 had a feature on the growing OER movement at Lehman College, with an interview of a student and faculty member that points to the fact that the benefits of OER go beyond cost savings—although the savings to CUNY students from OER are already in the millions of dollars, with many more millions about to be saved.

Our faculty are over the moon about this initiative. As the interview illustrates and our experience bears out, OER provides the opportunity and community of practice to rethink courses and refresh curricula and pedagogy. As they research options and see what is available, their passion for teaching is reignited. Numerous peer-reviewed studies report that the use of OER fosters student success: students enjoy saving the money but they also like the mix of materials and modes of learning, the opportunity for more active and interactive learning, and the convenience of access to materials anytime from anywhere.

Across the country, faculty enthusiasm, and administrative support of OER use, are evident in the growing number of conferences and skyrocketing attendance at those events. Established OER repositories are sources of curated, peer-reviewed OER materials now available across the globe. OpenStax, funded by the Hewlett Foundation, began offering high quality, openly licensed textbooks in many of the high enrollment general education subjects. The Open Textbook Network from the University of Minnesota is another movement leader as a premier provider of educational workshops for OER. They are currently the leading OER workshop/mentoring provider in the US, and will help us deliver system-wide workshops to faculty, as well as equip CUNY staff (Librarians/CETLs) to themselves deliver workshops (in a

train-the-trainer model). CUNY will continue to cultivate existing partnerships and seek new partnerships with OER providers and organizations in Higher Education, and CUNY faculty are engaged now in developing their own OER materials and texts. Councilmembers, this movement, in which CUNY is becoming a leader after a slow start, will deliver on its promise to keep college affordable and promote student success.

For an up to the minute accounting of where we are in OER implementation, I will turn now to the Dean of the Libraries, Greg Gosselin.

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Testimony of Jean Amaral, Assistant Professor
Borough of Manhattan Community College

New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
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Prices

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Testimony of
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Co-Facilitator, BMCC Open/Alternative Textbook Program
before the
New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Hearing - CUNY's Efforts to Reduce Costs Associated with Rising Textbook Prices

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Good morning, Chairperson Barron and members of the Committee on Higher Education. My name is Jean Amaral, and I am an assistant professor and librarian at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). I am also co-coordinator of BMCC's Open/Alternative Textbook Program and other campus open educational resources (OER) initiatives. Thank you for this opportunity to share with you the progress that BMCC, as an example of one of CUNY's seven community colleges, has made in providing no-cost textbook options for our students since the fall 2014 textbook affordability hearing of this committee.

BMCC has two campus-specific programs which address the barrier of expensive textbooks to our students' learning. One zero cost option for students is BMCC Library's ongoing textbook reserves program. The Library purchases every textbook that the campus bookstore stocks, as well as textbooks requested by faculty members, and makes them available to students for use in the Library. In 2016-17, there were over 78,000 check outs from a collection of over 2700 textbooks and recommend readings. While students are able to save money by accessing textbooks in the Library, this is an imperfect solution that does not provide the 24/7 access afforded by open educational resources (OER) nor the pedagogical benefits we have seen when faculty redesign their courses replacing commercial textbooks with OER.

As you may know, the more important zero cost option for our students is the availability of courses that use OER and other no-cost materials in place of expensive textbooks. At BMCC we are very fortunate to have the wholehearted support of President Perez and Provost Karrin Wilks for our efforts in this area. Beginning in spring 2015, BMCC established its Open/Alternative Textbook Program, through which faculty redesign courses with open educational resources (OER) and other no-cost materials available online and through the Library. Since the program's establishment, 75 faculty from 15 of 17 departments have participated in the program and redesigned over 50 courses including more than 100 sections. With an investment of \$80,000, used to support faculty participation, the program has saved approximately 6,750 students an estimated \$1 million cumulatively from the program's launch through this fall semester.

BMCC is building on the success of our Open/Alternative Textbook program with participation in the Achieving the Dream OER Degree Initiative. Beginning in fall 2018, all 20 courses required for the Criminal Justice Associate in Arts degree, BMCC's second largest degree program, will have at least one OER section offered, and often more. For example, this fall, there are 24 OER sections across the six required Criminal Justice courses. Each student who enrolls in all of the OER sections for the degree will save an estimated \$2,500 over the course of completing their program. BMCC is also receiving funds as part of the New York State Department of Education's recently funded \$4 million OER initiative. Our faculty will be redesigning with OER and other no-cost materials 225 sections of 45 courses, 25 of which are high enrollment. Estimated savings per semester for students enrolled in zero textbook cost courses is close to \$850,000.

Equally important as the financial impact of OER courses is the pedagogical transformation that takes place when faculty redesign their courses with OER and other no-cost

materials. In questionnaire responses, faculty talk about being freed from the tyranny of the textbook, being more creative in their course design, adding interactivity and more current content, as well as aligning learning materials to learning outcomes and assessments. Students recognize this difference in their OER courses, as well. In response to a survey question about the benefits of OER, students mentioned access to materials and learning more frequently than they did cost savings. They describe OER courses as being more engaging, more “real world.” They also emphasize the positive impact on their potential to learn because they have access to materials on the first day of class and 24/7 throughout the semester, as many, though not all, OER are delivered online. It is clear that the pedagogical impact of OER courses is as significant, if not more, than the financial.

I’ve provided a fact sheet that includes additional data and information, as well as quotations from students and faculty about the impact of OER courses. While we are very proud of our accomplishments at BMCC, we know that we have a long way to go in removing the barrier to learning that textbook costs pose for our students. In fall 2018, approximately 22% of BMCC’s courses and 13% of course sections will be zero textbook cost, and 10% of faculty will have participated in training sessions. This is not enough when we have students choosing between buying textbooks that will help them succeed in their courses and buying groceries or a METRO card or paying bills. It’s not enough when our students and faculty, along with national research studies, have told us about the positive impact OER have on learning and engagement. We can do more and will continue to seek the resources we need to support and grow BMCC’s OER initiatives. Some say that students should buy overpriced textbooks because they need to invest in their education. At BMCC, we believe in investing in our students, we believe they will succeed when barriers to their learning are removed, and that’s what we’re doing with OER.

Thank you.



Zero Textbook Cost Initiatives

Open/Alternative Textbook Program, Spring 2015 – Present

- Funded by BMCC Office of Academic Affairs, \$30,000/year
- 75 faculty from 15 out of 17 departments have participated in the program and redesigned one or more courses with OER or other no-cost materials from the Library or the web
- Estimated students benefiting from Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) courses: 4,500
- Estimated savings to students per semester: \$562,500
- Cumulative estimated savings to students since program launched: \$1 million

Achieving the Dream OER Degree Initiative, 2016 – 2018

- This initiative is funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation, the Shelter Hill Foundation, and the Speedwell Foundation
- Achieving the Dream grant awarded to CUNY Office of Library Services, \$320,000
- Borough of Manhattan Community College, Bronx Community College, and Hostos Community College participating; creating OER Degrees in Criminal Justice, General Education with History focus, and Teacher Education respectively
- BMCC received \$90,000
- Award supports redesigning at least one section of each of the 20 courses required for the Criminal Justice A.A. degree (BMCC's second largest degree program with over 2,500 students)
- As of fall 2017, all of the six required Criminal Justice courses have at least one ZTC section, and there are 24 ZTC sections across the six courses
- Students who are able to take all 20 ZTC courses for the degree will save an estimated \$2,500

New York State Department of Education Funding, 2017 – 2018

- \$4 million to CUNY Academic Affairs and Office of Library Services
- BMCC awarded \$371,750
- Award supports redesigning 45 courses, and offering 5 ZTC sections for each course
- 25 of the courses are high enrollment
- Approximately 100 faculty will redesign courses from July 2017 to June 2018
- Estimated savings to students per semester across the 45 courses: \$843,750

Projected Fall 2018 Snapshot (per semester)

- Approximately 120 courses, 380 sections offered as ZTC
- 175 faculty participating (11% of total faculty, full-time and part-time)
- Benefiting 11,400 students
- Estimated savings to students per semester: just under \$1.5 million

What BMCC Students Say about the Benefits of ZTC Courses

- "I saved some money so I was able to pay my bills."
- "I was never stressed by if I could afford the textbooks, and so I didn't put off the work."
- "I was able to use the money towards a METRO card and other necessities I needed to get to and from school."

- "I could either read it on my way to work and school on my phone or tablet."
- "I was able to have better access to everything and didn't feel lost or as if I was missing something."
- "No excuse for not completing the work."
- "Learning from real world experience which is better than learning from the textbooks because it's easier, better, simpler and understandable."
- "The benefits from the open/free materials were that it made the course more lively and fun."
- "We engaged more in class because we read together so I got a better understanding of the work."
- "I could afford to take the class. As in, I didn't need to pay for a book and this class was the one I learned the most in this year."

What BMCC Faculty Say about Redesigning Courses as ZTC

- Faculty reported feeling "happier," "excited," "energized," "liberated," and "confident."
- "The workshops . . . have given me the freedom to develop the course in ways that I see as more beneficial to the students."
- "It freed me up to think more creatively about what I wanted to teach, and enabled me to be more current in the content."
- "I concluded that a lot of my students even now, are not buying or using the course text book; furthermore, many commute long distances so I think that on-line materials will be more accessible to them as they commute."
- "I'm very excited to free myself from the structure of the textbook which the course was initially shaped around. . . . In many cases, the students weren't really learning about the subject, they were just learning the textbook."
- "It helped me see that it was possible to have a more interactive and personalized course."
- "It totally liberated me, from all sorts of ideas about texts and traditions."

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**Testimony of Chief Librarian and Professor Maura A. Smale
New York City College of Technology**

**The New York City Council
Committee on Higher Education**

CUNY's Efforts to Reduce Costs Associated with Rising Textbook Prices

September 14, 2017

Good morning, Chairperson Barron and members of the Higher Education Committee. I'm Maura Smale, Chief Librarian and Professor at New York City College of Technology, and I'm delighted to have been invited to discuss textbook affordability.

Like our colleagues at BMCC, City Tech has been an early institutional leader in open educational resource development at CUNY. Since 2014 the City Tech Library has coordinated an OER fellowship for faculty which pays them a stipend to convert a course they teach, replacing their textbook with OER and other cost-free materials for students (for example, library resources). Our fellowship program is led by my colleague Professor Cailean Cooney; we've involved 34 faculty members so far, and saved students nearly \$240,000. City Tech has also been a leader in open source platform development at CUNY: our OER are hosted on the City Tech OpenLab, an open digital platform for teaching, research, and collaboration. Our prior work has well-positioned us to participate in this year's state-funded OER initiative. We're significantly expanding our efforts this year, aiming to convert at least an additional 200 course sections to OER, impacting an additional 5,000 students minimum.

We've also surveyed and interviewed students and faculty to learn more about their experiences with OER. Today we'd like to share some of what we've heard from them.

Students appreciate cost-free course materials

Unsurprisingly, students strongly appreciate spending less money overall on textbooks and course materials. City Tech students have told us that they cannot always afford to buy their textbooks. While students at CUNY's senior colleges report a slightly higher household income than those at the community colleges, many are economically constrained: 54% of students at the senior colleges receive Pell grants, and 37% have a household income of less than \$20,000 annually. And of course many CUNY community college students transfer to the senior colleges, and will likely bring their expectations for OER use with them.

Students appreciate the time saved with OER

CUNY students are busy: many have jobs, caregiving responsibilities, or other commitments in addition to their academic work. In interviews with students we've heard about the strategies they use to get access to their textbooks and stay within their economic means, a task which can be surprisingly time-consuming. They search for and order textbooks online (which sometimes means they don't have the book until a few weeks into the semester), buy used books from other students, stand in line at the bookstore or in the library for reserve books, take pictures of the relevant pages in the book of a classmate, or just don't get the book at all. Saving students time getting their textbooks makes it easier for them to do their coursework.

Students appreciate the easy access to course materials that OER offer

Since OER are hosted online, students have more flexibility in accessing the materials they need for their coursework. Our libraries offer some print textbooks on reserve, but these

can only be used by one student at a time, and only when the library is open. Improved access to course materials provides students with the flexibility to work on assignments at their own convenience. While not all students have broadband internet access at home, most students have smartphones, and the opportunities to access OER are growing, especially with increased wifi availability on subways and buses. For students who prefer to read their course materials on paper, our libraries generally offer some free printing for students. One student mentioned that the OER saved her from developing back pain – a problem she faced in the past while travelling with textbooks. Other students shared their relief at not having to worry about the logistics of transporting a textbook to and from class, work, and elsewhere, which helped eliminate stress and complications while managing academic/work/life schedules.

Students and faculty appreciate the range of content featured in OER

OER allow faculty to include an engaging range of course content – text, images, video, audio, and simulations – a far more diverse range of materials than a print textbook can provide, and without the high cost of a publisher-provided digital supplements. Updates to OER are easy to implement at no cost, in contrast to textbook edition updates every few years, an advantage that City Tech faculty have been quick to note. This is especially important for rapidly changing disciplines like the STEM fields, and for us at City Tech, which has the highest number of STEM students across CUNY, over 7,800 as of Fall 2016. At City Tech our OER remain accessible to students even after their class has ended; students in our Biology department, for example, have access to their General Biology course materials even as they progress through Anatomy & Physiology and Molecular Biology, which allows them to review previous material as needed.

Students and faculty report increased student engagement with OER

Surveys of students in City Tech's OER courses have been positive. Students reported increased engagement, and said that they preferred the OER to a traditional textbook. Faculty have also noted that students were more engaged in their courses with OER rather than textbooks. Faculty have told us that students heavily annotate the printed OER pages which they had not done with a traditional textbook, since they were hoping to resell it. Beyond the immediate and significant financial benefits to students, continued expansion of OER at City Tech supports several important institutional goals: to provide students with access to a rich set of learning materials available online from any location; to support active learning and more effective online instruction; to provide part- and full-time faculty with useful, updated, and ideally collaboratively-developed resources; and to achieve consistency across all sections of a course and coherence between sequential courses.

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Testimony of Gregory Gosselin, Interim University Dean for
Libraries and Information Systems
CUNY Central Office

New York City Council Committee on Higher Education CUNY's
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Thank you, Vita, and Thank You, Chairperson Barron, and you the members of the esteemed Committee on Higher Education. My name is Greg Gosselin. I am the Interim University Dean of Libraries and Information Systems at CUNY. In February of 2016, with backing from the Hewlett Foundation, the Achieving the Dream (AtD) organization issued a request for proposals for community colleges to develop and deliver entire degree programs using only OER. The CUNY Office of Library Services authored a proposal and coordinated the participation of three community college partners including the Bronx, Borough of Manhattan, and Hostos. Thankfully, and deservedly, CUNY was selected and awarded \$320,000 to create “Z-Degrees,” or complete degree programs with no textbook costs, at all three colleges. We are well on the way to degree program conversions in Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, and General Education with a History concentration. Each degree program is converting approximately 25 courses including all major requirements and a selection of general education requirements. Initially, 76,000 students will benefit. Once implemented, the courses in these zero-cost textbook degree programs will be available for instructors in similar programs across CUNY (and the world) to adopt and adapt as they wish. The ultimate goal is to scale those gen-ed courses across all sections and then across colleges. The same goes for the degree programs.

This was the tipping point for OER at CUNY. It generated positive, national press and, just as important, awareness within CUNY academic units and administration of the manifold benefits of OER in terms of cost-savings and pedagogical innovation. The momentum generated by the AtD initiative caught the attention of the University Registrar who helped us fast-track an implementation of the “ZERO Textbook Cost” course attribute in the university catalog—a very important development, I might add. This designation indicates a course that replaces costly textbooks with Open Educational Resources. As of spring 2017, CUNY students and their advisors can now search for courses by this attribute, and faculty can designate their classes this way. As CUNY’s OER offerings begin to multiply, so too will the demand for them. As more faculty use this course attribute, we will be better able to track OER activity and analyze and correlate that impact on student access and academic momentum, as well as generate further awareness for instructors and students.

The culmination of CUNY’s groundbreaking work in OER was Governor Cuomo’s \$4 million tax levy support to CUNY’s Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) to establish, support, and enhance ongoing OER initiatives throughout CUNY. It is an acknowledgment of the work we have done, an investment in the future and our potential to execute a bold vision. I would

like to thank The Governor and his team for making this historic investment. This funding must be spent in FY 2018. The short-term goal of the CUNY OER Initiative is to reduce costs for students and accelerate their progress through college, but an important secondary impact is to change the culture to create systems and structures that connect curriculum and pedagogy to updated student learning outcomes. The expected result will be large-scale course conversions throughout the university and that is what we intend to do: institutionalize OER practices across the extraordinary mosaic that is CUNY. Funding for the CUNY OER Initiative was awarded to the campuses based on proposals OAA solicited from the colleges. Preference was given to those plans that targeted high enrollment general education classes or “Z” degrees (entire OER degree pathways), though we issued funding to every college that submitted a proposal. Campus funding includes generous allowances for faculty participation, institutional support, staffing, as well as training and professional development. Details of the Initiative are available on the CUNY OER Summary handout provided to the CCHE. Additionally, the CUNY Central Office will provide system-wide coordination, assessment and the establishment of communities of practice as well as facilitation of support and a variety of training options for the campuses. This includes on-site workshops as well as CUNY-wide training events. This massive initiative coupled with ongoing OER projects has created a need for Central Office staffing in addition to campus staffing needs. To ensure that project goals get met and remain on track, it is imperative that central coordination is staffed appropriately.

At present, all CUNY colleges with undergraduate programs are participating in OER initiatives! Awareness and enthusiasm have blossomed and cross-campus conversations have been enabled at every level. It’s been an amazing year and we’re truly just beginning. So, too, has been our developing partnership with SUNY, also an AtD participant, and also the recipient of \$4 million from Governor Cuomo. The AtD grant sparked conversations between both our systems on how we may formally collaborate and support one another as we begin to change a paradigm on our campuses, as well as learn from each other. Our goals are to envision and develop a shared infrastructure and web presence, consider and execute partnerships with agencies and technology partners in both higher education and vendor spaces, and share statewide programming and professional development. We’re close to realizing our first goal of developing a shared OER services hub. That will go live on Friday, Sept 15 – that’s tomorrow! Also in the works is a shared OER catalog that we’ll integrate into the services hub in joint partnership with OER Commons, a non-for-profit OER repository and digital publishing platform. We’re also developing standards for peer review and research, data collaboration, discovery metadata, and, lastly, aligning the assessment framework. It has been a most eventful year in support of CUNY’s mission.

I’ll now pass the baton to Jean Amaral, my distinguished colleague at BMCC, who will share BMCC’s triumphs and experiences with OER.

Current Open Educational Resources Initiatives at CUNY

Background: 2013 -2015

As part of CUNY's Text Book Initiative and Student Financial Aid Initiative, \$3 million was allocated for CUNY Libraries to purchase textbooks for courses. This funding also seeded nascent OER efforts primarily to support faculty to adopt OER into their teaching practices. In what began as an offshoot of the textbook initiative some libraries continued to fund OER initiatives, in some cases with campus funding. These local efforts created technological, logistical, and legal processes for converting CUNY courses to OER.

The OER Tipping Point: Z-Degrees at CUNY: 2016

As part of the *Achieving the Dream* (ATD) OER Degree Initiative, CUNY's Office of Library Services (OLS) was awarded a \$320,000 grant to create complete degree programs with no textbook costs—referred to as “Z-Degrees,” as in zero textbook cost—at three of the university's community colleges. BMCC, BCC, and Hostos combined will benefit 76,000 students. Upon full implementation of the Z-degree programs (all sections of a class converted), we estimate annual student savings of \$8.1 million at BMCC, \$3.4 million at Bronx Community College, and \$1.3 million at Hostos.

The OER Tipping Point: Gates Grant: 2016

The Gates Foundation recently awarded CUNY and SUNY \$100,000, matching our respective \$50,000 stakes to develop and scale-up OER initiatives. This project will employ Lumen Learning's advanced courseware with personal analytics. 1,600 students over the 2017-2018 academic year will save students \$140,000.

Beyond the Tipping Point: CUNY's 4 Million Dollar OER Initiative: 2017

Budget:

The Office of Academic Affairs proposed the following budget breakdown for the CUNY Open Educational Resources Initiative:

Direct College Support	\$3.5 million
Shared Centrally-Administered Resources:	\$0.5 million
Total:	\$4.0 million

Process:

CUNY is working with all of its colleges to identify high-enrollment courses that can be converted to OER. We have already solicited course conversion proposals from the colleges, specifying a budget framework, and section and enrollment targets. Funds were awarded based on the following general parameters. Initial eligibility required the colleges commit to converting at least five (5) courses to OER with five (5) sections per course.

CUNY OER INITIATIVE RFP	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
OER Course Conversions	5	15	25
Sections (5 per course per year)	25	75	125
Course Enrollment (25/section)	625	1,875	3,125
Course Development (@ \$2000 per course)	\$ 10,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 50,000
Faculty Training (@ \$500 per section)	\$ 12,500	\$ 37,500	\$ 62,500
Course Maintenance (@ \$15/student)	\$ 9,375	\$ 28,125	\$ 46,875
Librarian or CETLs staffing Support	\$ 35,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 75,000
CUNY OER Grant Award:	\$ 66,875	\$ 145,625	\$ 234,375

- Faculty stipend for course development – \$2,000 per course. Each course selected is expected to be taught across at least 5 sections with the course developer as the lead. The lead is expected to assist section instructors and inform advisors and the registrar about the “Zero Textbook Cost Course” status of the course sections.
- Stipend for faculty training – \$ 500 per section. Section instructors will receive training to teach their courses.
- Course maintenance fee per student for technical support – \$15 per student to be used to fund in-house or vendor provided technical support and infrastructure.
- Staffing support for participating libraries – (\$25,000 - \$50,000) Funding librarians and/or Centers for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) to support, train, and coordinate the program locally. Determined by level of participation.
- Faculty professional development: – (\$3,500 - \$10,500) Funding for conferences, workshops and travel. There is a growing community around OER. Other systems that have received funding to support OER initiatives see NYS as a leader in this arena and we will need our faculty and staff on our campuses to take a lead role in the national/global OER conversation.

Through this process, we have identified 265 courses with enrollments totaling more than 40,000 students. Courses have been identified in each of CUNY’s 18 undergraduate colleges. Participating faculty, including librarians, will receive professional development and technical assistance to convert courses. We will continue to work with the colleges to identify additional courses. By the end of the fiscal year, we plan to convert at least 350 courses with total enrollments of approximately 45,000.

Many, probably most, of the OER courses will make use of already existing openly licensed textbooks and other materials. However, we will also develop, share, and curate open textbooks and digital learning content. CUNY-developed course materials are especially appropriate for popular common core curriculum courses as well as for gateway courses into popular majors.

Cost of Course Conversion and Support: Centrally Administered Resources

The shared, centrally administered resources will be used for CUNY-wide faculty professional development workshops and conference travel, the development of textbooks and openly licensed learning materials, a faculty peer review committee to ensure academic quality, a CUNY-wide content management platform, CUNY-wide print services contract, and 1.5 – 2.0 FTE professional staff to manage the project. Project management will provide system-wide coordination, vendor relations, assessment, liaison with SUNY, accessibility advisement, and will establish a community of practice.

- Professional development workshops for faculty – they will learn, plan and receive assistance in the redesign of their courses. This will be provided through a combination of formats and sources including Lumen Learning, University of Minnesota Open Textbook

Network, OER Commons, and in-house trainers as they come on board. There will be need to fund travel to regional professional development workshops and also to help fund campuses that host the workshops.

- Opportunities for faculty to create original OER textbooks and other open digital OER projects.
- Faculty peer reviewers will review and make public their reviews of courses in the eight general education pathways.

Course Conversion Timeline:

It is expected that all 350 courses will be created during the Fiscal Year 2018. Below is a chart of the awards to the schools.

CUNY OER Initiative College Awards

College	Courses	Sections	Seats	Award
BCC	10	50	1400	\$69,000
BMCC	43	210	6450	\$371,750
Guttman	7	42	1081	\$73,215
HCC	14	54	2095	\$136,425
KCC	25	133	3763	\$245,945
LGCC	5	25	625	\$49,485
QCC	5	50	1500	\$93,500
Community Colleges	109	564	16914	\$1,039,710
Brooklyn	27	135	3375	\$244,125
Baruch	21	40	2585	\$162,275
CCNY	11	55	2000	\$121,000
City Tech	18	175	4375	\$262,125
CSI	13	53	1555	\$126,325
Hunter	10	50	1500	\$119,500
John Jay	13	65	1925	\$137,875
Lehman	12	30	2079	\$121,185
Medgar	10	50	1250	\$102,250
Queens	1	9	1200	\$29,500
SPS	15	40	1725	\$140,375
York	5	25	625	\$67,875
Senior Colleges	156	727	24194	\$1739,910

The table below summarizes OER activities happening at CUNY since 2013. The row labelled "Currently Identified" comprises courses which have been converted through grassroots campus efforts.

	Courses/Sections	Students Impacted	Estimated Savings
Currently Identified	150	3,750	\$468,750
ATD Degree Initiative	75	1,875	\$234,375
Gates	45	1,600	\$140,625
CUNY NYS Initiative	265	40,408	\$505,100
Totals	1,291	47,633	\$5,954,125

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
PUBLIC HEARING**

**CUNY'S EFFORTS TO REDUCE TEXTBOOK COST/ PRIVATE LOAN REFINANCING
TASKFORCE**

SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

**TESTIMONY: JONA KERLUKU, VICE CHAIR OF FISCAL AFFAIRS, CUNY UNIVERSITY
STUDENT SENATE, LEHMAN COLLEGE**

Greetings Honorable Committee Chairperson Barron and Honorable Councilmembers,

My name is Jona Kerluku and I serve as Vice Chair of Fiscal Affairs for the City University of New York University Student Senate, also known as CUNY USS. USS is the student governance organization responsible for representing the interests of the nearly 500,000 students that attend CUNY each academic year. I currently attend Lehman College with a major in Exercise Science and Mathematics. I'm also a proud member of city council district 32, represented by Councilmember Eric Ulrich.

Among other barriers to completing a college degree, income is a leading factor that can hinder a student from reaching their full potential. The average 2016 graduate accumulates \$37,172 in debt. In 2012, 71 percent of students, that is, 1.3 million individuals graduated from a four year college with debt. Graduate students owe about \$57,600 on average, not reflecting any other debt that they accumulated while an undergrad.

The City University of New York has historically been in a special position to offer low-income students an opportunity to receive a quality education at an affordable price. Unfortunately, throughout the years tuition for CUNY has risen along with other mandatory costs that are required for student to actively participate in the class. A study conducted by the U.S. Government Accountability Office in 2013 found that textbook costs rose 82 percent from 2002 to 2012.

Textbooks are now costing students roughly \$100-\$400 for books that are often used for just one class and for just one semester. Some classes require multiple books. It is wrong to interpret the narrative that the afflictions of poverty are eliminated when a low-income student enters college. Students drop out due to the financial strain they are feeling not only at school but also at home.

Governor Cuomo barely attempted to solve these systemic issues through the Excelsior Scholarship. This last dollar scholarship takes financial aid from our most needy students that can be used toward transportation, books, fees, and other school related bills. For graduate students, even less resources are available. To add to the financial crisis most students are facing, CUNY recently raised their tuition. And not only did the federal government just eliminate a program that would mitigate the debt students accumulate; they are actively taking steps to underfund public education.

Now more than ever, we need our brightest people working to solve these problems affecting the students of New York. USS is calling on legislators to pass and sign the A.6811/S.5120 bill to begin a task force on private student loan refinancing and efforts to reduce textbook costs.

Thank you for all the work that you do on behalf of members in our community. We look forward to working with you to make CUNY a place where everyone can attain a higher education.



National Association
of College Stores

**TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE STORES**

**CUNY's Efforts to Reduce Costs Associated
with Rising Textbook Prices**

By Richard Hershman

**Before the
Committee on Higher
Education New York City
Council**

September 14, 2017

**TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE STORES**

CUNY's Efforts to Reduce Costs Associated with Rising Textbook Prices

By Richard Hershman

**Before the
Committee on Higher Education New York City Council**

September 14, 2017

Chairman Barron and members of the Committee on Higher Education, on behalf of the National Association of College Stores (NACS), I thank you for the opportunity to testify today on how college textbooks can be made more affordable for college students. My name is Richard Hershman and I am the Vice President of Government Relations for NACS. Originally headquartered in New York City, NACS is now headquartered in Oberlin, Ohio.

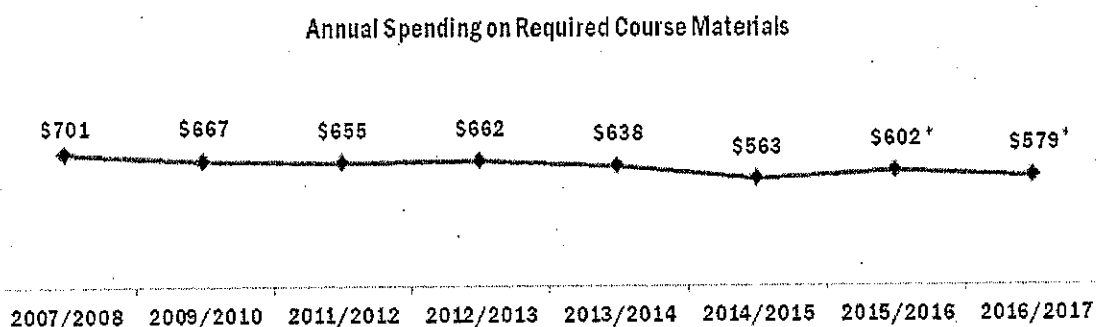
Our members are primarily college and university owned and other non-profit college and K12 stores, as well as companies that colleges and universities may partner with to operate or support college stores. NACS conducts extensive research into course material use and affordability, establish best practices, and collaborate with innovative companies and non-profits. We also operate several buying and discount consortiums available to New York's 255 college and K-12 stores and their institutions they serve. For example, earlier this year NACS announced a new course material sourcing initiative in partnership with Amazon, while we continue to work with the Open Educational Resource (OER) publisher OpenStax and our digital learning platform partners on delivering enhanced free digital and low cost print options for faculty and students. Through these various initiatives our community has saved New York's colleges and universities and K-12 schools and their students millions of dollars through lower prices

for goods and services including course materials.

When I last testified before this committee in September 2014¹, the transformation in college textbook affordability efforts were well under way at reducing costs, creating greater transparency and more choices in the marketplace. I am pleased to report progress continues and the results are clear and positive. However, there is work that remains particularly in enhancing the value and use of the course materials and addressing underlying financial pressures on students, which as you know are not limited to tuition, fees, and course materials.

Understanding Course Material Costs and Spending

Course materials are a core academic cost of higher education. The good news is the average student nationally spent \$579 in the 2016-2017 school year on required course materials, which is 17% lower than it was in 2007-2008 when students on average spent \$701.²



This positive trend is despite the fact students are still acquiring the same amount of course materials as they did before, the quality and features of course materials have

¹ Testimony by the National Association of College Stores, Committee on Higher Education, New York City Council September 30, 2014.

² See attachment and Student Watch: 2016-2017, Attitudes and Behavior towards Course Materials, OnCampus Research, a division of the National Association of College Stores, July, 2017.

improved, and until recently the average wholesale price of new materials increased. We expect this spending to continue to decline in this school year as publishers have lowered their prices and various initiatives and strategies have helped lower costs. It is important to understand that the averages in spending can vary by sector, lowerclassmen versus upperclassmen, subject concentration, and course load.³

Financial aid can also greatly reduce course material costs for students. Nearly half or 44.5% of community college students surveyed in the fall of 2016 by *Student Watch* said they used financial aid grants and scholarships to help pay for their course materials.⁴ Of the 44.5% of students who received grants and scholarships, this covered on average 80.4% of their costs for the fall semester. Compare that to the four year institutions and only 26% of students said they used financial aid grants and scholarships to help cover the costs of their books and of those students that aid covered 59.6% of their costs for course materials for the fall semester. Also on a somewhat positive note only 21% of students at both four year and two year institutions indicated they used student loans to help pay for their books. Finally, with the state's new Excelsior Scholarship program covering the last dollar of financial aid for tuition for many students, the federal American Opportunity Tax Credit's \$2,500 (partially refundable at up to \$1,000) can now exclusively be directed to helping cover required books and supplies for participating undergraduate students.

These spending trends are starting to be reflected in colleges' budget estimates for the cost of attendance for books, supplies and equipment. The annual report from the College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2016*, includes comparative data on what institutions recommend undergraduate college students should budget for books,

³ See attachment infographic for breakdown of spending by costs and major.

⁴ Student Watch: Fall 2016, Attitudes and Behavior towards Course Materials, OnCampus Research, a division of the National Association of College Stores, March, 2017.

supplies and equipment. Last year was the first time in 16 years of College Board data that institutional budgets for books, supplies and equipment at both four-year public and four year private schools have declined. On average, public four-year schools decreased their budgets by 3.7% from the previous school year, and four-year private schools decreased their budgets by 1.52%. Community colleges on the other hand increased their budgets by \$26 or 1.91%. When you look at the annual undergraduate budget estimates for books, supplies and equipment as a percentage of the total undergraduate student budget -books, supplies, and equipment have decreased over the last 16 years for all three sectors as a percentage of the total undergraduate budget. Books, supplies, and equipment now represent 5.1% of the total undergraduate student budget at public four year institutions, 2.5% at four year private institutions, and 8.2% at community colleges.

The Marketplace for Students is Strong and Improving

Students today have greater information, choice, and options than they did just four years ago in how to acquire and consume course material content. Most campus bookstores today provide students a choice between new, used, rental, digital options and information on how to obtain materials at no cost such as open educational resources (OER) or library resources. New online and in store software platforms and mobile websites are further enhancing the student customer experience. Many of the CUNY institutions also continue to offer physical store locations to better assist students with their variety of needs and preferences.

Online marketplaces are allowing students to shop online at the campus store and from a variety of online providers simultaneously from the campus store's website. Such marketplaces are now being utilized at 13 CUNY institutions partnering with Akademos.

In addition, all of CUNY institutions' partner stores offer price match guarantees including matching the prices of Amazon and other online booksellers.

Faculty Have More Options and Information to Make Informed Choices

Faculty have more options in the marketplace to choose from including more affordable commercial course materials and openly licensed materials. Various surveys indicate faculty are also more aware of and sensitive to costs in making their course material selection decisions.⁵ However, in our most recent faculty survey 55% of faculty report being unsure about the role they play in textbook affordability and more than 40% of faculty do not view textbook affordability as a priority for their institution and themselves.⁶

A new generation of course material discovery, selection, and price saving tools are being deployed by campus bookstores across the CUNY system to support this effort. These tools have evolved from simple digital versions of the textbook order forms to feature rich systems that allow faculty to research and select course material, look at product reviews that let faculty learn from colleagues around the country who have used the materials, and find out where materials have been adopted at other schools. There has also been a heavy emphasis on making this process easier and less time consuming for faculty to improve on-time selections. Preliminary information suggests this effort has improved faculty on time submissions within the CUNY system and reduce problems we noted in 2014.

Increasingly campus store platforms are incorporating OER materials. For example, Sidewalk Hero used by many institutionally operated stores in the state maps OERs and

⁵ Faculty Watch: Attitudes and Behavior towards Course Materials, Spring 2016, OnCampus Research, a division of the National Association of College Stores; and Opening the Textbook: Educational Resources in U.S. Higher Education, 2015-16, Babson Research Group, July 2016.

⁶ Attached infographic, Faculty Watch: Attitudes and Behavior towards Course Materials, September, 2017, OnCampus Research, a division of the National Association of College Stores.

other cost-effective content to national commercial textbook ISBNs, assisting in the proliferation of non-mainstream content types. Barnes and Noble Education, which currently partners with seven CUNY institutions, has implemented FacultyEnlight at those schools that allow faculty and administrators the ability to discover open educational resource content such as Merlot, Openstax, YouTube, and Khan Academy. Because these resources are integrated within the platform, materials that are being considered for use can easily be accessed and reviewed before being adopted. The platforms also allow instructors to create their own coursepack content that can blend OER, copyrighted content as well as library resources for an instructor. Recently the digital course material learning platform provider Redshelf, that partners with Akademos, in serving 13 institutions in the system announced a new agreement with OpenStax to provide free access to OpenStax titles on its e-reader.

More faculty are also adopting open educational resources to replace or supplement commercial materials and students have the choice to consume these materials digitally without additional cost or often in low cost print formats. NACS announced in April 2014 a distribution partnership with OpenStax that allowed the leading nonprofit publisher of quality peer-reviewed open educational resources to drop prices on all its print textbooks and distribute them nationally to college stores efficiently through our warehouse in Oberlin. In fall 2014, 237 stores purchased OpenStax print titles from NACS. By the fall of 2016 575 college stores have acquired OpenStax titles through NACS and we continue to see growth as these great resources gain adoptions and schools expand print options to meet student format preferences.

Finally, commercial publishers are also exploring ways to lower prices and increase value and effectiveness of their products. A promising development is college stores across

the country are helping institutions pilot and expand programs working with publishers on new digital discount delivery models known as inclusive access or immediate access programs. Under these programs where faculty have opted-in, students have access on the first day of class at no charge to their course materials in digital format and they retain that access until the add/drop deadline at no cost. At or prior to the add/drop deadline date, students have the option to 'opt-out' electronically and discontinue access to the materials. Students who do not opt out and opt to continue are charged for the materials at that time. Access continues for these students.

The benefits of such programs are immediate access to materials which can be important to student success since some students delay acquiring materials at the first day and they purchase incrementally which puts them at a disadvantage in the important first weeks. Typical discounts from publishers on immediate access materials are 10% to 20% off of regular digital access and 25% to 60% below rental or purchase of hard copies. Print-outs of the materials are usually available at low cost.

NACS also announced this summer new pilot textbook rental initiatives with Pearson Learning and Macmillan Learning that will significantly reduce the print rental prices of popular titles.

Recommendations

Here are a few specific recommendations that would help strengthen existing efforts here in New York to make course materials more affordable.

1. Take greater advantage of the new textbook discovery and adoption platforms at individual institutions and ensure they are integrated with system and campus initiatives like the new OER initiative funded by the state. This will lead to more

accurate information for students and faculty so they make better informed choices as well as increase actionable information about alternative free and low cost options for faculty to consider. This approach is already being adopted by leading providers in OER course content.

2. Continue to promote adherence to campus due dates for faculty to identify required and recommended textbook and supplemental materials, while minimizing changes to the information after it has been finalized and posted for students.
3. Ensure an inclusive strategy on campus with all key stakeholders at the table through textbook advisory committees where faculty, students, library, and bookstore personnel work together on strategies to reduce costs and improve classroom use of required materials.
4. Better inform and educate students on available tax credits to help cover course material costs and also financial education on budgeting for college.

The NACS supports efforts to enhance affordable and equitable access to quality course materials, and will continue to work as an ally for student interests. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important issue.

STUDENT SPENDING ON COURSE MATERIALS



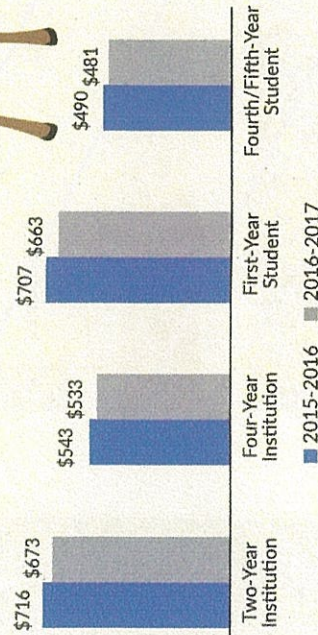
Student spending on course materials

Students spent an average of \$579 on their required course materials during the 2016-2017 academic year.



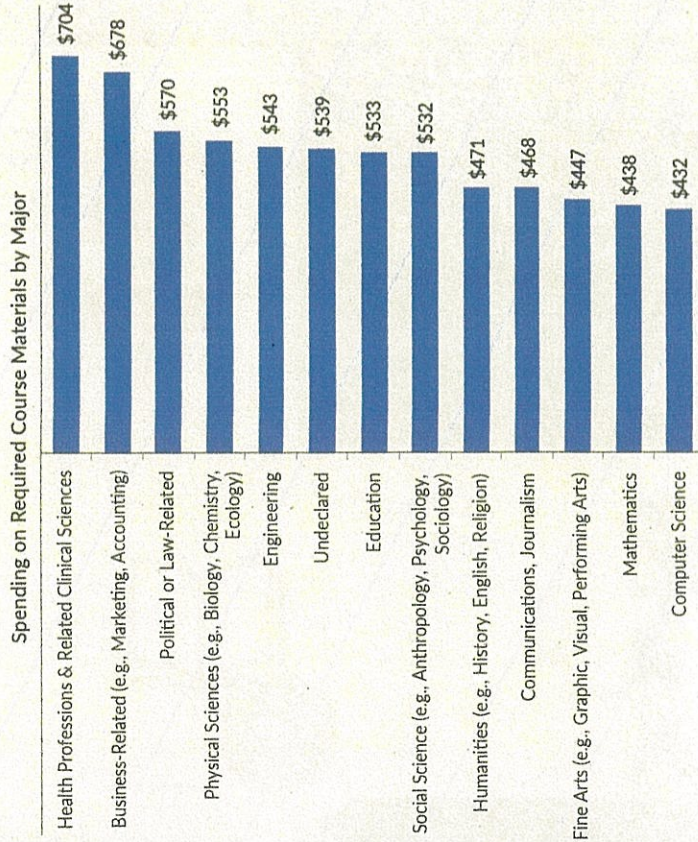
Student spending varies depending on type of institution and what year they are in

Upperclassmen at four-year institutions generally spend less on course materials than undergrads, lowering the overall four-year spending average considerably.



Student spending varies depending on their major

Healthcare and business majors reported spending the most while those enrolled in computer science and mathematics reported the least amount on required course materials.



*Starting in 2015/2016, total spending for the academic year was weighted by campus type to more accurately reflect the proportion of students enrolled at two- and four-year U.S. institutions.

STUDENT BEHAVIORS related to COURSE MATERIALS



Average annual student spending on course materials decreased

2007/08
\$701
to
\$579
2016/17

17% since 2007

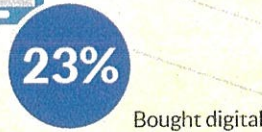
Students acquired an average of



10 UNITS over the past academic year

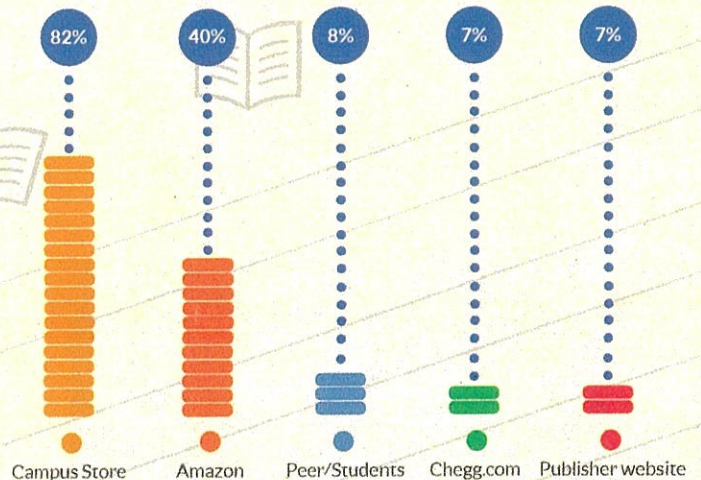
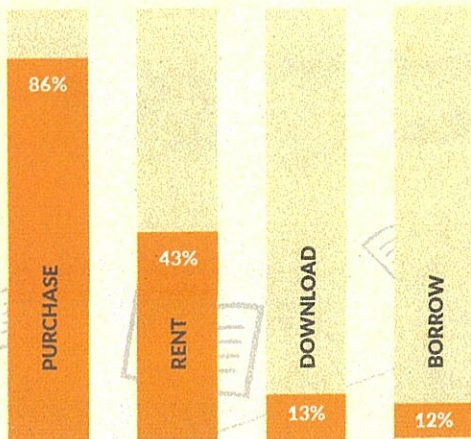


FORMATS OF COURSE MATERIALS students are buying



HOW STUDENTS ACQUIRE textbooks and course materials

WHERE STUDENTS ARE BUYING textbooks and course materials



Fall 2016

Underwritten by



Source: Student Watch™: Attitudes and Behaviors toward Course Materials, 2016-2017 Report

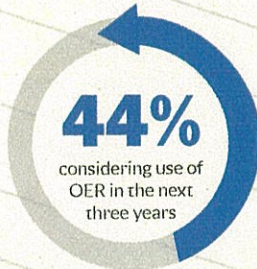
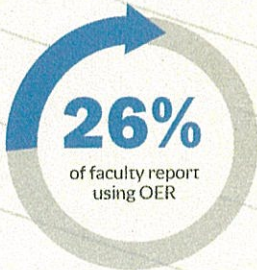
FACULTY BEHAVIORS related to COURSE MATERIALS



PRIMARY CONSIDERATIONS when selecting course materials



THOUGHTS ON Open Educational Resources (OER)



Print



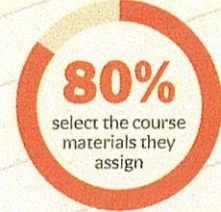
Print with digital component



Digital

FORMATS OF COURSE MATERIALS faculty prefer

Faculty assign **1** course material per course



Fall 2016



**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
PUBLIC HEARING
CUNY'S EFFORTS TO REDUCE TEXTBOOK COST/ PRIVATE LOAN
REFINANCING TASKFORCE
SEPTEMBER 14, 2017
TESTIMONY: CHIKA ONYEJIUKWA, CHAIRPERSON, CUNY USS**

Greetings Honorable Committee Chairperson Barron and Honorable Councilmembers,

My name is Chika Onyejiukwa, Chairperson of the City University of New York University Student Senate, also known as CUNY USS. USS is the student governance organization responsible for representing the interests of the nearly 500,000 students that attend CUNY each academic year. I am a proud recent graduate of Hunter College studying Community Health Education. I'm also a proud resident of city council district 27, represented by Councilmember Daneek Miller.

My colleagues today have detailed to you the plight of a CUNY student. The cost of textbooks coupled with the out of reach costs of tuition and expenditures, have disenfranchised many students from attaining a quality and affordable education. We are here today, to call on the council to take the following measures:

1. **CUNY Students Ask** the New York City Council adopt Reso. 1559 calling on the Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature to enact into law "Refinancing of Student Loans and developing a Refinancing Student Loan Taskforce."
2. Tuition Continues to rise but there is less financial aid available to cover books and transportation: **CUNY Student Ask** New York City Council to call on the state to reform the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) in four ways
 - a. One: Remove the one year full time eligibility requirement so that more students are eligible for Part Time TAP
 - b. Two: Amend the Excelsior Scholarship program to a first dollar so that students can use TAP and Pell Grants to cover book and transportation cost
 - c. Three: Extend the number of semesters students receive TAP so transfer students and can complete their degree without running out
 - d. Four: on behalf of our Undocumented Students Please Pass the NYS Dream Act our students need REAL leadership now more than ever.

3. **CUNY Students Ask** the New York City Council to write a letter to the New York State Legislature and Governor requesting that they adopted amendments to the “Get On Your Feet Student Loan Program” to include graduate student loan debt.
4. **CUNY Students Ask** the New York City Council to continue to provide funding for the City Council Merit Scholarship.
5. **CUNY Students Ask** the New York City Council to request the state freeze tuition for the next two academic years, our students deserve a break.

I would be remiss if I didn't take the time thank each and every member of this committee who works tirelessly to ensure that the City University of New York has the resources we need to educate and to succeed.



University Student Senate
555 West 57th Street, 1420
New York, NY 10019
Tel: (646) 664-8844
Fax: (646) 664-8863

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
PUBLIC HEARING
CUNY'S EFFORTS TO REDUCE TEXTBOOK COST/ PRIVATE LOAN
REFINANCING TASKFORCE
SEPTEMBER 14, 2017
TESTIMONY: FATIME URUCI, DELEGATE, CUNY USS & PRESIDENT, STUDENT
COUNCIL, JOHN JAY COLLEGE**

Greetings Honorable Committee Chairperson Barron and Honorable Councilmembers,

My name is Fatime Uruci and I serve as a delegate for the City University of New York University Student Senate, also known as CUNY USS. USS is the student governance organization responsible for representing the interests of the nearly 500,000 students that attend CUNY each academic year. I am a student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice studying English and Philosophy, minoring in Theatre Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies. I also have the distinct honor to serve as the President of John Jay's Student Council. In addition to that, I am a proud member of City Council District 30, represented by Councilmember Elizabeth S. Crowley.

In my four years as a student at John Jay, I have heard many stories from fellow classmates and students regarding the struggles they have undergone in order to get to college and continue to excel while in college. Our students and their stories are what inspire me everyday to work towards improving their overall college experiences. Through many conversations I've had with students, I have come to realize something rather unfortunate. One of the common denominators that I've found to be at the core of students' inability to succeed is the issue of paying for textbooks. The rising costs of textbooks place an additional financial burden on our students, and these increased costs have a direct effect on student academic success. I will recount today two instances, which I can assure you, are not outliers, and are situations that many students at CUNY find themselves in.

Sarah was a student in my Social Science Math class who confided in me that she was a part-time student who was living paycheck to paycheck. When our professor announced to the class that the textbook for the semester would cost each person in the class a whopping \$140, both of our jaws dropped. The textbook included an electronic access code to a website where we were supposed to do our math homework, and in fact, the access code actually cost more than the textbook itself. Because Sarah couldn't afford to put up such a huge amount for one textbook, she ended up dropping the course, and I never saw her again. No student should ever feel like their only option in this situation is to drop the course they are taking, a decision that may delay the continuation of a student's degree program. This is especially true for students who are seeking to enter the STEM field and come from socio-economic groups that traditionally do not have a major stake in STEM.

Sam's story is a little bit different; Sam was a student in the American Stories Literature course I co-taught with a professor. Because Sam could not afford to buy the books that he needed for this course, and because electronic devices were not allowed in the classroom, which is typically the case in literature courses, Jerry borrowed one of his classmate's books and every week would go to the library to individually scan and print every single page of every single novel we were reading. When I finally realized what he was doing, in order to save him the trouble of having to worry about such a menial thing - which I could tell was taking away from the time he put into his reading responses - I lent him my books since I had read them all in advance. When he didn't have to worry about making sure he had the readings for each week, the quality of his writing improved, and in the classroom I could tell that he seemed more comfortable and willing to engage with class discussions. Perhaps not having the books was a source of embarrassment for Sam that kept him from being engaged, something which he was then able to overcome.

These are only two student stories, but as I stated previously, they are situations that are more common for students than you might think. It is my hope that the City Council will do more to ensure that textbooks in higher education remain affordable, and that greater access to such materials be provided to students. I want to close by thanking you all for the tremendous work that you do on behalf of members in our community. We look forward to working with you to make CUNY a place where everyone can expect access to an affordable and high-quality higher education.

And as for my copy of that \$140 math textbook, it sits buried in my closet somewhere collecting dust, the access code never having been used. If only Sarah knew.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wendy Leder
Address: 25 Plaza St W, Bklyn, NY 11217
I represent: CUNY
Address: 315 Hudson St, NY, NY 10019

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jona KeBukku
Address: _____
I represent: CUNY USS / Lehman College
Address: CUNY USS / John Jay College

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Fatime Uruci
Address: _____
I represent: CUNY USS / John Jay College
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chika Onyejiukwa

Address: _____

I represent: CUNY USS / Hunter College

Address: _____

Please complete **THE COUNCIL** Sergeant-at-Arms
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VITA RABINOWITZ

Address: SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR

I represent: FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Address: _____

Please complete **THE COUNCIL** Sergeant-at-Arms
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 2017 Res. No. 6571

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/14/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Greg Gosselin

Address: 170 WEST 79 APT 514

I represent: CUNY

Address: 250 E. 200 St. 60019

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 2017 Res. No. 6571

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/14/2017

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jean Amaral

Address: 199 Chambers St NY NY

I represent: BMCC/CUNY

Address: 199 Chambers St NY NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 217 Res. No. 6571

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/14/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maura Smate

Address: 315 Saint Johns Pl. #31 Brooklyn NY 11238

I represent: NYC College of Technology CUNY

Address: 300 Jay St Brooklyn NY 11201

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 2017 Res. No. 6571

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/14/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Richard Hershman

Address: 1101 17th St NW

I represent: National Association of College Stores

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms