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All in for affordability: Textbooks 2.0 gives students options

Kansas State University Libraries

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ALL IN FOR AFFORDABILITY

BY CAILIN RILEY

TEXTBOOKS 2.0 GIVES STUDENTS OPTIONS, MAKES K-STATE MORE AFFORDABLE

Last year, the entire K-State community came together for K-State's first All In campaign, an effort to raise funds for a single cause within 24 hours. This year, Textbooks 2.0, an initiative supported by K-State Libraries, was chosen as the cause. While this year's event was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been rescheduled for the spring 2021 semester.

By investing in grant awards for instructors, the program, also known as the Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative, yields significant dividends to students. Since 2013, the program has already saved K-State students nearly \$5 million dollars.

Textbooks 2.0 provides funding to K-State faculty and instructors to develop or adopt digital alternatives to traditional print textbooks. These digital alternatives improve affordability, take learning to the next level by providing students with high-quality, faculty-authored materials relevant to their class and provide flexibility by bringing course materials to the palms of student's hands. So instead of purchasing an expensive textbook, students pay only \$10 for a digital textbook.

The Textbooks 2.0 program allows students to pay just \$10 for a digital textbook, potentially saving them hundreds on class materials.

Andy Bennett, department head of mathematics and co-founder of Textbooks 2.0, said the idea for the program arose from a desire to change perceptions about textbooks and how they can be used in the classroom. Bennett had already started using his own notes in place of a traditional textbook, which saved his students a lot of money.

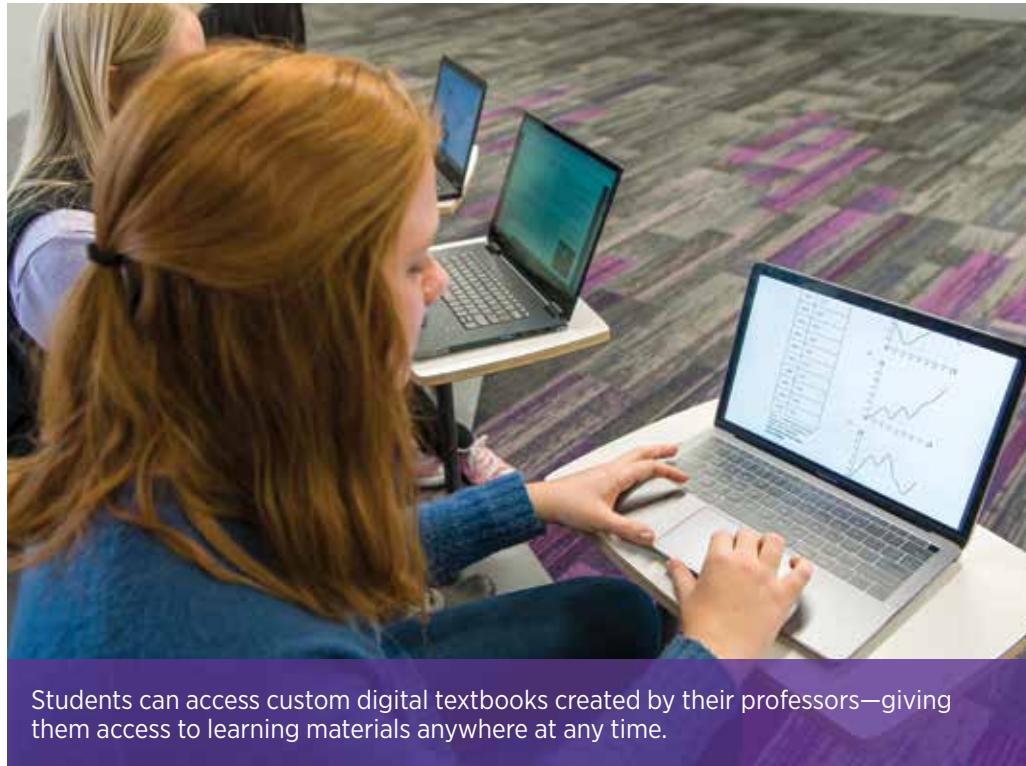
“My ‘textbook’ was \$100 cheaper than a traditional textbook,” Bennett said. “Using an open/alternative textbook meant that I spent some time thinking about my teaching and what key ideas I was trying to get across to students.”

Bennett worked with Brian Lindshield, professor in food, nutrition, dietetics and health, and Beth Turtle, digital scholarship librarian who has since retired, to explore a program that would encourage faculty to create their own open/alternative educational resources. The goal they had in mind—to save students money—turned into Textbooks 2.0, which provides faculty with the grant support they need in order to explore alternative resources for students.

Once Textbooks 2.0 got off the ground, Bennett started seeing results in students’ ability to learn the material.

“If you get students materials that are better suited for the class they are in, that they learn better from, and that they like better, then students will realize that there is more material out there to learn from,” Bennett said. “Information is not always in dusty volumes of textbooks. If you are going to be a life-long learner and be successful in your career, you need to learn that information is everywhere.”

Mary Hirtreiter, who used Textbooks 2.0 for her college algebra and chemistry classes, agrees that open/



Students can access custom digital textbooks created by their professors—giving them access to learning materials anywhere at any time.

alternative resources for students are the future. Instead of paying \$240 for each textbook, she only paid \$10 to

access the materials she needed for class. Hirtreiter said that she thinks the biggest benefit of the program is that it helps make college more affordable for everyone.

“I LOVE THAT I DON’T HAVE TO KEEP SHOVELING OUT MORE MONEY I DON’T HAVE IN ORDER TO GET THE SAME KNOWLEDGE THAT EVERYONE ELSE DOES.”

— MARY HIRTREITER, SENIOR



“As a first-generation college student who also works two jobs just to be able to go to school, I love that I don’t have to keep shoveling out more money I don’t have in order to get the same knowledge that everyone else does,” Hirtreiter said.

The program has found significant success and garnered a substantial return on investment. Additional funds raised by All In next spring will allow the program to expand to save even more K-State students money.

TEXTBOOKS 2.0 VS. TRADITIONAL TEXTBOOKS

LAST ACADEMIC YEAR:

57 TEXTBOOK 2.0 COURSES REPLACED

17,260 TRADITIONAL TEXTBOOKS

saving students \$1.57M

IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, INVESTMENTS OF ALMOST

\$500K = \$5M



savings FOR K-STATE STUDENTS

ONE CAUSE. ONE DAY.

ALL IN FOR K-STATE

TEXTBOOKS 2.0

If you would like to support Textbooks 2.0, please consider giving to All In for K-State in March 2021.

