

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA STUDENT ASSOCIATION

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT CONGRESS
CONGRESSIONAL SESSION LXXIX
CONGRESSIONAL BILL NO: 790602
March 4, 2008

GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
SENAT BILL NO: GS08-13
March 9, 2008

Title: CONCURRING RESOLUTION CONCERNING TEXTBOOK POLICY REFORM FAVORING STUDENTS

Whereas: A 2005 Government Accountability Office (GAO) study showed that textbook prices have increased at twice the rate of inflation over the past two decades. The average cost of books and supplies for a full-time in-state freshman at a four-year college is roughly one-fourth of tuition and fees, according to the GAO.

Whereas: Students attending four-year public universities spent an average of \$983 on books and supplies in the 2007 academic year, an increase of more than \$300 over the previous seven years, according to The College Board, a research organization that manages the SAT.

Whereas: Based on information from the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education, approximately 238,000 students enrolled in state colleges in 2007, with an estimated \$248 million spent for textbooks in 2007, an average of more than \$1,000 per student.

Whereas: The Oklahoma legislature has shown a commitment to the fight against rising textbook costs. The 2006 Speaker of the House Lance Cargill charged the State Regents to form a taskforce to investigate the rise of textbook costs. The Textbook Taskforce met in committee on December 13, 2006. OU had a student in attendance. This was followed with Speaker Cargill's legislation titled HB 2103 which passed in the 1st Session of the 51st Legislature (2007). It rejected the practice of bundled books and materials, encourages cooperation between faculty, the bookstores, and the publishers to provide means of cost savings, and university bookstores are required to inform faculty of costs and edition changes.

Whereas: The administration of the University of Oklahoma has shown a commitment to fight the rise of textbook costs. OU Senior Vice President and Provost Dr. Nancy L. Mergler established a Textbook Taskforce of the Provost's Office. It recommended ways of making the selection process of textbooks more efficient and transparent. Upon completion of the Provost's Taskforce, University President David L. Boren established a textbook library with a fund of \$200,000.

Whereas: The most recent event in the war on textbook costs is HB 2493 introduced by Rep. Wes Hilliard (D-Sulphur) during the 2nd Session of the 51st Legislature (2008). The bill seeks to eliminate all local and state sales tax on college textbooks to lessen the cost of higher education.

Whereas: We understand the tax revenue from textbook costs may help the local governments in smaller cities in Oklahoma; however, given the rate of savings among college students, it is believed that the money saved through the purchase of tax-free textbooks will be spent within the community and thereby benefit the larger community as a whole. Noted in the OU Daily on January 24, 2008,
"Rip Scott, University Bookstore director, said the bill also could prove beneficial for area businesses, which was his previous experience when operating a college bookstore in a university town in South Carolina. In South Carolina, we operated under similar

legislation. Students were often pleasantly surprised at the register and were always appreciative of the extra savings.”

In addition, Norman is rapidly growing with the expansion of the University North Park retail district. According to the City of Norman, the economic growth of the city is estimated at 4-6% for this fiscal year. The choice is who carries the burden of this sales tax which is \$70-80 per student or with passage of the HB 2493 ,based on the math of student journalists at the OU Daily, \$1.62 million divided among 102,827 Norman residents, based of 2006 U.S. Census estimates, equals \$15.75.

Whereas: The University of Washington bookstore has created a guaranteed buy-back program that lasts year-round and is committed to paying 50% to students for their textbooks. In addition, students are able to view buy-back offers of the bookstore online and be alerted via email when buy-back offers rise based on the bookstore’s need of that textbook.

Whereas: Rend Lake College in Illinois created a partial textbook rental program focusing initially on general education texts. The need to reduce costs was great on their campus as 70% of the students were on financial aid. The program has expanded to now covering 60-65% of all course texts being offered for a cost of \$28 and a \$20 deposit.

Whereas: Portland State University, University of Washington, and the states of Connecticut and Illinois are seeking to help those who cannot afford their textbooks with need-based scholarships and aid for textbooks.

Whereas: California State University System is developing a virtual marketplace clearinghouse for the buying and selling of textbooks state wide. This is seen as a monumental long-term gain by the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance commissioned by the U.S. Congress to investigate textbook costs.

Therefore let it be resolved that:

Section 1: The University of Oklahoma Student Association (UOSA) thanks the Oklahoma State Legislature for their support in battling textbook costs and requests their continued support for Oklahoma’s college students.

Section 2: The UOSA thanks Provost Nancy Mergler for her work with the Textbook Taskforce and her desire to assist students in their ability to acquire textbooks of reasonable costs.

Section 3: The UOSA thanks University President David L. Boren for his never ending work in making the University of Oklahoma a premier institution and his endeavors to open up the access to education to more students which includes the creation of a textbook library meant to offset costs associated with textbooks.

Section 4: The UOSA thanks Rep. Wes Hilliard for his support of Oklahoma's college students through his authorship of HB 2493 which has the goal to eliminate all local and state sales tax on college textbooks.

Section 5: The UOSA requests that more be done to aid students in this matter. For instance, University faculty must be mindful of the impact on students by the texts they choose.

Section 6: The UOSA requests The University of Oklahoma and the State of Oklahoma observe the actions taken by other higher education institutions and state governments such as: the University of Washington with the commitment to 50% buy-back policy, Rend Lake College in Illinois with its textbook rental program, California with the virtual marketplace clearing house, and thus consider implementing changes within Oklahoma that have been proven to work.

Section 7: Copies of this Resolution shall be sent to the following:

David L. Boren, President, University of Oklahoma
Nancy Mergler, Senior Vice President and Provost, University of Oklahoma
Governor Brad Henry, State of Oklahoma
Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins, State of Oklahoma
Rep. Wes Hilliard, Oklahoma State House of Representative, District 22
Rep. Chris Bengel, Speaker of the Oklahoma State House of Representative
Rep. Ken Miller, Chairman of the House Appropriations and Budget Committee
Rep. Tad Jones, Vice Chairman of the House Appropriations and Budget Committee
Rep. Randy Terrill, Chairman of House Revenue & Taxation Committee
Rep. Danny Morgan, House Democratic Minority Leader
Dr. Chris Purcell, OU Regents
Clarke Stroud, OU Dean of Students and Vice President, Student Affairs
Ms. Susan Sasso, OU Student Affairs Associate Vice President
Mr. Steve Bradford, OU Norman Campus Faculty Senate Chair
Ms. Mechelle Gibson, OU Provost Office
Danny Hilliard, OU Director of Government Relations
The Oklahoma Daily
The Norman Transcript
The Tulsa World
The Oklahoman

Author: Kenah Nyanat, UOSA President
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Katherine Fox, UOSA Director of Student Organizations
John Rodgers, UOSA Director of Student Finances
Matt Gress, UOSA Student Congress
Kurt Davidson, UOSA Public Relations Chair

Submitted on a Motion by: Rep. Biddle, seconded by Rep. Adesoye

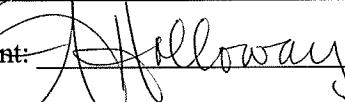
Action taken by Congress: On a vote of 13-10-5, Measure Passes.

Verified by Chair: ^{Vice}  _____ Date: 7-08-08

Submitted on a Motion by: Senator Miller (72), seconded by Senator Sherk (51)

Action taken by Senate: On a vote of 43-2-4, Measure Passes.

Verified by Chair:  _____ Date: 6-04-08

Approved by UOSA President:  _____ Date: 6-06-08