

## Resolutions Related to Textbook Cost Transparency and Affordability Adopted at ASCCC Spring 2023 Plenary Session

### 6.01 S23 Support AB 607 (Kalra, 2023), If Amended

Whereas, AB 607 (Kalra, as of February 17, 2023)<sup>1</sup> proposes to modify California Education Code §66406.9<sup>2</sup> by adding the requirement that the California Community Colleges “prominently display, by means that may include a link to a separate internet web page, the estimated costs for each course of all required course materials and fees directly related to those materials, for no less than 75 percent of the total number of courses on the online campus course schedule. 'Course materials' as used in this paragraph includes digital or physical textbooks, devices such as calculators and remote attendance platforms, and software subscriptions”;

Whereas, California Education Code §66406.9<sup>3</sup> currently uses the term “course materials” and “digital course materials” to refer to course resources that are exclusive of devices and supplies such as calculators;

Whereas, Resolution F20 20.02 Ensure Course Cost Transparency for Students encourages “local academic senates to advocate for the implementation of a process for consistent, clear, and transparent messaging to students prior to registration regarding all material and supply costs in appropriate locations including the schedule of classes and the bookstore”<sup>4</sup>; and

Whereas, California Code of Regulations Title 5 §59402<sup>5</sup> states that required instructional materials “means any materials which a student must procure or possess as a condition of registration, enrollment or entry into a class; or any such material which is necessary to achieve the required objectives of a course,” establishing “instructional materials” as inclusive of textbooks, supplemental materials, and course supplies;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges support AB 607 (Kalra, as of February 17, 2023) if amended to replace “course materials” with “instructional materials” to ensure that definitions within California Education Code §66406.9<sup>6</sup> are consistent and to prevent the introduction of a definition into law that is inconsistent with a definition that is presently in regulation.

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<sup>1</sup> AB 607 (Kalra): [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240AB607](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB607).

<sup>2</sup> California Education Code §66406.9: <https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/education-code/edc-sect-66406-9.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution F20 20.02 Ensure Course Cost Transparency for Students: <https://www.asccc.org/resolutions/ensure-course-cost-transparency-students>.

<sup>5</sup> California Code of Regulations, title 5 §59402: <https://casetext.com/regulation/california-code-of-regulations/title-5-education/division-6-california-community-colleges/chapter-10-community-college-administration/subchapter-7-instructional-materials/section-59402-definitions>.

<sup>6</sup> California Education Code §66406.9: <https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/education-code/edc-sect-66406-9.html>.

### **13.01 S23 Low Textbook Cost Designation and Search in CVC Online Course Finder**

Whereas, Resolution 17.05 F22 Adopt Student Senate for California Community Colleges Low-Cost Recommendation<sup>7</sup> encourages local academic senates to adopt \$30 or less as their locally established cost threshold that must not be exceeded for a course to be considered low-cost for reporting purposes and designation in the class schedule;

Whereas, Establishing a low-cost definition is a local determination, yet a single meaning of low-cost is necessary when students are provided the opportunity to select courses from different colleges, since various definitions of low-cost at different institutions may be confusing and even misleading for students;

Whereas, The California Virtual Campus Exchange's online Course Finder enables students to access online courses across the state and both designates when a section is Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) with a symbol and enables students to limit their search to only those sections that are ZTC; and

Whereas, The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has encouraged colleges to implement a mechanism for identifying course sections that employ low-cost course materials and recognizes that although reducing costs to zero may not be immediately possible, efforts to substantially decrease the costs of course materials should be recognized<sup>8</sup>;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges request that the California Virtual Campus (CVC) add a Low Textbook Cost (LTC) symbol to recognize those sections that have a cost of textbooks and supplemental resources that do not exceed \$30 and include the LTC symbol in the search feature in the CVC's online Course Finder.

### **13.06 S23 Establishing Low-Cost Textbook Parameters**

Whereas, Resolution 13.01 F17 Recognition of Course Sections with Low-Cost Course Material Options established that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges encourages colleges to implement a mechanism for identifying course sections that employ low-cost course materials and supports efforts to increase student access to high-quality open educational resources and to reduce the cost of course materials and supplies for students in course sections for which open educational resources may not be available to accomplish zero cost for students;

Whereas, Resolution 17.05 F22 Adopt Student Senate for California Community Colleges Low-Cost Recommendation encourages local academic senates to adopt \$30 or less as their locally established cost threshold that must not be exceeded for a course to be considered low-cost for designating and reporting purposes;

Whereas, XB12, the instructional-material-cost section level data element, was added to the California Community Colleges Management Information System Data Element Dictionary for

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<sup>7</sup> Resolution F22 17.05 Adopt Student Senate for California Community Colleges Low-Cost Recommendations: <https://asccc.org/resolutions/adopt-student-senate-california-community-colleges-low-cost-recommendation>.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution F20 09.01 Recommendations for the Implementation of Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Designation in Course Schedules: <https://asccc.org/resolutions/recommendations-implementation-zero-textbook-cost-ztc-designation-course-schedules>.

implementation in summer 2022 and requires colleges to code course sections that have “low instructional material costs (as defined locally)”<sup>9</sup>; and

Whereas, Local academic senates have sought guidance regarding what parameters should be used to determine the cost used when deciding whether a given course section is below the locally established low-cost threshold;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Colleges recommend that local low-cost course material definitions specify that the price point be based on the costs of textbooks and supplemental materials—e.g., homework systems—at or through the college bookstore that are available to all students; and

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Colleges recommend that local low-cost course material definitions specify that the price point be based on the costs of textbooks and supplemental materials that students will own or have access to permanently.

### **13.07 S23 Asserting Faculty Primacy with Respect to Establishing Low-Cost Definitions and Instructional Materials Cost-Reduction Goals**

Whereas, Selecting course instructional materials is part of the academic and professional matters listed under Title 5 §53200, and faculty have a responsibility to take into consideration the cost associated with those instructional materials;

Whereas, California community colleges have been increasingly subjected to mandates that were initially introduced as optional in areas that are clearly the purview of academic senates, including the creation of associate degrees for transfer, the submission of courses to the Course Identification Numbering System (C-ID), the removal of many math and English prerequisites, implementation of guided pathways, and approaches to maximizing the probability that students will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics within a one-year timeframe of their initial attempt; and

Whereas, The charge of the Equitable Student Experience: Burden-Free Instructional Materials Task Force—initially referred to as a ZTC Taskforce—is to evaluate the existing infrastructure that guides instructional material choices and provide recommendations to structural changes that will facilitate the creation of sustainable solutions that reduce textbook costs for students in the long term<sup>10</sup>;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges urge local academic senates to assert academic senate primacy in addressing course instructional material cost issues, including all aspects of local low-cost definitions and any goal setting related to instructional materials costs or the offering of zero textbook cost and low textbook cost sections.

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<sup>9</sup> California Community Colleges Management Information System Data Element Dictionary: <https://webdata.cccco.edu/ded/xb/xb12.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Zero Textbook Cost Program Updates, February 23, 2023: <https://asccc-oeri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ztc-program-overview-and-guidance-a11y.pdf>