

**Textbook Affordability Symposium *Solutions Roundtable Minutes***  
*A discussion of strategies that Ohio's universities and colleges can adopt to reduce the cost of textbooks, moderated by Chancellor Fingerhut*

**View Roundtable Footage on The Ohio Channel**

([http://ohiochannel.org/multimedia/programs/program.cfm?program\\_id=107662](http://ohiochannel.org/multimedia/programs/program.cfm?program_id=107662))

**Roundtable Participants\***

**Chancellor Eric D. Fingerhut**

**State Representative Shawn Webster**

**Connie Myers, Student, Columbus State Community College**

**John J. Burke, Gardner-Harvey Library, Miami University (Middletown)**

**John Cuppoletti, Ph.D., University of Cincinnati**

**Sean Devine, CourseSmart**

**Richard Hershman, National Association of College Stores**

*\*Speaker bios at <http://universitysystem.ohio.gov/textbooksymposium/documents/textbookAgenda.pdf>*

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**SUGGESTED STRATEGIES**

**State Representative Shawn Webster:**

- Vision is a well articulated University System of Ohio: this involves review & changes in courses. Resources should remain flexible. Duplication between courses should be removed.
- We should be mindful that bookstores are small businesses- and shouldn't have sole blame for high cost placed upon them. There is a bigger picture. These stores should not be run out of business in the process of obtaining affordability
- Summary: The solution has to be student focused and thought of in a way that recognizes that students have differing needs. Textbook legislation is on the way. It has come of a result of his interactions with Chancellor Fingerhut. The University System of Ohio is a result of trying to focus higher education on the students. It is much better to address these needs on the front end of things then to force students to deal with solutions that are thought of without them.

**Connie Myers:**

- Student involvement in the process in attaining affordability- they are the consumers whose lives and/or education may be affected by high costs.
- Problem: Certain faculty & colleges are starting to create their own custom books; however, they cannot be sold back even though the book is still being used by the same professors.

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**Richard Hershman:**

- A successful practice of employing textbook advisory committees of students, faculty, administrators, and bookstore personnel has been implemented in some cases.
  - Books can be decided upon in a timely manner.
  - Custom books can be created effectively and when necessary.
- Course information should be released to faculty as soon as possible, so that they have time to review bundles, consider using older editions, and contrast direct value/ affordability of used books
- There is a need for financial aid to students to help pay for textbooks and basic expenses. Tax changes/ breaks are also an option used by some states (no tax on books, etc).

**Sean Devine:**

- Going digital with textbooks is a valid option to make content more affordable (eBooks, digital marketplaces).
- How do we move from the printed to digital system?
  - 72 / 2000 books available as eBooks at BGSU- We need to ensure that there is a critical mass of content
  - Markets grow when standards begin to take hold: as long as there are multiple means of implementation, new plans will not be adopted. A common technology platform and regulations need to be implemented.
    - **Chancellor Fingerhut:** How can we balance the notion of a common standard w/ the constant implementation of new systems?
    - **Sean Devine:** People want to invest in something that is a fairly common platform and can keep up with technology & evolving standards.
  - Trusted distribution between buyers and sellers should implement solutions.
  - Aligned economic incentives- insuring that all the right people are in the room talking about the solution of the textbook affordability issue.

**John Cuppoletti:**

- The costs of textbooks are about \$500 million. \$100-200 million can be taken off if the government increases the supply of eBooks.
- Does technology simply shift costs?
- Faculty would reject any plans to limit their supply, etc.

**John Burke:**

- Bookstores do a good job buying resources and making them available.
- OhioLink, etc should help to make eBooks more available.

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- Materials can be placed on library reserve (for courses), so that the books may be borrowed. However, campuses do not have the money needed to this with all of the courses.
  - Alternative sources for course materials are available through current library subscriptions, such as books and articles.
  - Libraries should help to organize and house open sources of textbook creation projects.
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**QUESTIONS:**

**Jana Dulin (Central State):** We have directed our efforts to minority and low-income students. Is anyone interested in giving scholarships or reducing costs for proven low-income students?

- **Richard Hershman:**
  - Library reserves and book sharing are options for such students.
  - Students who are faced with dropping out because of book costs should speak with book store managers and financial aid at their schools, because scholarships are available.

**Tom Ebhart (Used Textbook Association):** a used textbook program based on early adoption is an answer now.

- Students do not seem willing to adopt eBooks now.
- Custom books should be able to be resold.

**Aaron:** We need/ want any new system created to be fully accessible to the disabled. We would like to help work on this system from the beginning and urge their inclusion.

**Richard Sax (Vice President of Academic Affairs at Lake Erie):** Very few faculty members realize how much new editions of the book will be. Is there some source of information so that prices can be compared?

- **Chancellor Fingerhut:** If we are going to be publishing course information, etc, then it seems completely possible (technologically) to add textbook information for courses to this site. With respect to the integrated technology infrastructure, The Ohio Board of Regents can rule over public institutions' policies. The goal is to create enough incentives to broaden the scope to private schools.
- **John Cuppoletti:** How much information is already online? 90% of courses information at some schools is on Blackboard should be consolidated/ added to.
- **Sean Devine:** Digital delivery is the answer. We work with bookstores and faculty. Faculty members are provided w/ access to the website to review textbooks (100s millions of dollars are spent shipping review copies). Their online adoption review shows faculty members the digital price to students.

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- **Richard Hershman:** Teacher resource centers are available online to review course materials available on a particular topic. The site allows faculty members to post comments about each book and others to read these comments.

**Mike Norris (Lake Erie College):** Would students like to see textbook information online?

- **Connie Myers:** Yes. It can make the difference as to which classes I schedule- I need to know if / how much I need to save for books. This should be available at the time of registration.
- **Chancellor Fingerhut:** It would be beneficial to take information that is available at numerous schools and allow students to compare them between courses taught at different schools within the University System of Ohio. This would raise faculty awareness of costs and alternative options for course materials.

**Sharon Britton: (BGSU Firelands)** I work with donors to find textbook scholarships.

**(BGSU):** We have been constrained by looking at textbooks and economic motives, rather than the ways in which course materials aid student outcomes. This decreases the demand that students find other resources through which to learn and develop skills which would aid professional development. Libraries should step forward to provide materials needed by students. Increase faculty development in understanding alternative resources. This will improve student outcomes.

- **Richard Hershman:** Professional development is key. How new supplemental materials make it to the students needs to be discussed.
- **John Cuppoletti:** Since we have an opportunity to save money on textbooks, the savings should be used to fund OhioLink or similar programs.
- **Chancellor Fingerhut:** There is a goal of having an integrated infrastructure. We may never be able to get a line item to the level that we may want, but if we link it to the system, we can capture these resources more effectively. We cannot approach reforms as add-ons: there will never be enough resources or utilization. It has to be integrated into the fundamental approach of the University System of Ohio.