6-1-2016

Open/Alternative Texbook Initiative saves students millions of dollars

Follow this and additional works at: https://newprairiepress.org/ksulibraries

 Part of the Higher Education Commons, and the Library and Information Science Commons

Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative
saves students millions of dollars

Natarajan says K-State algebra students appreciate the availability of a free, online textbook.

Consider the numbers:

If Dr. Rekha Natarajan, college algebra coordinator, is responsible for teaching more than 1,600 students per year, and the textbook she assigns costs $260, then collectively, they would spend $416,000.

Alternately, Dr. Natarajan could receive $5,000 and create an online textbook that she makes available for free.

Which scenario is best for K-State students and families?

Bonus question: What would happen to the price of a college education if this scenario were duplicated for students in intro to biology, human nutrition, technical writing and so on?

The answer lies in K-State's Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative.

Since 2013, this initiative has granted awards of $2,000-$5,000 to 45 faculty members who developed open or alternative textbooks for their courses. Instructors can adapt a pre-existing free, online resource (an open text) or elect to write their own materials, use library resources or implement some combination (an alternative text).

The initiative was created when the student governing association allocated seed money from an existing fund created by university administrators. K-State Libraries provided additional financial backing, as well as administrative support.

"THE SAVINGS PASSED ON TO STUDENTS IS MORE THAN TEN TIMES THE AMOUNT OF OUR INITIAL INVESTMENT."
— PROVOST APRIL MASON

Upon witnessing the financial impact of the program, the offices of the provost and president committed funds for two additional years.

"The savings passed on to students is more than ten times the amount of our initial investment," said April Mason, provost and senior vice president. We look forward to the development of many more affordable—and even free—resources in our classrooms."

This is just one of thousands of open access programs at universities around the globe in response to the high cost of traditional publishing. They all share a desire to make research freely available.

"Libraries have always worked to get users access to the information and research they need," said Lori Goetsch, dean of libraries. "If cost is a barrier to students participating in a college education, it's a natural fit for a university's library system to facilitate access."

In 2015, the Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative received national attention thanks to "Open Textbooks: The Billion Dollar Solution," a report released by the Student Public Interest Research Groups. They concluded that if every undergrad in the United States were assigned just one open-source textbook each year, students would save a billion dollars annually.

So what happens when a professor receives a stipend, creates an open textbook and reduces the students' financial load?

At K-State, it's a winning formula for everyone involved.

Visit **lib.k-state.edu/open-textbook** to learn more.

What is an open textbook?

Open textbooks and materials are created with the intent that they will be freely used, adapted and distributed. They can be accessed online, downloaded for no cost or printed at low cost.
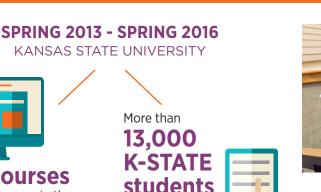
SPRING 2013 - SPRING 2016
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

30+ courses have been or are in the process of being converted to open/alternative textbooks

More than **13,000 K-STATE students benefit each year**

More than **$1,670,000 saved!**

Less than $150,000 invested in the program

FACT: Every year these textbooks are used in these courses, students will collectively save more than one million dollars. As the program grows, so will the savings.