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.

54% of CSUN students are Pell-eligible.

Digitally available textbooks decrease equity gaps.

Lower textbook costs increase pass rates of course sections.
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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First semester at this campus</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

November 2020 survey of all CSUN students, 999 respondents
# Undergraduate Course Sections by Textbook Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zero Cost</th>
<th>Low Cost</th>
<th>Traditional/Unspecified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategies to Promote OERs during COVID

- Website rebranding
- Partnerships with Faculty Development
- Email outreach
- Individual and department awards
- Crowdfunding as outreach
Welcome to AL$!

What is AL$?

ALS, or Affordable Learning Solutions, 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, ALS has saved CSU students over $2,000,000 in textbook costs.

ALS News: In its continued efforts to reduce the cost of textbooks for students, the CSU 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 CSU 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

#EBOOKS FOR EVERY MATADOR

THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US: A MEMOIR

Retail Price: $17.99
Students impacted: 40
Savings: $719.6

Savings: $2872.5
Retail Price: $97.75
Students impacted: 70

MEDITATIONS, A NEW TRANSLATION, PENGUIN

Retail Price: $4.95
Students impacted: 49
Savings: $242.5

Total Savings: $3834.05

Access to course materials equals higher engagement with course content, better scores, retention and graduation. One $200 donation may equal thousands of dollars in savings for students.

Help us buy eBooks.

The ultimate goal is to have the core materials for every assignment freely available to students.
"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 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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