Textbook Affordability Project

UTRGV's Textbook Affordability Project (TAP) is a partnership between Academic Affairs and the Univeristy Library. It has been instrumental in providing an innovative and accessible educational environment to students and faculty since its inception in 2019. The impact of these initiatives weaves teaching excellence and student success throughout UTRGV by providing accessible course materials to all. This project is but one of the initiatives that continue to position UTRGV as one of the most affordable institutions of higher education in the country.

# Faculty Engagement

## Increased Participation

The TAP has seen a steady increase in faculty engagement. Since Summer 2022, 198 new faculty have engaged in campus affordability initiatives.

* Spring 2019 to Spring 2021 371 faculty
* Summer 2021 404 faculty
* Fall 2021 444 faculty
* Spring 2022 603 faculty
* Summer 2022 606 faculty
* Fall 2022 699 faculty
* Spring 2023 795 faculty

## Strong Faculty Engagement Across Disciplines

Since 2019 every college and school has shown interest in at least one aspect of textbook affordability at UTRGV including our newest School of Podiatric Medicine.

* Business 76 faculty
* Education 55 faculty
* Engineering 62 faculty
* Fine Arts 66 faculty
* Health Professions 99 faculty
* Liberal Arts 231 faculty
* Medicine 9 faculty
* Nursing 11 faculty
* Podiatric Medicine 3 faculty
* Sciences 153 faculty
* Social Work 7 faculty
* University College 16 faculty

# Return on Investment

The Textbook Affordability Project has benefited from internal funding which has been instrumental in increasing faculty engagement and awareness of affordable textbook alternatives. The Affordable Textbook Adoption (ATA) Grants were partially supported in the 2020-21 academic year by the Frontier Set grant funding. All TAP initiatives have received direct support from the Office of Academic Affairs and HEERF funding. The library funded newly created positions to increase the working capacity on these projects and dedicated collection development funds to purchase digital textbook replacements.

## Affordable Textbook Adoption Grant\*

* Fall 2019
  + Investment $3,033
  + ROI in Student Savings $52,493
* Spring 2020
  + Investment $7,530
  + ROI in Student Savings $80,218
* Fall 2020
  + Investment $6,000
  + ROI in Student Savings $51,455
* Spring 2021
  + Investment $15,000
  + ROI in Student Savings $55,586
* Fall 2021
  + Investment $4,500
  + ROI in Student Savings $45,410
* Spring 2022
  + Investment $9,037
  + ROI in Student Savings $152,338
* Fall 2022
  + Investment $13,500
  + ROI in Student Savings $47,932
* Spring 2023
  + Investment $13,539
  + ROI in Student Savings $103,660

## Library Licensed Textbook Purchase\*

* Spring 2021
  + Investment $1,696.63
  + ROI in Student Savings $18,528.07
* Summer 2021
  + Investment $1,221.79
  + ROI in Student Savings $14,325.91
* Fall 2021
  + Investment $5,267.24
  + ROI in Student Savings $62,661.63
* Spring 2022
  + Investment $3,204.13
  + ROI in Student Savings $41,940.59
* Summer 2022
  + Investment $909.17
  + ROI in Student Savings $22,847.49
* Fall 2022
  + Investment $2,609.79
  + ROI in Student Savings $82,898.36
* Spring 2023
  + Investment $2,710.18
  + ROI in Student Savings $13,3469.71

\*Student savings is calculated by multiplying the total course enrollment by the lowest cost of the replaced textbook purchased new. This data is calculated once and does not reflect the ongoing savings for each course.

# Total Savings

To date, the ATA grant has saved students $646,451 and the Library Licensed Textbook Replacement Purchases have saved students $376,671 totaling over a million dollars in initial student savings.

$1,023,122 saved

# Students Impacted

The ATA grant has impacted 4,288 student seats and the Library Licensed Textbook Purchases impacted 8,393 student seats. Combined these efforts have provided over 12,000 opportunities to gain free and immediate access to required course materials.

12,681 students impacted

# Course Marking

Texas legislation has established protocols for OER course designation to be present in course catalogs and registration systems. In Summer 2020 UTRGV's Zero and Low-Cost Course Material Course definitions were created and the course information was manually collected. In Summer 2021 the Course Materials Reporting Form was created to collect and report this information to various stakeholders. In Spring 2022 these designations were made searchable through Banner to allow students to filter their course searches by these attributes during registration. This process allows students to have transparency on the price of their required course materials.

* Summer 2020
  + Zero-Cost 17
  + Low-Cost 1
* Fall 2020
  + Zero-Cost 80
  + Low-Cost 23
* Spring 2021
  + Zero-Cost 117
  + Low-Cost 15
* Summer 2021
  + Zero-Cost 143
  + Low-Cost 38
* Fall 2021
  + Zero-Cost 387
  + Low-Cost 144
* Spring 2022
  + Zero-Cost 181
  + Low-Cost 51
* Summer 2022
  + Zero-Cost 173
  + Low-Cost 25
* Fall 2022
  + Zero-Cost 368
  + Low-Cost 109
* Spring 2023
  + Zero-Cost494
  + Low-Cost 101
* Summer 2023
  + Zero-Cost 237
  + Low-Cost 27
* Fall 2023\*
  + Zero-Cost 469
  + Low-Cost 97

\*Fall 2023 course material reporting currently in progress

## Course Marking Timeline

Summer 2022 through Spring 2021 was a manual collection of data. Summer 2021 through present the Course Materials Reporting Form was implemented. Spring 2022 through present, the courses are searchable by attribute in the student registration system.

# UTRGV Student Feedback

Since 2019 we have surveyed students who have used affordable textbooks. We have had over 1,500 students respond about their experiences.

* 87% of students surveyed rated the overall quality of an OER course to be above average.
* 85% of students surveyed would like to take more courses that use free/open educational resources.
* 80% of students surveyed would be more likely to enroll in a college or university that uses OER.

## Open Education Week Student Testimonials

* Thanks for all your hard work! You make every day easier for us and I am forever thankful!
* Thank you so much! You definitely helped my peace of mind and stress.
* Thank you for your generous heart! Your help does not go unnoticed. There are many that need in this world and you make an impact in these student’s lives. Keep doing what you do. I appreciate you all.

# Faculty Testimonials

## Affordable Textbook Adoption Grant

* The material of the OER was much better than the paid material I used in my course.
* The quality of OER is very good. I have looked at some OER textbooks in the past and did not like them, but the current textbook I used (College Physics) is very good, even compared with traditional, well established textbooks.
* I considered the quality of OER superior given that it is up to date, and I was able to use various OER to meet the course objectives and offer different assessments.

## Texas Learn OER Exploratory Grant

* I greatly appreciate the opportunity to learn more about OER, which I support as an important ethical issue for students. I was glad to see UTRGV mentioned so prominently as a university that’s doing well in the training material!
* I think this training should be given to all new faculty as part of a training, many of us sometimes do not know that this kind of resources exists until another colleague tells us or we discover it semesters later. Great tools.

# Publishing OER

The University Library has acquired a subscription to Pressbooks. Pressbooks is an online software that enables authors to design and format various digital book formats.

Throughout this academic year, UTRGV faculty created 3 openly licensed Textbooks.

* Reflexiones sobre nuestra lengua
  + by: Yanina Hernández Department of Writing and Language Studies & José Esteban Hernández Department of Spanish
* NURS 3301 Professional Mobility
  + by: Dania Ochoa School of Nursing
* ENG 3360 – Introduction to Language Studies
  + by: Regine Pellicer Department of Writing and Language Studies

UTRGV faculty continue to express interest in utilizing Pressbooks to create Open Educational Resources.