



Textbook Affordability Survey Report

2019

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2019 Textbook Affordability Survey

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Executive Summary

This report looks at the current state of the textbook affordability issue from the perspective of 238 academic librarians, who have been playing a leading role in acquiring ebooks and other digital materials for academic libraries, in addition to traditional print materials. While faculty—individual instructors—decide what academic materials are required and available for their academic courses, they often do so in conjunction or collaboration with librarians. The issue of textbook affordability is not an idle one; if students are unable to afford textbooks and other required materials, they are likely to underperform or fail to graduate, which can have a negative effect both on the students' ability to succeed and the academic institution.

Concern with Textbook Affordability

Two-thirds (68%) of academic libraries agree that textbook affordability is a “major concern” for their institution, while virtually all (95%) believe that textbook affordability is a “major concern” for students.

	<i>To what degree is textbook affordability a concern for ...?</i>	
<i>% of respondents</i>	<i>Your Institution</i>	<i>Students</i>
Major concern	68%	95%
Minor concern	26%	1%
Not a concern	3%	1%
Don't know	3%	3%

Our survey respondents estimate that, on average, about six out of ten students who use library resources for assigned reading do so to save money on textbooks.

<i>What percent of students who use library resources for assigned reading would you estimate are doing so to save money on buying their own textbook?</i>	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students
Mean	55%	60%	61%	64%
Median	54%	63%	63%	67%



Offer Digital Alternatives

One solution to the problem of textbook affordability is digital alternatives—ebooks and other electronic materials. Ninety-three percent of academic libraries say they work with faculty to help make digital alternatives available for students. Most frequently, libraries acquire *new* materials and curate *existing* library materials to supplement a traditional textbook. In addition, 50% have “acquired new materials to replace a traditional textbook.”

<i>In what ways does your library work with faculty to help make affordable digital alternatives available?</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Acquire new materials to supplement a traditional textbook	58%
Curate existing library materials to supplement a traditional textbook	54%
Acquire new materials to replace a traditional textbook	50%
Find, vet, and curate open access publications from other institutions	48%
Provide course reading/resource list tools to faculty	46%
Help to make faculty publications available open access	39%
Curate existing library materials to replace a traditional textbook	39%
Build e-textbook collections	38%
Other	26%
None	7%

As for libraries’ *primary* strategy for making affordable digital alternatives to textbooks available, no single option overwhelmingly dominates. Seventeen percent said they “find, vet, and curate open access publications from other institutions” while 14% said they “build etextbook collections.”

<i>Which is your primary strategy for making affordable digital alternatives available?</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Find, vet, and curate open access publications from other institutions	17%
Build e-textbook collections	14%
Provide course reading/resource list tools to faculty	12%
Acquire new materials to supplement a traditional textbook	11%
Curate existing library materials to supplement a traditional textbook	10%
Acquire new materials to replace a traditional textbook	9%
Help to make faculty publications available open access	6%
Curate existing library materials to replace a traditional textbook	5%
Other	16%



Faculty Interaction/Collaboration

Academic libraries actively interact and collaborate with faculty to offer affordable textbook options. The top ways they interact with each other are to “select open educational resources” (64%), “suggest/select course materials” (56%), and “create course reading/course lists” (49%). Interestingly, 22% say they “develop and publish an open access textbook.” Only 11% say they do none of these things.

<i>Does the library interact with faculty to do any of the following?</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Select open educational resources (OER)	64%
Suggest/select course materials	56%
Create course reading/resource lists	49%
Develop and publish an open access textbook	22%
Coordinate course curriculums	18%
Other	14%
None of the above	11%

On average, 19% of faculty members currently work with library staff to reduce textbook costs. Although one-third (37%) of libraries surveyed say that less than 10% of faculty help with textbook cost reduction.

<i>Approximately what percentage of faculty members currently work with the library to reduce textbook costs?</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
0%	4%
1%–9%	33%
10%–19%	29%
20%–29%	13%
30%–39%	9%
40%–49%	7%
50%–59%	4%
60%–69%	1%
70%–79%	0%
Mean	19%
Median	14%

Two-thirds (65%) of libraries say that the percentage of faculty working with the library on textbook cost reduction is growing, and another 33% say that it is at least holding steady. Only 2% of libraries say that the percentage of faculty helping with textbook cost reduction is shrinking.



Faculty Receptivity to Adding Digital Resource Materials

Generally, faculty are receptive to the idea of integrating digital materials into their course work—25% of them are “very” receptive and 60% are at least “somewhat” receptive. Only 15% are reluctant, 2% “very reluctant.”

<i>How receptive are faculty to the idea of integrating digital resources in their course work?</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Very receptive	25%
Somewhat receptive	60%
Somewhat reluctant	13%
Very reluctant	2%

Faculty Barriers to Adding Digital Resources

The top barrier to adding digital resources that librarians say that faculty members cite is **“too much time and effort to build the needed resources,” cited by 81% of respondents**. The number two barrier is “materials they want are not available,” cited by 65%. Twelve percent say this is “not a problem that needs solving”—meaning they either already integrate electronic resources, or they have no interest in integrating them. The former seems the more likely interpretation.

<i>What barriers to adopting such strategies do faculty members cite?</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Too much time and effort to build the needed resources	81%
Materials they want are not available	65%
Lack of supplementary materials and tools provided by textbook publishers	46%
Students prefer print to digital texts	37%
Not a problem that needs solving	12%
Other	18%
None	1%



Assessing Affordability Efforts

Finally, how do our survey respondents assess whether their own efforts to help improve textbook affordability for students have had an impact? More than one-half (56%) have “increased the number of faculty members/course sections participating,” followed by “word of mouth or anecdotal accounts” (52%), and “dollar saved on textbook purchases” (44%). Still, more than one-quarter (27%) have not made assessments of their textbook affordability efforts.

<i>How do you assess that your library's efforts to address textbook affordability have had an impact?</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Increased number of faculty members/course sections participating	56%
Word of mouth/Anecdotal accounts	52%
Dollar saved on textbook purchases	44%
Increase in student reports of having access to the reading	26%
Improved grades/passing/student retention	14%
Other	10%
We have not made assessments	27%

Conclusions

Textbook affordability is a concern for an institution in the sense that if students are unable to afford textbooks and other required materials, they are likely to underperform and fail to graduate, which obviously has a negative effect on the students and their ability to succeed, but also reflects poorly on the institution. Libraries can supply these materials to some extent, but to have a large number of students all trying to use library editions of the same texts is an impractical workaround.

If there is one clear conclusion from this report it is that greater communication between faculty and library needs to take place to ensure that everyone in the university is working in concert to alleviate the issue of textbook affordability, which has benefits for all concerned parties—students, libraries, faculty, and even the institution itself.

As myriad *Library Journal* surveys and studies have found, libraries are eager to embrace new book technologies, but are often frustrated by ebook (and even print book) publishers when it comes to things like digital rights management and what libraries perceive as unreasonably high costs.

It is obvious that the textbook affordability problem will not be solved overnight, but if all parties work together to develop workable solutions, which will—again, have benefits for everyone involved.



Introduction

Welcome to the *Library Journal* Textbook Affordability Survey. The affordability of academic textbooks has been an issue...well, probably since the advent of academia.¹ Anyone who has been to college likely remembers the “sticker shock” they got when buying their textbooks for the semester. As the cost of college has risen across the board, it should be no surprise that textbook affordability issues have remained—but today’s digital/electronic alternatives have the potential to alleviate at least some (perhaps even most) of those issues.

As a result, the present report looks at the current state of the textbook affordability issue from the perspective of academic librarians, who have been playing a leading role in acquiring ebooks and other digital materials for academic libraries, as well as traditional print materials. To what extent is textbook affordability seen as an issue that needs resolving? What are some of the strategies that institutions and libraries have adopted to help combat the problem of textbook affordability? To what extent do libraries and faculty cooperate and collaborate to resolve the issue? How do these libraries assess their success in making textbook content more affordable for students? And are there some disciplines and course types that lend themselves better to electronic alternatives than others?

How the Data in this Report Are Organized

As in most *Library Journal* survey reports, the bulk of this report provides top-level survey results in chart form—in essence, the “all responses” results, or what all academic library professionals surveyed said about a specific question. This provides the prevailing attitude.

Each chart is followed by a corresponding table that breaks down the survey responses by:

- The academic level of students served (community college, four-year college, graduate, and post-graduate).
- Whether an institution is public or private.
- The number of students served by a particular institution, divided into small (under 5,000 students), midsize (5,000 to 14,999 students), and large (more than 15,000 students).

We have called out in commentary where some results in these segments caught our attention, but readers who are looking for more granularity will find much of value in these tables.

¹ A major part of the problem with textbook affordability is the business model of textbook publishing. Since academic textbooks are frequently updated and revised, sometimes every year, any given edition has to earn back its production costs in its first year, which is why many students get “sticker shock” when they buy their texts for the semester. It is also why there is a well-established used textbook market. As is the focus of this present study, the advent of electronic alternatives has the potential to alleviate textbook affordability problems.



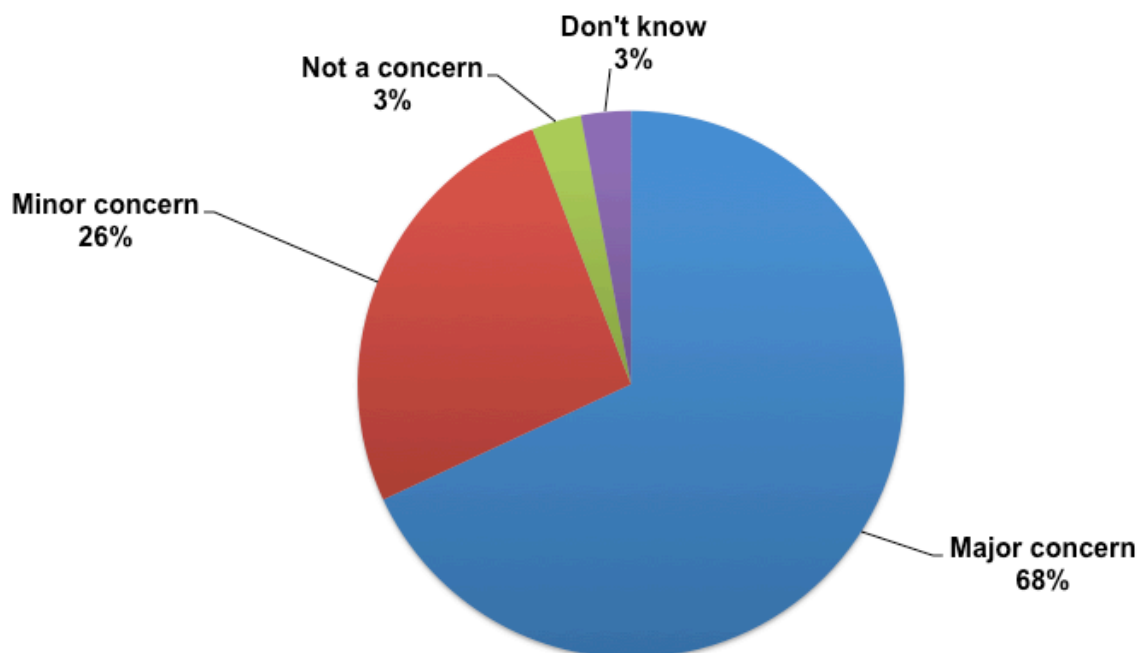
Academic Libraries and Textbook Affordability

Concern with Textbook Affordability

A Concern for the Institution

Two-thirds (68%) of academic libraries say that textbook affordability is a “major concern” for their institution. One-fourth (26%) said it was a “minor concern” and only 3% said that it was “not a concern” at all.

Figure 1. To what degree is textbook affordability a concern for your institution? —All academic libraries



Community colleges have the biggest issues with textbook affordability (84% said it was a “major concern”) and as one might expect public institutions had a bigger issue with textbook affordability than private ones (73% vs. 58%). Textbook affordability concerns rise with the number of students in the institution.

Table 1. To what degree is textbook affordability a concern for your institution? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

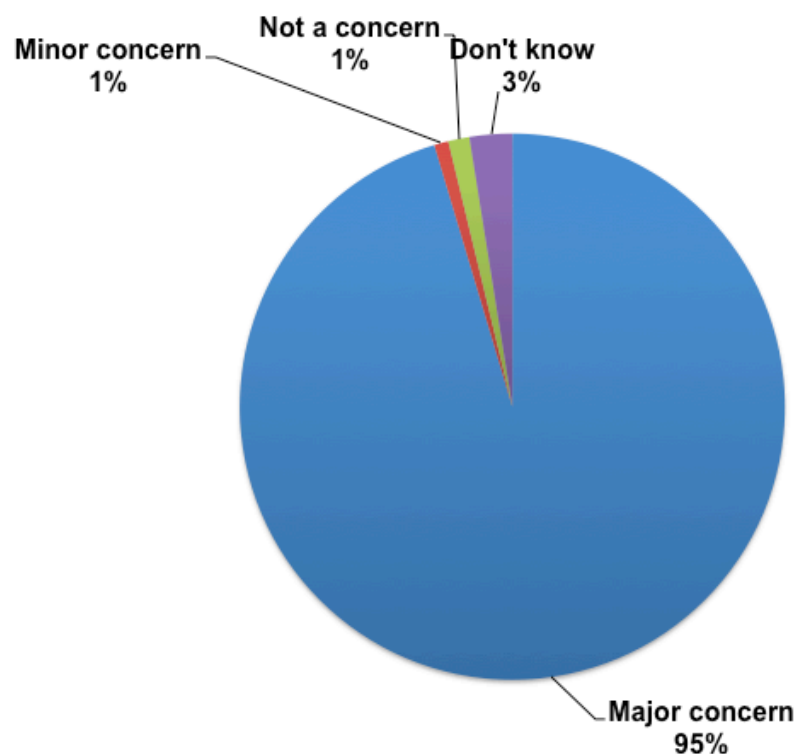
	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Major concern	84%	61%	63%	61%	73%	58%	64%	69%	71%
Minor concern	10%	34%	32%	32%	22%	34%	29%	27%	24%
Not a concern	2%	2%	3%	4%	1%	6%	4%	2%	1%
Don't know	4%	4%	3%	3%	5%	2%	4%	2%	4%



A Concern for Students

Textbook affordability affects students far more than it does the institution—at least directly, since they’re the ones who have pay for them. As a result, 95% of institutions said that textbook affordability was a “major concern” for students.

Figure 2. To what degree is textbook affordability a concern for students? —All academic libraries



Academic institutions across the board said that textbook affordability was a “major concern” for students.

Table 2. To what degree is textbook affordability a concern for students? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

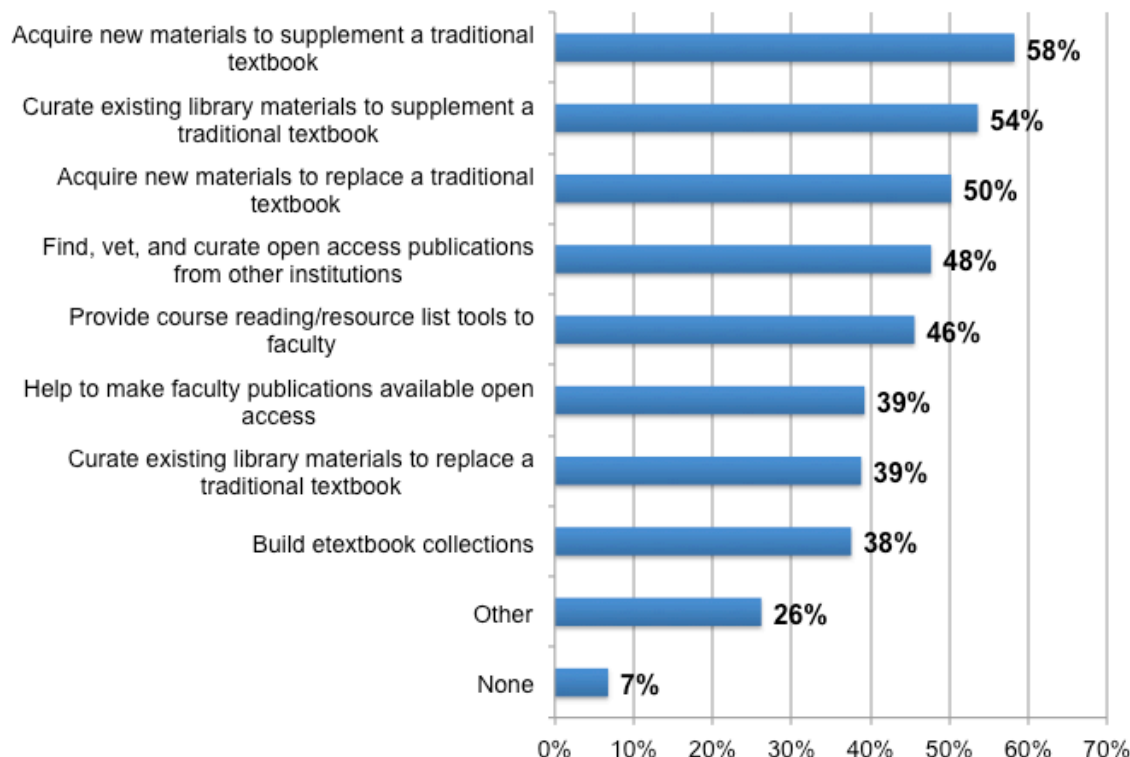
	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Major concern	100%	95%	95%	96%	98%	91%	96%	96%	96%
Minor concern	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	1%	2%	0%
Not a concern	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	3%	3%	0%	0%
Don't know	0%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	0%	2%	4%



Digital Alternatives

One solution to the problem of textbook affordability is digital alternatives—ebooks and other electronic materials². To what extent do academic libraries make these digital alternatives available to students? Fifty-eight percent of libraries “acquire new materials to supplement a digital textbook,” 54% “curate existing library materials to supplement a traditional textbook,” and 50% “acquire new materials to replace a traditional textbook.” Only 7% say they don’t do any of these things.

Figure 3. In what ways does your library work with faculty to help make affordable digital alternatives available? —All academic libraries



² This also includes “open source” etextbooks which do not have copyright or other rights management protections, which helps keep textbook prices low or free.



Community college libraries are the least likely (12%) to work with faculty to help make digital alternatives available for students. Libraries that serve graduate and post-graduate students are the most likely. Libraries in public institutions are more likely than private institutions to try to help make affordable etextbook alternatives available.

Table 3. In what ways does your library work with faculty to help make affordable digital alternatives available? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

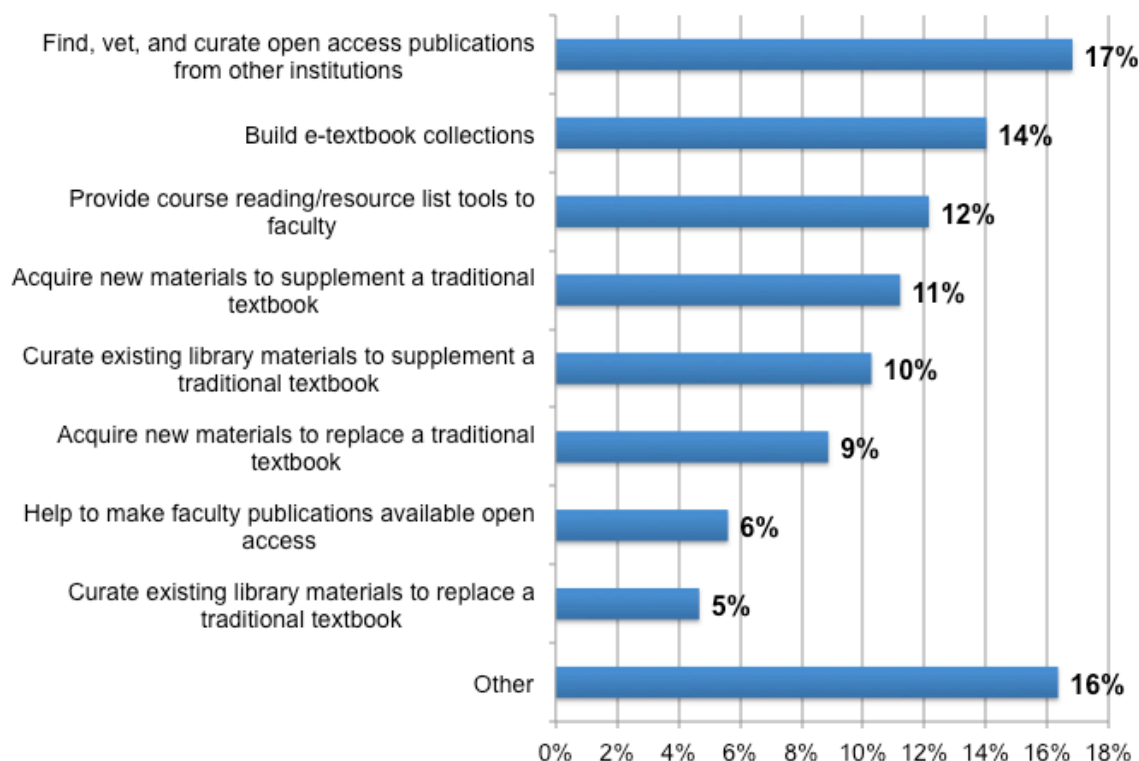
	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Acquire new materials to supplement a traditional textbook	56%	58%	62%	61%	63%	50%	58%	62%	57%
Curate existing library materials to supplement a traditional textbook	58%	55%	60%	58%	62%	44%	48%	67%	55%
Acquire new materials to replace a traditional textbook	44%	51%	57%	57%	53%	45%	47%	48%	55%
Find, vet, and curate open access publications from other institutions	50%	50%	55%	55%	53%	45%	43%	60%	52%
Provide course reading/resource list tools to faculty	40%	50%	53%	51%	50%	45%	42%	52%	52%
Help to make faculty publications available open access	26%	45%	50%	58%	43%	38%	29%	37%	58%
Curate existing library materials to replace a traditional textbook	42%	41%	47%	51%	44%	36%	39%	40%	45%
Build etextbook collections	34%	42%	46%	45%	40%	41%	42%	37%	42%
Other	36%	27%	27%	27%	33%	20%	29%	23%	33%
None	12%	3%	2%	1%	5%	5%	6%	4%	4%



Primary Digital Alternative Strategy

We asked libraries to select their *primary* strategy for making affordable digital alternatives to textbooks available, but no single option overwhelmingly dominated. Seventeen percent said they “find, vet, and curate open access publications from other institutions” while 14% said they “build etextbook collections.”

Figure 4. Which is your primary strategy for making affordable digital alternatives available? —All academic libraries



Community colleges are far and away (32%) the most likely to “find, vet, and curate open access publications from other institutions,” but are the least likely (9%) to build etextbook collections—or, indeed, have any of the other items as a primary strategy. Private institutions’ libraries are the most likely to build etextbook collections (20%).

Table 4. Which is your primary strategy for making affordable digital alternatives available? — Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Find, vet, and curate open access publications from other institutions	32%	13%	13%	11%	23%	8%	18%	22%	14%
Build e-textbook collections	9%	16%	15%	16%	12%	20%	15%	12%	16%
Provide course reading/resource list tools to faculty	5%	15%	16%	21%	11%	16%	8%	14%	16%
Acquire new materials to supplement a traditional textbook	9%	11%	9%	5%	11%	10%	17%	10%	5%
Curate existing library materials to supplement a traditional textbook	7%	12%	13%	12%	11%	8%	8%	18%	6%
Acquire new materials to replace a traditional textbook	7%	10%	11%	8%	6%	15%	11%	4%	10%
Help to make faculty publications available open access	0%	5%	4%	7%	2%	7%	4%	4%	3%
Curate existing library materials to replace a traditional textbook	7%	3%	4%	5%	5%	3%	3%	4%	6%
Other	25%	16%	14%	14%	20%	13%	15%	12%	24%



Student Access of Digital Resources

How do students access digital library resources? Students are most likely to access digital library resources through the institution's learning management system (58%), with a few going through the library website (26%).

Figure 5. How do students most often access digital library resources for assigned reading? —All academic libraries

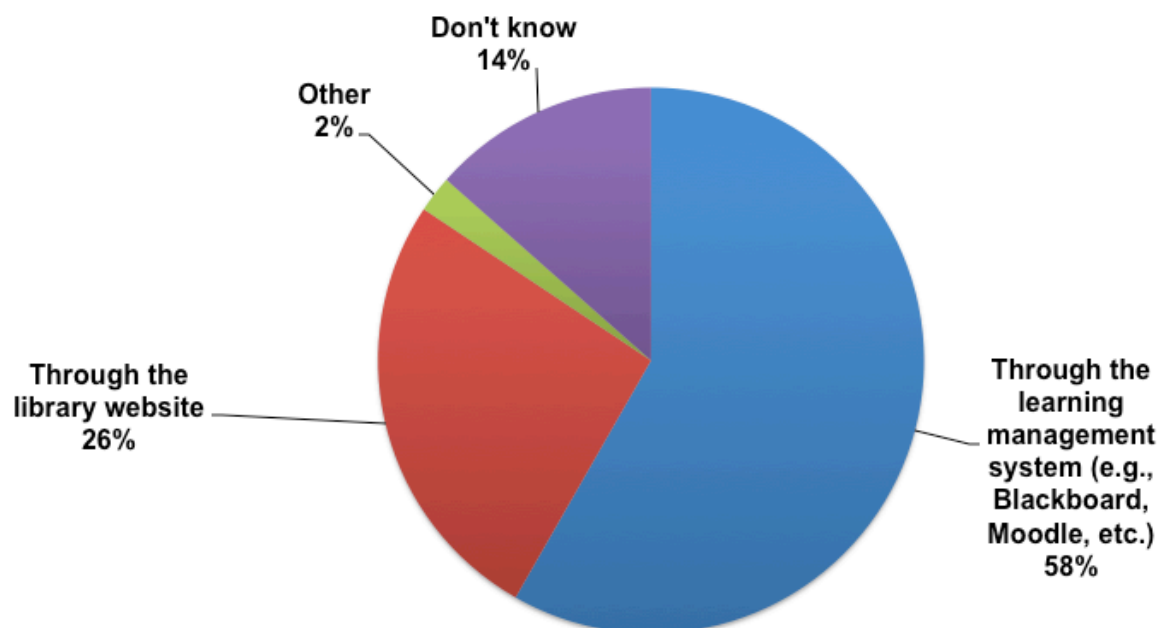


Table 5. How do students most often access digital library resources for assigned reading? — Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Through the learning management system (e.g., Blackboard, Moodle, etc.)	64%	54%	55%	63%	54%	61%	53%	65%	53%
Through the library website	30%	26%	24%	16%	31%	20%	34%	19%	26%
Other	0%	4%	3%	4%	2%	5%	4%	0%	3%
Don't know	6%	16%	18%	17%	14%	14%	9%	15%	18%



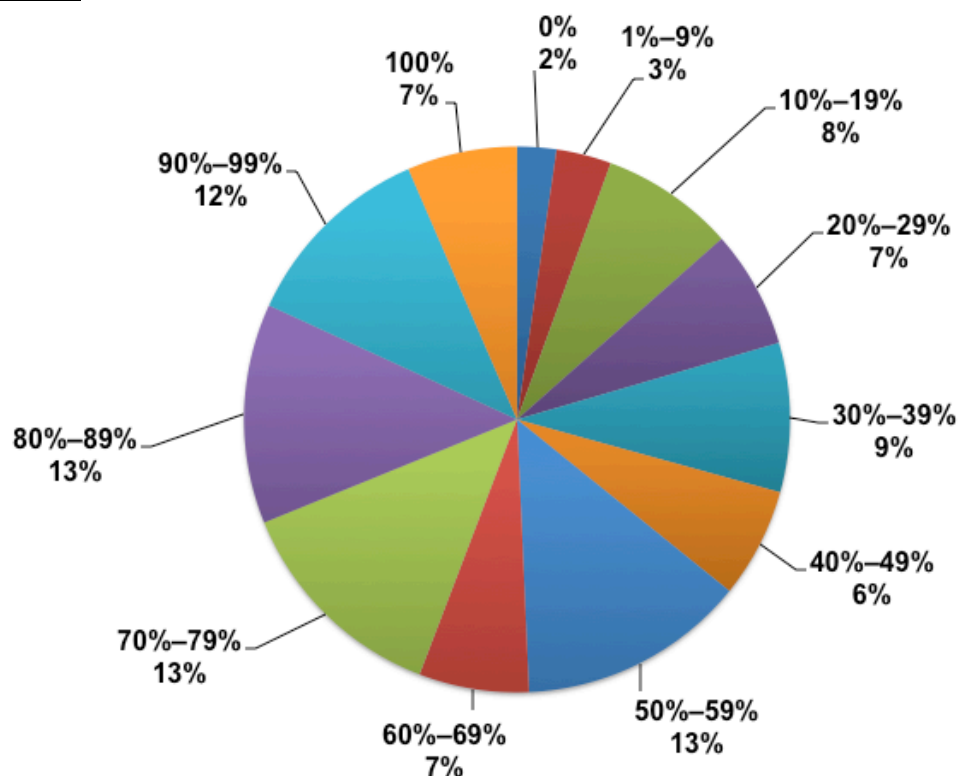
Library Resources as a Student Money-Saving Strategy

Our survey respondents estimate that, on average, about six out of ten students who use library resources for assigned reading do so to save money on textbooks.

Figure 6. What percent of students who use library resources for assigned reading would you estimate are doing so to save money on buying their own textbook? —All academic libraries

Mean: 59%

Median: 61%



There is not as much demographic variation in this estimate as you would think; about 55% of community college students are believed to use the library to save on textbook costs compared to 64% of post-grad students, 61% of grad students, and 60% of four-year college students. Even private and public school students are perceived as being roughly equally cost-conscious.

Table 6. What percent of students who use library resources for assigned reading would you estimate are doing so to save money on buying their own textbook? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

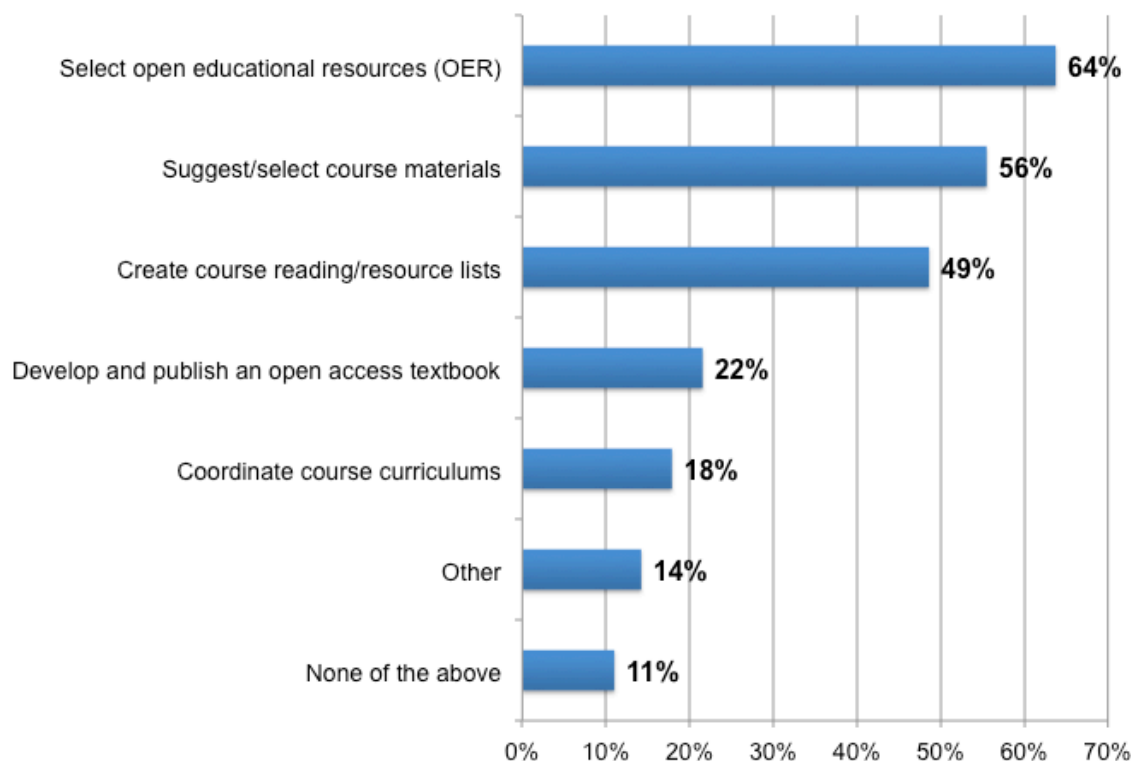
	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
0%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%
1%–9%	4%	4%	3%	1%	2%	7%	7%	4%	0%
10%–19%	14%	6%	6%	4%	10%	2%	8%	8%	8%
20%–29%	8%	6%	5%	6%	7%	5%	7%	4%	8%
30%–39%	12%	7%	7%	6%	9%	8%	9%	14%	3%
40%–49%	6%	6%	6%	10%	6%	8%	11%	2%	5%
50%–59%	10%	17%	19%	16%	16%	13%	13%	18%	15%
60%–69%	4%	7%	8%	7%	6%	7%	5%	4%	10%
70%–79%	10%	15%	15%	16%	11%	16%	12%	14%	13%
80%–89%	8%	14%	15%	16%	13%	13%	11%	14%	15%
90%–99%	14%	10%	7%	9%	10%	11%	9%	10%	13%
100%	8%	7%	7%	9%	8%	7%	7%	6%	10%
Mean	55%	60%	61%	64%	59%	61%	55%	59%	65%
Median	54%	63%	63%	67%	58%	66%	55%	58%	70%



Faculty Interaction/Collaboration

Eighty-nine percent of academic libraries actively interact and collaborate with faculty to offer affordable textbook options. The top ways they interact with each other are to “select open educational resources” (64%), “suggest/select course materials” (56%), and “create course reading/course lists” (49%). Interestingly, 22% say they “develop and publish an open access textbook.”

Figure 7. Does the library interact with faculty to do any of the following? —All academic libraries



Three-fourths (74%) of community college libraries said they “select open educational resources,” as do 73% of public institution libraries. More than one-fourth (27%) of libraries serving post-grad students say they “develop and publish an open access textbook,” as do 26% of libraries serving public institutions. Community colleges are only slightly less likely than other institutions (12% said “none”) to do any of these things.

Table 7. Does the library interact with faculty to do any of the following? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Select open educational resources (OER)	74%	63%	67%	65%	73%	47%	57%	75%	65%
Suggest/select course materials	60%	56%	60%	63%	63%	45%	52%	63%	57%
Create course reading/resource lists	50%	51%	53%	56%	55%	41%	45%	58%	50%
Develop and publish an open access textbook	20%	21%	22%	27%	26%	14%	14%	17%	34%
Coordinate course curriculums	16%	19%	17%	21%	18%	20%	18%	17%	21%
Other	10%	14%	16%	15%	12%	16%	13%	17%	10%
None of the above	12%	9%	8%	11%	8%	14%	13%	4%	12%



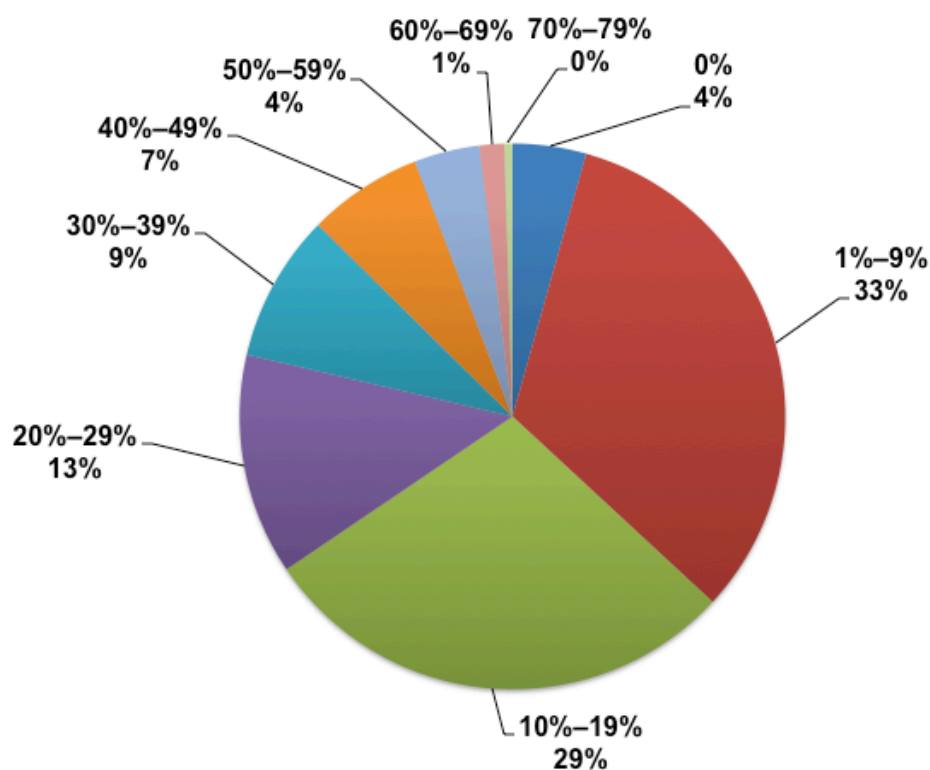
Faculty Collaboration on Textbook Cost Reduction

On average, 19% of faculty currently works with library staff to help reduce textbook costs. And one-third (33%) of libraries surveyed say that less than 10% of faculty help with textbook cost reduction. So there is room for faculty to play a bigger role in helping with textbook affordability—such as being aware of what a specific text costs, assigning (or suggesting the use of) less costly texts, or working with library staff to vet and procure less expensive course materials.

Figure 8. Approximately what percentage of faculty members currently work with the library to reduce textbook costs? —All academic libraries

Mean: 19%

Median: 14%



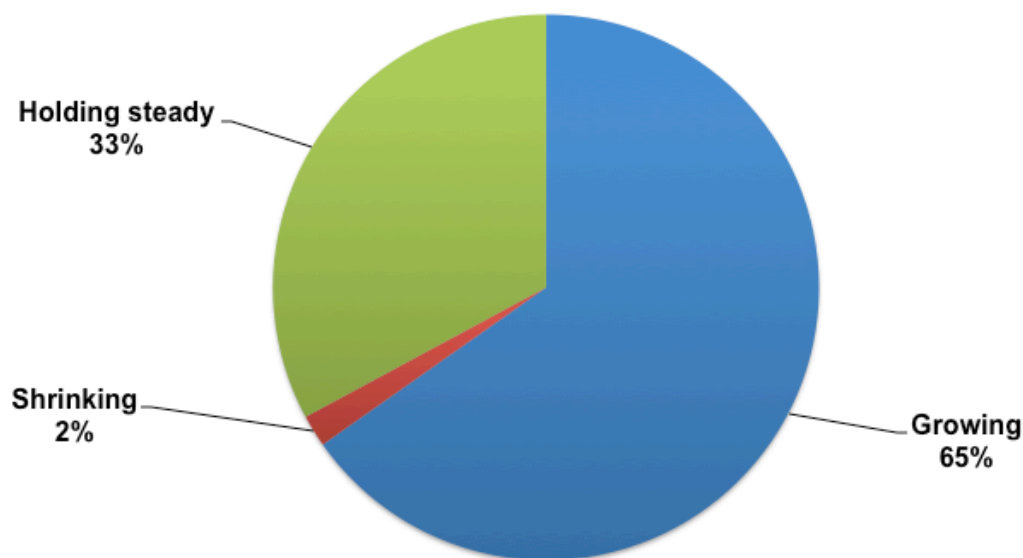
There is little significant divergence among the various institution categories.

Table 8. Approximately what percentage of faculty members currently work with the library to reduce textbook costs? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
0%	4%	5%	6%	6%	2%	10%	5%	2%	6%
1%–9%	33%	31%	31%	30%	33%	30%	36%	29%	31%
10%–19%	27%	29%	26%	29%	29%	29%	30%	27%	29%
20%–29%	17%	14%	14%	12%	13%	16%	12%	18%	13%
30%–39%	10%	8%	9%	10%	10%	8%	8%	6%	13%
40%–49%	4%	7%	7%	9%	7%	3%	4%	10%	5%
50%–59%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	2%	4%	4%	2%
60%–69%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	2%	2%
70%–79%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Mean	18%	19%	19%	19%	19%	17%	17%	22%	18%
Median	14%	14%	15%	14%	15%	13%	13%	17%	14%

That said, two-thirds (65%) of libraries say that the percentage of faculty working with the library on textbook cost reduction is growing, and another 33% say that it is at least holding steady. Only 2% of libraries say that the percentage of faculty helping with textbook cost reduction is shrinking.

Figure 9. Is that number growing, shrinking, or holding steady? —All academic libraries



Graduate and post-graduate institutions—as well as private institutions—are the most likely to see faculty help with textbook cost reduction growing, while community colleges are the most likely to see it shrinking. Mid-size and large institutions are also more likely than small institutions to experience increased faculty help with textbook affordability.

Table 9. Is that number growing, shrinking, or holding steady? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Growing	67%	69%	75%	75%	73%	60%	55%	84%	72%
Shrinking	6%	1%	1%	0%	2%	2%	4%	0%	2%
Holding steady	27%	30%	24%	25%	24%	38%	41%	16%	27%

Respondents' Ideas for Stemming the Costs of Textbooks

We asked an open-ended question about what would aid libraries and faculty to collaboratively stem the high cost of textbooks for students? Money and to a lesser extent, time, were the most common responses. Here is a sampling of some of the more thoughtful responses (lightly edited).

- “Stem” is a funny word, implying “stop.” Replace it with “get over the barrier of” and my answer is grant money—and recognition, but mostly money—to pay experts to create expert textbooks. Ethically, people should be paid for their expertise, time and labor. You get what you pay for. Therefore, if you want excellent textbooks, provide compensation. Budgets are tight everywhere, taxes go down, budgets go down, services go down, textbook purchases go down, graduation rates go down, it all falls down. Choice is between taxing the rich (Just try) and taxing the poor (increasing the tuition costs).
- Ideally, for big institutions to strike open access deals with publishers. Short term, to supplement textbooks with freely available material—not really an option for STEM fields, but doable to a degree with the humanities.
- 1) More high-quality open textbooks with ancillary materials available to choose from (more and more faculty are relying on homework help, PPT slides, and other tools provided by publishers and don't want to give that up). 2) More human resources (we need another librarian to adequately promote and educate faculty about OERs). 3) More money to incentivize faculty, we currently pay \$200 for Open Textbook Library reviews and \$500 for course redesign stipends. Though most faculty do not appear to be doing this for the money, I think it would help some if we could offer more. We don't have the budget to incentivize faculty to consider library ebooks in place of some of the expensive textbooks they use (and the number of publishers who will sell their titles to libraries in unlimited simultaneous user ebook format is still quite low).
- 1. More open-access textbooks and other course materials that target upper-level undergraduate courses (so much of the content out there now targets large intro freshmen courses). 2. More “supplemental” materials for instructors, such as test



- banks, to accompany open-access textbooks, lesson plans, etc. 3. A centralized “clearinghouse” or database, maybe run by ACRL, ALA, or similar, where librarians could share information about what existing library resources they have curated to replace a traditional textbook. For example, someone could submit the course description, the course outline of content topics, and then the list of books, chapter, articles, reference entries, videos, etc., that were selected and combined to serve as the course reading materials / learning content. This might help to reduce redundancy of efforts when librarians at multiple institutions are seeking solutions for similar courses. 4. Coordinated efforts to enlist subject-specialist librarians in contributing public evaluations or reviews of open-access textbooks and other OER materials (e.g., on platforms like OER Commons, Open Textbook Library, etc.). Having informed reviews available helps faculty select materials, but many teaching faculty feel too busy to contribute such reviews themselves, so librarians can help to provide this type of evaluative information.
- A better institutional culture, to be honest. The library's a bit of an afterthought in a lot of ways.
 - A better system for us to link up with individual faculty members before they choose course textbooks. Maybe we need to work with the bookstore/registrar to get lists of faculty and courses.
 - Change on the publishers' part. For example, yesterday another librarian and I were looking at a textbook we have on course reserve, for which the last two chapters are only available via the enhanced textbook code for online access—effectively cutting these chapters off from any students who did not buy their own, brand new copy of the textbook.
 - Legislative mandate, e.g., through state or fed government, to have all publicly-funded state universities and colleges provide information and access to OERs to their faculty and students.
 - A more self-service way for faculty to find free or low-cost alternatives to commercial textbooks. Right now that requires librarian mediation, which is time intensive and hard to scale. Better courseware to accompany OER needs to be created. Faculty choose high-priced commercial products because of their ease of use (autograding, test questions, etc.).
 - A repository of repositories of OER materials—basically a list of lists of where to go.
 - A single source for listing open access and OER resources rather than having to check multiple websites.
 - Allow libraries to have reserve materials of textbooks available to students without fear of losing accreditation because of the collections.
 - An edict to do so from the Provost.
 - As a campus, we're feeling our way through the issues of academic freedom, departmental choice (of textbooks), lack of some useful OERS so developmental costs are prohibitive. The library stands poised to help, but we can only do so much. Would love more info on negotiating licenses to provide use of ebooks as OERs.



- Assurance that things like OER are of high quality. Faculty understanding why it is important.
- At our library, we offer research project assistance to faculty/staff. Most of our research project requests are to find digital course materials and etexts that could be used for a course to cover specific topics. We also work closely with administration on etextbook/affordable learning initiatives to make sure faculty/staff are aware of what's already available through the library. I think affordable learning has to be a priority for faculty, administration, and staff to create buy-in. We've found working with a few faculty members and providing good resources, then brings other faculty to the table when they hear about it.
- Being able to acquire/license more DRM-free materials that can be used in courses.
- Better awareness of OERs and willingness to help develop curricula with more faculty to incorporate resources already owned by the Library and OERs.
- Better faculty buy-in.
- A clearinghouse for OER materials
- Collaboration and partnership between college, university, state campuses, and their libraries to recognize and accept that "libraries" are an essential component to OER/DE/ZTC initiatives. Libraries and librarians MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE CONVERSATION.
- Communication!
- Consistent education on the crisis of the cost of textbooks for students. Faculty must acknowledge the issue and act accordingly to make more affordable choices for required course material. Lower income students are at a distinct disadvantage and we are setting them up to fail.
- Consultations on OERs and how to manage integrating/replacing texts with those resources. Policy statements supporting variation in required texts, or mechanisms delivered to educate faculty on alternatives to textbook purchases.
- Convince faculty to stop using traditional textbooks.
- Coordinated responses to publishers would help—our faculty often enter into agreements with publishers for textbook adoption or worse, for inclusive access models, which remove the secondary market, carries accessibility problems, and cuts the library out of the picture.
- Do we really need a new version of all parts of a textbook? Asking for some kind of modular publishing model might help.
- Easy affordable ways to provide print textbooks—our students don't like etexts.
- Easy to find and use OER alternatives.
- Encourage or incentivize faculty to create OER or modify existing OER for their curricula.
- Evaluate existing resources. Coordinate in a more timely manner in planning courses and adding resources. Encourage faculty use of online resources in LMS.
- Faculty appear to be hesitant to explore other options because they have taught the same book, the same way, forever. Presently, we have the ability to use a collection of OERs with a stipend provided for any instructor who changes. None

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of our faculty have taken advantage of it. There also is the mindset that all instructors of a certain course have to use the same textbook and that makes it difficult for those with initiative to change.

- Faculty needs to buy in to making textbooks free or affordable. A platform/vendor that offered low cost or free textbooks in all disciplines.
- Faculty understanding the cost of materials.
- Faculty work with library to identify appropriate online materials, rather than letting librarians trying to figure it out alone.
- Incentives for faculty to develop OERs and open textbooks.
- Get the development dept. to fundraise for an endowment that would fund the purchase of one textbook per class that students can access in the library. Also fund OER grant for faculty to use or develop their own materials. the money would be an incentive.
- Getting faculty to consider free open source textbooks is rough. They don't like change. I had one reject a free resource because it was missing one chapter he needed. I can't believe he couldn't work with me to find resources to cover that material. I can't get anyone to try an open source textbook, but I do have a list of sources on a website that has been sent to professors for consideration in case we ever get someone hired who would consider it.
- Having alternatives to expensive textbooks available for review when departments make decisions on textbook selection.
- Having ebook options we can purchase be unlimited usage, not just top out at three users. Or having PDF options.
- Having more e-extbooks available with a higher multiple-user number at the same time.
- Having more quality open educational resources available to students and faculty. There seems to be quite a bit of OER materials out there. However, there does not seem to be systematic review processes for these materials. It would help libraries and faculty if there was an organization reviewed these materials. I think that would give the OER more authority and as a consequence they would be used more. This higher usage of OER materials would reduce cost of textbooks for students.
- I think faculty have been brainwashed by the publishers that their expensive, resource rich texts are superior to OER materials. My faculty are finding out that they have been brainwashed/hoodwinked and that students have had to pay the huge cost.
- If faculty had more time to review and revise their required readings that support their course, if our library could afford better tools to integrate with the learning management system.
- If institutions would require faculty to have the library check their e-collections for the same or similar resources that students could use instead of the high-priced textbooks, that would be a start. The library does not have easy access to course syllabi, otherwise we would probably take the initiative and do it without being



asked. Colleges should also organize multi-pronged approaches—OER initiatives, inclusive access, library ebooks, and textbooks on reserve.

- If there were better, cost effective ebook packages that libraries could get that would have the necessary texts for students and faculty. Then if a student wanted a personal copy they can buy it, but the students wouldn't NEED to pay for a textbook for a class they already paid tuition for. It would also help if we promoted our ebook collection more so that perhaps faculty could use ebooks already in our collection for their coursework.
- Improved OER metadata for better OER discovery. Maybe some curated OER collections with robust search methods. Maybe that's what LibreTexts is doing for us, though!
- Incentives for faculty and a university administration that prioritizes curbing the power of the on-campus bookstore.
- Inclusion of librarians in curriculum development.
- Institutional support would be very helpful. Faculty want to know what's in it for them, but administrators aren't willing to listen to the library when it comes to institutional strategy. The library needs to be positioned as a partner rather than a service so that faculty will see our benefit and usefulness beyond merely giving them what they ask for.
- Instructors need to be aware of how many resources a librarian can provide, especially one who is involved in the Open Education Movement. Many times they aren't even aware of the different services provided.
- It's simple: Academic librarians and faculty must develop an ongoing communication that ensures that EVERY course that has a textbook has a copy of the textbook as an ebook or print copy that is current and available to students.
- Less emphasis on publisher materials like PPTs and test banks.
- Librarian and faculty training workshops and trainings on implementation strategies and best practices.
- Making texts unlimited user license without any extra component available by digital download code.
- money
- More communication between librarians and faculty that is initiated from the librarians' side requesting to visit with faculty members at a faculty meeting about what librarians can do to support faculty and students.
- More faculty education on the quality and safety of OERs. A lot of our faculty still don't trust OERs and open access and worry about the quality.
- More high quality OER textbooks like we are beginning to see from OpenStax and other groups.
- More OER and more material to supplement OER textbooks like tests, assignments, course materials, etc. More marketing material to help faculty understand alternatives to traditional textbooks.
- More support for choosing, editing, and writing OER and No/Low cost materials. Including promotion & tenure support for writing/producing.



- More training for instructors on what REALLY is available AND how easy the technology is! Special paid workshops for adjuncts! Mentoring open access teams.
- Most solutions involve better conversations with faculty and the student hardship. Instructors don't realize that access codes and bundles make it even harder for libraries to provide student access. We run a robust lending library, but we have to buy used on Amazon and hope the book comes in time. Bundles cause us to donate the access codes to a separate program to then figure out how to get them the neediest students.
- Moving away from the traditional textbook model.
- Need effective tools to search for OER and/or to collate OER/library materials/faculty created materials.
- No one has any leverage with the textbook companies or the journals. Our budgets are flat.
- Offer affordable etextbooks; help keep the cost of textbooks reasonable or assist faculty in finding OERs. When we see the number of students who are food insecure or facing homelessness—it is hard to stomach the cost of textbooks.
- One of our English professors started a Justice Textbook Library, where students donate used copies of textbooks or other assigned readings that are still being used in class. The donated textbooks can then be checked out by other students for the entire semester based on the financial needs of the student. Those with less financial support are given priority over others. The financial determination is made by our TRiO coordinator.
- Open Access initiatives with publishers; consortial licensing deals with publishers based on faculty feedback.
- Open access; move away from Elsevier.
- Presidential (of university) support, Student Government “uprising,” initiatives like OhioLINK’s eTextbook discount continuing
- Professors relying more on library resources and librarians for help with course planning.
- Publish in open access journals, digital scholarship projects and experimenting with open pedagogy in their classes
- Purchasing books through a reliable funding source, e.g. Student Leadership to place on course reserves for student use. Also, an energetic and strong faculty and librarian collaboration could be very helpful to build a collection that supports the students. However, the library policy is to add supplementary items and textbooks.
- Recognition in promotion and tenure mechanisms for faculty course revisions and OER creation and adoption
- Resources//incentives for faculty to encourage them to take time to look for, use, or create open resources.
- Shared understanding of the factors that most impact course material costs; more lead-time from faculty for librarians to assist in redesigning courses
- Some kind of all-inclusive directory of OER.

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- Tenure track faculty need incentives to create OERs, in the form of rewards for doing so. Small grants help, but the reappointment, tenure, and promotion guidelines need to include this. That's a university-level challenge/to-do.
- Time. Faculty do not have time to design curriculum based on the needs and goals of everyone involved. The easiest way for some faculty to teach as many classes they can is to obtain materials (ex: Pearson books) that do most of the work for them before the offering the class. It's hard for overwhelmed faculty members to design classes based on material costs. This is why we provide the option of placing their materials on library reserve for their students. Some students cannot afford the book, so this gives the student access to the materials a different way. If faculty and the library worked together to locate OER resources for their classes, we could curb the use of expensive materials. But this is difficult because faculty develop their classes individually. A pilot program would need to be initiated with a few classes in order to see what works in the long run. Also, this will not work with every subject or class.
- To understand that it's not just the textbook, but the access codes for supplemental homework, quizzes, etc. And to bring nonprofit presses (university presses?) into the conversation as a partner, especially those with OA initiatives, instead of trying to recreate the wheel. But mostly, there needs to be a push within the disciplines and their professional societies, especially math and physical sciences and not just on a per campus basis, to create quality alternatives, especially for lower level required courses.
- We recently worked with VIVA, who had funding available encouraging faculty to either adapt, adopt, or create OERs for their courses.
- Wider awareness and use of OER. Easier discovery of OER by course topic.
- Willingness of faculty to engage OER resources.
- Willingness or discussion for professors to make their own open access textbooks.

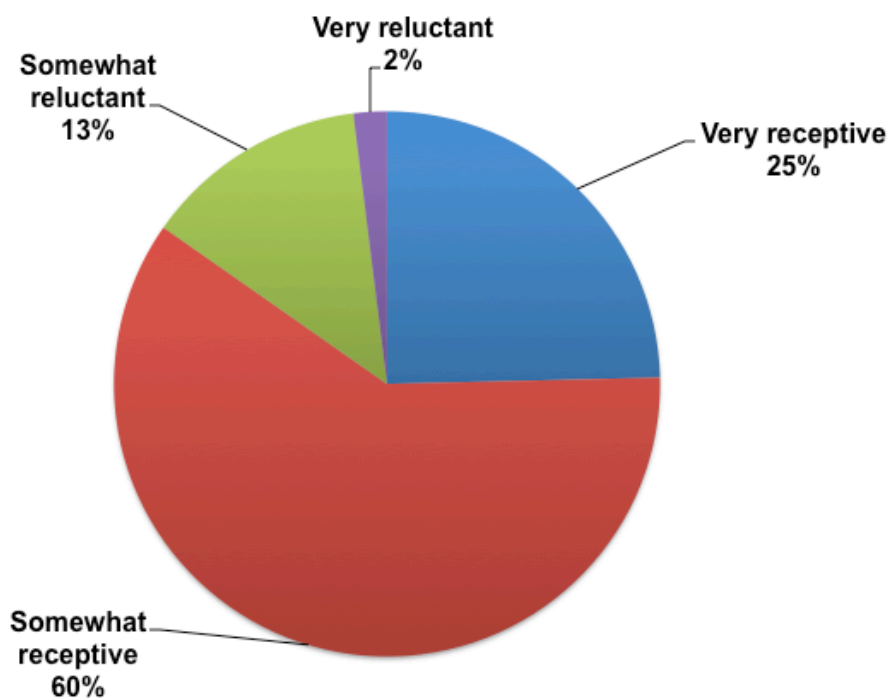


Digital Resource Materials

Faculty Receptivity

How receptive are faculty to the idea of integrating digital materials into their course work? Twenty-five percent of them are “very” receptive and 60% are at least “somewhat” receptive. Only 15% are reluctant, 2% “very reluctant.”

Figure 10. How receptive are faculty to the idea of integrating digital resources in their course work?
—All academic libraries



Community colleges are most reluctant—although not by much (18% are somewhat reluctant)—to add digital resources to their coursework, because community college students are the least likely to have access to digital materials off-campus. Faculty in public institutions are more receptive to integrating digital resources into course work than those in private ones.

Table 10. How receptive are faculty to the idea of integrating digital resources in their course work?
—Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

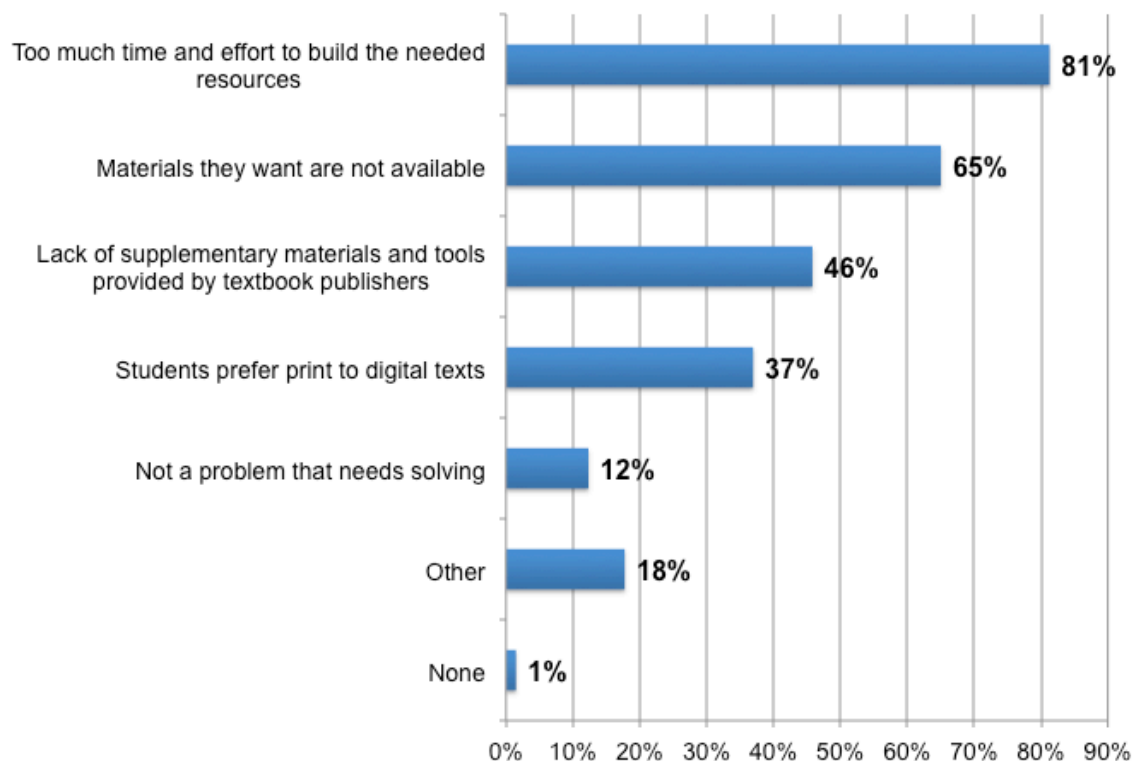
	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Very receptive	27%	23%	25%	30%	27%	19%	17%	20%	35%
Somewhat receptive	55%	65%	64%	59%	62%	60%	61%	72%	54%
Somewhat reluctant	18%	10%	10%	8%	10%	16%	19%	8%	7%
Very reluctant	0%	2%	2%	3%	1%	5%	3%	0%	3%



Barriers to Adding Digital Resources

The top barrier to adding digital resources that librarians say faculty members cite is “too much time and effort to build the needed resources,” cited by 81% of respondents. The number two barrier is “materials they want are not available,” cited by 65%. Twelve percent say this is “not a problem that needs solving”—meaning they either already integrate electronic resources, or they have no interest in integrating them. The former seems the more likely interpretation.

Figure 11. What barriers to adopting such strategies do faculty members cite? —All academic libraries



Community colleges are far and away (94%) the most likely to cite “time and effort” as a barrier, while post-graduate institutions are the most likely (67%) to cite “materials they want are not available.”

Table 11. What barriers to adopting such strategies do faculty members cite? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Too much time and effort to build the needed resources	94%	77%	78%	73%	87%	68%	77%	86%	82%
Materials they want are not available	66%	64%	64%	67%	66%	63%	58%	71%	69%
Lack of supplementary materials and tools provided by textbook publishers	56%	43%	46%	52%	53%	32%	32%	63%	49%
Students prefer print to digital texts	40%	37%	35%	38%	40%	35%	39%	31%	42%
Not a problem that needs solving	10%	13%	13%	15%	9%	19%	9%	12%	16%
Other	18%	18%	20%	18%	18%	19%	17%	20%	18%
None	0%	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	3%	0%	1%

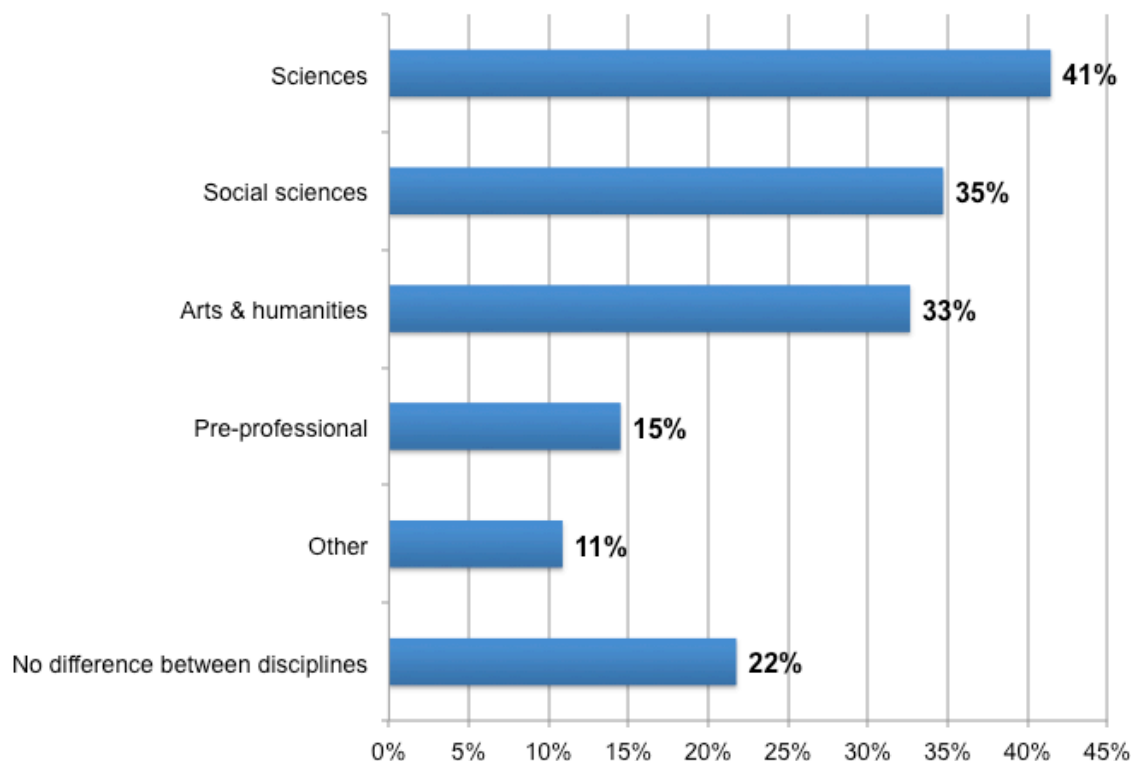


Affordable Textbooks by Discipline and Course Type

By Discipline

Different disciplines lend themselves to affordable digital textbook alternatives better than others. Or do they? Our survey respondents tell us that faculty/institutions in the sciences are the most open to seeking affordable textbook options for students—41% said this—followed by social sciences (35%) and arts and humanities (33%). Nearly one-fourth (22%) said there was no difference between disciplines in terms of openness toward seeking affordable textbook options.

Figure 12. Which fields or disciplines do you find most open to seeking affordable textbook alternatives? —All academic libraries



Community colleges were the least likely to find any difference among the disciplines in terms of seeking affordable textbook options (16%), and indeed they felt that faculty/institutions in the arts and humanities (48%) were the most open, followed by social sciences (46%). Public institutions were less likely than private ones to find a difference among the disciplines.

Table 12. Which fields or disciplines do you find most open to seeking affordable textbook alternatives? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

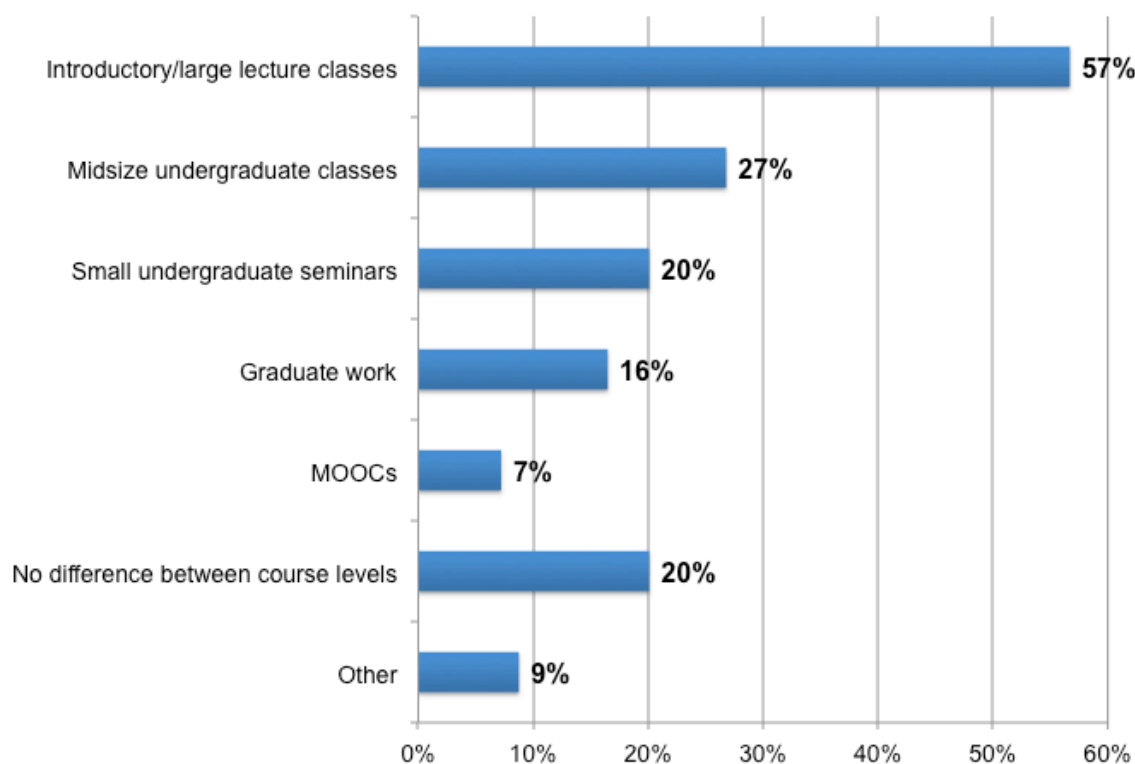
	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Sciences	38%	44%	44%	39%	44%	39%	47%	45%	36%
Social sciences	46%	31%	32%	32%	43%	19%	30%	43%	36%
Arts & humanities	48%	28%	24%	26%	35%	31%	30%	35%	36%
Pre-professional	14%	15%	13%	14%	16%	12%	15%	6%	21%
Other	12%	11%	13%	10%	14%	5%	5%	16%	13%
No difference between disciplines	16%	23%	23%	28%	16%	29%	23%	18%	18%



By Course Type

In terms of specific kinds of courses, librarians feel that faculty in introductory or large lecture classes are the most open to seeking affordable textbook options for students—57% said this—followed by those who offer midsize undergraduate classes (27%) and small undergraduate seminars (20%). One-fifth (20%) said there was no difference between course levels in terms of openness toward seeking affordable textbook options.

Figure 13. Which level of courses are most open to seeking affordable textbook alternatives? —All academic libraries



Community colleges were the least likely to find any difference among course levels in terms of seeking affordable textbook options (8%), and they felt that faculty/institutions offering introductory or large lecture classes (70%) were the most open, followed by midsize undergraduate classes (32%). Public institutions were less likely than private ones to find a difference among course levels.

Table 13. Which level of courses are most open to seeking affordable textbook alternatives? — Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Introductory/large lecture classes	70%	54%	57%	56%	62%	48%	55%	61%	58%
Midsize undergraduate classes	32%	25%	28%	31%	28%	27%	26%	24%	31%
Small undergraduate seminars	20%	19%	18%	21%	18%	25%	24%	20%	15%
Graduate work	2%	21%	25%	31%	16%	18%	16%	16%	18%
MOOCs	0%	10%	12%	11%	6%	10%	4%	8%	10%
Other	12%	8%	10%	11%	10%	7%	5%	4%	16%
No difference between course levels	8%	24%	20%	19%	15%	28%	20%	16%	19%



What Can Publishers Do?

We asked an open-ended question about what libraries feel publishers could do that might aid professors in the transition of print to digital course materials. Here is a sampling of their responses (lightly edited).

- Better user interfaces. Fully compatible with preexisting ereader apps. Making the digital copy significantly cheaper than the print copy. Provide solid information to instructors indicating that students can do just as well with digital.
- Purchasing perpetual access to ebook version of textbook. Have free access to ebook version of purchased print copy.
- A clear and concise “if you bought this in paper you get a digital version too” disclaimer—or not, just make it clear.
- Affordable print+digital bundles.
- Again, unlimited access and downloadable PDF chapters or entire book.
- Aligning digital platforms to structure resources to be downloaded and/or adapted to individual course usage.
- Allow library access to textbooks for more than one user.
- Alternative and open access homework sets—especially for business/math.
- Ancillary materials (especially for open access) and a print on demand option.
- As I see it, commercial publishers are reluctant to help due to the loss in revenue.
- We are moving towards an Inclusive Access model that involves a fee for digital textbooks at a reduced cost. More publishers need to be on board with this if they want to stay in business.
- Both print and electronic at a much-reduced rate.
- Bring down costs to making digital material available.
- Build unit sized information packages, not full course items. Why buy chapters 1-10 when you only read chapters 3, 6, and 8?
- Built-in compatibility with Moodle, Blackboard, etc. Incentives/trials to try digital over print.
- Bundles are a real issue that raise the cost of student texts.
- Cengage offers a free print textbook mailed to the student’s home for everyone purchasing their electronic textbook for our Introductory Psychology course. Our bookstore does not stock the print copies.
- Cost amelioration to offset the change from the “we bought it and now we own it” to the “we have to re-buy it annually” model. The cost of e-resources is nuts, especially in the face of diminishing budgets. We’re starved for options.
- Cost of printing. Most professors also prefer print to digital. Also, we have a “no textbook” purchase policy in the library, which does give some instructors pause. We can reserve print books, but not digital.
- Course alignment with standards of practice for librarians.
- Creating additional features with a digital copy. There are more options with digital resources for adding dynamic content that you couldn’t have with a print copy. I think those additional features would add value to faculty.
- Cut the cost of required access fees. They are almost as much as the print book.

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- Digital course materials need to work really well from all devices and with our campus LMS (Canvas).
- DRM-free ebooks
- DRM-free multi-user versions of standard textbooks; digital updates to standard textbooks that have already been purchased.
- Drop their prices to come under \$50.
- Electronic textbooks, handbooks, activities, etc.
- Ensuring content and platforms are accessible (to all—those with disabilities).
- Fewer barriers and genuine cost-effectiveness. Unlimited seats on resources rather than limited seating which is then complicated by tiers of cost for the increasing number of seats. Proprietary platforms.
- Free access to the digital materials even if the product purchased was in print. Not charging extra for those digital materials. Providing print copies to faculty when requested at no additional cost even when they choose to go with digital materials. The digital divide is real and not everyone has access to the internet every day in their homes.
- Having low-cost print alternative to digital reading materials is essential. Training modules would also be helpful for faculty who are unfamiliar with digital platforms. Targeting older faculty who are more resistant to changing how they do things.
- Honestly, I would like to see them stop providing so much. It is hard to move a faculty member to an OER or library owned book if it does not include all of the related material they get “free” from publishers. These materials may be free to the instructor, but the students pay dearly for them.
- I like what the publishers are doing with the affordable learning initiative.
- I think that publishers are resistant to anything that might “save students money” and see it as something that they are losing profits on. I would be surprised if they would collaborate to provide anything.
- I’d like to see publishers stop conflating their fee-based products with OER because it confuses faculty.
- If talking about open publishers like OpenStax, would love for every OpenStax title to have a full suite of ancillary materials available upon release of new titles.
- In-depth previews.
- Lobby for broadband in rural areas.
- Lower costs for Inclusive Access textbooks to encourage adoption, and make sure the technology CONSISTENTLY WORKS.
- Lower costs for materials. Period. Faculty are tired of being held hostage by big publishers. They like the flexibility of open resources.
- Lower textbook costs. Remove the idea of planned obsolescence through newer editions and have content updated online freely available/lower cost.
- Lumen Learning and others are already providing the wrap-around resources for a fee (Lumen Learning more cheaply than some others). So make OER wrap-



amounts available on a sliding cost scale, dependent on FAFSA need level evaluation. Let rich kids pay more than poor kids.

- Make easy to use platforms that work well with platforms already in use at the schools.
- Make more DRM-free materials; make them easier to use.
- Make them accessible! Always have both options available for students with disabilities or students who have a preference. DRM free. Ability to download onto multiple devices. Material can NOT require an internet connection. Must be easily readable and navigable on a phone.
- Making it easier for students to access the digital material through the Blackboard.
- Maybe have workshops in regions all over the state/country where they explain alternatives.
- Much greater transparency as to their print production costs, so that faculty and students could understand their need for enormous price increases.
- I think they are **aggressively** already doing this - Inclusive Access, courseware, subscription models. Publishers could stop conflating the OER, OA conversation with their digital solutions.
- Open Access; lower cost for Unlimited Simultaneous user license fees for e-content.
- Our students are very economically disadvantaged and often don't have a sufficient device upon which to use digital content, beyond the computers available in the library and in other computer labs on campus. Publishers, if they wanted to push for and secure digital business, could assist in purchasing inexpensive devices for student access.
- Platforms that are easier for the students to use. What we most often see are students struggling with the online platforms and how to access their materials.
- Provide tablets or other ereaders for students who either don't have the appropriate technology or who prefer print.
- Provide us with complete OERs tailored to departments. Librarians are stretched thin and the time to create OERs is tedious.
- Publishers should not abandon print textbooks completely. There are many students who still prefer a print textbook and feel that they learn better by using print.
- Realistic affordability.
- Stop making small changes to texts and then calling them "new editions" for which full price is charged—a new edition every 2–3 years which is little changed from the previous edition should be cheaper.
- The ability to print material. That may be a losing battle, but while students like to access/find materials digitally, in my experience they still greatly prefer actually reading the material in print.
- The biggest barrier is that big, high cost published textbooks include all the homework and grading help which significantly cuts down on work that



professors have to do. We need more open/low cost supplementary material to make alternative options as appealing.

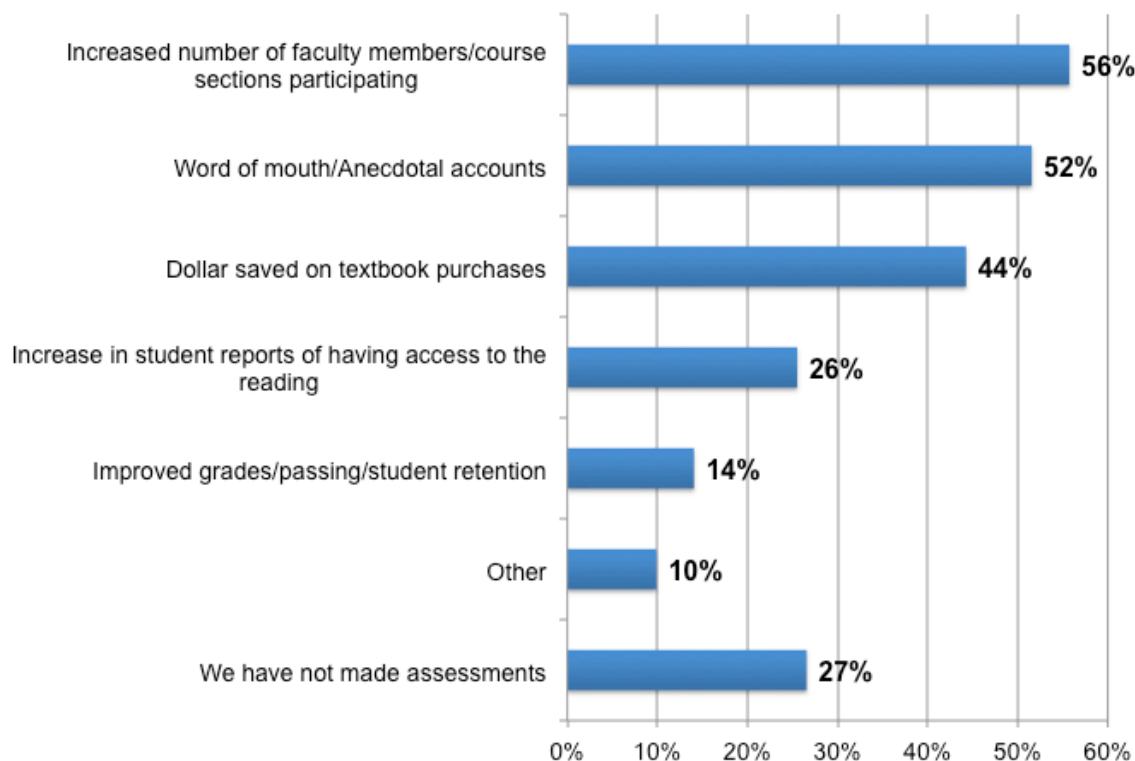
- The biggest barrier to digital course materials is the annoying single-use codes that restrict the re-usability of texts. At least with print you can sell your books back for money for the next set. Also a pain are the additional applications students would need to buy / use to do their coursework. MyMathLab is one I hear often complained about.
- The problem isn't print to digital. The problem is alternatives to high-cost textbooks from traditional publishers.
- They could provide peer reviewed OER materials. I think this might aid professors because it would give the confidence to introduce these materials to their students and colleagues.
- This question is a mistake. Is this survey biased toward the adoption of digital course materials? There is a great deal of research on the affordances of different media and differential needs of students and other users of these media. We should not be looking for a one-way transition, but looking for the best way to support every learner and every discipline.
- This question is confusing. Is this survey about open education resources or is this survey about the print to digital transition? These are very different issues.
- Training in online course materials where they could come to campus and showcase how to use these materials.
- Why do they need to be involved? It looks like they began the crisis to begin with. And OERs aren't necessarily digital; our students who prefer print have that option for \$30 via the bookstore.



Assessing Affordability Efforts

How do our survey respondents assess whether their own efforts to help improve textbook affordability for students have had an impact? More than one-half (56%) have “increased the number of faculty members/course sections participating,” followed by “word of mouth or anecdotal accounts” (52%), and “dollar saved on textbook purchases” (44%). Still, more than one-fourth (27%) have not made assessments of their textbook affordability efforts.

Figure 14. How do you assess that your library's efforts to address textbook affordability have had an impact? —All academic libraries



Community colleges and large schools are the most likely to have made assessments, and their top method is “increased number of faculty members/course sections participating” followed by “word of mouth/anecdotal accounts.” Graduate and post-graduate institutions are the least likely (29% each) to have made any assessments about the effectiveness of their textbook affordability efforts.

Table 14. How do you assess that your library's efforts to address textbook affordability have had an impact? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Increased number of faculty members/course sections participating	63%	53%	56%	54%	58%	52%	53%	61%	55%
Word of mouth/Anecdotal accounts	50%	50%	50%	56%	53%	48%	51%	55%	50%
Dollar saved on textbook purchases	46%	41%	43%	47%	45%	42%	38%	49%	47%
Increase in student reports of having access to the reading	29%	25%	27%	25%	23%	31%	30%	25%	20%
Improved grades/passing/student retention	21%	13%	13%	13%	16%	11%	15%	18%	11%
Other	13%	10%	8%	7%	12%	6%	10%	14%	8%
We have not made assessments	25%	28%	29%	29%	25%	29%	29%	25%	24%



Conclusions/Recommendations

Textbook affordability is a perennial problem for college and university students. For students (and their parents), it is another major expense alongside tuition, housing, and food. Lack of access to required (or even optional) course texts negatively affects academic performance. For schools, a large body of underperforming students can reflect poorly on the institution.

In the past, there were few ways of alleviating or avoiding the high cost of textbooks, especially given the business model of textbook publishing³. However, today's digital and electronic technologies have the potential to assuage many of these costs for students, whether it be replacing or supplementing traditional print textbooks (and other course materials) with less expensive (ostensibly) electronic alternatives or moving to open source or open educational resources (OER), which are designed to be low-cost or even free.

There has been a significant move toward open educational resources, and many educators and libraries are coming to embrace the concept. The challenge, as one would expect, to the development of OER materials—in particular, high-quality materials that have been vetted and reviewed to ensure accuracy and rigor—is the OER model itself. “If resource users do not pay for their production and distribution, for example, then how can their production and distribution maintained?”⁴ A detailed look at the emerging OER sustainability models is beyond the scope of this report (see Downes, cited in footnote 4 below for an overview of the current thinking on the topic), but suffice to say here its proponents are aware of the challenges—and its opponents are aware of the benefits of OER.

At the same time, ebooks and etextbooks have much lower production costs than printed books, even accounting for author's royalties and other fixed costs.⁵ It is clear from our quantitative responses and, especially, the qualitative verbatim comments that academic libraries are eager to embrace alternatives to traditional textbooks but are challenged by getting faculty and administration on board. It seems that faculty are becoming more aware of the economic hardships of many students, and that less expensive textbooks or Open Source materials can go some way toward helping their financial plight, but it is obvious that this will take some time.

Libraries are enthusiastic about open source and OER textbook replacement options, although they admit that vetting—if not preparing—these materials is a challenge. Librarians cite the budget crunches they inevitably face, as well as the shortness of staff to take on the challenges of properly identifying OER materials.

³ Production (aka printing and other related) costs often need to be recouped in the first year of publication, given the rapid rate at which textbooks are updated and revised.

⁴ Stephen Downes, *Models for Sustainable Open Educational Resources*, http://scholar.google.com/scholar_url?url=https://www.learntechlib.org/p/44796/article_44796.pdf&hl=en&sa=X&scisig=AAGBfm0F5DEtKheUCBwoSljkn8qjmoIA&nossl=1&oi=scholar.

⁵ Etextbooks still need to be designed, laid out, and produced, even if they're not ultimately printed.



While librarians are enthusiastic about pursuing digital alternatives, they also recognize that many students prefer printed textbooks (which is born out by other recent *Library Journal* studies⁶) and many students lack off-campus (or out-of-library) access to electronic devices on which to read electronic alternatives. Some libraries are not shy about complaining about faculty who, as one respondent writes, “teach the same way they have always taught”) and are reluctant—or claim they do not have the time—to evaluate alternative or open source texts or OER.

If there is one clear conclusion from this report, it is that greater communication between faculty and library needs to take place in order to ensure that everyone in the university is working in concert to alleviate the issue of textbook affordability, which has benefits for all concerned parties.

As myriad *Library Journal* surveys and studies have found, libraries are eager to embrace new book technologies, but are often frustrated by ebook (and even print book) publishers when it comes to things like digital rights management and what libraries perceive as unreasonably high costs.

It is obvious that the textbook affordability problem will not be solved overnight, but if all parties work together to develop workable solutions, this will have benefits for everyone involved.

⁶ See, for example, our most recent survey of academic libraries—*2016 Survey of eBook Usage in U.S. Academic Libraries*

(https://s3.amazonaws.com/WebVault/research/LJ_2016_EbookUsage_AcademicLibraries.pdf).

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Respondent Demographics

This section provides a demographic profile of the libraries responding to our survey.

Student Level

One-third (34%) of our survey respondents are four-year undergraduate colleges or universities, 28% are graduate schools, 18% are post-graduate or PhD institutions, and 18% are community colleges.

Figure 15. What level of students use your library? —All academic libraries

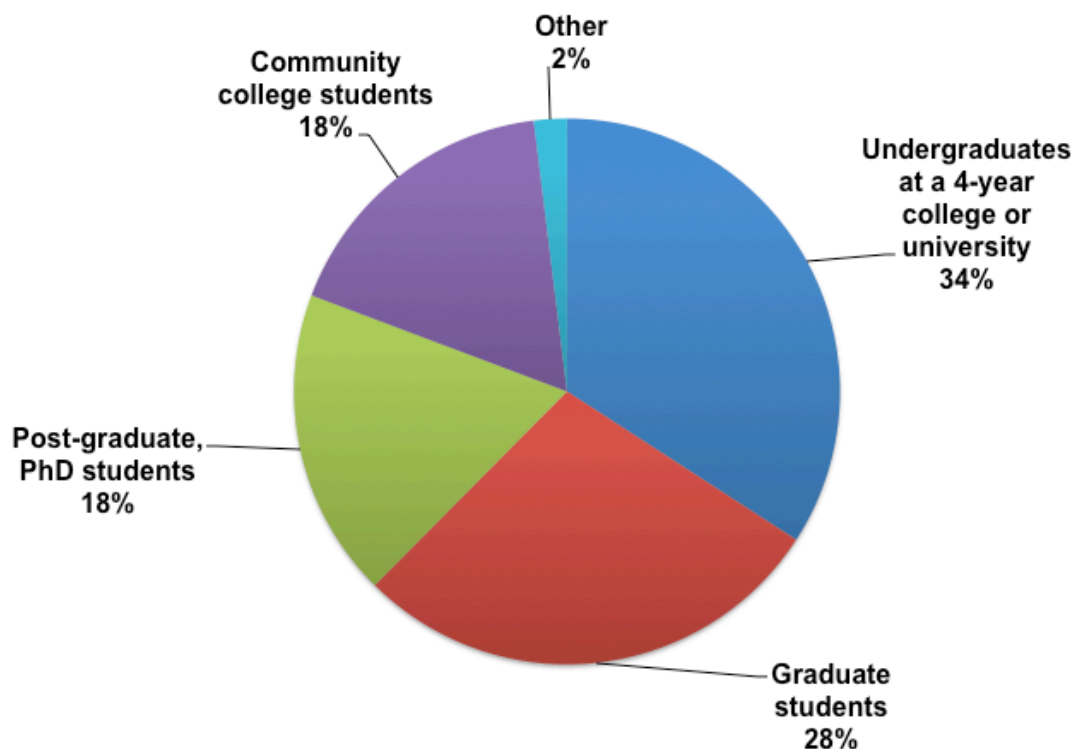


Table 15. What level of students use your library? —Academic libraries by students served, type of institution, and number of enrolled students

	Students Served				Type of Institution		No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Undergraduates at a 4-year college or university	0%	100%	97%	93%	61%	91%	69%	65%	78%
Graduate students	0%	81%	100%	95%	54%	69%	45%	61%	72%
Post-graduate, PhD students	0%	50%	61%	100%	34%	48%	19%	37%	60%
Community college students	100%	14%	15%	12%	52%	3%	34%	51%	26%
Other	2%	4%	6%	8%	5%	3%	1%	2%	9%



Public or Private Institutions

Two-thirds of our respondents are public institutions, one-third private.

Figure 16. Is your institution public or private? —All academic libraries

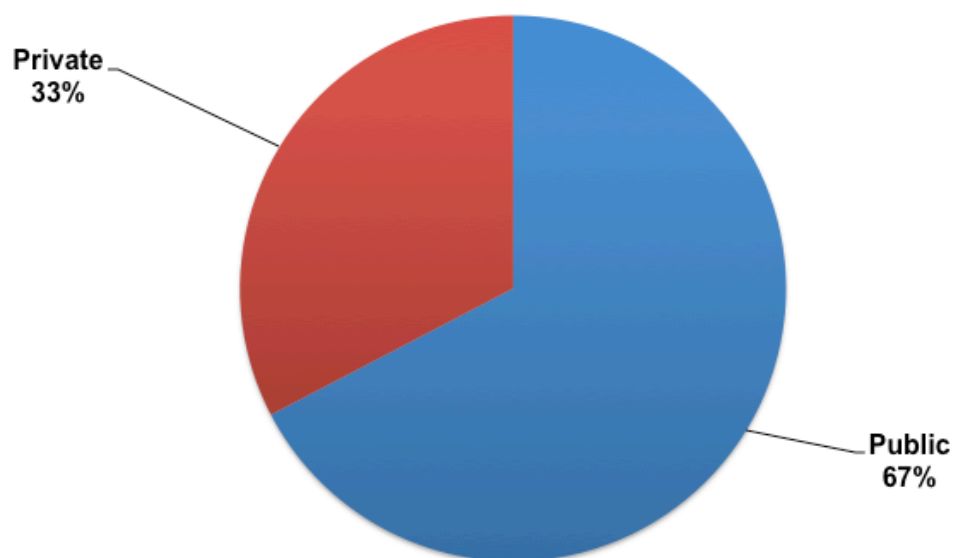


Table 16. Is your institution public or private? —Academic libraries by students served and number of enrolled students

	Students Served				No. of Students Enrolled		
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	<5,000	5,000–14,999	15,000+
Public	98%	58%	62%	59%	41%	83%	85%
Private	2%	42%	38%	41%	59%	17%	15%



Size of Institution

Our survey respondents serve a mean 12,147 students (median 8,050). One-fifth of our survey respondents serve between 1,000 and 2,499 students and a further 15% serve 2,500 to 4,999 students. All told, nearly one-half (47%) of our responding institutions serve under 7,500 students.

Figure 17. How many students are currently enrolled in your institution? —All academic libraries
Mean: 12,147/Median: 8,050

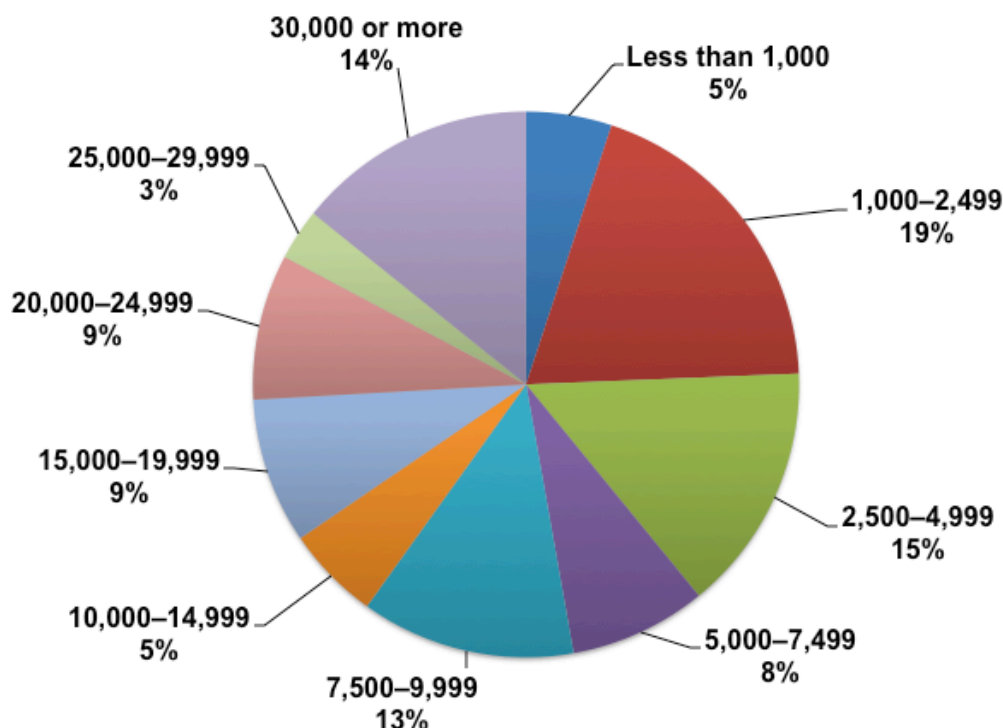


Table 17. How many students are currently enrolled in your institution? —Academic libraries by students served and type of institution

	Students Served				Type of Institution	
	Comm. college	4-year students	Grad. students	Post-grad. students	Public	Private
Less than 1,000	4%	5%	2%	1%	2%	11%
1,000–2,499	16%	21%	15%	8%	10%	39%
2,500–4,999	22%	12%	14%	11%	12%	20%
5,000–7,499	12%	7%	9%	11%	8%	8%
7,500–9,999	16%	12%	12%	11%	17%	5%
10,000–14,999	6%	5%	6%	4%	8%	2%
15,000–19,999	6%	9%	10%	13%	11%	5%
20,000–24,999	8%	8%	10%	13%	10%	6%
25,000–29,999	2%	4%	4%	7%	4%	2%
30,000 or more	8%	17%	18%	21%	20%	3%
Mean	10,031	12,961	14,313	16,749	15,078	6,282
Median	6,666	8,515	9,731	16,750	11,000	2,500



Methodology and Questionnaire

The *Library Journal* Textbook Affordability Survey was emailed to a random selection of academic libraries on March 22, 2019, with a second mailing on April 2. The survey link was also advertised in *LJ*'s Academic Newswire enewsletter on March 28. The survey closed on April 5 with 238 North American responses. The survey was created by *Library Journal* research and was programmed, hosted, and tabulated in-house. The responses are unweighted.

Questionnaire

1. To what degree is textbook affordability a concern for your institution?

Major concern
Minor concern
Not a concern
Don't know

2. To what degree is textbook affordability a concern for students?

Major concern
Minor concern
Not a concern
Don't know

3. In what ways does your library work with faculty to help make affordable digital alternatives available? Please check all that apply.

Acquire new materials to supplement a traditional textbook
Acquire new materials to replace a traditional textbook
Curate existing library materials to supplement a traditional textbook
Curate existing library materials to replace a traditional textbook
Provide course reading/resource list tools to faculty
Build e-textbook collections
Help to make faculty publications available open access
Find, vet, and curate open access publications from other institutions
Other, please specify: _____
None [If none, skip next question]

4. Which is your primary strategy for making affordable digital alternatives available?

5. How do students most often access digital library resources for assigned reading? Please select one answer.

Through the library website
Through the learning management system (Blackboard, Moodle, etc.)
Other, please specify: _____
Don't know



6. What percent of students who use library resources for assigned reading would you estimate are doing so to save money on buying their own textbook?

0%

1% - 9%

10% - 19%

20% - 29%

30% - 39%

40% - 49%

50% - 59%

60% - 69%

70% - 79%

80% - 89%

90% - 99%

100%

7. Does the library interact with faculty to do any of the following? Please check all that apply.

Suggest/select course materials

Coordinate course curriculums

Create course reading/resource lists

Select open educational resources (OER)

Develop and publish an open access textbook

Other, please specify: _____

None of the above

8. Approximately what percentage of faculty members currently work with the library to reduce textbook costs?

0%

1% - 9%

10% - 19%

20% - 29%

30% - 39%

40% - 49%

50% - 59%

60% - 69%

70% - 79%

80% - 89%

90% - 99%

100%

9. Is that number growing, shrinking, or holding steady?

Growing

Shrinking

Holding steady

10. What would aid libraries and faculty to collaboratively stem the high cost of textbooks for students? _____



11. How receptive are faculty to the idea of integrating digital resources in their course work?

Very receptive
 Somewhat receptive
 Somewhat reluctant
 Very reluctant

12. What barriers to adopting such strategies do faculty members cite?

Materials they want are not available
 Lack of supplementary materials and tools provided by textbook publishers
 Too much time and effort to build the needed resources
 Not a problem that needs solving
 Students prefer print to digital texts
 Other, please specify: _____
 None

13. Which fields or disciplines do you find most open to seeking affordable textbook alternatives? Check all that apply.

Sciences
 Social sciences
 Arts and humanities
 Pre-professional
 Other, please specify: _____
 No difference between disciplines

14. Which level of courses are most open to seeking affordable textbook alternatives? Check all that apply.

Introductory/large lecture classes
 Midsize undergraduate classes
 Small undergraduate seminars
 MOOCs
 Graduate work
 Other, please specify: _____
 No difference between course levels

15. Is there anything that publishers could provide that might aid professors in the transition of print to digital course materials? _____**16. How do you assess that your library's efforts to address textbook affordability have had an impact? Check all that apply.**

Increased number of faculty members/course sections participating
 Dollars saved on textbook purchases
 Increase in student reports of having access to the reading
 Improved grades/passing/student retention
 Word of mouth/Anecdotal accounts
 Other, please specify: _____
 We have not made assessments

Demographics

17. What level of students use your library? Check all that apply.

Community college students

Undergraduates at a 4-year college or university

Graduate students

Post-graduate, PhD students

Other, please specify: _____

18. Is your institution public or private?

Public

Private

19. How many students are currently enrolled in your institution?

Less than 1,000

1,000 – 2,499

2,500 – 4,999

5,000 – 7,499

7,500 – 9,999

10,000 – 14,999

15,000 – 19,999

20,000 – 24,999

25,000 – 29,999

30,000 or more

Do you wish to be entered into the drawing for the \$100 American Express gift card?

Yes

No, thanks

If yes, please provide your contact information. The winner will be notified via email.

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Email: _____

