

In support of Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Pathways

Whereas, The Academic Senate is the organization whose primary function is to make recommendations with respect to academic and professional matters (Title 5, 53200), and is primarily relied upon for curriculum, degree and certificate requirements, education program development, and policies related to grading, student preparation and success, and faculty professional development (Board Policy 3255); and,

Whereas, California Education Code §78052 defines Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) as “courses that eliminate conventional textbook costs by using alternative instructional materials and methodologies,” and the state of California designated \$115 million in the summer of 2021 to develop ZTC pathways for degrees and certificates in the California Community Colleges system, so that students have a path to graduation clear of textbook costs; and,

Whereas, Data indicate that ZTC and Open Educational Resources (OERs) not only save students money, but also address affordability, retention, completion, attainment gap concerns, and learning with greater success rates for Pell recipient students, part-time students, and populations historically underserved by higher education (Colvard et al., 2018); and,

Whereas, Faculty have the academic freedom and choice to select instructional materials that are most appropriate for their courses; and,

Resolved, That Faculty should take reasonable steps to minimize costs of instructional materials without compromising academic freedom or educational quality, and when selecting materials, faculty should consider the following recommendations from Mt. SAC’s Textbook and Instructional Materials Committee to enhance affordability and accessibility:

1. Choosing alternative low or no-cost materials such as OER, library-licensed materials, and/or original content, in accessible formats, consistent with appropriate legal standards for accessibility and copyright law;
2. Providing multiple accessible formats for textbooks and required instructional materials, including, where applicable, paperback, loose-leaf textbook publication, older editions, ebooks, and/or audiobooks, in accessible formats, consistent with appropriate legal standards;
3. Consider cost and format limitations of assigning an electronic access code (such as online homework system, publisher websites, etc.,) as the sole or additional instructional materials format;
4. Committing to a text and/or edition for at least four semesters and continue use as long as possible to allow student access to used books (and content converted to accessible formats through ACCESS);
5. Confirm the retail cost/price of materials and various pricing options, through appropriate communication with the bookstore (rather than relying solely on publisher estimates);
6. Consider the impact of material selection on the used market and buy-back process, such as the limitations of using loose-leaf and custom editions relative to the students’ ability to sell books back to the bookstore;
7. Avoiding bundling of materials unless all bundled materials are needed and there is a significant cost savings to students in bundling;

8. Adopting a common textbook across all sections of a course as appropriate, in order to increase student buy-back opportunities and used edition availability;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate encourage the use of approaches that significantly reduce course resource costs such that course sections with a low-cost can obtain zero-textbook-cost status by virtue of the cost being absorbed by Mt. San Antonio College (for example through college library subscriptions, purchasing access to copyrighted resources, or purchasing print resources); and,

Resolved, That the Academic Senate encourage and support the development of ZTC pathways at Mt SAC.

References

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. (2022). *Establishing an Effective and Sustainable Zero Textbook Cost Program* (Resolution 7.04). Retrieved from <https://www.asccc.org/resolutions/establishing-effective-and-sustainable-zero-textbook-cost-program>

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Colvard, N. B., Watson, C. E., & Park, H. (2018). The Impact of Open Educational Resources on Various Student Success Metrics. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 30(2), 262–276. <https://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/pdf/IJTLHE3386.pdf>

Hartnell College. (2021). *Support Faculty Adoption of OER, ZTC, and Low-Cost Textbooks* (Resolution 21-2). Retrieved from <https://www.hartnell.edu/governance/councils/academic-senate/21-4-support-the-adoption-of-oer-ztc-low-cost-resources.pdf>