Closing Doors but Opening Access How to Boost Equity during a Pandemic

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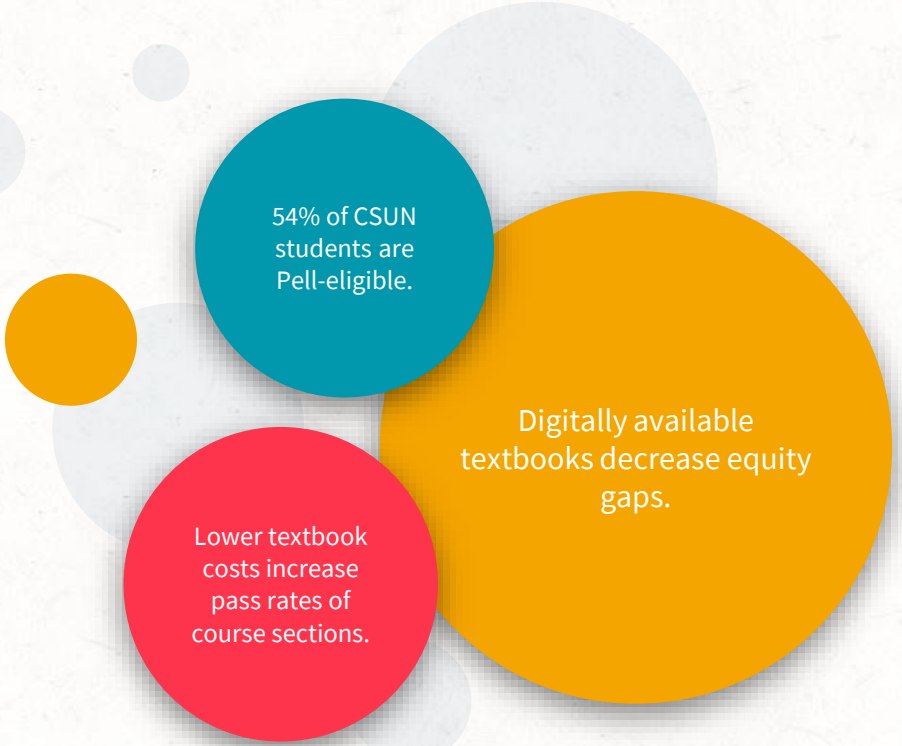
The Problem

How can libraries rapidly adapt to supporting 95% of course sections online when most publishers won't sell us digital textbooks?

Textbook costs are a major equity and access concern.



The Outcome

Broad outreach on Affordable Learning Solutions prevented overwhelmed faculty from adopting expensive "courses in a box" for teaching online, very slightly increasing zero-cost sections.

Did you pay more or less for textbooks this semester than last semester?

More	**21%**
Less	**28%**
About the same	30%
First semester at this campus	21%

November 2020 survey of all CSUN students, 999 respondents

Undergraduate course sections by textbook cost

	Zero Cost	Low Cost	Traditional/ Unspecified
Fall 2019	**12%**	**no data**	**88%**
Fall 2020	**13%**	**15%**	**72%**

Strategies to Promote OERs during COVID

- Website rebranding
- Partnerships with Faculty Development
- Email outreach
- Individual and department awards
- Crowdfunding as outreach

Rebrand AL$ website

Affordable Learning $olutions

The official website of the CSUN AL$ initiative.

Search this Guide | Search

- Welcome!
- For Faculty
  - How to Reduce Costs
  - Find Affordable Resources
    - General Resources
    - Resources by Discipline
    - What Are OER?
    - About CC Licenses
  - Report Textbook Costs
  - Apply for an AL$ Award
  - AL$ Examples
  - Get Help From a Librarian
  - COVID-19 Resources
  - Library Instruction Support
- For Students
  - Cost-Saving Tips
  - Submit a Reserves Request
- About AL$
  - What is AL$?
  - FAQ
  - Contact Us

Member

Welcome to AL$!

What Is AL$?

AL$, or Affordable Learning $olutions, is an initiative by the CSU Chancellor's office to promote the use of low- or no-cost course materials to reduce the financial burden on students. Since 2016, AL$ has saved CSUN students over $1,000,000 in textbook costs.

AL$ News: In its continued efforts to reduce the cost of textbooks for students, the CSUN Library recently joined the Open Education Network, a community of higher education institutions that promote access, affordability and student success through the use of open textbooks. Read the CSUN Today article here.

Resources by Discipline

- Arts, Media, & Communication
  - Art & Art History
  - Cinema & Television Arts
  - Communication Studies
  - Journalism
  - Music
  - Theatre
- Business & Economics
- Education
- Engineering & Computer Science
- Health & Human Development
- Humanities
- Science & Math
- Social & Behavioral Sciences

10

Faculty Webinars (2 hosted by AL$ + 8 co-facilitated with FacDev)

14

Departmental presentations

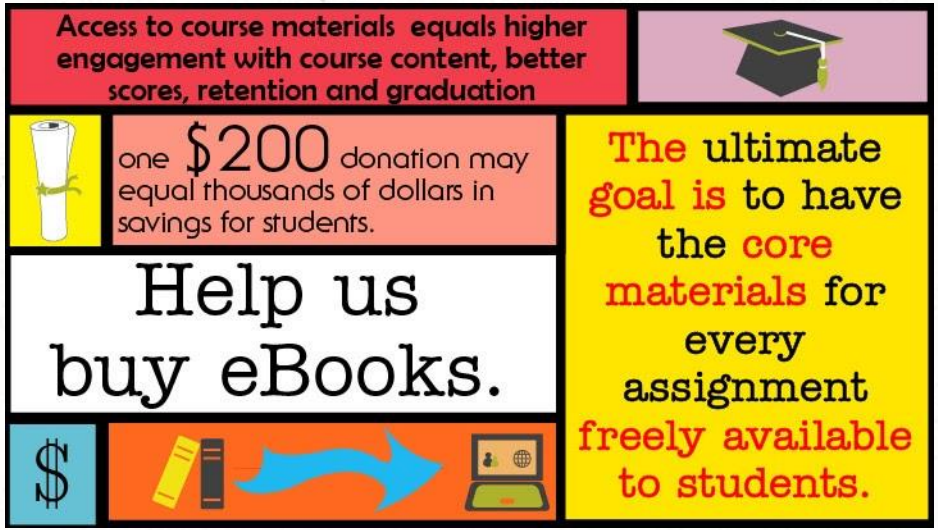
8

Librarian webinars

8140

Compared to 2768 in 2019 March 12–August 16

Crowdfunding as Outreach



Faculty Feedback

“My students have been overwhelmingly happy to have a class that relies solely on OER. They say that it has freed them not only financially but also physically. Learning can happen wherever they are with their phone.”

Faculty Feedback

“Extremely positive feedback from faculty in department as well as students interviewed. In addition, we have shared our results with our College Curriculum Committee to encourage other departments to investigate more zero-cost options... This has a been a cathartic experience for our department faculty and an exciting catalyst to increase our dialogue and action regarding adoption low/zero-cost course materials for students. We appreciate your support via this award.”

Future Directions

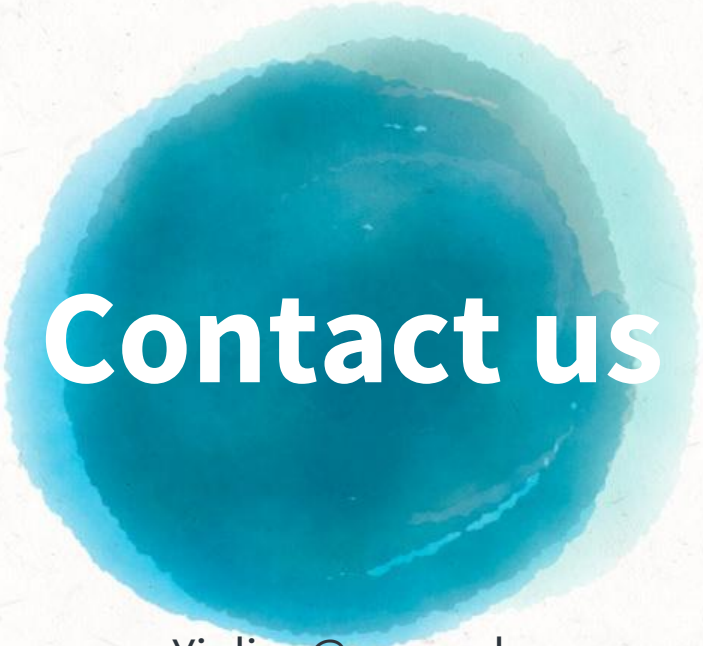
Back to the status quo?

Spring 2022 expected to have more face-to-face instruction, but likely more hybrid courses than 2019

Strategies for Encouraging Faculty to Keep OERs

- Highlight positive effects on student outcomes
- Departmental awards for OER adoption

Thanks!



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