

A young person with dark hair is shown from the chest up, looking down at an open book. The image is heavily stylized with a blue, pixelated or mosaic-like overlay. The text 'EDITED BY ALLAN M. MASLOVE' and '2009-2010' is faintly visible on the book's cover.

TEXTBOOK COSTS & DIGITAL LEARNING RESOURCES

A report of the VCCS Reengineering Task Force

2015



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Introduction

The Virginia Community College System is committed to improving the educational outcomes for Virginia's community college students. Guided by its six-year plan, Achieve 2015 and Rethink, its reengineering project "to serve more students and to serve them better," the VCCS has undertaken a number of innovative initiatives aimed to increase students' access to and success in higher education.

An important reason for these initiatives is to reexamine the established practices of VCCS faculty, staff, and administrators in order to identify opportunities for improving the outcomes for our students. The processes VCCS colleges use to select, purchase, sell, and deliver academic textbooks is one such area in need of reexamination. The content of these textbooks often make up a significant portion of course curricula and having access to them is crucial to a student's success in the class. However, for many VCCS students the increasing costs of college textbooks are creating a significant barrier to their success and

ability to complete and earn a college credential. The high cost of textbooks isn't a problem specific to VCCS students, but is a national issue. Across the country, post-secondary institutions, including the VCCS, are pursuing a number of strategies to help reduce textbook costs, primarily by leveraging the efficiencies of networked digital technologies. Some of these strategies include selecting textbooks that can be purchased in both print and lower-cost digital formats, offering the option for students to rent textbooks, and supporting the adoption and use of openly licensed materials, or OER, to replace expensive, proprietary textbooks.

A Second Bite at the Apple: The 2004 Task Force on College Textbooks

Before delving into the report of this committee, it should be acknowledged that the VCCS has attempted to address the issue of textbook affordability before. In 2003, the VCCS assembled the Task Force on College Textbooks to address the exorbitant cost of textbooks. This Task Force issued a set of recommendations in its final report in June of 2004. The 2004 report contains many useful and still-relevant recommendations; in fact, many similar recommendations are echoed

this report. For example, the 2004 report recommended that VCCS faculty should consider cost when adopting textbooks for their courses, as well as adopt the same textbook for all sections of a course for a minimum of three years. Another 2004 recommendation, offered well before the mainstream awareness of open educational resources, is for colleges to encourage faculty to develop alternatives to traditional textbooks. In a brief follow-up report in March 2005, it was reported that most colleges were beginning to implement many of the recommendations released the year before.

Over a decade has passed since the release of 2004 Task Force's report and it remains unclear if the report or its recommendations had any lasting impact. What is clear is that textbook costs have continued to rise unabated, even during a period that saw the unparalleled growth and use of digital technology, and like the students of 2004, today's VCCS students continue to bear the financial consequences.





About

The Textbook Costs and Digital Learning Resources (TCDLR) Committee was established in 2012 by Chancellor Glenn DuBois and the VCCS Reengineering Task Force.

The purpose of the TCDLR Committee was to investigate the issue of textbook affordability and, based on the findings, develop recommendations for reducing the cost of college course materials for VCCS students. The Committee was charged to address six specific goals:

- examine VCCS administrative practices and policies that unnecessarily add to the cost of academic textbooks,
- explore how networked digital technology can best be leveraged to lower the overall cost of textbooks, including using open educational resources,
- investigate ways which currently licensed electronic resources can be used in electronic "course packs," as a substitute for textbooks, or for the supplementary material often required for a course of study,
- identify opportunities for interested VCCS faculty to explore using openly licensed resources in their courses,
- examine the current relevance of printed textbooks in an age of interactive, web-based content, digital publishing, and
- recommend strategies and policies for creating an institutional culture that embraces and practices openness, transparency, collaboration, and sharing.

The administrators, faculty, and staff invited to serve on the TCDLR committee were selected to reflect the breadth and diversity of the VCCS. Members include a college president, deans, academic and finance vice-presidents, library, instructional design, finance, financial aid, and information technology staff, and, most importantly, adjunct and full-time VCCS faculty (see Members). There are representatives from 16 VCCS colleges, the System Office, as well as a senior administrator from a four-year public university. For this reason, the Committee is confident that the recommendations contained within this report are informed by the perspective of all VCCS stakeholders and reflect broad agreement among VCCS administrators, faculty, and staff.

Convened in the Spring of 2012, the TCDLR has been an especially active group, both influencing and achieving noteworthy accomplishments during its relatively short tenure. To some degree this has been out of necessity due to the timeliness of the issues it was charged with investigating. In September 2013, despite having much more work to do, the Committee released a set of the more urgent recommendations in a TCDLR Interim Report. Many of the recommendations in the Interim Report were successfully implemented, most notably the inclusion of textbook affordability goals in the annual evaluation of VCCS college presidents and a set of criteria that was included in the RFP of what is now the the VCCS Collaborative Bookstore Contract with Follett (see Appendix). Other recommendations successfully implemented since the 2013 TCDLR Interim Report have been included in the body of this report.

The **2015 TCDLR Final Report** builds on the findings, recommendations, and accomplishments documented in the Interim Report. The bulk

Our vision is that every VCCS student receives high-quality instruction with supporting instructional resources that are cost-effective, efficient for colleges, and supported by faculty.

of the group's work was completed by the several dedicated subcommittees established early in the Committee's formation to address specific issues, topics, or tasks. All relevant findings, including collected survey data, errata, and supplementary documents can be found in the *Appendix* of this report.

With this report, the formal work of the Textbook Costs and Digital Learning Resources Committee will come to an end. However, the Committee would like to emphasize that these recommendations, should they be accepted by the RETFII Committee, require immediate and sustained action. There is still much work to be done.



The rising cost of textbooks

Over the last decade, the average cost of college textbooks has risen at four times the rate of inflation.

Look back further several decades more and you see an even more dramatic increase. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average price for educational books has risen 812% since 1978, more than the cost of medical services, new home prices, and the consumer price index.

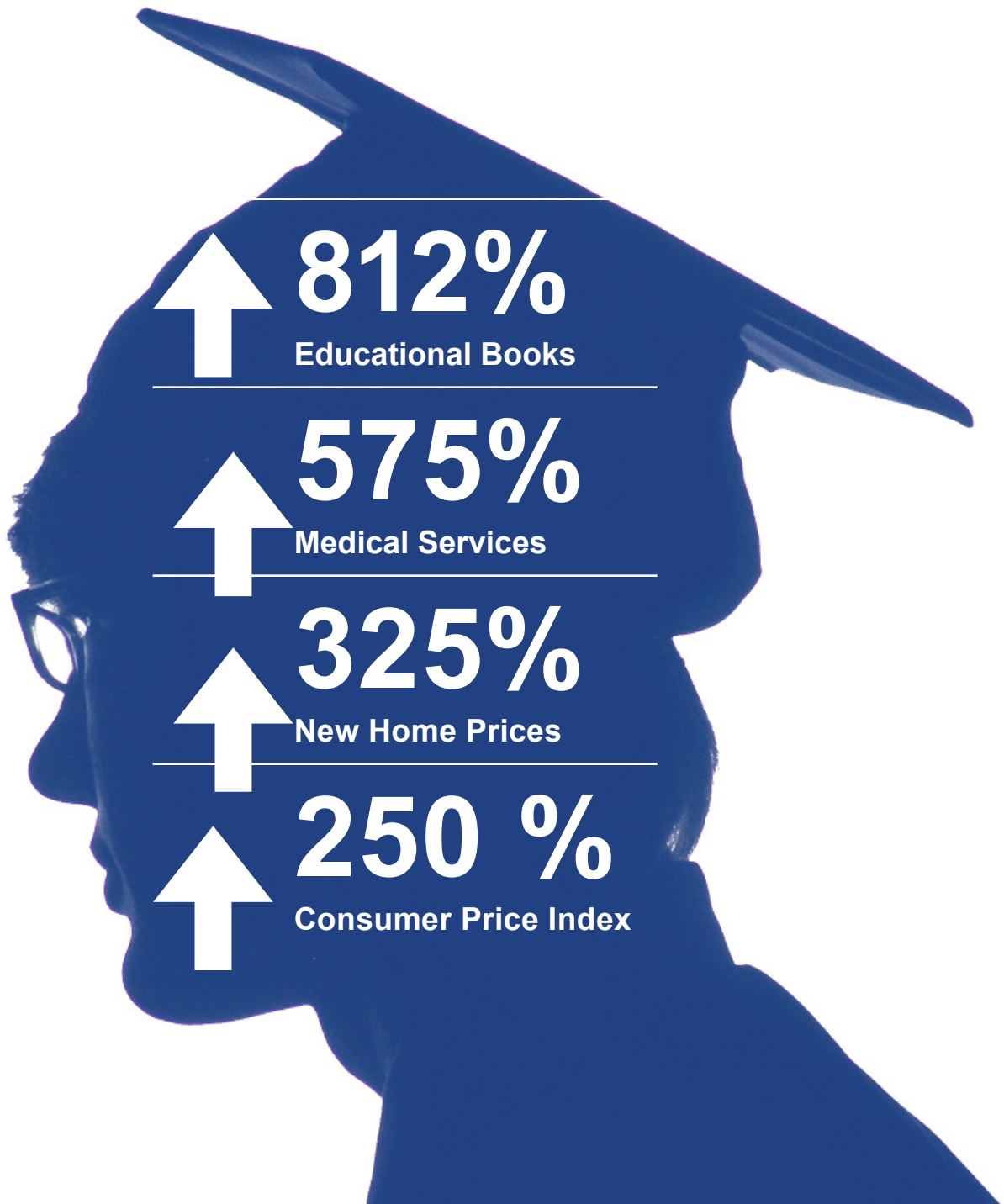
Nationally, college students spend an average of \$1200 a year on textbooks and supplies, according to the report Trends

in College Pricing 2014 released by The College Board. Textbook costs for Virginia's community college students average about \$520 per semester, according to a survey conducted by this Committee. For some courses of study at the VCCS, such as Nursing, textbooks can run as much as \$1000 per semester. These costs can dramatically increase a student's college bill—adding 10, 20, 25% or more to the overall cost.

Many college students sacrifice important expenses, such as food, rent, or other necessities, in order to pay for their college textbooks. Others take out student loans to cover the cost, an often necessary decision but one that contributes to another growing problem: student debt.

Another strategy used by students to mitigate costs is to take fewer courses than they had planned, or else delay enrolling in college. Some

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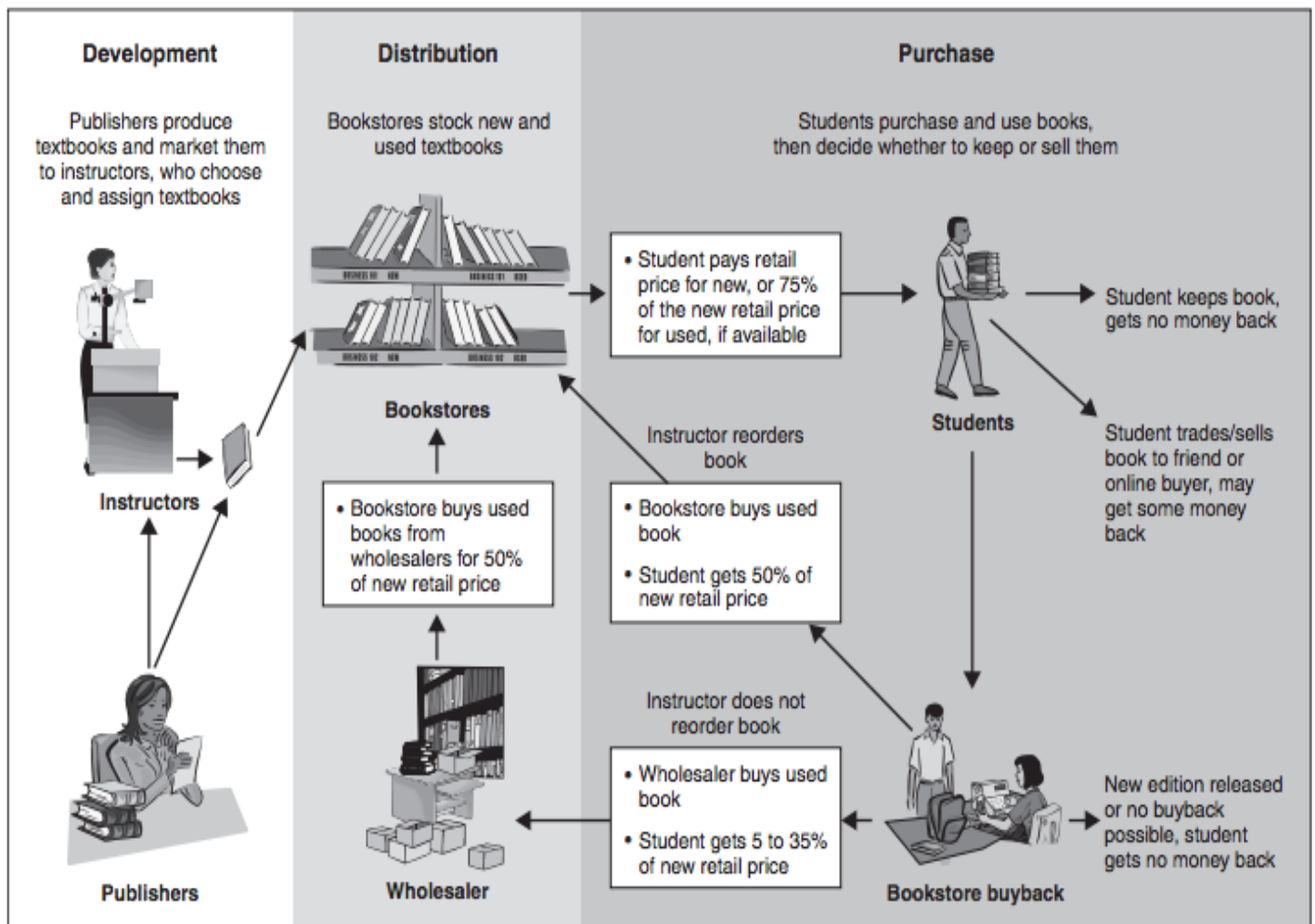
students choose to skip buying the textbook altogether, or share the book and the costs with a classmate. Seven in ten college students have reported avoiding buying at least one textbook for a course because of the exorbitant cost.

Unfortunately, while these various cost-saving strategies are understandable, they often end up extending the time a student takes to earn a degree. Research on persistence is clear: even a minor delay in a student's education increases the likelihood he or she will not be successful.

The larger question regarding the rising cost of textbooks is, *Why?* Why, in the second decade of the digital era, are publishing costs rising when the cost of electronic reproduction costs almost nothing?

From Printers to Digital Engagement Services: Textbook Publishers

There are a number of complex factors, both tangible and intangible, that contribute to the cost of today's textbook. Many of these factors are market-based, or part of the production process. Others are the



Source: GAO analysis (presentation). Art Explosion and Clipart.com (images).

results of the pressures faced by a once-dominant industry being disrupted by dramatic social and technological changes. Before the ubiquity of computers and the Internet, textbook publishers were uniquely equipped to supply college faculty with current, relevant, peer-reviewed, printed educational content. Even now, long after the dawn of the digital era, faculty still call on publishers to provide these services. In fact, academic textbook publishing is still the most profitable sector of the publishing industry. However, these services are no longer the exclusive domain of publishers. Access to easy-to-use digital tools and high-quality educational content allows almost anyone to become a publisher. And the explosive adoption of handheld digital devices like smartphones and tablets have quickly challenged the five century dominance of

print. Sales of digital books now far surpass those of print books. In higher education, more and more students have access both print and digital versions of course materials.

Paradoxically, as the ability of anyone to be their own publisher has become easier, printed content has become less important. In the classroom, the focus of teaching and learning has evolved from content consumption to interaction and knowledge-creation. As a technology, in the fundamental sense of the word technology, the static, content-heavy textbook is an artifact designed for an era that has passed.

Publishers will continue to be necessary partners to higher education for the near future. However, even academic publishing is moving aggressively away from print publishing to

becoming “digital engagement specialists,” offering digital products, such as e-books and software and services, like custom content creation, faculty training, and copyright clearance for open materials.

Alternative Textbook Formats

As textbook publishers have concluded that the future of the textbook is digital, it is important to better understand the various textbook formats available to students. The primary alternatives to the purchase of a new, print textbook are textbook rentals, electronic textbooks (e-books), and used (print) textbooks.

E-textbooks

Digital versions of textbooks are becoming more and more widely available, with some academic publishers offering 90% of their catalog in a digital format. E-books come in a variety of formats, such as the

more common pdf and e-pub, as well as proprietary formats developed by for a specific e-book reading device.

While there can be some cost savings to using e-textbooks, there are drawbacks. Students cannot keep their e-book, or resell it to the bookstore, at the end of the semester. E-textbooks also limit the number of pages that can be printed or the number of devices that can access the book. At the VCCS, there is limited but growing use of e-books, with faculty at many colleges beginning to explore their use in the classroom as more titles become available.

Rentals

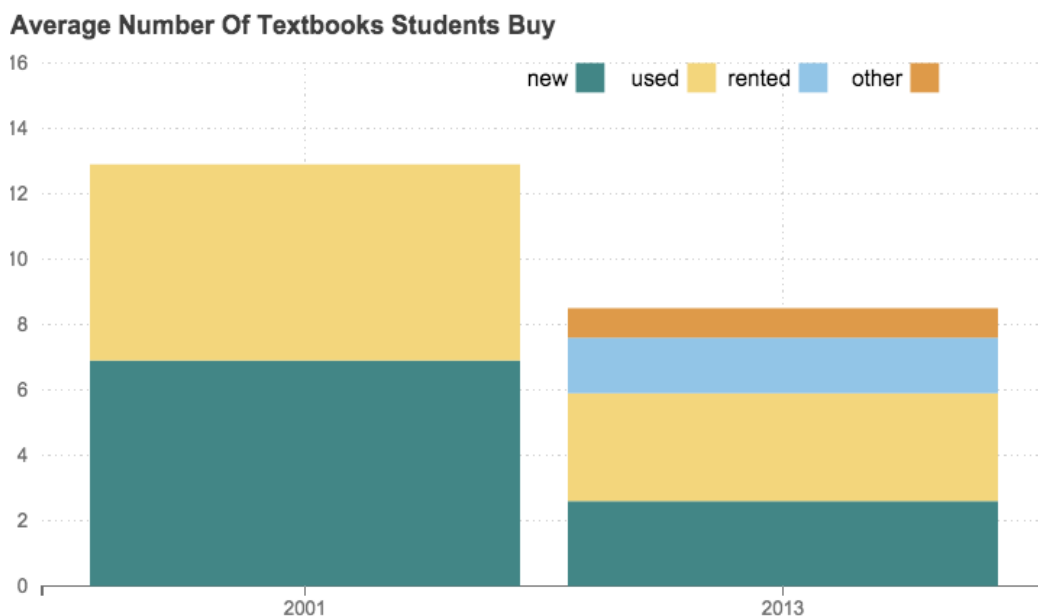
Renting printed textbooks is another potential cost-saving option for VCCS students. Currently,

nineteen college bookstores report offering textbook rental options. There can still be limited titles available for renting in some disciplines and students must have a major credit card to rent.

The VCCS Collaborative Bookstore contract with Follett, discussed in more detail below, proposes expanding and growing its textbook rental program, offering additional savings for longer-term textbook adoptions, and additional commissions to colleges with robust rental programs.

Used Books

All 23 colleges offer a used textbook option for their students. However almost all colleges report having insufficient used textbook inventories to meet the high student demand. Only twelve colleges reported that 50% or more of assigned



Source: Student Monitor
Credit: Quoc Trung Bui/NPR

textbooks were available through the used textbook program.

According to a report from the National Association of College Stores, a number of factors limit the total market for used textbooks, including the need for new texts to generate sufficient sales to return to the market as used books.



Out of sight, out of mind

Practices and policies that add to the cost of academic textbooks

In its investigation of any VCCS “practices and policies that may unnecessarily add to the cost of academic textbooks” the TCDLR Committee identified two significant practices widely-shared among colleges that impact textbook affordability: the first was the varied processes the 23 colleges used to formally adopt textbooks. The second was the contractual terms between colleges and their on-campus, for-profit bookstores. The Committee identified a single policy--albeit federal policy--that contributed to the already high cost of college textbooks: Federal Financial Aid policy.

Textbook Affordability and the Textbook Adoption Process

One strategy for lowering textbook costs is for colleges to establish formal processes and policies for adopting academic textbooks. Several colleges

have established just such policies, although they vary significantly in their requirements. Thirteen out of 23 colleges have established formal textbook adoption processes, but only nine include textbook cost as a consideration in adoption. Ten VCCS colleges have no formal textbook adoption policy.

Often, simply making faculty more aware of what students pay for the textbooks assigned in their course is enough to lead them to explore ways to lower textbook costs for their students. Another approach is to provide faculty with training on proven ways to reduce textbook costs. A majority of VCCS colleges do offer textbook affordability training to faculty. Also, the new faculty evaluation process requires faculty to consider the cost of textbooks in their selection of materials for the course.

A benefit of establishing a formal textbook adoption process is that departmental faculty and deans have an opportunity to ensure the same textbook is assigned for all course sections of a particular course, preventing students who need to alter their course schedule from having to purchase a different book for the same course. Eleven VCCS colleges practice this college-wide; another three use the same textbook campus-wide. Nine colleges allow different textbooks to be used for different sections of the same course.

Textbook costs can be

significantly reduced when a faculty member commits to a textbook adoption for multiple years, providing publishers with a more stable customer-base for a particular edition of a book and increasing the number of available rental and used editions. At seven colleges, textbooks are adopted for a minimum of three years; another five colleges adopt textbooks for a minimum of two years. At eleven colleges, there is no policy in place regarding a minimum period of textbook adoption.

Sixteen colleges responded

that 10% or less of their courses incorporated alternatives to traditional textbooks; six responded that 11% or more incorporate alternatives, with three indicating more than 25%. Seven colleges indicated that alternatives to traditional textbooks are offered throughout a curriculum.

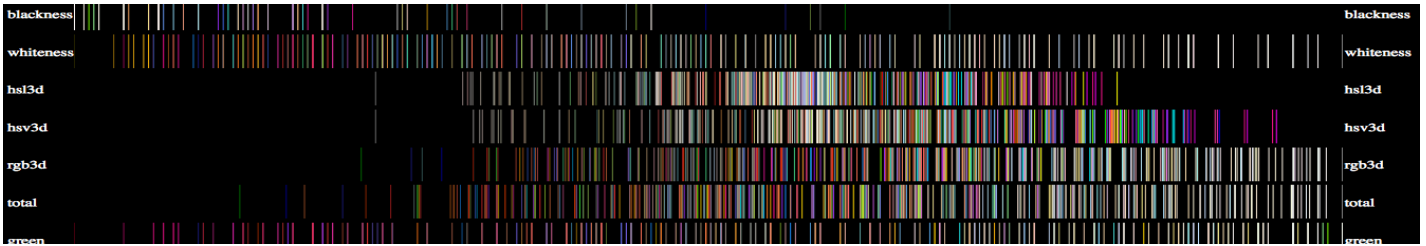
In 2013 the Committee surveyed college Vice Presidents of Finance at all 23 colleges about the details of their respective college's bookstore contracts. The results of the survey revealed that there were significantly variable terms and conditions

A word about the word

Textbook. The word used liberally in this report as well as in the name of the TCDLR Committee, is problematic. The word is actually a stubborn holdout from the pre-digital era of schooling. Technically, the word describes a specific format of educational material, namely a bound and printed academic book: a tangible artifact. Printed textbooks are still heavily preferred by college faculty and continue to fill the shelves of college bookstores. However, they are no longer the only, or even the best, resource material for academic courses. Nor will they be the course materials of the future.

In fact, faculty now have a wealth of resources available to them to use in their courses. These include web-based resources, educational software, downloadable digital books, streaming audio and video, and digitized images, among others. While some of these resources represent digital versions of printed materials, many more of them provide students with an enhanced, sophisticated, and interactive educational experience.

Clearly the term textbook no longer meaningfully describes the variety of digital content found in more and more college courses. However, the more accurate term--"course materials"--leaves much to be desired. In this report, the word "textbook" will be used as the equivalent of "course materials," conveying the meaning of both printed and digital content. When specifically referring to the print textbooks, the terms "printed textbook" or "traditional textbook" will be used.



in public funding for education, an approach to teaching that has been in place for decades—but the result is that colleges are now faced with unparalleled competition by external forces both private and public. If community colleges are going to compete successfully, they must embrace a new approach.

[Read the Fine Print: College Bookstore Contracts](#)

In its 2013 Interim Report, the TCDLR Committee identified college bookstore contracts as one contributing factor to the cost of college textbooks. One way college bookstores generate profits is by marking up the price of the textbooks it sells, increasing what many consider already inflated textbook prices. Additionally, the VCCS colleges that contract with private bookstore vendors receive, and have come to depend on, a percentage of the campus bookstore revenues. The Committee found that these revenues vary by college, ranging anywhere from a range of 6-11% up to \$1 million in gross revenues. According to college finance staff, colleges use their bookstore commissions for student activities, scholarships, facility operations, renovation and new construction, and other costs

not eligible for state funding.

VCCS students are not required to purchase their textbooks at the college bookstore. Like so many of today's college students, they can use online book retailers like Amazon.com or Chegg to purchase their books, or they can purchase them at a local off-campus used bookstore. However, VCCS students on financial aid who want to use any of these other options often don't have access to their financial aid award in time to purchase their texts before classes begin. They must either pay cash or use a credit card, luxuries they often don't enjoy. Some wait to buy their books until after their financial aid is disbursed, often after the second or third week of class. For those financial aid students who want their materials on the first day of class, college bookstores are the only realistic source for textbooks.

In 2013 the Committee surveyed college Vice Presidents of Finance at all 23 colleges about the details of their respective college's bookstore contracts. The results of the survey revealed that there were significantly variable terms and

conditions in VCCS college bookstore contracts, even among colleges that shared the same bookstore vendor. In addition, several contracts included other restrictions, such as limiting the college's ability to negotiate with other vendors of textbooks, instructional materials, and logo merchandise, or providing OER materials at no cost in the bookstore.

Most importantly, the survey revealed that a majority of existing bookstore contracts were due to expire, or be eligible for renewal, within the next several years. The result is the *VCCS Collaborative Bookstore Contract*.

The VCCS Collaborative Bookstore Contract

Responding to opportunity presented by so many looming contract expirations, the TCDLR Committee urged finance officers from colleges with

expiring bookstore contracts to collaborate on a common Request For Proposals (RFP) for a leveraged bookstore contract. This group compared the bookstore contracts of each participating college, collected by the TCDLR Committee, to determine the terms that would allow for more affordable course material options, specifically the VCCS's growing collection of OER. The eventual RFP includes most of the recommendations the TCDLR Committee included in its 2013 Interim Report(see *Appendix*).

In August 2014, Follett was selected as the vendor for the VCCS Collaborative Bookstore Contract. A total of seventeen VCCS colleges have agreed to be a part of this contract, generating enough sales volume to bring significant reductions the cost of course materials for the VCCS students at the

participating colleges. The terms of the bookstore contract obligate Follett to support the increased use of OER and digital course materials through a no-cost distribution in their bookstores. In addition, a Digital Course Material Specialist is dedicated to the VCCS to help grow the use of OER materials. A full-time Follett IT project manager will be dedicated to the VCCS as well. Other benefits of the contract include higher commission rates, a cap on textbook markups and the elimination of freight charges to students, significant technology enhancements, and use of Faculty Discover and Student Discover, on-line discovery and adoption platforms for faculty and students, respectively.

In addition, Follett is offering colleges a \$5,000 incentive to pilot the use of a flat-rate textbook fee, which can be

often offer significant savings than purchasing them a la carte. Several colleges participating in the bookstore contract have expressed interest in piloting this flat-rate textbook fee, and are negotiating the details with Follett. The fee will require State Board Approval, although the Board has previously expressed interest in such a fee.

A further opportunity in the new Follett contract is the potential for expanding the textbook options for students. Under the contract, textbooks can be rented for up to 50% of the cost of a new textbook and 25% less than the cost of a used textbook. In some cases, a faculty member must commit to using a title for four semesters in order to achieve these savings. This highlights the need for all VCCS colleges to establish formal textbook adoption policies.

The Neediest Must Often Pay More: Federal Financial Aid

Federal financial aid regulations require post-secondary institutions to provide a way for students who are eligible for a Federal Pell Grant to obtain or purchase their required books or supplies by the seventh day of the payment period, assuming the following conditions apply: ten days before the beginning of the payment period, the school could have disbursed Federal Student Aid

(FSA) funds to the student;

disbursement of those funds would have created a FSA credit balance.

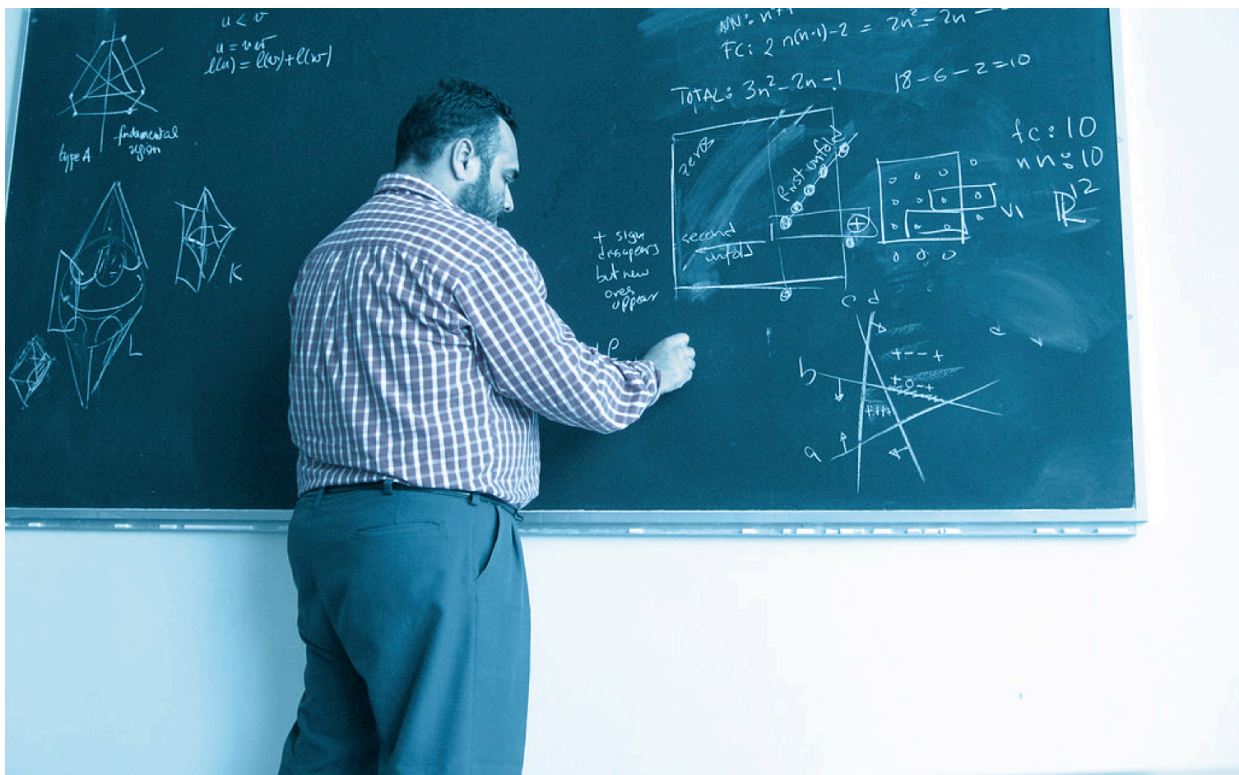
Federal financial aid regulations require post-secondary institutions to provide a way for students who are eligible for a Federal Pell Grant to obtain or purchase their required books or supplies by the seventh day of the payment period, assuming the following conditions apply: ten days before the beginning of the payment period, the school could have disbursed Federal Student Aid (FSA) funds to the student; disbursement of those funds would have created a FSA credit balance.

VCCS institutions are currently meeting this regulation by allowing students to use their anticipated financial aid award to charge their purchases in the college bookstores for a specified period prior to the start of classes each term. While this allowance is intended to give financial aid students a means for purchasing course materials before the disbursement of their financial aid award, one unexpected outcome of these regulations is that, at least among community college students, the most financially needy students often end up having to pay more for their textbooks. Instead of finding the cheapest price through online or

discount vendors, they must use the bookstore where bookstore and college commissions are added to the textbook price.

There are currently no proposed changes to the Federal Financial Aid regulations to accommodate students looking for alternative purchasing options for their college textbooks. In fact, as financial aid fraud in distance education continues to spread, rather than being relaxed, the financial aid practices of post-secondary institutions will most likely be tightened.

If VCCS financial aid students want to have their course materials on the first day of class, they must purchase their books from official institutional vendors, typically the college bookstore. Therefore, it is crucial that any low-cost textbooks be offered within the college bookstore, or that colleges pursue contracts with additional vendors in lieu of an exclusive contract with the college bookstores, to drive down costs and create more affordable options for students. In this way, financial aid students would be afforded with more than one option for purchasing books and supplies.





The Digital Revolution Will Be Livestreamed

Using digital technology to lower the cost of textbooks

The Committee was also charged with exploring ways networked digital technology can be used to lower the overall cost of textbooks. The Committee addressed this charge by focusing on two specific areas: the VCCS's electronic library resources and open educational resources.

VCCS Library Resources

The VCCS is fortunate to have a wealth of subscription e-book, streaming media, and online research article resources to

which all faculty have ready access. Last year, VCCS students and faculty made tremendous use of the shared online library, with close to 3 million e-journal article downloads and over 800,00 e-book views.

The shared holdings of the VCCS online library are as impressive as they are overwhelming. Through a cooperative purchasing agreement with the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA), VCCS faculty can access to over 170

research databases with a access to 20,000 full-text journals, 1,540 streaming videos, and more than two million additional full-text reports, dissertations, conference proceedings, pamphlets, and newspapers. Combined, VCCS and VIVA's shared e-book holdings comprise more than 78,625 titles from over a dozen different collections, including:

- APA PsycBooks
- Gale Reference Collection
- EBL
- eBooks on EBSCOhost
- OverDrive Digital Audiobooks

- OVID Nursing Collection
- Oxford Reference Collection
- PsycBOOKS
- Safari Tech Books
- ScienceDirect 2013 Collection
- Scribner Writers Online
- Springer Science E-books
- Twayne's Authors Online

To provide easy access to the full breadth of these library materials, VCCS Library Services released QuickSearch, the new VCCS library catalog that allows easy, single-search of all library holdings. Most colleges have migrated to the new system as and user feedback has been largely positive.

E-book collection growth

The VCCS shared e-book collection has grown from roughly 8,000 titles in 2008-9 to over 46,000 2012-13. Additional 2013 titles are regularly added as they become available. In Spring 2013, VIVA e-book acquisitions from Springer and Elsevier, coupled with the VIVA EBL Demand-driven acquisition (see next section) (see below) pilot program, expanded the

shared VCCS e-book collection considerably.

In 2012, the General Assembly provided the VIVA public institutions with funds for e-books in STEM-H (Scientific, Technical, Engineering, Mathematics, and Health) areas, resulting in over 3,500 new e-books. VCCS students and faculty have access to the full e-book collections in Behavioral Science, Biomedical and Life Science, Computer Science, and Earth and Environmental Science. All e-books from are current, high-interest academic titles that provide a robust user experience and are licensed for unlimited, simultaneous use. Additionally, many of the e-books offer an option to purchase a printed paperback grayscale copy for \$25 to accompany online access.

Demand-driven Acquisition

Demand-driven acquisition (DDA) is a new e-book selection and

licensing model that lets the user choose what the library buys, resulting in an e-book collection tailored to user needs. In the DDA model, rather than investing upfront in a "best guess" about which e-books users need and want, the library simply offers seamless access to a large selection of e-books for users to choose from. Students browse the DDA e-book collection freely, triggering library purchases of only popular, high-demand titles. This emerging model has been in place at all VCCS libraries since March 2013 as a result of this participation in the VIVA DDA pilot program.

This pilot program is VIVA-funded and limited to STEM-H e-books. This innovative effort permits VCCS students and faculty access to roughly 5,000 of the latest STEM-H e-book titles via their home library catalogs, and VIVA pays only for those

e-books that are used.

LibGuides: Library support for alternatives to textbooks

Besides providing access to a wealth of electronic, educational content, the VCCS library staff also provide expertise and support. Because the variety of library e-resource licensing and access schemes often pose unwieldy barriers to their integrated use in the classroom, the VCCS library system must answer the question, How can the libraries empower faculty to efficiently leverage existing library e-resources as course materials?

The consensus from Library Resource Center directors is take a cooperative approach to select and uniformly present the most flexibly-licensed materials as alternatives to textbooks. The VCCS has licensed Springshare LibGuides for this purpose. LibGuides is a widely-used digital tool that allows academic libraries to quickly customize and “brand” access to a set of particular e-resources, whether library, open access, or otherwise. This LibGuide approach is a user-friendly solution to the perennial difficulty of creating engaging, well-designed, comprehensive access to e-resources at the user’s point of need.

The VCCS libraries piloted the first LibGuide for the Articulating Learning Outcomes (ALO)

Psychology 200 course redesign, using the platform to create a template that identifies psychology-related e-books that are uniformly licensed for unlimited, concurrent use, allowing any interested VCCS faculty member to easily incorporate these resource into their courses. The Psy 200 LibGuide was presented to faculty at the 2014 Psychology Peer Group meeting.

The LibGuide model was adopted for use during the 2014 Chancellor’s OER Adoption Grant (see next section). In addition to awarding funds to faculty to identify and vet a broad selection of open resources for high-enrollment course sequences (BIO 101-102, CHM 111-112, etc.), the 2014 Chancellor’s Grant also awarded grants to selected library staff to develop LibGuides for each of the grant’s course content areas. These LibGuides are available to all VCCS faculty.

The screenshot shows a LibGuide page for 'ACC 211 - Principles of Accounting I'. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: 'Library Home', 'eResource List', 'More Guides', and 'Ask a Librarian'. Below this, the page title 'ACC 211 - Principles of Accounting I' is displayed, along with a breadcrumb trail: 'VCCS Online Library > ResearchGuides > ACC 211 - Principles of Accounting I'. A note states: 'These online library resources support the redesigned ACC 211 course. The e-books selected for this guide are licensed for unlimited concurrent use.' The URL 'http://vccs.libguides.com/acc211' and 'Last Updated: Apr 3, 2014' are also visible. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column, 'Careers in Accounting', lists 'Occupational Outlook Handbook (BLS)' and 'VSCPA Career Resources'. The middle column, 'The ABCs of Accounting: The Matching Concept and the Accounting Cycle', features a video player with a 'Play' button and a 'Table of Contents, transcripts, and related media' link. The right column, 'Research and Writing', lists 'APA Style Guide', 'APA style simplified (2012)', 'Citation Builder', and 'Researching in the Social Sciences'.

Open Educational Resources

There is perhaps no better way to dramatically lower the overall cost for college textbooks than to institute the broad and systematic adoption of high-quality open educational resources in high enrollment community college courses. Open educational resources are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license, such as a Creative Commons license, that permits their free use and repurposing by others.

The VCCS’s forward- thinking and innovative support of open educational resources has made Virginia a leader in reducing college textbook costs for students. Currently, 16 VCCS colleges participate in the development of open courses, collectively creating

over 70 individual OER courses.

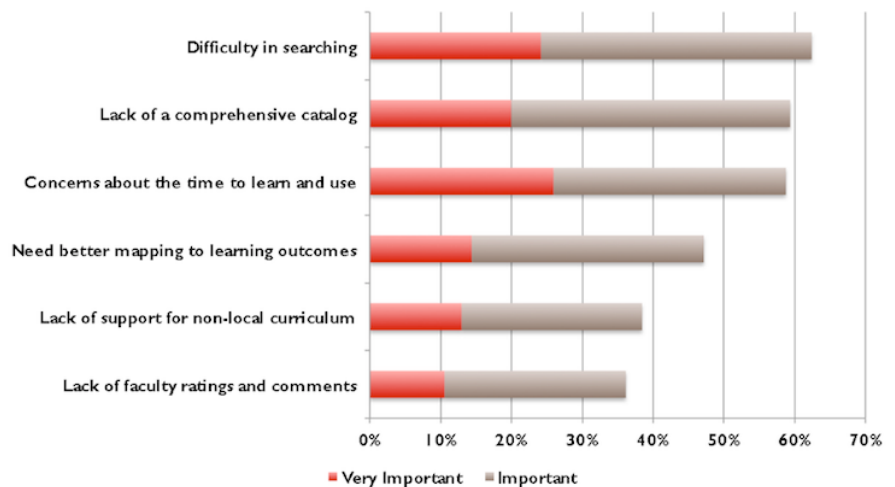
Notably, Tidewater and Northern Virginia, are the first colleges in the world to develop full OER degrees. NVCC offers Associate of Science degrees in General Education and Social Sciences, and Tidewater’s Z-Degree is an Associate of Science in Business Administration. Germanna and Reynolds are currently using the courses in NVCC’s degree to develop their own OER certificates. John Tyler Community College, Lord Fairfax Community College, and New River Community College also have significant OER projects.

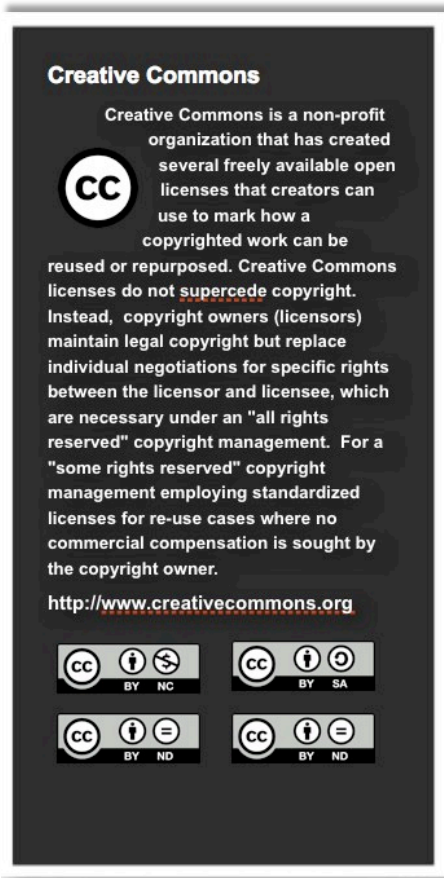
Overall, these efforts have not only saved our students money--estimated at being over a million dollars, collectively--but have saved money for colleges, too, by attracting students to the “free textbook courses” and, most importantly, keeping them enrolled. In Tidewater’s OER courses, there was a 6% decrease in attrition. In NVCC’s pilot OER courses, there was a 9% increase in student success. A modest investment in OER can clearly have significant returns.

VCCS Faculty and OER

In 2012, the TCDLR Committee

FACULTY: BARRIERS TO ADOPTION OF OER





surveyed full- and part-time VCCS faculty in 2012 to better understand how familiar VCCS faculty were with OER, their perception of the quality of open materials, the number who have used or are using OER in their courses, and the types of incentives, if any, they would expect in order to develop OER for their courses.

The faculty survey received approximately 1000 responses from both full and part time

faculty, with respondees representing all 23 colleges. Approximately 60% were full-time and 40% were part-time, or "other", faculty. Of the full-time faculty, 52% were familiar with the concept of OER and 27% reported using OER to some extent in their course(s). Of the respondees, full-time English faculty indicated the greatest use of OER, followed by Math faculty. Of the part-time, 26% were familiar with the concept of OER and under 5% reported using OER in their course(s).

In order to assess how best to encourage faculty to develop and adopt OER resources, the survey also asked faculty to choose the best method for providing incentives for their transition to using OER.. The incentives included grant funding, faculty release time, additional education and training, and assistance from a peer group. A clear majority

of full-time faculty responded that grant funding, followed by release time, were the most appealing incentives. A majority of part-time faculty identified additional education and training as being the most important incentive, followed by grant funding. At eighteen colleges, full-time faculty are encouraged through training and/or incentives to develop alternatives to traditional textbooks; at only seven colleges part-time faculty receive the same encouragement.

There is no doubt that since this data was collected in 2012 that both faculty awareness and faculty use of OER has increased. These answers make clear that in order for OER is to be widely adopted by faculty, there needs to be financial incentives, either through funding or comparable reassigned time. Special efforts need to be made to include adjuncts in OER projects, as

they teach the majority of VCCS courses.

Current Initiatives to Reduce Textbook Costs

The Chancellor's Innovation Fund

The Chancellor's Innovation Fund (CIF) is a competitive fund open to VCCS faculty and staff to support innovative, targeted projects that closely align with the VCCS's strategic goals. All CIF projects need to be developed, piloted, and assessed by the end of the fiscal year.

While CIF monies can be awarded to any number of projects that fits within the scope of the grant requirements, for the past three years the CIF has specifically invited proposals that focused on the development, adoption, and use of Open Educational Resources.

Over the last three years, approximately seven colleges

have been awarded mini-grants in the amount of \$180,600 through the Chancellor's Innovation Fund to develop open educational resources for high enrollment courses on their campuses, including NVCC's OER-based Associate Degree Project (see Appendix). All deliverables created with these funds are required to be openly licensed with a Creative Commons license. This enables others to easily reuse, remix, and redistribute project materials.

The Chancellor's OER Adoption Grants

In 2012, Chancellor Glenn DuBois established the Chancellor's OER Adoption Grant to provide incentives to faculty to adopt OER in their courses and lower textbook costs for students. During the first round of the grants, twelve faculty received stipends of \$3000 to adopt free, openly-licensed materials for

their courses. Faculty piloted these courses during the Fall 2013 semester.

520 students enrolled in 20 sections of the twelve OER courses created through the Chancellor's OER Adoption Grant, generating an initial \$91,775 in overall cost savings to students, with additional savings accruing to students each passing semester.

In 2014, in order to build on the success and momentum of the first set of OER courses, another round of Chancellor's grants was announced. The second phase focused on broadening the adoption of OER courses by funding faculty to identifying and vetting a comprehensive library of OER for four high-enrollment course sequences.

Tidewater Community College's Z Degree

It was at the 2012 VCCS

Chancellor's Annual Retreat that the idea of offering an OER-based degree came to Daniel DeMarte, Tidewater Community College's Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer and driver behind the creation of the world's first all-OER degree.

Over a period of nine months in 2013, a dedicated team of TCC faculty completely rebuilt 24 courses by mapping high-quality OER to each course's learning outcomes. The result was the "Z-Degree," an associate of science degree in business administration that is based entirely on openly licensed content, eliminating textbook costs as a barrier to student success.

Since its launch in Fall 2013, more than 1,700 students have participated in Z-Degree courses saving an estimated

\$174,500 on textbook and course materials. Data shows that students are overwhelmingly satisfied with Z courses, and that students remain and succeed in Z courses at a rate equal to or higher than traditional courses. The Z-Degree has attracted national attention from the media, educational foundations, and post-secondary institutions interested in replicating an OER-based credential.

In 2014, Tidewater also instituted a policy intended to sustain the quality of current Z courses as well as ensure that future Z courses will meet the same standards of quality. The policy includes requirements for training and professional development, instructor qualifications, quality measures, and continuous improvement. Tidewater's policy can be found in the Appendix of this report.

NVCC's OER General Education

Degree

NOVA's Extended Learning Institute (ELI) was awarded funds for two consecutive CIF proposals--one in 2012 and one in 2013-- to develop its own OER-based degree pathway. The results are two associate degrees, one in General Studies and the other in Social Sciences that do not require students to purchase textbooks. Students completing all twenty-four "Digital Open" courses can save nearly \$4000 in textbook and materials fees.

ELI's Instructional Services unit created an OER adoption model leveraging internal talent and provided assistance to faculty developing these OER courses using online library resources, curated digital materials, and instructional design support.

Based on fall 2013 enrollment data, over 5000 students have enrolled in an OER section,

saving NVCC students over \$800,000. More importantly, student success data shows that the overall student success rate average in the pilot OER courses was 9% higher than the overall success rate average for the equivalent textbook-based courses. ELI's OER-Based Associate Degree Project was featured as a showcase by the Open Education Consortium, and recently won a national 2014 WCET Outstanding Work (WOW) Award.

Z Degree x 23

The most recent OER project in the VCCS is its most ambitious: to scale the Z Degree idea pioneered by Tidewater Community College and Northern Virginia Community College by supporting the development of a college credential with no textbook costs at each of the 23 VCCS colleges. This project depends on receiving grant funds from

the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, a major funder of OER projects.

Other OER Projects

Germanna Community College

Germanna has six instructors researching and preparing materials for both OER enhanced courses and fully OER courses. Three have small internal grants; another received funds from the 2014 VCCS Chancellor's OER Adoption Grant. Entire GCC departments as well as individual instructors are focusing on developing OER, with the overarching goal to eventually offer an all-OER associate of General Education.

John Tyler Community College

In the *Dynamic Texts: Multiple models for integrating OER* project at John Tyler Community college, five faculty members across two divisions are working to reduce textbook costs and model effective teaching practices by integrating OER

into courses. Project faculty will also evaluate the project by recording student responses, evaluating student learning, and documenting the OER implementation process. At the completion of the project, video interviews with project instructors and course material will be publicly available on an open site.

The use of OER will reduce the combined book cost in the five courses from \$771 to \$162, saving students in the five pilot classes a total of approximately \$15,225. Three instructional designers are providing instructional and technical support to the project.

Reynolds Community College

Reynolds OER Initiative is developing OER for courses that are part of Reynolds' General Education Certificate. Reynolds chose 11 courses that are part of the pathway to the

General Education Certificate for high school students at county and city high schools in the college's service region to be completed concurrent with high school graduation so that two communities of students would be targeted. As a result, high school faculty who are part of Reynolds' Advance College Academy will work with Reynolds faculty to produce OER .through a two-day workshop conducted by Lumen Learning, whose work will also include reviewing OER materials.

Reynolds hopes to develop a set of policies and procedures based on those developed by TCC. OER sections will be piloted in spring 2015 and then offered as part of the OER General Education Certificate in fall 2015.

Lord Fairfax Community College

In 2013, Lord Fairfax Community

College was awarded a grant to redesign Accounting 111 and 112, based on newly developed articulated course outcomes. In conjunction with this process, the three faculty working on this project also designed the courses to use only OER or materials available through the VCCS library acquisitions. This effort grew into a larger movement at the college to reduce costs to students and redesign courses in the general education degree to include OER and/or low-cost instructional materials.

New River Community College

New River Community College's Open Text Initiative System (OTIS) is a virtual library of linked and original resources chosen and uploaded by faculty from a variety of disciplines. All NRCC faculty have their own OTIS accounts where they upload instructional materials. The

goal of OTIS is to allow faculty to collect, store, and share materials to create, supplement, or enhance their courses.

Another goal is to help lower textbook costs by providing all faculty using the system with free and open alternatives to course textbooks. In the fall 2014 semester, NRCC made OTIS available to users across the VCCS.

OpenVA

The Office of Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, and Virginia Community College System held the inaugural OpenVA Conference at the University of Mary Washington in 2013 in order to build an understanding of the challenges and opportunities open resources offer for teaching and learning across the Commonwealth.

That conference brought

together teams of higher education stakeholders from across Virginia to showcase current open projects and practices, but also actively link higher educational institutions together in order to develop and support a vibrant community of practice around the use of OER.

In 2014, the second OpenVA event was held, this time in a more intensive Summit format to provide an opportunity for a community of educational leaders to create a framework for state policy on open education resources. The Summit featured three panels focused open infrastructure, open content, OER, open pedagogy, open curriculum, and open policy.





Moving Beyond Textbooks

Print resources in a digital age

Another charge given to the TCDLR Committee was to “examine the current relevance of printed textbooks in an age of interactive, web-based content, digital publishing, and collaborative social networks.” Over the past two decades, innovations in digital technology have revolutionized almost every aspect of modern life. These innovations have changed how we communicate, entertain ourselves, work, shop, make music, consume news, even date. Old forms of communication, both analog and digital, are still around, of course. We still call each other on our phones (although more and more we do this on smartphones rather than landlines), write letters, and watch television. But these days we also “google”, “facebook”, email, blog, and tweet. These changes have been dramatic, and

have happened with lightening speed, quickly transforming and even disrupting society and culture. Even once indomitable business sectors like book and newspaper publishing and the recording industry have, to their detriment, been caught off guard by these changes.

Today’s educators have a wealth of powerful digital resources available to assist them in engaging their students in learning. These resources include a growing number of free web-based applications, such as Google Apps for Education, a rich selection of educational software, interactive books, education-related mobile apps, streaming audio and video feeds, virtual learning spaces, and digitized and archived primary source images, videos, and documents. The VCCS licenses a

number of enterprise applications* available for use by faculty at all 23 colleges, and individual VCCS colleges offer access to additional software and services that meet unique, local educational needs. The VCCS licenses a number of enterprise applications* available for use by faculty at all 23 colleges, and individual VCCS colleges offer access to additional software and services that meet unique, local educational needs.

Digital learning resources, when used thoughtfully and effectively, offer unique affordances that allow faculty to teach in ways impossible a decade ago to allow deeper, more engaging, and more lasting student learning. Using digital learning resources effectively requires both faculty and students to possess a sufficient level of what digital literacy, defined by the American Library Association's as "the ability to use information and communication technology to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information."

However, with rare exception, most educational institutions in the United States remain committed to traditional instructional practices based on an educational model instituted over a century ago. In fact, the 2014 Horizon Report: Higher Education Edition identified the low digital fluency of faculty as one of the significant challenges facing higher

education in the near future. According to the report:

Despite the widespread agreement on the importance of digital media literacy, training in the supporting skills and techniques is rare in teacher education and non-existent in the preparation of faculty. As lecturers and professors begin to realize that they are limiting their students by not helping them to develop and use digital media literacy skills across the curriculum, the lack of formal training is being offset through professional development or informal learning, but we are far from seeing digital media literacy as a norm. This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that digital literacy is less about tools and more about thinking, and thus skills and standards based on tools and platforms have proven to be somewhat ephemeral.(p.14)

There are a myriad of factors for why college teaching remains resistant to change--the nature of faculty appointments and promotion in academia, dramatic reductions in public funding for education, etc.--but the result is that colleges are now faced with unparalleled competition by external forces, both private and public. To remain relevant to students with so many educational options, community colleges will need to acknowledge the crucial importance of digital technology and begin to infuse these technologies into the college curriculum.

Professional development

To do this, the VCCS must make professional development in the area of digital technology a priority. Both full-time and adjunct will need

ongoing training on effectively incorporating technology and digital literacy skills into their courses.

Embracing openness, transparency, collaboration, and sharing

Finally, the last charge given to the TCDLR Committee is perhaps the most challenging: recommend strategies and policies for creating an institutional culture that embraces and practices openness, transparency, collaboration, and sharing. To achieve a culture of openness the VCCS, the values of collaboration and sharing must be embraced and practiced across the system. It should be acknowledged that it is individual colleges that are leading the charge in finding affordable textbook solutions. These institutions have brought us long way in a relatively short period of time, but there is a lot more to do. While leadership and support from college presidents and senior administrators are critical, faculty are the true drivers of change at any institution. Most of the initiatives detailed in this report have been spearheaded by VCCS faculty, or else faculty have played a crucial role. In order to take significant bite out of the costs of course materials for our students, the entire VCCS community, lead by faculty, must be a part of the solution.

It is important that we not lose momentum. To that end, the TCDLR offers the following recommendations.





Recommendations

The VCCS should express systemwide support for openly licensing all educational materials created with state funds, as well as encourage faculty to use high-quality, openly licensed educational materials whenever possible, including:

- a. creating a new OER policy, or updating the VCCS Intellectual Policy to include language about the support and use of OER.

The System Office, along with individual VCCS colleges, should continue to provide training, resources, and incentives to full- and part-time faculty to reduce textbook costs. These should include:

- a. developing a statewide professional development program to acquaint full- and part-time faculty with open educational resources and provide them training on how to develop, access, and adopt OER materials. The Office of Professional Development should be charged to lead the development of this program.
- b. incorporating criteria for reducing textbook costs into the evaluation plans of college instructional faculty and academic administrators.
- c. identifying and training library staff to be OER liaisons responsible for providing support and expertise on the use of OER.
- d. providing incentives and resources to package licensed library resources for specific disciplines, individual courses, and customized assignments into LibGuides. For an example of a VCCS LibGuide for the Principles of Accounting (ACC 211), go to <http://vccs.libguides.com/acc211>
- e. establishing an OER Peer Group as a resource to support VCCS faculty and staff working on various OER projects.

The VCCS should continue to promote and support strategies to reduce the cost of traditional, proprietary course materials by:

- a. establishing best practices and requiring formal textbook adoption policies;
- b. educating faculty members about the cost of textbooks and how they can help lower these costs;
- c. finding opportunities to standardize course materials across disciplines;
- d. increasing the percentage of textbook rentals; and
- e. recruiting additional colleges to join the VCCS Bookstore Contract.

The VCCS should give students additional flexibility in how to access their financial aid awards to obtain lower costs for required course materials by:

- a. adopting bookstore-generated debit cards to allow VCCS students to purchase college course materials from alternative vendors.

The VCCS should encourage colleges to pilot innovative solutions that may have an impact on textbook affordability, such as:

- a. print-on-demand services.
- b. alternative technologies, such as tablets or e-readers, to provide students with access to low-cost, digital course materials.
- c. a per-semester flat textbook fee to cover participating students' course materials costs.

The VCCS should institute regular data collection practices to monitor the overall cost of textbooks, usage of OER, and impact of any other recommendations that are implemented, such as:

- a. collecting textbook ISBN and cost information for courses in the student information system(SIS), including course that use low-cost or no-cost materials ,
- b. surveying faculty on their awareness and use of OER,
- c. evaluating impact of OER on student attrition and completion, and
- d. assessing level of student satisfaction and success with textbook alternatives such as OER and LibGuides.

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Appendix

A. 2004 Task Force on College Textbooks

<http://goo.gl/q5nYRh>

B. Survey of Colleges on the Implementation of 2004 Task Force Recommendations

C. VCCS Collaborative Bookstore RFP

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/228323330/VCCS-Bookstore-RFP>

D. VCCS Collaborative Bookstore Contract & MOU

Contract: <http://goo.gl/oJ8vyN>

MOU: <http://goo.gl/AhL0D0>

E. VCCS Lumen Learning Contract

<http://goo.gl/q0w45y>

F. TCDLR Survey of Vice Presidents of Finance

G. TCDLR Survey of Full-and Part-time Faculty

H. A Qualitative Investigation of Faculty Open Educational Resource Usage in the Washington Community and Technical College System: Models for Support and Implementation

<http://goo.gl/dERBtX>

I. Tidewater Community College's Policy on TheUse of Open Educational Resources

<http://www.tcc.edu/policies/2000/2108-UseofOpenEducationalResources.pdf>

J. Recommendations from the 2013 TCDLR Interim Report