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## **UWF expands Textbook Affordability Program to remove financial barriers for students**

**Pensacola, Fla. – Dec. 7, 2016** – The University of West Florida recently expanded its Textbook Affordability Program after a successful pilot launch. The program, implemented by the Office of the Provost and the John C. Pace Library, aims to reduce student costs by ensuring access to course-required print textbooks.

“It is important for institutional units to contribute to student success,” said Robert Dugan, dean of libraries at UWF. “The UWF Textbook Affordability Program was planned and implemented to provide access to the textbooks undergraduate students need to succeed in their courses by removing textbook costs as a barrier.”

To date, the University has purchased one copy of every required print textbook for every section of 1000, 2000, 3000 and 4000 level courses and made them available for students to loan. If in the process of monitoring queues, a book is requested five times while on loan to another student, the library purchases a second copy of that book.

During the pilot program last fall, the Pace Library purchased 125 print textbooks for 1000 and 2000 level courses, which were checked out more than 1,000 times. The project was expanded in Spring 2016 to include textbooks required by 3000 level courses, and 4000 level course textbooks were added in Fall 2016. Additionally, the program expanded to UWF Emerald Coast, with 87 textbooks shelved to support students at that location.

The program’s objectives are to increase college affordability by providing an alternative to purchasing textbooks, increase retention by reducing the chances of financial constraint due to textbook cost, and to improve the classroom experience by making textbooks available so students will be better prepared for class.

University costs for the first full academic year totaled more than \$45,000 for the program, including the purchase of more than 400 textbooks. According to Dugan, the dollar value of textbooks loaned to students added up to \$414,387.12, resulting in a 9-to-1 return on investment for the University.

UWF implemented the Textbook Affordability Program prior to the passage of HB-7019, a bill signed into law by the Florida Board of Governors to identify strategies to promote college affordability.

Dugan said the libraries brought a solution concerning the cost of textbooks to the Office of the Provost based upon findings from the 2015 pilot project. Leadership in the Provost's Office made it possible for the libraries to expand the program to include all textbooks.

"As a student-centered institution, UWF understands that the costs to attend can be problematic for students," Dugan said. "Institutional units in UWF have sought to decrease the costs for students throughout the years through a multiplicity of approaches. Identifying and addressing student needs has been a hallmark of UWF since it opened nearly 50 years ago."

For more information, visit the [UWF Libraries website](#).

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