

VALENCIA COLLEGE

Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability at Valencia College

Background

The average student in the United States graduates from college with approximately \$30,000 in debt. The cost of tuition is not the only reason that students need assistance in paying for college. In addition to tuition and fees, the average student spends \$1200 per year on instructional materials. The cost of textbooks in particular has skyrocketed, increasing by over 80 percent in the last ten years.

A 2013 survey by the Public Interest Research Group found that 64 percent of students had not purchased a text for one of their courses on one or more occasions because of its cost, even though 94 percent of them were concerned that the choice would negatively affect their grades. Forty eight percent of the student also said that the cost of textbooks influenced both how many and which courses they took in a given semester.

In addition to forgoing buying textbooks, student may purchase used texts (those who are not paying for books with financial aid usually search online for the best deal), opt for slightly less expensive e-versions of texts, or rent texts if that option is available.

Open Educational Resources (OER) are materials with no copyright, or a copyright that allows educational use, that are often free or available for a nominal cost. Across the country, the use of OER is growing rapidly, and is supported by a number of private foundations (e.g., Gates and Hewlett) and universities (e.g., MIT). Community Colleges in particular are early adopters and a number of consortia and projects are showing great success in lowering costs for students. While OER show great promise, there are a number of obstacles to its use. Discussions with Valencia faculty point to the lack of OER for certain technical and health-related fields. A 2014 article in EDUCAUSE Review notes that the early promise of OER has not been realized because:

- Many OER resources are difficult to find;
- Quality is uneven;
- Integration of the materials into an existing LMS is “is not necessarily in the skill repertoire of the average faculty member”; and,
- Not all faculty are willing or able to contribute to open resources (such as the *Creative Commons*).

Within this context, Valencia College is working diligently to lower costs to students and make college more affordable.

Section 1. Selection of Textbooks and Instructional Materials

A. Instructional Materials Policy

Historically, the selection of instructional materials has been at the discretion of faculty. It makes sense that those who are experts in a field, are the best judges of the materials need to help students acquire the knowledge and skills in a given course. In fact, our accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools explicitly states in Policy 3.4.10 that “The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.”

Valencia’s Instructional Materials policy, revised by the faculty and approved by the District Board of Trustees in 2013, acknowledges the expertise of faculty, while still asking them to seriously consider costs to student in their selections. The full policy is provided as *Attachment A: Valencia’s Instructional Materials Policy*

B. Courses with Wide Variance in Costs

In spite of the best efforts of faculty, there is still some variance in the costs of instructional materials among different sections of the same course. A complete list of the courses is provided as *Attachment B. Courses with Wide Variance in Costs*. For purposes of this report, Valencia College defined “wide variance” as materials costing over \$50 with more than a 50 percent difference in cost among sections. It notable that only *seven* courses had significant differences out of approximately *1,137* unique courses offered by the college last year.

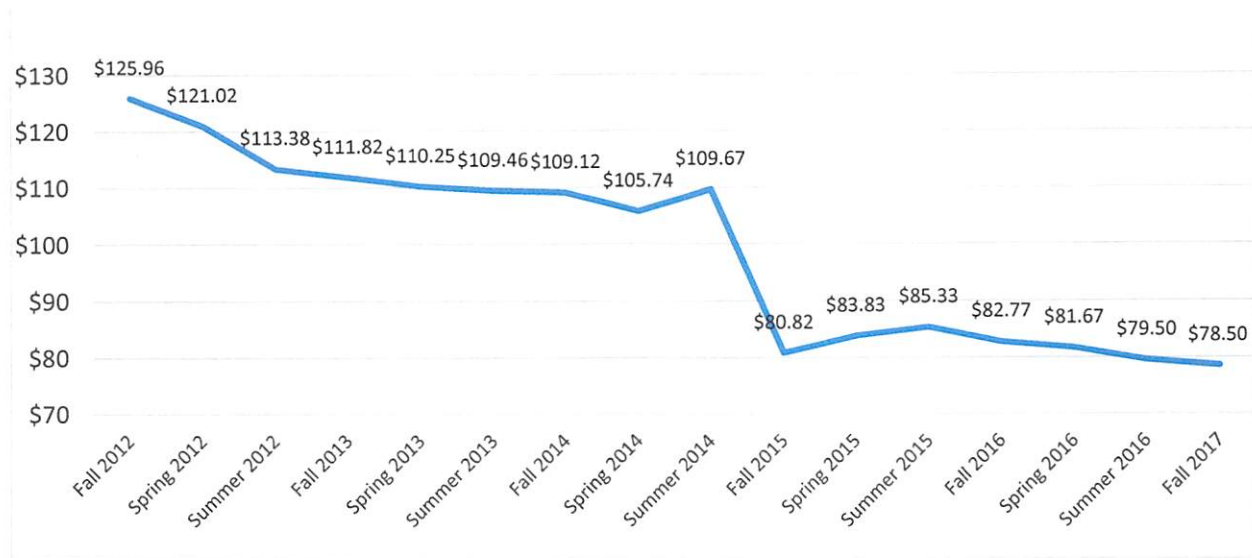
In addition, Valencia College has virtually no instances of frequent changes in textbooks. Any changes that do occur may be attributed to the publisher issuing new editions of a textbook, and not to the selection of a different book. Our policy itself stipulates that materials are to be used for at least two years, and the bookstore data indicates that three years is average.

These lists of courses were provided to faculty, program chairs, and deans as required by 1004.085, Florida Statutes.

Section 2. Initiatives to Reduce Costs

Over the last five years, Valencia has made significant progress in lowering the costs of textbooks and instructional to students. In the fall term of 2012, the average text book cost was \$125.96. For the 2017 fall term, the average text book cost is now \$78.50, a reduction of 38 percent to the student. Figure 1 below shows the decline in the average costs of textbooks over the last five years.

Figure 1. Reduction in the Cost of Instructional Materials



The drop in costs in Fall 2015 is notable, and occurred for a number of reasons. Perhaps most significant was the availability of more specific data on the cost of materials, and a resulting change in faculty culture as they began to work together to make new choices. A number of other initiatives and practices have helped students reduce costs. They are described below.

A. College-Wide Initiatives

Valencia's new textbook policy itself has helped to lower costs. The policy requires new adoptions to be assessed for affordability. New adoptions costing more than 20 percent higher than the previous materials must be approved by a Dean and Campus President. Materials costing substantially more than other available alternatives must be justified by the faculty member and instructors must use all materials that students are required to buy. In addition, faculty may experiment with OER materials with the review and approval of peers.

In Spring 2014, a Digital Materials Task Force, Co-Chaired by the President of the Faculty Council, Deidre Holmes-Dubois, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs, explored forward-looking options for instructional materials. A large group of faculty, deans, administrators from OIT and Academic Affairs, and staff from the bookstore educated themselves about the availability of digital content, including OER and curated copyrighted materials. The team also looked at commercial platforms for the delivery of digital content. Guest speakers both inside and external to the College shared strategies for creating lower-cost, higher-quality materials. The team ultimately developed design principles for the adoption of digital content.

B. Faculty and Dean Initiatives

Faculty and Deans have led the way in finding low cost solutions for instructional materials. Examples include:

- Professors are carefully reviewing materials to see if there are ways to combine or eliminate textbooks. For example, Professor Wendy Wish-Bogue and the English for Academic Purposes instructors on West Campus reduced the number of required texts in all reading classes. Formerly, the required texts were a separate vocabulary textbook along with the base reading textbook, but they now are using one text that integrates reading with vocabulary learning.
- Many faculty use self-created instructional materials. These are usually free, or provided at the nominal cost of duplication, and include tutorials, workbooks, and instructor notes. For example, Professor Val Woldman on Winter Park Campus created a LibGuide with Librarian Dian Dalrymple and uses it in place of the text for Late Roman/Medieval Humanities http://libguides.valenciacollege.edu/roman_medieval. The guide is free to students, but of course it takes a significant amount of time from the faculty member and librarian to keep it current.
- Many textbooks our faculty select are used for multiple classes. For example, Chef Pierre and the faculty in our culinary program on West Campus worked to find a book that can be used for almost every class in the program. Students can find a used copy of *On Cooking* (any addition is allowed) for as little as \$100, making their cost about \$16 per class.
- A growing number of faculty use free materials from on-line sources. These might include materials from educational sites (e.g., MIT's Open courseware) or non-profit organization (e.g., Creative Commons or Kahn Academy).

For example, a growing number of our English faculty are using only free, public domain materials, including Valencia's own free open-source, online reader, *The Valencia Reader*, edited by Professor Randy Gordon and Librarian Chris Wettstein. Our program chairs estimate that this has resulted in a savings of over \$150,000 per year to students taking composition and literature classes. Other faculty are using our free online *Kirkman Reader*.

On Osceola Campus, all of the MAT classes (lower-level math classes with a lab) use a free software called IMathAS. This provides an online platform for quizzes, homework, and other electronic resources that are used to supplement the inexpensive workbooks. The cost of the educational is kept to \$24-\$42 per course, which is a substantially lower price for the 2,000 students taking the classes this fall. While this is an example of a practice that saves money for the student, it does pass that cost on to the college.

Because we have to maintain it on our own server, it takes a significant amount of time from the lab support staff to keep the platform updated and running smoothly.

- Some instructors may choose to curate their free content from a variety of sources such as Ted Talks, youtube videos from trusted sources, public domain journals and books, and journals available through the Valencia Library. For example, Professor Donna French, who teaches speech on Osceola campus, uses a peer reviewed open source textbook called *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing* in addition to self-created instructional materials such as model essays, Power Points, study guides, and quizzes. She also uses free resources like the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill OWL (Online Writing Lab), the Purdue OWL, Style.mla.org, the Norton publishing website, and yourwritingguru.com.

Selecting materials that are specifically and uniquely related to individual topics in a course can result in a very exciting class-but such curation requires far more time than preparing for class using materials that are already assembled. If we want faculty to experiment with this approach, we must allow them the time to do so, which again is an expense to the College.

- Students in many classes are provided with the option of choosing a traditional text or an e-book, which are generally less expensive than hard copy textbooks. They can also rent some textbooks at 40-60 percent of the cost of new and used books.

It is important to understand that some texts that appear to be very high in cost provide a full complement of options such as test banks, videos, or interactive presentations that enhance the overall value and quality of materials.

It also should be known that the use of all OER materials may not be advisable for all adjunct faculty. Online content may not come with the usual supplemental information that accompanies a textbook. The instructor's version of a traditional literature text may provide essays on genre, information about scanning poetry, questions about analyzing elements of a short story, author biographies, etc., while online materials may provide no such context. Some adjuncts who are not as experienced as teachers may need these materials to guide them in their work with students.

C. Bookstore Initiatives

Within the bookstore, a number of efforts have been made to reduce costs to students.

- Bulk purchases of text books are made that enable lower purchase prices on instructional materials. For example, Deans and faculty decided to use a common textbook for all sections of our introductory humanities course, which a very highly

enrolled class. The bulk purchase by the bookstore dropped the price of the book by almost half.

- The College made a decision to maintain lower margins on high cost textbooks. This again passes the cost along to the College.
- The use of Valencia branded custom text books significantly lowers prices to students (often by over 50 percent). In this case, however, the college then assumes the related risks of inventory management on unsold over stock.
- Many students return and are reimbursed for used books when the semester ends. These are then used to source the rental and used book market.
- The bookstore seeks out used books to sell to students. The price depends on our cost and edition status, but is never higher than 75 percent of the new price.
- Agreements have been made with a major publisher, Cengage, to receive 20 percent off national net prices for all new texts purchased by the college.

Section 3. Policies Regarding the Posting of Required and Recommended Instructional Materials

Section XIII of Valencia Policy 6Hx28: 4-09 shows compliance with 1004.085, Florida Statutes:

“The College shall post on its website, as early as is feasible, but not less than 45 days prior to the first day of class for each term, a list of each textbook required for each course offered at the College during the upcoming term. The posted list must include the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) for each required textbook or other identifying information, which must include, at a minimum, all of the following: the title, all authors listed, publishers, edition number, copyright date, published date, and other relevant information necessary to identify the specific textbook or textbooks required for each course. For those classes added after the forty five (45) day notification deadline, the College shall post textbook information on its website immediately as such information becomes available.”

Section 4. Number of Courses and Course Sections Not Meeting Posting Deadlines

Very few Valencia courses do not meet posting deadlines. The only exception is that some additional sections of courses that are already posted may be added to the schedule less than 45 days before the start of the semester. Last minute additions are needed to meet student demand. We are confident that we stay within the 95 percent posting requirement provided by the state.

Conclusion: The Future of Affordable Instructional Materials

Valencia College has made great strides in reducing the cost of instructional materials to students. Most notably:

- We have reduced the costs of instructional materials by 38 percent in just five years.
- Enhanced reporting of costs for materials used on different campuses has raised awareness and stimulated conversation among faculty about how to select low-cost materials that are of high quality and best serve the students' needs
- Ongoing and spirited conversations, both in department and discipline meetings and through faculty development activities, encourage faculty to develop new approaches to teaching that better engage students and that utilize free or low cost materials.

We also have two new efforts that we hope will further reduce costs to students. First, the Faculty Council, under the leadership of Past President Suzette Dohaney and current President Neal Phillips has convened a standing Instructional Materials Committee to keep the faculty current on new opportunities and explore options for lowering costs.

Second, our faculty development program, Destination, will create a track for faculty to work on self-created and curated instructional materials. Every summer, faculty in Destination spend a month together with experts to learn new practices which they implement in the fall semester. Summer 2017 will be the first time we have scheduled an Instructional Materials track and we are excited about the opportunity to support a cohort of faculty in this new work.

While there is still work to be done, we are proud of the seriousness with which our faculty have worked to lower costs to students.

Attachment A: Valencia's Instructional Materials Policy

POLICY: 6Hx28: 4-09



Responsible Official: Vice President,
Academic Affairs and Planning

Specific Authority: 1001.64, F.S.
Law Implemented: 1001.64, F.S.

Effective Date: 09-17-2013

Instructional Materials

Policy:

The adoption of textbooks and other required instructional materials shall occur in a manner that will promote quality of education, maintain academic freedom, and further efforts to minimize cost for students while complying with the applicable federal and state statutes and rules, and eliminating conflicts of interest and/or the appearance of conflicts of interest. Textbook and other instructional materials selection will align with the bookstore's ordering deadlines so as to confirm availability of the requested materials and, where possible, ensure maximum availability of used materials. The President or designee(s) will establish procedures to implement this policy.

Procedure:

- I. The adoption of textbooks and other instructional materials will comply with Section 1004.085, F.S., State Board of Education Rule 6A-14.092, and any other applicable state and federal laws.
 - A. No employee of Valencia College may demand or receive any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, service, or anything of value, present or promised, in exchange for requiring students to purchase a specific textbook for coursework or instruction.
 - B. A Valencia College employee may receive (subject to the requirements of the Florida Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees):
 1. sample copies, instructor copies, or instructional materials. These materials may not be sold for any type of compensation whether or not they are specifically marked as free samples not for resale. Such copies can be returned to publishers or provided to an instructor's division or the Valencia library for use as reserve materials.

2. royalties or other compensation from sales of textbooks or other instructional materials that include the instructor's own writing or work, as long as the textbook and instructional materials have been produced and copyrighted by a recognized, independent publisher at its own expense, have been made available for open sale, and have been approved through the two-step process detailed below:
 - a. All materials proposed for official adoption will be examined and approved using the documented process detailed in Paragraphs C. through E. below. However, a Valencia faculty member who has authored textbooks or other instructional materials being considered for adoption shall recuse himself or herself from the selection process for the course(s) for which the materials are being considered.
 - b. If a textbook or other instructional materials authored by a Valencia faculty member are approved through the regular selection process, a committee of faculty and a dean from the same department on any other campus will subsequently review the materials, measuring them, in particular, against other adopted materials for those courses both for cost and quality, to ensure that the faculty-authored materials meet policy standards. The committee will write a report that details the process and criteria used for the decision to ensure the process is documented in case of audit or inquiry.
 - c. honoraria for academic peer review of course materials. However, a Valencia faculty member who has received honoraria for academic peer review of instructional materials being considered for adoption and is participating in the selection process for such instructional materials shall disclose in writing the receipt of such honoraria to the selection committee and/or dean.
 - d. fees associated with activities such as reviewing, critiquing, or preparing support materials for textbooks pursuant to guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education. However, a Valencia faculty member who has authored support materials for instructional materials being considered for adoption shall disclose in writing such authorship to the selection committee and/or dean, as appropriate.
 - e. training in the use of course materials and learning technologies. However, travel, lodging, and food costs related to attending training will be the responsibility of the faculty member, who may request College funding through appropriate channels.

II. Each campus or set of campuses reporting to a campus president must adopt textbooks and other instructional materials no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the first day of classes to allow sufficient lead time to the bookstore to work with publishers to confirm availability of the requested materials and to ensure maximum availability of used books. When courses are added

after this forty-five (45) day deadline, textbooks and other instructional materials for such courses shall be adopted as soon as is feasible to ensure sufficient lead time.

- III. Each campus or set of campuses reporting to a campus president may select up to two sets of instructional materials for each course.
 - A. If a particular component of a set is available in multiple formats, full-time professors may choose to use any format as long as it is less expensive than the default option. (If a textbook is available in print and as an e-book, professors may choose to use the e-book, even if it has a different ISBN, if it is less expensive than the traditional book.)
 - B. A full-time faculty member may elect to use a set of materials from any approved set college-wide.
 - C. A campus president may approve additional sets of materials that meet the principle underlying this policy: ensuring quality instructional materials at reduced costs available to all students before classes begin, thus enhancing student learning. An annual report of these exceptions will be provided to the District Board of Trustees, the College president, and the Faculty Council.
 - D. A campus president may approve a one-time pilot of materials if that pilot results in lower costs to the students than the cost of the adopted instructional materials.
- IV. Instructional materials are selected at the discipline level with the participation of full-time faculty members who teach particular courses. Faculty from each campus supervised by a campus president will be included in the selection processes related to affiliated campuses. If an academic area doesn't have a full-time faculty member, the dean will select the instructional materials after consulting with the faculty teaching in the area.
- V. Faculty in each discipline will use a collaborative, documented process to adopt instructional materials for each course. The process shall include a vote, and each full-time faculty member in a discipline will have a vote. The selection process will ensure that:
 - A. materials for a given course are suitable, accurate and current.
 - B. materials reflect diverse viewpoints, where appropriate.
 - C. materials offer students format choices, when possible.
 - D. materials are accessible with assistive technologies used by students with disabilities.
 - E. materials that might be used by students taking sequential courses are given particular attention.
 - F. materials are reasonably priced within the context of the academic area, and affordable alternatives have been carefully evaluated.

- G. significant variations in the cost of materials are avoided or justified using the appeal procedure described below:**
- 1. If the cost of a set of instructional materials exceeds the cost of a concurrently used or previously used set by more than 20%, the use of the set must be approved by the academic dean and the campus president.**
 - 2. The faculty requesting to use the substantially higher priced set of materials must explain the need for the materials and document the qualities of the materials that make the higher cost necessary.**
- VI. The College shall collect and maintain, before textbook adoption is finalized, written or electronically transmitted certifications from course instructors attesting:**
- A. That all textbooks and other instructional items ordered will be used, particularly each individual item sold as part of a bundled package, and**
 - B. The extent to which a new edition differs significantly and substantively from earlier versions, and the value of changing to a new edition.**
- VII. The instructional materials selected through the process described above generally are the only ones for which students may be charged a fee. Instructional materials in addition to the adopted materials may be required, with the approval of the department's textbook committee and the dean, and should be available at the start of a class. Such materials should be provided for no cost, electronically when possible, or at the direct cost for reproduction and copyright permissions where applicable.**
- VIII. Employees of the College are prohibited from selling any instructional materials directly to students, parents, other College employees, and to the College (including without limitation the College's bookstore).**
- IX. Full-time faculty may choose to not use any officially adopted materials, with notification to the academic dean of this choice before book ordering deadlines. Faculty opting out of the use of the adopted materials may use any combination of no cost (free and/or open source) materials, with the review and approval of the department's textbook committee. All course learning outcomes must be met even if the officially adopted materials are not used.**
- X. Once adopted, instructional materials should be used for as long as possible, and reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain suitable for the course and that the cost has not increased to an objectionable extent. An ideal adoption cycle is at least two years.**
- XI. Part-time faculty may use only textbooks and other instructional materials approved in accordance with this procedure by full-time faculty on the campus where they teach a class unless an exception is approved by the dean.**
- XII. Faculty and academic departments are encouraged to participate in the development, adaptation, and review of open-access textbooks, in particular for high enrolled general education courses.**

- XIII. The College shall post on its website, as early as is feasible, but not less than 45 days prior to the first day of class for each term, a list of each textbook required for each course offered at the College during the upcoming term. The posted list must include the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) for each required textbook or other identifying information, which must include, at a minimum, all of the following: the title, all authors listed, publishers, edition number, copyright date, published date, and other relevant information necessary to identify the specific textbook or textbooks required for each course. For those classes added after the forty five (45) day notification deadline, the College shall post textbook information on its website immediately as such information becomes available.
- XIV. Bookstore personnel will inform faculty and deans of materials that are not available with time for adjustments so materials will be available by the first day of classes.

Related Documents/Policies:

See Policy 6Hx28:4-10 "Materials Required of Students"

Policy History:

Adopted 12-15-82; Amended 11-18-92; Amended 9-17-13; Formerly 6Hx28:05-06

Procedure History:

Adopted 12-15-82; Amended 11-18-92; Amended 9-17-13; Amended 9-13-16; Formerly 6Hx28:05-06

Attachment B. Courses with Wide Variance in Costs

Valencia College
Courses with Wide Variance in Cost

COURSE		CAT_ISBN_SKU	DESCRIPTION	RATIONALE
BSC1011C General Biology II	Most Expensive \$202.00	1-61731-058-1	ADAMS / VAN DE GRAAFF'S PHOTOGRAPHIC ATLAS FOR THE BIOLOGY LAB	Faculty Discretion and Instructor Preference; cost comparison to testing of e-text in one section.
		0-536-13979-2	MYERS / VCC FUNDAMENTALS OF BIOLOGY II LAB MANUAL	
	Least Expensive \$79.00	1-260-05811-5	BROOKER / BIOLOGY VOL 2 (EVOLUTION, DIVERSITY & ECOLOGY)	
		10390177	OSCEOLA SCIENCE DEPARTMENT / FUNDAMENTALS OF BIOLOGY II LAB MANUAL	
		1-269-90773-5	REECE / MASTERING BIOL NEW DESIGN W/E-TEXT T/A CAMPBELL BIOLOGY VOL 2	
ECO 2013 Principles of Macro Economics	Most Expensive \$254.00	1-259-67285-9	MCCONNELL / MACROECONOMICS W/CONNECT PLUS	Faculty Discretion and Instructor Preference; one section comparison to openstax concept.
	Least Expensive \$39.00	1-938168-23-2	OPENSTAX / PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMICS	
HUM2410 Asian Humanities	Most Expensive \$158.00	1-121-73670-X	ADAMS / ASIAN HUMANITIES (PREVIOUSLY WORLD VIEWS)	Faculty Discretion and Instructor Preference.
		0-324-37367-8	FRAME / ASIAN READER	
	Least Expensive \$76.00	0-7679-0332-3	HAGEN / BUDDHISM PLAIN & SIMPLE	
		0-8048-3295-1	DAVIES / JAPANESE MIND	
		1-121-73670-X	ADAMS / ASIAN HUMANITIES (PREVIOUSLY WORLD VIEWS)	
MAC1114 College Trigonometry	Least Expensive \$94.00	1-269-44636-3	PEARSON / MYMATHLAB NEW DESIGN	1) Faculty discretion and instructor preference and 2) continued use of same text over several semesters addition resulting in increase in used book market.
	Most Expensive \$209.00	0-470-64805-8	BARNETT / ANALYTIC TRIGONOMETRY W/APPL	
MAC2233 Calculus for Business & Social Science	Least Expensive \$76.00	1-285-85758-5	WANER / WEBASSIGN ENHANCED 6-MONTH ACCESS FOR APPLIED CALCULUS	Faculty preference on hard text based on subject matter.
	Most Expensive \$254.00	10161036	GROCCIA / MAC2233 CALCULUS FOR BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE CLASS NOTES	Inexpensive supplement created in-house and sold only for the cost of printing.
		1-133-60768-3	WANER / APPLIED CALCULUS	Traditional paper text with no code used by faculty members who prefer a pedagogy based on hand-written work and testing. Book can be purchased used or rented and sold back during buy-back which may make net cost very similar.
PHI2600 Ethics & Critical Thinking	Least Expensive \$96.00	1-305-07750-4	MACKINNON / ETHICS: THEORY & CONTEMPORARY ISSUES CONCISE ED	Adjuncts must use this book.
	Most Expensive \$206.00	0-538-45283-8	MACKINNON / ETHICS: THEORY & CONTEMPORARY ISSUES	Used the 7 th edition when 8th would have been less.
STA2023 Statistical Methods	Least Expensive \$140.00	0-13-446602-0	GOULD / ESSENTIAL STATS W/MSL & E-TEXT	Bundle includes the paper text and MSL code. This is the most economical way to get both parts together and used by faculty members who require the paper text in class and who also use the MSL content.
	Most Expensive \$214.00	0-13-386499-5	LARSON / ELEMENTARY STATISTICS W/MSL	Faculty preference on hard text based on subject matter.

COURSE

CAT ISBN SKU

DESCRIPTION

RATIONALE

Selection Criteria

Selected groups of texts that were within general education classes that were both greater than \$50 and 50% in variance from similar classes across campuses