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## Textbook Affordability Project: Chipping away at the cost of a university education

Kansas State University Libraries

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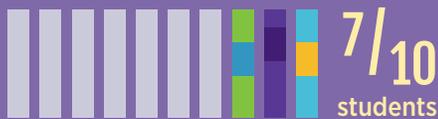
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# THE TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY PROJECT

BY SARAH HOYT

**After students enroll in classes, they buy their books ... right?**



**Not always.** Seven out of ten students say that they have not purchased a required text because of its price tag, according to the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG).

**In fact,** The College Board, an organization that works to expand access to higher education, estimates a full-time undergraduate student at a public four-year university will pay **\$1,298** per year for books and supplies.

So in order to fill students' backpacks without emptying their wallets, **K-State Libraries launched the TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY PROJECT.**



A \$15,000 Student-Centered Tuition Enhancement grant from the K-State Student Government Association (SGA) allowed the Libraries to buy textbooks for students to use at no cost.

In order to make the largest impact on students with the greatest need, the Libraries acquired at least one copy of each textbook for undergraduate courses that have the highest overall enrollment, highest dropout rates, and largest numbers of first-year students, transfer students and Pell Grant recipients.

Some books were purchased through funds from the SGA grant, while others were donated by students who previously took the class. Professors also donate or loan their copies.

Instead of adding those materials to the permanent collection, the Libraries put them in one of their reserve collections. Students check out reserves materials, which are shelved behind a library help desk, for a short period, usually two hours at a time. Reserves items range from textbooks and children's books to films and boxes of rocks for geology.

"The university library has offered reserves materials for more than a century, but thanks to the SGA seed money and the Textbook Affordability Project, we're able to give more students than ever an alternative to purchasing unaffordable texts," Jason Coleman, head of library user services, said.

In fall 2016, K-State Libraries had course materials on reserve for 366 courses. During the semester, 1,354 students checked out those items 5,629 times.

"The Textbook Affordability Project makes significant additions to our

reserves collection, which is already very popular," Rebel Cummings-Sauls, Textbook Affordability

**"THANKS TO ... THE TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY PROJECT, WE'RE ABLE TO GIVE MORE STUDENTS THAN EVER AN ALTERNATIVE TO PURCHASING UNAFFORDABLE TEXTS."**

— JASON COLEMAN

Project committee chair, said. "We look forward to increasing awareness about reserves and reaching even more students in future semesters."