Sara Perman, State Relations
Manager
University of Alaska
Juneau: (907) 463-3086
Cell: (907) 360-7271
Email: srperman@alaska.edu

UNIVERSITY
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Many Traditions One Alaska

University of Alaska
Legislative Office,
227 4th Street,
Juneau, AK 99801

January 31, 2023

The Honorable Senator Robert Myers and Representative Ashley Carrick
Alaska State Capitol,
124 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Myer and Representative Carrick,

Following the introduction of Senate Bill 13 and House Bill 10, "*relating to the costs and charges for textbooks and other course materials required for University of Alaska courses,*" your offices have requested a joint update from the University of Alaska on our current implementation measures. We look forward to providing you both with an update later today during our scheduled meeting. However, I am also taking the liberty to pass along written updates from each of our universities beforehand so that you may have time to review them before our discussion. Please find the updates as attachments to this letter.

Kind regards,

Sara Perman

State Relations Manager,
University of Alaska

Senate Bill 13 and House Bill 10 require the University of Alaska to provide the costs and charges of textbooks and other course materials for courses offered by our universities. The language in the bills specifically requires that the University provide, through its online course schedules, a description of each course that identifies all required course materials and their associated costs; as well as an identifier marking if the course materials are zero-cost or, to the extent practical, low-cost.

It is important to note that each of our universities, UAA, UAF, and UAS are subject to federal regulations that require us to provide accurate and timely information about the cost of books or required materials. We have already been doing this, however, we have made recent progress in highlighting the availability of low and zero-cost resources. The following pages provide a quick summary, provided by each university, of the measures currently in place to do so.

University of Alaska Anchorage

Current students may search for Zero Textbook Cost Sections of Courses in the University of Alaska's self-service portal, UAOnline. From the landing page, students may select Search for Classes, then Schedule Planner. Schedule Planner will prompt students to choose the campus courses they would like to view. From the home page, students can begin their search by clicking add a course, then Search by Section Attribute. Students may select UAA Zero Textbook Cost Section in the Attribute drop-down menu. Schedule Planner will display Subject and Course Number Options for courses with Zero Textbook Cost Sections.

Prospective students may also search for Zero Textbook Cost classes without University of Alaska Login credentials. Using our Mobile Friendly Class Schedule Search, anyone may view available classes. To view with Zero Textbook Cost Sections: click Search, filter for courses with a free or low-cost book(s) or material(s), and select search again. All Zero Textbook "

What the student sees in Schedule Planner-

What they see in alternate course search-

UA's Zero Cost /Low-Cost Materials Transparency Efforts

What they see in public search-

This and is a vast improvement over the past when students had to go back and forth between the class schedule and the online bookstore.

Please note that at UAA, we have not yet defined a "low cost" level, so students here can see the No-cost or what we call Zero Cost Textbook courses.

Additional zero-textbook cost resources for students, prospective students, and faculty:

https://libguides.consortiumlibrary.org/ztccourses/

https://libguides.consortiumlibrary.org/ztccourses/students

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxF8jxmoITg

University of Alaska Fairbanks

In response to the Textbook Cost Transparency Act - SB13 / HB10

Sec 14.40.112 Course materials

(a) The University of Alaska online course schedule must provide a description of each course that clearly identifies
         (1) required course materials;

The UAF online course schedule (as per Sec 14.40.112.c.3) located in the UA Online interface provides a description of each course and a link to the UAF Bookstore. All required course materials for purchase through the UAF Bookstore are listed each semester through the UAF Bookstore online interface (eFollet). Students' required course materials are listed in their academic syllabi, and if required course materials cannot be purchased through the UAF Bookstore, they contact the instructor for more information.

         (2) which of the required course materials, if any, are zero-cost resources;
         (3) to the extent practicable, which of the required course materials, if any, are low-cost
              resources; and

The UAF Bookstore includes the following options for each course textbook adoption and this information is displayed to students at the time of search: "No materials are needed for this course", "Students should contact the instructor for materials", and "Only FREE Open Educational Resources will be used for this Course/Section. Access information will be supplied by the instructor." The UAF Bookstore also lists textbooks and course materials as "Required", "Recommended", and "Suggested" based on the UAF instructor syllabi. The Bookstore sells new and used (lower cost) publications and offers a textbook rental program to students looking for cost-efficient course materials. In addition, the Bookstore runs a textbook buy-back program available to students to resell their textbooks and recoup up to 50% of the upfront costs (based on textbook condition and program criteria) and offers a Textbook Low Price Guarantee, meaning if a student finds a less expensive price within seven days of purchase, the UAF Bookstore will give the student the difference based on program details.
UAF syllabi require a section for all required materials to be listed. Students may request syllabi from instructors before registration to learn more about any zero-cost and low-cost resources. Many zero-cost resources are also provided throughout the weekly lecture materials in a course, in line with other content.

As per Sec 14.40.112.c.2, "Course Materials" include "other media used to convey course information to a student". In UAF online courses, zero-cost materials may include external videos, audio, journal articles, and images. Providing additional information about all zero-cost materials in a course within the schedule would be impractical, overly burdensome, and potentially an additional barrier for students if lengthy.

Separating no-cost and low-cost materials and listing each in the CLSS/Banner system would require significant custom modifications and changes to faculty textbook adoption practices. (see also response to Sec 14.40.112.b below)

> (4) the amount of each automatic fee, if any, charged for required course materials when a student registers for a course.

Some courses (e.g. studio art, lab courses, etc) have additional fees for materials. These fees are displayed in UA Online schedule search results and at the time of registration.

Some courses require exam proctoring services that charge students a fee. This fee is generally not reported in the online course description, though students are made aware of this through their instructors. UAF is in active discussion on additional ways to make this nominal fee known.

(b) A search function on the University of Alaska online course schedule must provide for searches identifying courses in which all required course materials are zero-cost or low-cost resources.

In the Spring of 2021, UAF implemented a combined no/low-cost course marking (a.k.a. "NoLo") into the online course scheduler (CLSS) and UA Online. Each semester, courses are tagged in CLSS as NoLo, as reported by instructors. NoLo courses are searchable via several course schedule locations: Advanced Search in UA Online and the UAF Coursefinder, the eCampus website, and the Open@UAF website (open.uaf.edu).

NoLo courses are defined as those where course materials are under $40. This threshold is based on the pre-tax sales price not more than four times the current (2023) hourly minimum wage in Alaska (as per Sec 14.40.112.c.2).

UAF NoLo course materials include books, computer software, magnetic media, DVDs, CD-ROMs, computer courseware, online services, online learning programs, or other media used to convey course information to a student. It does not include lab fees, tuition, or special course fees that include supplies. (as per Sec 14.40.112.c.1)

University of Alaska Southeast

UAS Affordable Course Materials Efforts have saved students over $100K/year each of the past six years on course materials.

UAS Zero Textbook Cost Course Marking & Search (Spring 2022)

- collaboration between faculty senate, provost, registrar, IT/web team, and academic department admins to update Proposed Course Offering workflows at all three campuses to enable faculty to mark their course sections that have Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC). SZTC is the Banner attribute applied by the Registrar to mark these sections so they can be identified by students during course search and registration.
- met with the UAS Student Government to discuss and collect input on ZTC implementation and to share info about textbook affordability challenges and introduced Textbook Transparency legislation.
- Earlier discussions at the Faculty Senate level led our team to focus on implementing the ZTC process and to postpone considerations for marking course sections using Low-Cost materials. Primary challenges or concerns raised by faculty were sourcing pricing data, assigning responsibility for this task, and/or quality control checks.

Spring 2023
- 79 ZTC sections

Fall 2022 (close freeze)

- 116 ZTC sections (25% of total sections offered)
- 1,312 students enrolled
- $132,120 estimated student savings on textbooks/course materials
- 58 participating faculty
- Institutional Effectiveness adds ZTC filter to Course Enrollment Dashboards to simplify reporting.

Previous Efforts 2016-2021 (Pre ZTC marking, students couldn't search for this type of course, faculty self-reporting)

- 342 Low or No Cost Sections
- 3,749 students enrolled
- $374,900 estimated student savings on textbooks/course materials
- 99 participating faculty"

Additional resources:

https://uas.alaska.edu/library/open-educational-resources.html

https://uas.alaska.libguides.com/open-educational-resources/ztc