



May 28, 2008

Dear Chancellors, Presidents, and Trustees:

As we are sure you are acutely aware, the cost of textbooks has become increasingly high, preventing student access and hampering their success. As part of the implementation of the System Strategic Plan, the System Office and the Board of Governors have been looking at practices that campuses and the system as a whole can engage in to reduce the cost of textbooks. We are happy to tell you that the Board of Governors adopted recommendations on May 5, 2008 developed through the Textbook Summits that my office organized to look for ways to improve textbook affordability. Your leadership is absolutely essential to focusing attention on this issue at your campuses and we want to enlist your support in carrying this work forward.

First of all, we want to recognize the leadership that many of you have already taken in your districts and colleges to improve textbook affordability. During the summits, we heard of many creative and well-run efforts that your colleges have already initiated. Just a few of those efforts include exemplary textbook adoption policies at Chabot and other colleges, collaboration through the Bay 10 Association of community college bookstores, textbook rental programs at Southwestern College, College of San Mateo and other colleges, the Textbook Affordability Taskforce at Los Rios Community College District, and the Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources spearheaded by Foothill-De Anza. We want to specifically thank Roe Darnell, Chancellor of Yosemite Community College District and Hal Plotkin, President of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District Board of Trustees, who represented CEOs and trustees at our summits.

All of you can help focus attention on the issue of textbook affordability and how it relates to student access and successful learning on your campuses by:

- Establishing a Textbook Affordability Taskforce to foster awareness and collaboration in developing campus solutions to high textbook costs.
- Encouraging the development and implementation of Textbook Adoption Guidelines to establish agreements among your bookstores, faculty and other stakeholders to address early adoptions, usage timeframes, use of bundles, and other issues so as to increase the number of used and lower cost textbooks available for students.

- Educating faculty, administrators and students about the roles they can play in reducing the cost of textbooks while maintaining academic freedom and the use of high quality textbooks and learning materials.
- Investigating other potential solutions on your campuses, such as creating textbook rental programs, increasing library reserves, encouraging the use of open educational resources, and negotiating with publishers for customized textbook editions, customized bundles, and the timing of new editions.

The attached recommendations provide more detail on steps you can take to address this issue on your campuses.

We will also continue to work on textbook affordability at the system level with community college associations and college representatives. In the coming months, my staff will be working to:

- Develop “how-to” guidelines on setting up textbook rental programs for colleges that are interested in pursuing these kinds of programs.
- Explore possibilities for grant funding and/or joint purchasing related to textbooks and textbook rental programs with the Foundation for California Community Colleges.
- Support the statewide Student Senate in their development of student awareness initiatives related to textbook affordability.
- Support the statewide Academic Senate and the Community College Committee of the California Association of College Stores in their efforts to gather and/or develop model textbook adoption guidelines.

Your hard work and commitment to California’s community college students remains our greatest asset and we personally thank each of you for your contribution.

Sincerely,



Diane Woodruff, Ed.D.  
Chancellor



Lance Izumi  
President, Board of Governors