Affordable Access Success Stories

Affordable access programs like Inclusive and Equitable Access are innovative course material delivery models that help institutions of higher education provide their students with access to course materials on the first day of class at a significantly discounted price.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, the U.S. Department of Education issued regulations that permitted institutions of higher learning to charge students for books and supplies as part of tuition and fees. The regulations define these programs as an arrangement between the institution and "a book publisher or other entity" that makes books or supplies available "below competitive market rates." Affordable access models like Inclusive Access help students obtain course materials on the first day of class and require institutions to provide students with the ability to opt out of the program.

Students on more than 1,500 campuses (and growing) throughout the United States participate in some type of an affordable access program such as Inclusive Access, Equitable Access, or a combination of the two known as a cascading model. These programs deliver world class content and interactive digital platforms proven to aid in improving student outcomes. Affordable access programs ensure all enrolled students have access to their required course materials on the first day of class at a significantly reduced price. Additionally, these programs permit institutions to apply charges for required course materials to a student's account alongside tuition and fees, greatly increasing convenience for students and ensuring financial aid eligibility.

INSTITUTIONAL SUCCESS STORIES

Over the past decade, institutions have leveraged affordable access programs to offer students a convenient, affordable, and timely option for obtaining their required course materials. Below is a sample of key findings from various Inclusive and Equitable Access programs throughout the country:

University of Arizona

Pay One Price brings affordability and predictability to student textbook costs

Key Excerpt:

*University of Arizona BookStores is looking to make textbook costs for students more affordable and predictable through the launch of **Pay One Price**, a program that will provide access to required textbooks for a flat rate of $250 per semester, no matter how many courses a student takes or what their major is.*

*"This is all about helping students," said **Cindy Hawk**, assistant director for the book division at the BookStores. "Previously, we've seen some students taking fewer courses each semester, some not signing up for courses based on book costs and some taking courses that they may be less interested in. Pay One Price lets students plan ahead and streamlines the process."*

Pay One Price is an expansion of our current Inclusive Access program, which has saved the University of Arizona students millions of dollars on digital course materials since 2017. Pay One Price will:

- *Increase ease and convenience by providing all required textbooks and courseware for one flat rate each semester.*
- *Provide day-one access so students can begin class with all materials they need.*
- *Ensure a predictable, flat rate each semester, regardless of the student's major for easier financial planning.*
- *Pay One Price is a digital-preferred program. Students can freely preview Pay One Price materials in D2L through the opt-out date.*

University of California – Davis

Inclusive Access: Bringing Course Content into the Twenty-First Century

Key Excerpt:

Why It Works

- *Because of lower overall logistical and production costs, digital course content is by nature less expensive than the ever-escalating prices of printed textbooks. It can be provided without quantity restrictions, with zero shipping and storage costs, and can be updated easily, guaranteeing every student access to the latest academic content.*
- *Through the Inclusive Access program, each participating course essentially becomes a buying group acquiring the content through a single source, so publishers are willing to negotiate much lower prices than they can for print materials.*

- *Deferred payment also allows students to use their financial aid instead of credit cards and ends the educational disenfranchisement of waitlisted students waiting to purchase their course materials.*
- *In just its first year, the program saved UC Davis students over $1 million while providing them day-one access to adaptive and interactive course content which has been shown to improve educational outcomes.*

California State University – San Bernardino

AL$ Inclusive/Included Access Program

Key Excerpt:

*With this program, students have access to their class materials in digital format (e-books), at no charge, from the first day of class **until census day**, when they can choose to remain in and pay for the e-book or **opt out.** The pioneer of this type of program is San Diego State University. It has proven to be an efficient way to help students, in that they do not have to commit to buy a textbook until they are sure about staying in the class. Additionally, e-books are usually a less expensive format. This method is also ideal for students who do not receive their financial aid at the beginning of the term; after census date, students are charged on their student accounts.*

CSUSN Inclusive/Included Access Program Savings 2018 – 2021: $237,282

Copiah-Lincoln Community College

A Decade of Inclusive Access at Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Key Findings

- *Launched Inclusive Access in 2012 in 14 courses*
- *Expanded to 144 courses across nearly every division*
- *Students save on average $1400 each per year; a combined $4 million annually*
- *Retention rates have improved 21 percentage points since inception*
- *Graduation rates have improved 14 percentage points since inception*
- *Students now expect to have digital resources and first-day access*

UNC Greensboro

UNCG Bookstore launches First Day program

UNCG First Day Complete

Key Excerpt:

"The pilot program launched this semester and consisted of 24 courses across twelve departments, representing 4,020 students enrolled in those courses. Of the students enrolled, less than 1% chose to opt-out. The overall savings to students in the Pilot program was $314,316."

University of Iowa

ICON Direct Saves University of Iowa Students $10 Million

Key Excerpt:

The University of Iowa's inclusive access program, ICON Direct, hit a new achievement with a total of over $10 million in student savings to date.

ICON Direct is the University of Iowa's initiative for ordering digital content from specific publishers and delivering it to students to address rising textbook costs. To date, 22 publishers have content available through the program. During the 2023–2024 academic year, 1,030 course sections with 20,507 students used ICON Direct to deliver course content, with the average amount saved by students during that academic year being $200.

"Instructors tell us how much they appreciate students having their digital textbooks in the ICON classroom on day one," says Vicky Maloy, assistant director of OTLT Academic Technologies. "The publisher platforms are extremely popular because they encourage student engagement."

Minneapolis College

Bookstore Collaborative Saves Students $11.6 Million

Key Excerpt:

The Minnesota State Bookstore Collaborative Services group of stores saved students $11.6 million via Inclusive Access digital course material programs across six of our two-year colleges in a seven-year span of the program. These verifiable savings are calculated as a comparison between the cost of a traditional text format versus a digital version.

"The Inclusive Access program was conceived in partnership with student input, participating publishers, as well as System Office and CFO support. In addition to the shared services personnel savings models that the Minnesota State Bookstore Collaborative Services provides to our participating Colleges, Inclusive Access is just one of our focused efforts on course material

affordability, saving students significant costs and continues to grow each term and academic year," said [Program Director] Westerland.

University of Missouri

AutoAccess: Mizzou Digital Content Solution

Key Excerpt:

The University of Missouri's digital content solution is AutoAccess. This program provides students with digital course materials through Canvas automatically at a reduced cost. Student accounts will be charged for the cost of the content. It's that easy.

Student Savings with AutoAccess: $67 million
AutoAccess Enrollment: Over 80,000

Texas A&M University – San Antonio

Office of the Provost pushes for Inclusive Access course sharing

Key Excerpt:

Dr. Duane Williams, associate vice provost of Student Success and Retention explained the Inclusive Access program and how it can help students save money on eligible course materials from publishers...

"Instead of charging the retail price to students, it's at a discounted rate," Williams said. "So when you activate and you go to wherever you have to access it through Blackboard, students have it from day one, which was the real meat and muscle behind why we planned this, because it is saving a lot of money for students."

Williams also explained that the program is optional for faculty as well as students, and that both can choose to opt out of the program.

…the online learning materials are sold at the "lowest market price," and a map on the [McGraw Hill] webpage states that from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, 137 institutions in Texas have an Inclusive Access program, and the savings realized in a year is $14,907,224.

College of Wooster

Wooster's Inclusive Access Course Materials Programs improves affordability, accessibility, and convenience for students

Key Excerpt:

The program, coordinated through the College's Robert C. Mayer Bookstore, debuted in spring 2023 with a one-course pilot and has experienced growth with each subsequent semester. Currently available for 34 classes, the program has had a significant impact, benefitting over 700 students in the spring semester of 2024 alone. Wooster's Inclusive Access program ensures that students have immediate access to textbooks on the first day of classes, alleviating challenges often associated with more traditional purchasing methods of independent sourcing and shipping.

Furthermore, the textbooks offered in the program come with substantial cost savings for students. "Our goal is to help our students acquire their materials at the lowest possible price and ensure they are prepared on day one for classes," said Kevin Leitner, director of the Mayer Bookstore. The average savings for the spring semester was 29%, resulting in thousands of dollars of savings for students.