

IFS STATEMENT TO HECC RE TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY

Chair Nesbitt, Executive Director Cannon and members of the Commission,

At our January 31/February 1 meeting in Eugene, The Interinstitutional Faculty Senate (IFS) engaged in a robust and frank discussion on the issue of textbook affordability. Our discussion highlighted a range of best practices, including textbook rental programs, adoption of open source textbooks, using older editions of textbooks, adoption of electronic versions of textbooks, campus bookstores matching of prices by on-line vendors, faculty placing copies of textbooks on reserve at the library, and instructors going textbook-less. However, our discussion also highlighted several vexing problems IFS found deeply disturbing. We heard stories about:

- Students that couldn't afford their textbooks who would regularly sit in the bookstore and read the assignments for their classes.
- Distribution of financial aid after the first day of class, resulting in either no books being available, or affordable used versions being sold out.
- Institutional bookstores charging more than the manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) for a required book, and the practice to be deemed acceptable as 'the cost of doing business'.
- Financial aid policies mandating students purchase their textbooks at the institution's bookstore at significant additional cost than purchasing through alternative sales outlets.

Given the affordability and access underpinnings of the state's 40/40/20 goals, textbook affordability is a significant impediment to the development of an educated workforce that will serve the Oregon's long term economic best interests.

At this key juncture, IFS recommends the formation of a Task Force composed of students, faculty, librarians, community college representatives and bookstore staff to explore best practices and provide a range of perspectives which could inform HECC's important work on textbook affordability, one of the primary concerns for students throughout Oregon's higher education system. We encourage HECC to charge IFS with this task at its earliest opportunity.

Thank you for your time, and I would be glad to answer any questions you may have.