

**Docket Item:**

Open Educational Resources (OER) findings and recommendations

**Summary:**

This item presents research conducted by a team of students from the University of Oregon's Master of Public Administration program for their capstone course. The research focuses on textbook affordability, in particular the effectiveness of how community colleges and public universities in Oregon designate courses that use no-cost or low-cost textbooks or course materials in response to requirements set forth in HB 2971 (2017).

Textbook affordability is a significant issue nationally, particularly as it pertains to overall affordability and access to higher education. Oregon House Bill 2871 (2015) and House Bill 2729 (2017), which passed with bipartisan support, were intended to provide students and faculty with access to Open Educational Resources (OER) in order to lower the cost of textbooks for students. As defined in HB 2871, Open Educational Resources (OER) refers to "teaching, learning and research [that] reside[s] in the public domain or that have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others." Students worked with Veronica Dujon, Director of Academic Planning & Policy for the Office of University Coordination and Patrick Crane, Director of the Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, on this year's project

A summary of key findings is below. A Policy Brief and a presentation are included in the meeting materials and the full report will be posted on the HECC's website.

*Summary of Key Findings:*

- Varying designation methods within and across institutions make finding OER/no-cost/low-cost courses difficult for students
- Many college students surveyed have been affected academically or have made a decision about a course due to the cost of required textbooks
- The majority of students surveyed are unaware of what the abbreviation "OER" means
- Community colleges have implemented more designations than public universities, and their students are generally more aware of no-cost or low-cost resources at their institutions
- Students primarily learn about no-cost/low-cost course materials from their instructors, but not early enough to influence their course selection at the time of registration
- Overall, most students don't know where to find no-cost and low-cost courses

- Students would like to see designations everywhere that they look for courses and course materials, including in person at the campus bookstore

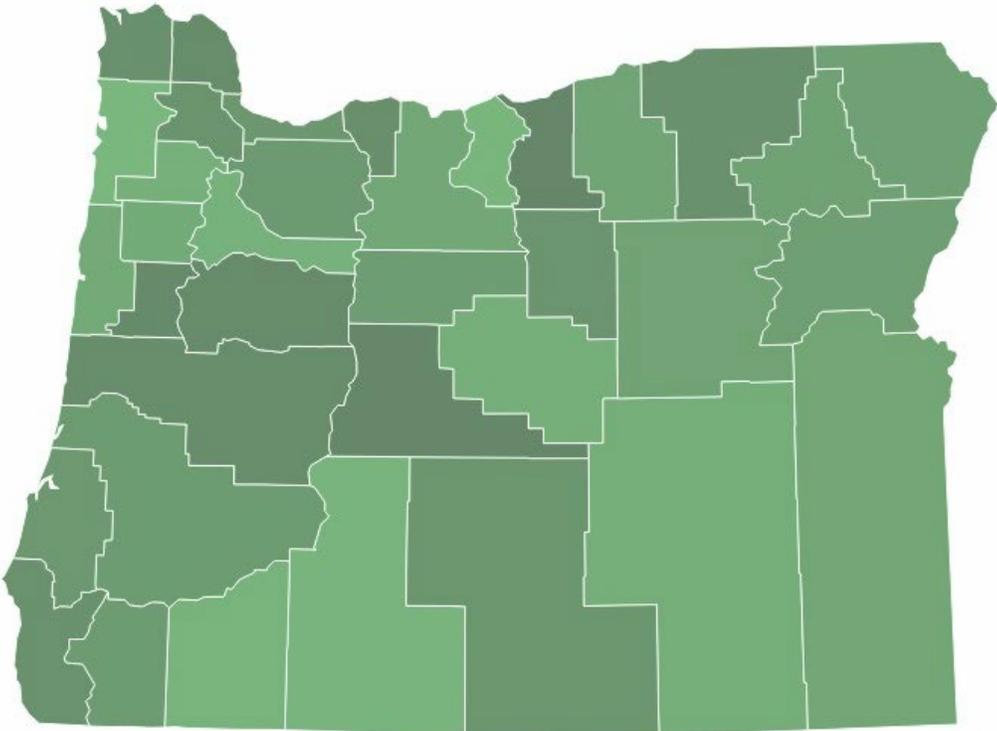
**Staff Recommendation:**

Information item only.

# Evaluating Oregon’s Open Educational Resources Designation Requirement

POLICY BRIEF

JUNE 2018



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University of Oregon School of Planning, Public Policy and Management  
Master of Public Administration Capstone

## **Executive Summary**

Textbook affordability is a significant issue nationally, particularly as it pertains to overall affordability and access to higher education. Oregon House Bill 2871 (2015) and House Bill 2729 (2017), which passed with bipartisan support, were intended to provide students and faculty with access to Open Educational Resources (OER) in order to lower the cost of textbooks for students. As defined in HB 2871, Open Educational Resources (OER) refers to “teaching, learning and research [that] reside[s] in the public domain or that have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others.”

This research was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the methods that Oregon community colleges and public universities use to designate courses that use no-cost and low-cost textbooks or course materials in response to the requirements set forth in House Bill 2871.

## **Summary of Key Findings**

- **Varying designation methods within and across institutions make finding OER/no-cost/low-cost courses difficult for students**
- **Many college students surveyed have been affected academically or have made a decision about a course due to the cost of required textbooks**
- **The majority of students surveyed are unaware of what the abbreviation “OER” means**
- **Community colleges have implemented more designations than public universities, and their students are generally more aware of no-cost or low-cost resources at their institutions**
- **Students primarily learn about no-cost/low-cost course materials from their instructors, but not early enough to influence their course selection at the time of registration**
- **Overall, most students don’t know where to find no-cost and low-cost courses**
- **Students would like to see designations everywhere that they look for courses and course materials, including in person at the campus bookstore**

## **Recommendations**

### **Use a simple icon or phrase that is easily understood (NOT OER!)**

Oregon OER legislation allows institutions to use “OER” as designation for OER and other no-cost/low-cost course materials. Inventory of designations implementation across institution found that some institutions use “OER” as a designation for OER and no-cost/low-cost courses without providing a definition of the term. With a low level of student awareness of the meaning of the term OER, using a simple icon or phrase to designate no-cost/low-cost materials would improve student ability to find and choose these courses.

### **Consistently designate no-cost/low-cost courses everywhere students search for classes and course materials, including at the bookstore**

Students that participated in the survey and in group interviews shared a desire for OER/no-cost low-cost designations, that include both an easily identifiable icon and a short description, to be displayed in more than one location when searching for and registering for courses. Consistent designation across search platforms would likely improve student ability to identify and choose no-cost/low-cost courses.

### **Post required materials lists earlier, in time for registration**

Most survey respondents who reported an awareness of no-cost/low-cost resources learned about them through their instructors. Some institutions do not require instructors to report OER courses prior to the registration deadline. This makes it difficult for students to choose courses based on no-cost/low-cost status prior to the first day of class or without emailing instructors. Student survey respondents and group interview participants reported that the timing of the availability of the course materials list is an important factor in selection of courses based on textbook costs, making posting of required materials prior to registration critical. Late course material reporting also limits bookstores’ ability to post designations in a timely manner for students purchasing books.

### **Consider adopting a uniform designation or icon across all 24 institutions**

Currently, varying methods of designation and icons are used within and across each institution, which may contribute to the lack awareness by 74 percent of community college and 85 percent and university students of OER available at their institution. Uniform designations could contribute to an increased student awareness of OER and would make it easier for students moving between institutions (e.g. from a community college to a university) to find no-cost/low-cost courses.

## Future Research

### **Conduct large, representative group interviews to determine best designation icon.**

HECC could offer support to institutions by taking the lead on market research for best designation methods that all schools could adopt.

### **Conduct research to determine the best methods to encourage instructors to implement no-cost and low-cost materials in their courses.**

Faculty knowledge of OER remains low, despite more than a decade of OER availability (Allen & Seaman, 2014; Hilton, 2016; Morris-Babb & Henderson, 2012). Previous national research found several barriers to adoption of OER by faculty, including: faculty found it difficult to find the needed OER resources; lack of resources for specific subjects; concern about updates of OER; and a concern about quality level of OER resources (Seaman & Seaman, 2017). Though many faculty have reservations about OER, nearly 90 percent of faculty also reported the cost of textbooks for the student as important in their selection decisions of required course materials (Seaman & Seaman, 2017). With most faculty expressing concern for student textbook costs, finding methods of encouragement, such as workshops, trainings, or stipends, would likely increase adoption of OER materials by faculty across institutions.

### **For the full text and analysis of this research project, see:**

Freed, B.A., Friedman, A., Lawlis, S., Stapleton, A. Evaluating Oregon's Open Educational Resources Designation Requirement: A Report for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, June 2018.

## References

Allen, E., & Seaman, J. (2014). Opening the curriculum: Open educational resources in U.S.

Hilton, J. (2016). Open educational resources and college textbook choices: a review of research on efficacy and perceptions. *Educational Technology Research & Development*, 64(4), 573–590. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-016-9434-9>

Morris-Babb, M., & Henderson, S. (2012). An experiment in open-access textbook publishing: Changing the world one textbook at a time 1. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 43(2), 148–155.

OR HB 2729 (2017). Relating to open educational resources at post-secondary institutions of education; creating new provisions; repealing ORS 348.753; and declaring an emergency.

OR HB 2871 (2015). Relating to higher education; and declaring an emergency.

Seaman, Julia Seaman, Jeff. (2017) Opening the Textbook: Education Resources in U.S. Higher Education, 2017. Babson Survey Research Group. Retrieved from [www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/oer.htm](http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/oer.htm)

# Evaluating Oregon's Open Educational Resources (OER) Designation Requirement

*A research project for the Higher Education  
Coordinating Commission (HECC)*

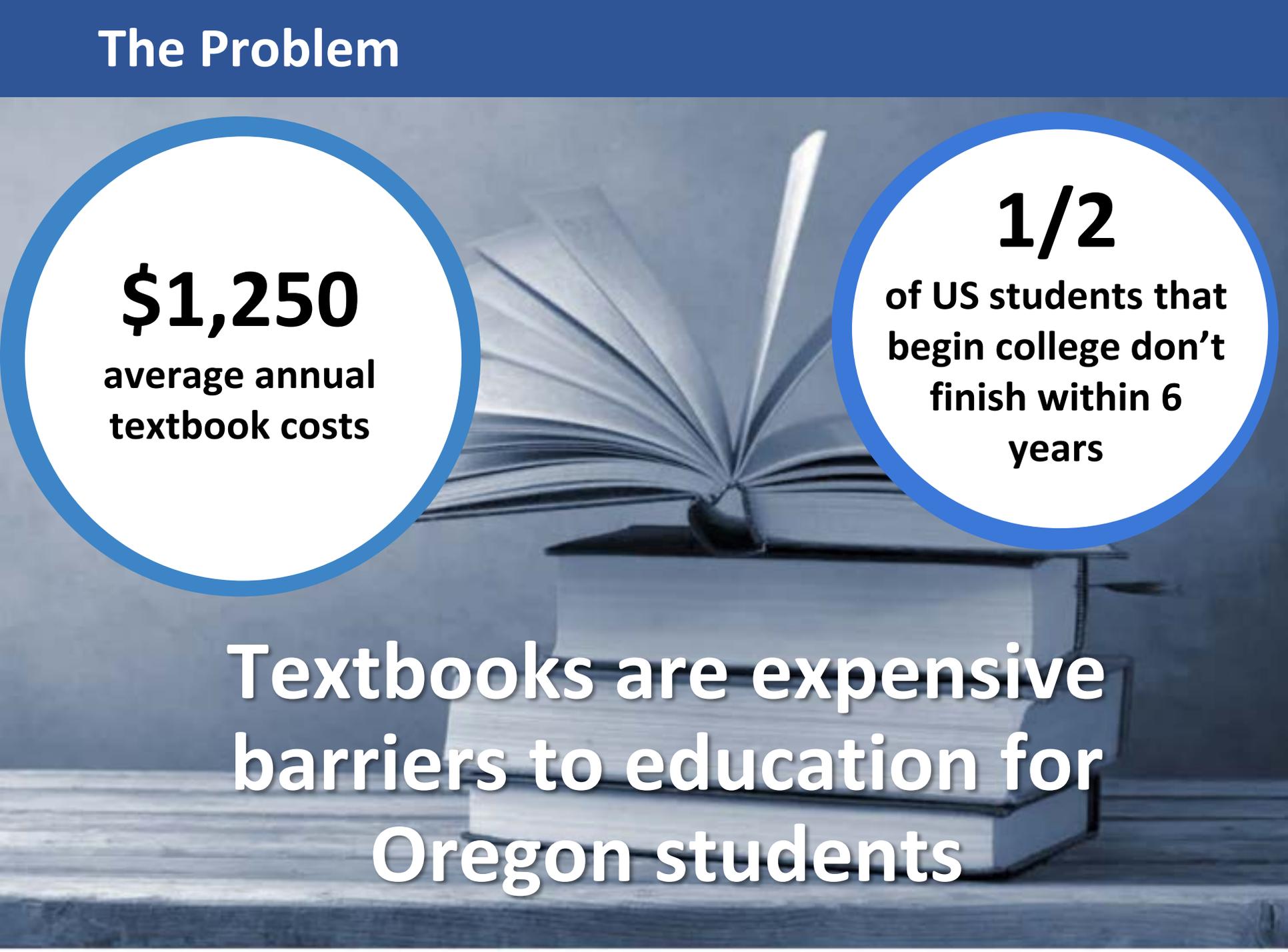
*Sarah Lawlis, Angie Stapleton, Amber Friedman, Brooke Freed*



UNIVERSITY OF  
OREGON

School of Planning, Public  
Policy and Management

# The Problem



**\$1,250**

average annual  
textbook costs

**1/2**

of US students that  
begin college don't  
finish within 6  
years

**Textbooks are expensive  
barriers to education for  
Oregon students**

# Current Policy Solution

## HB 2871 (2015) & HB 2729 (2017) provide access to Open Educational Resources (OER)



### HB 2871 (2015)

Requires community colleges and public universities to “prominently designate courses whose course materials exclusively consist of... low-cost or no-cost course materials”

# Our Research



## Research Question

Which designation techniques are most effective in promoting OER and other no-cost/low-cost materials in Oregon community colleges and public universities?



## Effective is defined as:

(1) Students know OER and other no-cost/low-cost course resources are available AND (2) Students are aware of OER and other no-cost/low-cost course choices at time of course registration

# Methods

**24**

## Inventory

Designations from registration and related websites of 24 Oregon institutions

**8,590**

## Survey

Over 8,000 student respondents across 22 institutions

**2**

## Group Interviews

1 community college and 1 university,  
total of 7 student interviewees

# Student Experience



# Institutional Requirements

“Prominently designate”

Crs #	Name of Course
<b>RVC, Riverside Campus, Medford</b>	
CG144 <b>*LOW COST BOOKS*</b>	Introduction to Assertiveness (4/6/18-5/11/18)
HS115 <b>*NO BOOK COSTS*</b>	Principles of Client Record Management (4/6/18-5/11/18)
HS152 <b>*LOW COST BOOKS*</b>	Stress Management (5/18/18-6/15/18)

# Institutional Requirements

“In the published course descriptions”

<b>Title:</b>	College Algebra	<b>Course ID:</b>	MTH111-D2
<b>CRN:</b>	1079523	<b>Credits/Hours:</b>	4/44T
<b>Term:</b>	Spring term 2017/18	<b>Days:</b>	MoWeFr
<b>Instructor:</b>	C. PETERSEN	<b>Location:</b>	TOWL-201
<b>Dates:</b>	4/2/2018 – 6/15/2018	<b>Estimated Tuition:</b>	\$396.00
<b>Times:</b>	1:30PM – 2:45PM	<b>Estimated Fees:</b>	\$50.00 (see Notes)
<b>Description:</b>	Students demonstrate their knowledge of polynomial, exponential and logarithmic functions through the solution of equations and inequalities using a combination of current technology and algebraic methods. For students who have had two years of algebra and one year of geometry in high school. Prerequisite: MTH 95 with a "C" grade or better or appropriate score on the COMPASS mathematics placement tests.		
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MTH095</li><li>• COMPASS College Algebra Score: 1 or higher</li><li>• COMPASS Trigonometry Score: 1 or higher</li></ul>		
<b>Notes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prerequisite: MTH095 with a grade of "C", "P" or better, or appropriate score on COMPASS math placement test.</li></ul>		

<u>Required Books for MTH111-D2</u>			
ISBN	Book Title	New Price*	Used Price*
<a href="#">9781337777469</a>	WEB ASSIGN FOR OPENSTAX COLLEGE AL	\$45.00	\$33.75

<u>Optional Books for MTH111-D2</u>			
ISBN	Book Title	New Price*	Used Price*
<a href="#">9781938168383</a>	COLLEGE ALGEBRA (OER)	\$52.00	\$39.00

# Institutional Requirements

“At the time of course registration”

**Attribute Type:**

All

50 dollars or under textbook  
Arts & Letters (Humanities)

**Attribute Type:**

Natural Science

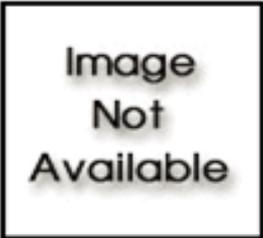
No cost textbook

Social Sciences

# Institutional Requirements

“On the bookstore course materials list”

Term: SPRING 18 Name: WRD 098 Section: 15 Instructor: A. Wickert L

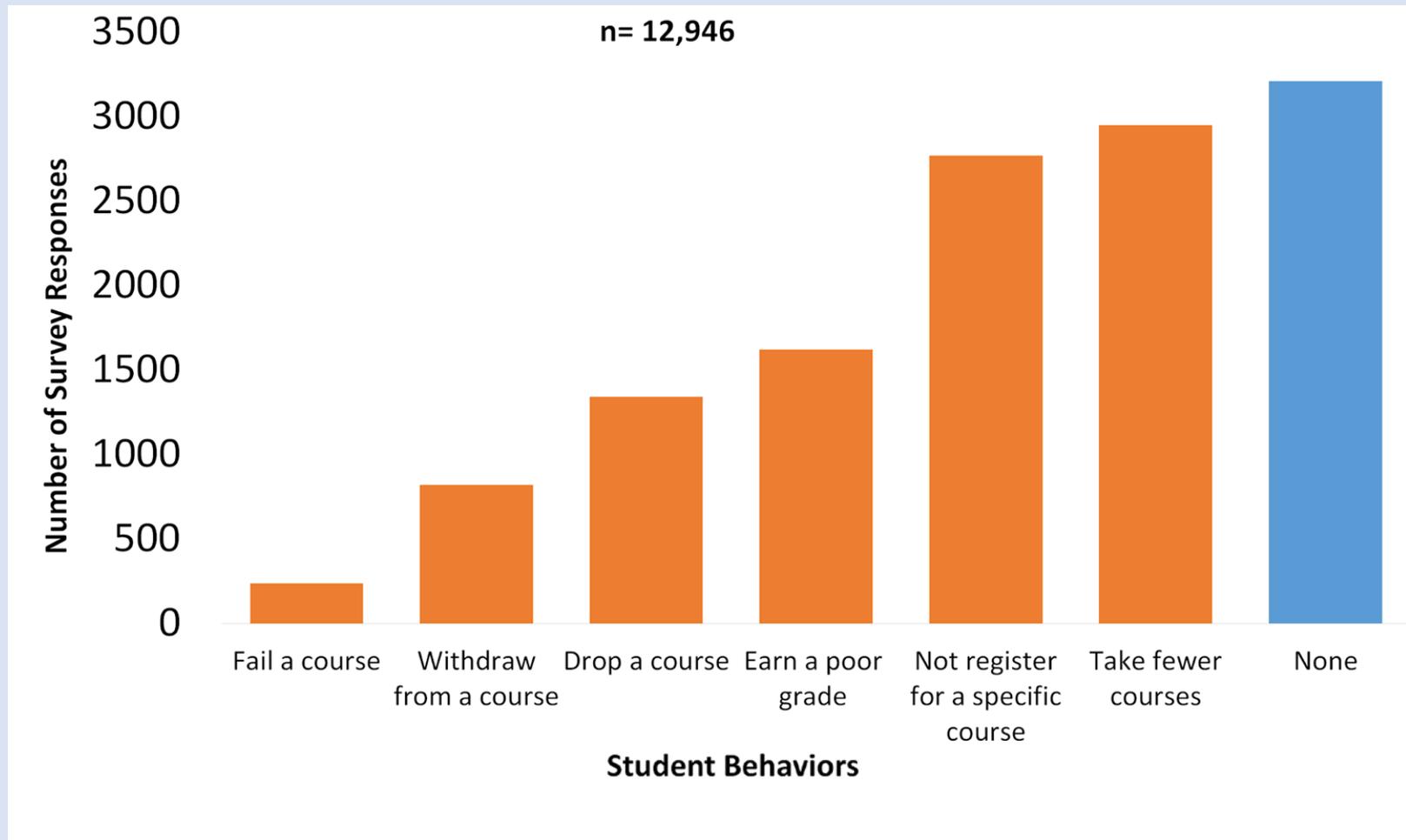
	<b>FREE OPEN ED RESOURCE TEXTBOOK</b>	TBD	Used
	Author   CCC Edition   0 ISBN   9780594065005	TBD	New

[More info...](#)



# Survey Findings

## The Cost of Required Textbooks Has Caused Students to:



# Survey Findings



**11%**  
of students know  
what OER  
means



**89%**  
of students do not  
know what OER  
means



**22%**  
of students are  
aware of  
low-cost/no-cost  
materials at their  
institution



**78%**  
of students are  
not aware of  
low-cost/no-cost  
mat at their  
institution



# Survey Findings



## **What is Working?**

Comprehensive list of no-cost/low-cost courses

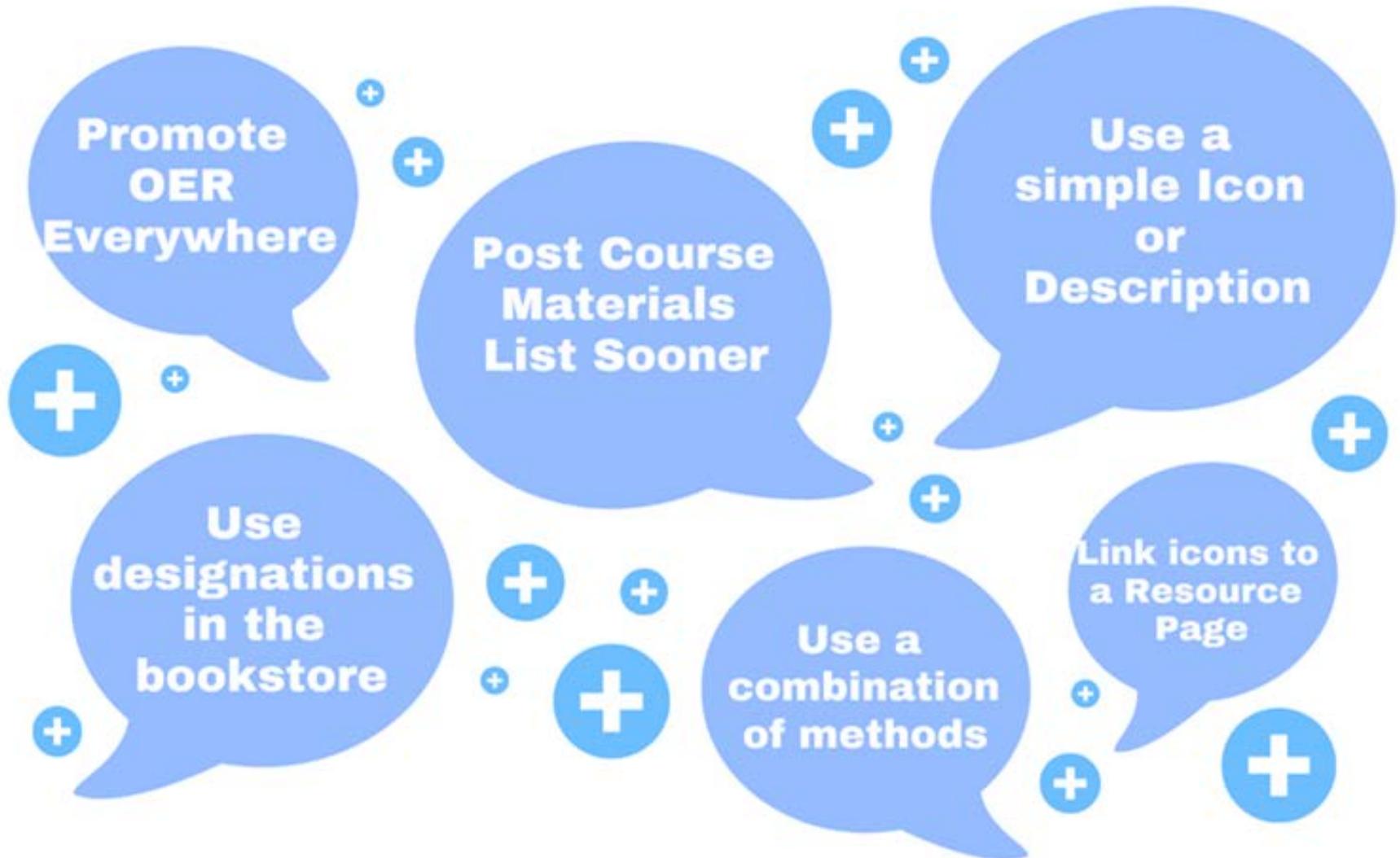


## **Who is most likely to know about OER?**

Community College students and students who qualify for work study or grants

# Survey and Interview Findings

## WHAT DID STUDENTS SAY?



# Recommendations



**Use a simple icon or phrase that is easily understood (not OER!)**



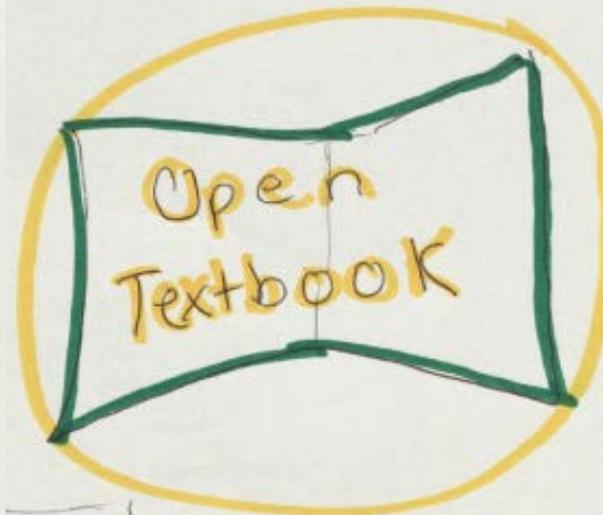
Low or no cost  
textbook and materials

\* ~~(\$)~~ no book costs ~~(\$)~~ \*

\* ~~(\$)~~ low book costs ~~(\$)~~ \*



Equal Access Online



Equal Access Textbook

# Recommendations



**Post required course materials lists earlier, in time for registration**

# Recommendations



**Consistently designate courses on every platform, including at the bookstore**

# Recommendations



**Consider adopting a uniform designation across all platforms and 24 institutions**

# Impact: Improved Access to Higher Education

Graduates with a bachelor's degree earn

**66%**

more than those with only a high school diploma



The average lifetime earnings of a worker with a bachelors degree is

**\$1 million**

more than a worker without postsecondary education



By 2020 **2/3** of job openings will require postsecondary education or training



# Questions?

