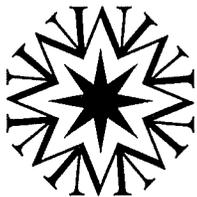


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Addressing the High Cost of Textbooks:

A Joint Report from the Minnesota State
Colleges & Universities, Minnesota State
University Student Association (MSUSA) and
the Minnesota State College Student
Association (MSCSA)



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

Introduction

The high cost of college textbooks has increasingly become a concern for students in higher education. As tuition continues to increase and financial aid remains steady, the increasing cost to textbooks are being absorbed by students. In an effort to address this issue, the Minnesota Legislature in 2007 passed legislation that directed the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities to initiate pilot programs to address the high costs of textbooks. The legislation reads,

“This appropriation includes funding to identify and improve on practices for selecting and purchasing textbooks and course materials that are used by students. The board, in collaboration with the Minnesota State University Student Association (MSUSA) and the Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) must develop and implement pilot projects with this appropriation to address the financial burden that textbook prices and requirements place on students. These projects may include textbook rental programs, cooperative purchasing efforts, training, and education and awareness programs for students and faculty on cost considerations and textbook options. The student associations must be fully involved in the development and implementation of any project using this appropriation.”

Pilot Program Selection

Responding to this legislation that allocated \$500,000 to implement these pilots, the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities formed a Textbook Task Force that included representatives of the Minnesota State University Student Association (MSUSA) and the Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) as well as faculty and administrators. This task force constructed a Request for Proposals (RFP) that was advertised across campuses to solicit pilot proposals. The main consideration when reviewing the pilot proposals was that the projects 1) must aim to reduce cost associated with textbooks for students. 2) Projects must be sustainable after the initial grant money and 3) The student associations must be involved in the development and implementation of these projects.

Projects were solicited just early 2008 and initially there were six selected. These pilots are listed below.

Pilot Projects



Anoka Technical College (\$148,300) designed and implemented a pilot project that lowered the costs of curricular materials by increasing campus-wide communication and strategically targeting cost-reduction methods to students at different stages in their education career. The project is a hybrid model that capitalizes on the strengths of each method and source of course materials. It recognizes the relative experience and comfort level of students at different phases in their education. Specifically, Anoka Technical College offered students (1) rental textbooks and materials in select developmental education courses; (2) rental, custom published, and traditional textbooks and materials for purchase in general education and entry level courses, and (3) textbooks and curricular materials for purchase in technical courses.

The primary goal of Anoka Technical College's pilot project is to reduce the cost of course materials for students. It was also expected that this effort will lead to a higher level of customer service for students, build faculty and student capacity, and contribute positively to student retention and learning by lowering barriers to student success.

Cost Savings
Participating students saved an average of \$89 per course and a total of \$39,354 was saved across campus during the first semester. These savings will continue and may increase in future semesters.



Minnesota State University, Mankato (\$5,000) created an expanded Library Reserve Program which is known as the Maverick Reserve Program. This program enabled students who choose not to purchase the main textbook of a selected General Education course, the ability to check the book out from designated shelves at the Maverick Reserve located in Memorial Library.

This system would focus on General Education classes where the textbook purchase cost would be \$80 or higher and in those courses where there was a high probability that the textbooks would not be changed for a year or more.

Cost Savings
It is estimated that if 10% of a given class section use the Maverick Reserve check out system there will be an annual savings per student using this system of roughly \$115 or \$47,264 for the entire program during the first year.



Minnesota West Community & Technical College (\$8,000) initiated a project to lease books in two selected courses that included CHEM 1100 and GEOG 1100. The program rented textbooks to most students in these courses during the Fall 2008 semester. The program is set to continue to rent these textbooks out in future semesters

and has already seen a significant savings for students enrolled in these courses. With the initial success of these courses there is already interest on campus to extend this program to additional courses.

Cost Savings

Participating students saved an average of \$92.00 each during the first semester. The total savings to students by leasing the textbooks rather than purchasing new textbooks was \$4877 during the first semester of operations.
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South Central College (\$36,523) initiated a project that specifically aimed at improving the used textbook options for students. By purchasing used textbooks,

students are able to save at least 25% off of the price of new textbook prices. Through an extensive educational program on campus to educate both students and faculty the aim is to increase the amount of used textbooks that are available for purchase by students.

The second aspect of the South Central College project is to lower the costs associated with textbooks for students by presenting faculty with additional low-cost and alternative textbooks materials for adoption.

Cost Savings

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 206 students saved \$16,216 by faculty choosing lower cost alternative textbooks during the first semester. This equals a savings of an average of \$79 per student. - The bookstore was able to increase the buy back list by eight titles so that there were additional used textbook options for students. - Increased awareness of online reservation system for increasing students chances of purchasing a used copy of a textbook. This reservation system had an increase from 551 books for Fall Semester 2007 to 1360 books for Fall Semester 2008. |
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Vermilion Community College (\$60,000) created a book lease program. Under this program students are able to lease their textbooks for a semester. The program began with books for courses that most students must take to get an associate's degree at Vermilion: English writing courses, mathematics courses, a humanities course, and a psychology course. To maximize the benefits to students, they started the program with those books used in courses taught each semester.

Cost Savings

It is estimated that this program will result in an average annual savings of \$24,554, or \$40.65 per full-time student during the first year of operation. These savings will continue and may increase if the program is expanded.



Hibbing Community College
A TECHNICAL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Hibbing Community College (\$20,000) this project included the campus Librarian creating an easily accessible list, via a website, of currently available online textbooks for instructors and students. This resource will include those commercial textbooks that are currently purchased as part of various library subscription databases. The intent of the project is to help increase the information about what textbooks are currently freely available to

faculty and students, which would then reduce the amount that these textbooks are purchased in print versions.

Cost Savings

The cost savings of this project will be realized through students access to textbooks and supplemental resources. This is a first step in a combined future effort to education faculty and students on using existing materials or library resources to offset the costs of textbooks.

Additional Pilot Projects

After the initial pilot projects were selected there were additional pilots that have been added throughout this academic year that address other possible methods for reducing the financial burden that textbooks play on students.



Minneapolis Community and Technical College (\$41,000) bookstore is developing an online textbook exchange system that will allow students to list their used textbooks for exchanging or selling them to other students on campus. This software is being developed

with the ability to allow other institutions of the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities to use this software on their own campuses.

Cost Savings

The cost savings to students will be fully utilized once the system is fully developed and deployed. The savings will be directly realized between students by selling and buying each others materials. This system has a great potential to save students money by increasing the availability of used textbook for purchase.



Winona State University (\$26,500) will be utilizing online textbooks in a large Psychology section. The pilot will include research into comparing the use of online textbooks with the use of print textbooks in the same course. Winona State University is a fully laptop campus and this pilot will enable the campus to determine if online textbooks, which generally have a lower purchase price, are an acceptable alternative format for both faculty and students.

Cost Savings

38% cost savings will be realized in this course using the online version of this textbook vs. the new print version of this textbook. If the analysis that is being performed to determine the acceptability of online textbook is successful then there may be a greater willingness by faculty and students to have a greater

Metropolitan
State University



Metropolitan State University (\$76,716) is implementing a project that will initiate a small scale rental program (currently none of the existing pilots that included rental were at a State University), an overhaul and re-launch of the student senate run online textbook exchange system and, research and investment to incorporate and promote electronic textbooks other media resources.

Cost Savings

Participating students saved an average of 63 % through rental of the textbook. This will equal a total of \$33,408 was saved through the leasing program during the first semester. These savings will continue and may increase in future semesters.

Currently Investigation

Recently there has been a significant shift in the development and availability of electronic textbooks. These are currently being developed by both the publishing industry and by faculty

themselves. Although there still is a significant cost associated with a commercial online textbook, the costs are significantly lower than that of a hardcover print textbook. Given both the cost savings and the flexibility of the online format, we are currently working to use a portion of the remaining textbook pilot funding to initiate additional pilots that will investigate the feasibility of the online format for classes taught in a variety of disciplines.

We are further investigating the use of an educational component on campuses to inform student, faculty, and staff on the high costs of textbooks and present effective practices in reducing these costs. We are looking to develop a campus based approach that can be replicated on campuses across the other campuses of the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities.

Identified effective practices

Although the pilot programs have recently started there are a number of effective practices that have already been identified. These include:

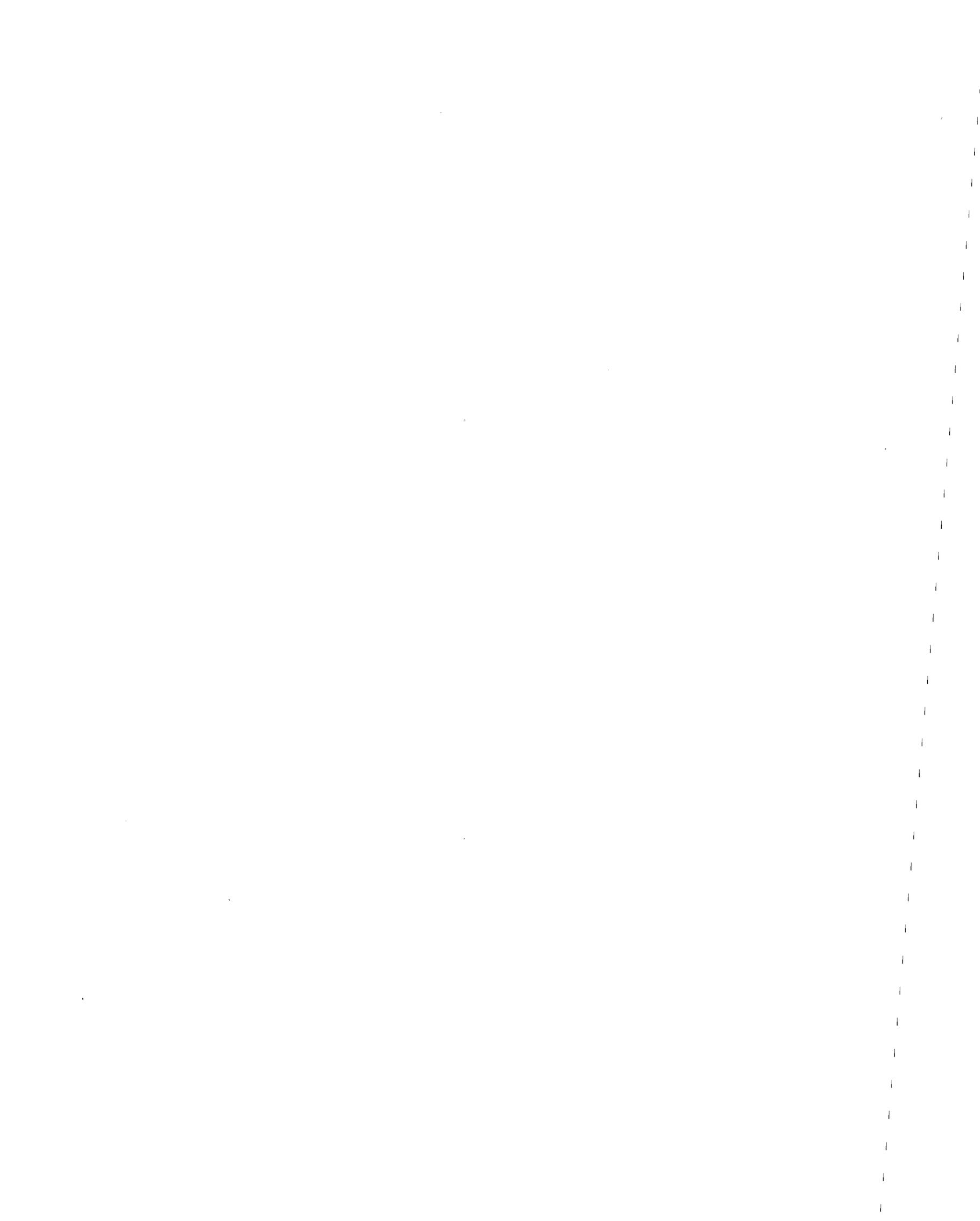
- Small scale leasing programs for courses, especially those in the developmental areas have had a positive return and have saved money for those students enrolled. Through our pilots we have seen that leasing programs can save a significant amount of money over purchasing a new textbook for a course.
- Increased and clearer channels of communication between the bookstore and faculty for placing orders can significantly increase the inventory of lower cost used textbooks for students in upcoming semesters. This also enables higher levels of buyback from existing students which aids in returning some money to the students.
- Online textbooks are showing promise to reduce costs to students. As a higher percentage of classes are also available through online delivery, these online textbooks will become an increasingly viable option compared to a traditional print textbook.

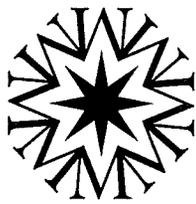
Federal Legislation

Federal legislation regarding textbooks was included in the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act. This legislation sets in place similar regulations for transparency in the textbook industry. These regulations will have a significantly higher impact in that they apply to all institutions that receive federal funding. Given the broader scope of these regulations there will likely be a higher level of compliance by publishers and others in the textbook industry.

Conclusions

The Minnesota State Colleges & Universities, Minnesota State University Student Association (MSUSA) and the Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) would like to express thanks to the Minnesota Legislature for funding the pilot programs that investigated ways to lower the costs of textbooks for students. Addressing the costs of textbooks is a joint effort between administration, faculty, and students and given the pilots and the lessons learned we feel that we are in a much stronger position to continue pursuing ways to lower these costs.





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