



# Examining Course Material Affordability Models

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*Meeting of the College Course Materials  
Affordability and Equitable Access Task Force*

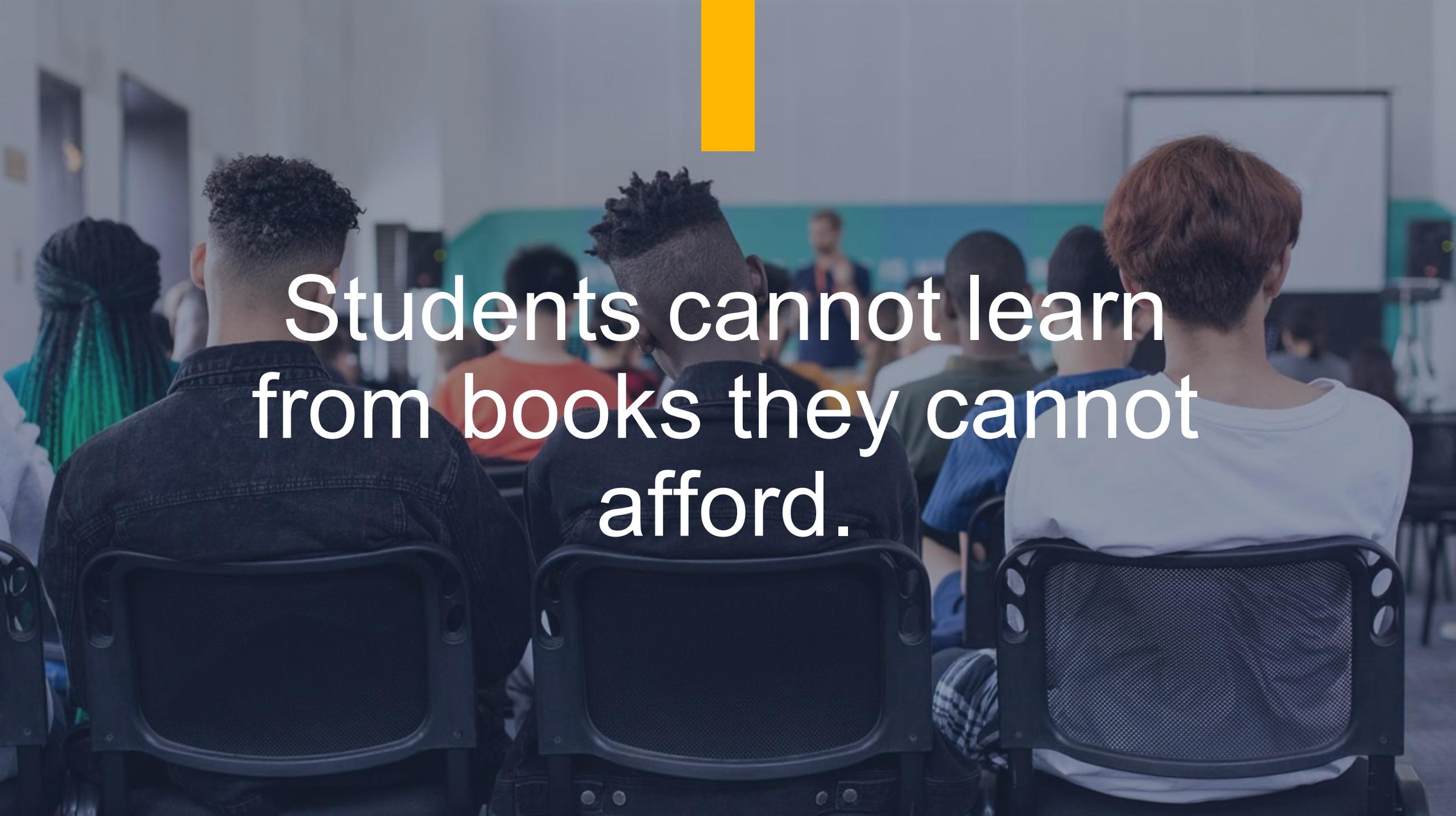
Thursday, May 12th



# Illinois member libraries

- **Association of College & Research Libraries**
- **Illinois Wesleyan University**
- **Northwestern University**
- **University of Chicago**
- **University of Illinois at Chicago**
- **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**
- **American Theological Library Association**
- **College of DuPage**

**SPARC\***



Students cannot learn  
from books they cannot  
afford.

# What is Inclusive Access?

Inclusive Access is a textbook sales model that adds the cost of digital course content into students' tuition and fees.



# What is OER?

Open educational resources (OER) are course materials—from supplemental content to entire textbooks—that are free for people everywhere to use and repurpose.

# OER

- Digital access is available by day one at no cost to students. Access is free forever.
- Students can choose low cost print option if desired.
- Students retain access to materials forever.
- Openly licensed so faculty can adapt materials to local needs.

# Inclusive Access

- Digital access is available by day one and students are directly billed for the cost later.
- Print rental option may be available at additional cost.
- Access typically expires at the end of the course.
- “All rights reserved” so faculty do not have copyright permission to adapt or tailor.



# What are the savings?

Inclusive access content is discounted compared to print prices, but not always by much, and prices can rise.



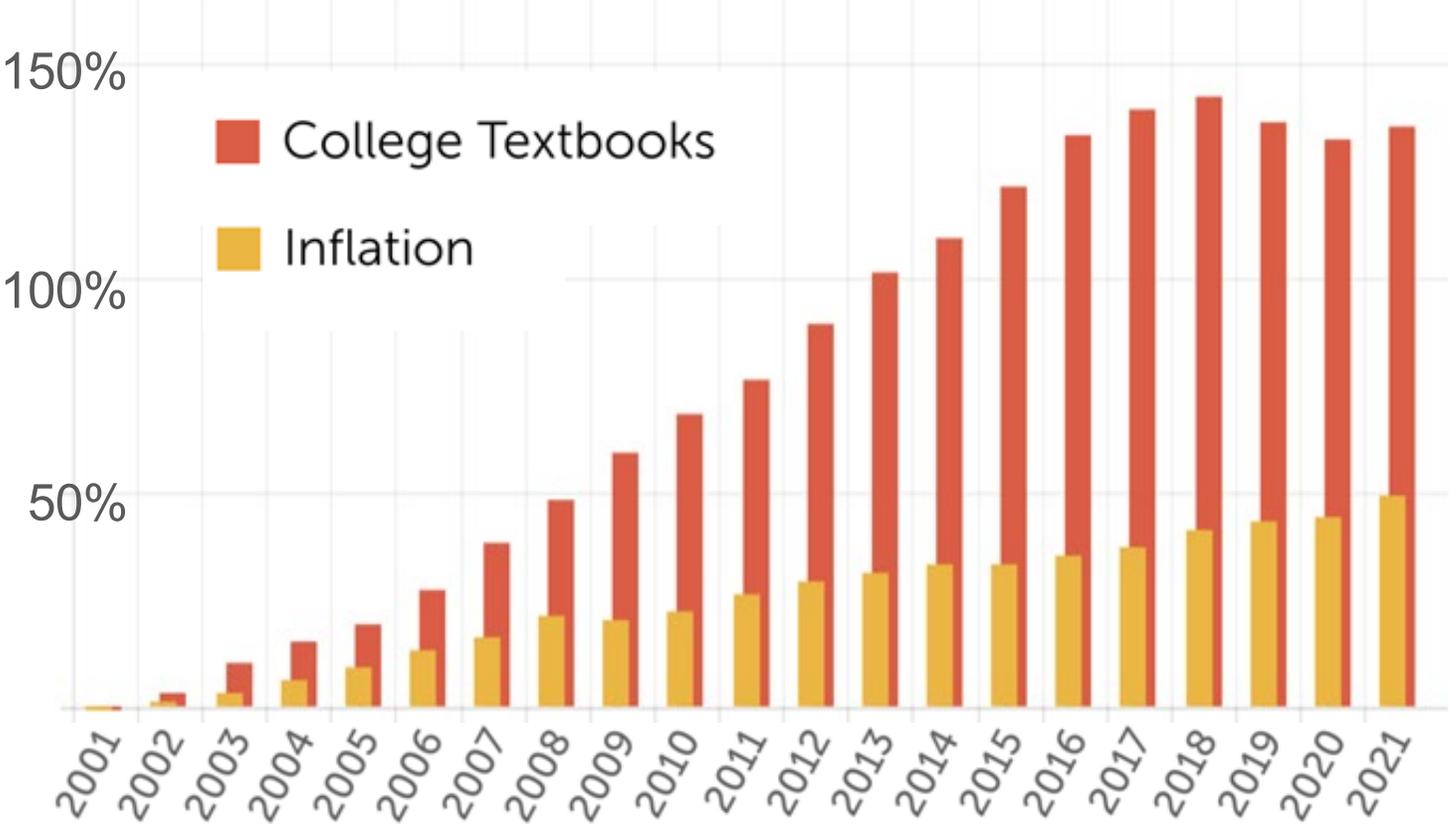
*I know they say it's cheaper, but that's not been my case. I pay more for inclusive access, and it's that one-time use that you don't have access to later.*



Barbara Gooch, Student

Volunteer State Community College | Gallatin, TN

# Textbook Market, 2001-2021



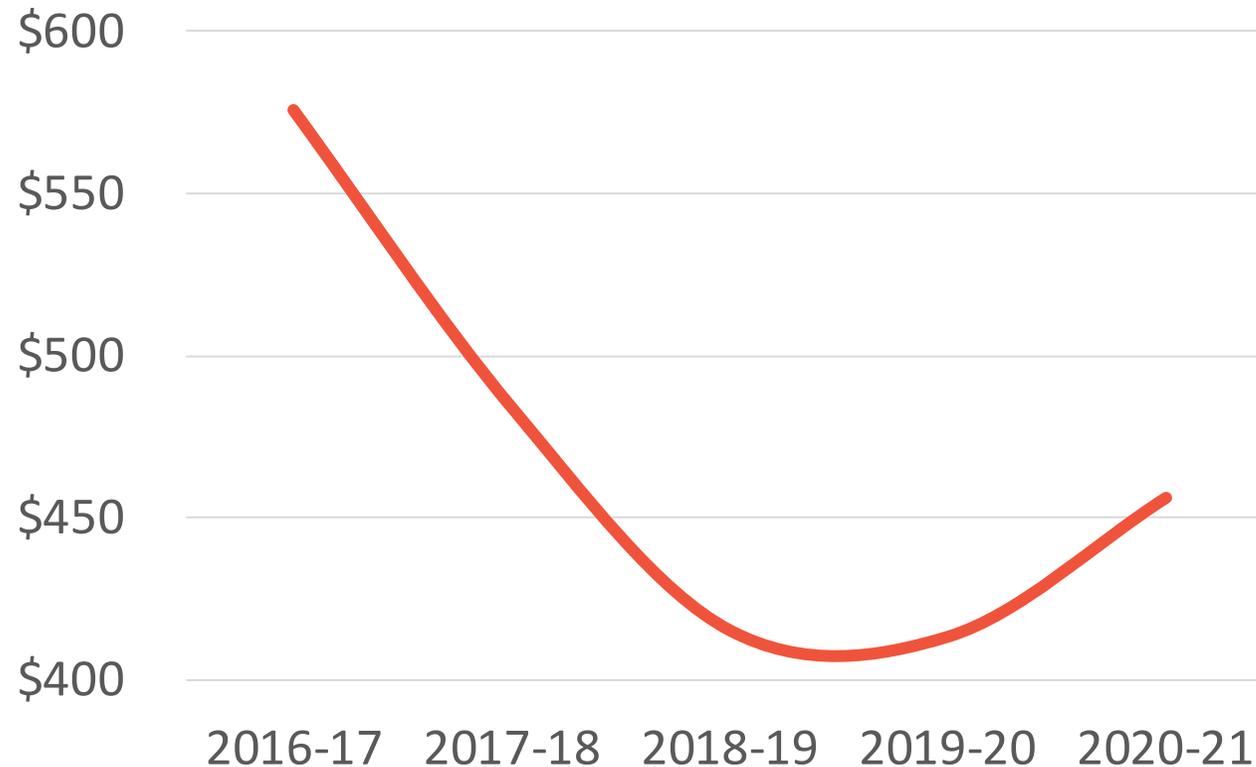
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index. Graph represents the percent increase to prices over time.



# Do students have a **choice**?

Inclusive access can provide first-day access to content, but it constrains students' choices as consumers.

# Trends in Student Spending



## Contributing factors:

- 15% decline in students skipping required materials
- Reduced access to lower cost print rental and used textbooks due to the pandemic
- Publishers slightly raised prices

*Source: National Association of College Stores, Student Watch, 2021 Report*



*The most pressing issue for students is cost and choice. Each student should have the choice to buy the textbooks that work best for them, and each student should be able to learn in a way that benefits them the most .*



Winni Zhang, Student

Washington and Lee University | Lexington, VA



# A Data Mine?

Inclusive Access content can capture vast amounts of data on students and faculty.

# Student Data Collection

**Median student**



**1**

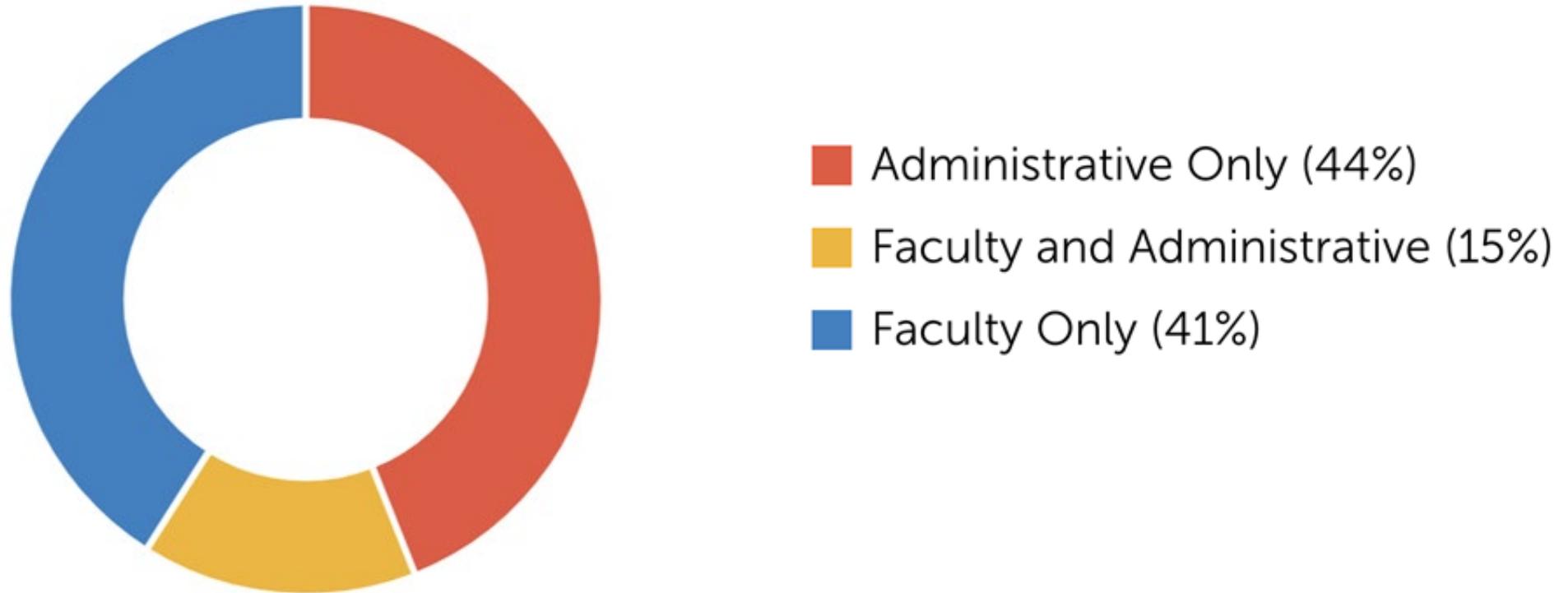
Poor understanding of publisher data collection policies for digital course materials

Perfect understanding of these policies and the ability to explain them to a peer

**10**

*Source: U.S. PIRG, Fixing the Broken Textbook Market, 2020*

# Inclusive Access: Who Decides?



Source: Source: Bay View Analytics, *Inflection Point: Educational Resources in U.S. Higher Education*, 2019

**How** to navigate these  
various models?



# What can you do?

**Inclusive**  
**Access**  
**.org**

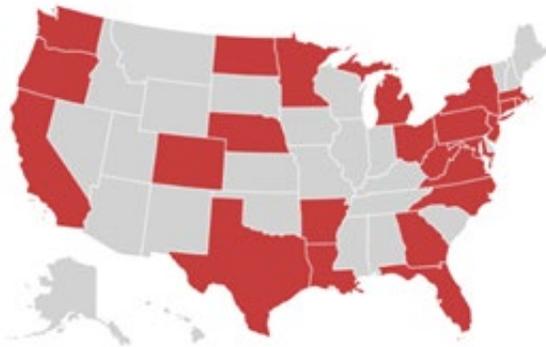
- **Be proactive.** Make sure admin, faculty, students are aware of OER initiatives how open practices have benefits beyond first day access.
- **Ask questions.** Thoroughly examine the legal, financial, and ethical implications of new models like Inclusive Access.
- **Be rigorous.** Ensure all claims about benefits and savings are backed up by independent evidence, including research and numbers.
- **Center equity.** Put student needs and voices at the center of the conversation – there is always time to consult and listen.

# Ask Questions!

1. Are there plans in place to independently verify the advertised savings of Inclusive Access and track them over time?
2. Are students fully informed about Inclusive Access costs and their right to opt out when they are registering for courses?
3. Are students informed about how Inclusive Access materials will collect and use their data before they are automatically billed?
4. Is the opt-out process simple, transparent, and clearly communicated to students?
5. What support mechanisms are in place for students who cannot afford Inclusive Access materials?
6. What plans are in place to regulate Inclusive Access prices, considering the industry's legacy of significant price inflation?
7. What policies are in place concerning the collection, governance, and third party use of data and data analytics in Inclusive Access materials?



# States to learn from



- **Georgia.** Statewide affordable learning program with central support unit for faculty and staff.
- **Colorado.** Statewide OER council that administers a successful OER grant program
- **Massachusetts.** Statewide OER advisory council that coordinates among institutions and offers grants and professional development.
- **Texas.** Transparency law for OER and IA programs and a statewide OER grant program.
- **Idaho.** Board policy for course material access and transparency and “zero textbook cost” degrees.



OER State Policy Tracker  
OER State Policy Playbook  
Model Policies

[sparcopen.org/state-policy](https://sparcopen.org/state-policy)

The cover of the OER State Policy Playbook 2021-2022 Edition features a large, light gray arrow pointing to the right, which serves as a background for the text. The text is arranged in a stacked format: "OER" in black, "STATE POLICY" in black, and "PLAYBOOK" in red. Below the title, "2021-2022 EDITION" is written in black. At the bottom of the cover, there is a small paragraph of text and the SPARC logo.

**OER  
STATE POLICY  
PLAYBOOK**

**2021-2022 EDITION**

Open educational resources (OER) are textbooks and other course materials that are free for people everywhere to use and repurpose. States and institutions are leveraging OER to expand access to flexible, digital learning materials that reduce costs for students by millions each year.



# Questions

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**InclusiveAccess.org**