

MAKE TEXTBOOKS AFFORDABLE

Spring 2017

The Student PIRGs.
Make Change Happen.

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Make Textbooks Affordable How-To Guide

This guide should be used with the S17 Strategy Memo to meet semester goals for the Textbooks campaign. These tactics will help campuses raise awareness about the campaign, mobilize the student body, build faculty support, and win administrative support. This guide provides steps to accomplish each action item listed below.

Goals

By the **end of the S17 semester/quarter each campus** should meet these goals:

- Conduct 3 VIP meetings
- Host 1 campus event
- Gather 25 faculty emails

VIP Meetings:

It's critical that we have sit-down meetings with decision-makers on campus. VIP meetings ensure that our chapters maintain strong campus relations, maximize our impact, protect our long-term existence, and maintain a strong connection to the people we work with every day.

The textbooks campaign provides a vehicle to develop positive relationships with decision-makers: we're encouraging schools to take advantage of this "hero" opportunity to lower costs for their students. The goal of these meetings is to push our chapter schools to launch their own open textbook pilot programs.

What is a VIP?

Anyone that has influence, is a decision-maker, or could be a vocal supporter on campus. Ex: librarians, administrators, faculty members, student government leaders

Steps to a successful VIP meeting:

1. Power map decision makers (academic affairs committee, librarians, deans, student leaders, etc.)
2. Request a meeting
3. Prep students to speak (train students on how to run the meeting)
4. Write agenda (Faculty Meeting Practice Agenda)
5. Go to meeting
6. Do any and all follow up items

RESOURCES: Open Textbooks Guide, Spring 2016 Project Packet, advocacy meeting overview, faculty meetings overview-introductory email to set up meeting, faculty meeting practice agenda

Goal: 3 VIP meetings by the end of the S17

Hold Campus Event:

Events are an important tactic to engage students and campus leaders in face-to-face conversations on open textbooks and provide a visibility opportunity for the campaign and the chapter.

Ex: tabling, textbooks graveyard event, giant textbook prop, photo petitions

Steps to a successful campus event:

1. Identify goal of/need for event
2. Select students to assist with event (what resources do you need, what resources do you have?)
3. Assign roles to students for coordinating (prop/display coordinator, recruiter and trainer of volunteers, media/promotion coordinator, etc.)
4. Conduct planning meetings (timeline, volunteer needs, props, promotion, money)
5. Host event! (make sure to use social media day of)
6. Debrief event with student coordinators and volunteers

RESOURCES: Open Textbooks Guide, Spring 2016 Project Packet, event ideas, planning an event

Goal: 1 campus event by end of S17

Faculty Emails:

Emailing faculty is a great way to find new supporters and to cultivate relationships with existing supporters. Through email we can update faculty on our progress and national calls to action for supporters of open textbooks.

Steps to gathering faculty emails:

1. Gather up-to-date list of current faculty emails for your campus
2. Add deans from all colleges if not already added
3. Add emails from VIP meetings
4. Send at least monthly emails to campus list updating about events on campus, progress on campaign

****note:** the national program team will send out national updates for you to send as well

RESOURCE: Open Textbooks Guide, Spring 2016 Project Packet, sample faculty outreach-add faculty to email list, sample coordinator roles

Goal: collect 25 faculty emails by end of S17

ADVOCACY MEETING OVERVIEW (VIP):

Our main strategy is to convince campuses and administrations to create their own open textbook programs. There are a whole bunch of reasons why a school would want to kick off their own program – it actually saves students money, it's great public relations, and it makes the school more competitive and forward-looking.

There are four main goals we need to accomplish when meeting with Top 25 leaders and pitching them on the textbooks campaign.

1. Basic Education – what are open textbooks? Why do they matter?
2. Overcome misconceptions – address concerns of faculty or other campus leaders
3. Demonstrate support – prove that the campus community is ready for change
4. Start the ball rolling – provide ideas about how the university could move forward

How-to:

1. Power map campus stakeholders (academic affairs committee, librarians, deans, student leaders, etc.)
2. Research campus stakeholders and gather contact info
3. Send an email and call to schedule 30-45 minutes to sit down
4. Prepare – practice the agenda and FAQ in Open Textbooks Guide
5. Hold the meeting
6. Follow up within 2 weeks to thank them and exchange information

Brainstorm Asks:

What can we ask campus stakeholders?

- Commit funds to campus-wide pilot program
- OER course designations
- OER faculty awards
- System-wide OER program
- SGA resolution

FACULTY AND ADVOCACY MEETINGS OVERVIEW (VIP):

Goal: To prepare students to be able to meet one-on-one with faculty and ask them to consider switching to an open textbook for their class.

Key Principles:

- Connect
- Start with the basics
- Address concerns
- Create a follow up plan

Overview:

Professors, in many cases, are the final decision-makers about what materials to use in their courses. By sitting down with them and talking through the open textbook options that are available, we can greatly increase the likelihood that the professor will consider adopting an open textbook for their next course.

Through these meetings, we can also engage professors as open textbook champions through other channels beyond their own classroom. In this training, we will brainstorm some asks for these meetings, and we'll practice actually sitting down with faculty.

How-to:

7. Research professors for whom open textbooks are already available.
8. Send an email and call to schedule 15-30 minutes to sit down, or find out when they hold office hours.
9. Prepare – practice the agenda and addressing FAQ
10. Hold the meeting
11. Follow up within 2 weeks to thank them and exchange information

Brainstorm:

What are the different asks we could have for professors?

- Consider switching their class to an open textbook (if available)
- Sign an endorsement of open textbooks
- Speak at a release event or forum
- Invite us to speak at their department or senate meeting
- Post a link to the Open Textbook Library on the department website
- E-mail information about the Open Textbook Library to their colleagues
- Put up a poster or pass out flyers in the department office
- Write a blog post, letter to the editor, or article in an academic journals
- Do a video/interview for social media

SAMPLE FACULTY OUTREACH- Introductory email to set up meeting

Hi Professor [**PROF NAME**],

My name is _____, a [**year**] here at [**college**] and a volunteer for **XXPIRG**'s campaign for affordable textbooks. As you probably know, textbooks have become very expensive and pose a real financial burden for many students.

One way faculty can make a difference for students is to consider using "open textbooks," which are faculty written, peer-reviewed textbooks that are published under an open license, meaning they're free online and hard copies cost just \$10-40.

Thousands of faculty are already using open textbooks, and saving students millions of dollars.

I'd love to sit down and talk with you a little more in-depth about our campaign – is there a convenient time for us to meet for 15-20 minutes [**this/next**] week? Thanks so much for your time, and I look forward to speaking with you.

Thanks,

[Your Name, PIRG, Contact Info]

P.S. You can check out [**link to open textbook available for their course on the Open Textbook Library (open.umn.edu) or at OpenStax**] to see an open textbook available for your **xxCOURSExx**.

FACULTY MEETING PRACTICE AGENDA:

Intro: Hi. I'm ___ from PIRG, the public interest group on campus. We were scheduled to speak about our affordable textbooks campaign. Do you have a few minutes?

The Problem: Textbook costs are a big issue for students here on campus.

- Textbooks are expensive - \$1200+ per year, rising 4x the rate of inflation.
- Publishers undermine the used book market with new editions and costly bundles.
- It's gotten to the point where many students don't buy their required books – a PIRG survey found that 65% of students surveyed skipped buying a required book.

Ask: Have you noticed that this is a problem for your students?

The Solution: The good news is that our campaign to fight the high cost of textbooks is making progress.

- Students have cost-saving measures like used books, renting & sharing on campus.
- There's a new federal law requiring publishers to disclose textbook price and revision info to professors, which ensures you have easy access to that information.
- More affordable alternatives are coming onto the market that can save students money up front.

Open Textbooks: The main affordable alternative we wanted to tell you about is open textbooks. Open textbooks are published under a license that allows free digital access and low-cost printing.

- How open textbooks are similar to traditional textbooks:
 - Written and reviewed by experts.
 - Covers the standard material for a course.
 - Hard copies sold in the bookstore.
- How open textbooks are more beneficial than traditional textbooks:
 - Freely available to read online
 - Hard copies cost \$20-30, and students can print out pages themselves, too.
 - Instructors are allowed to adapt the text by adding readings or removing extra material.
- More than 165 open textbooks are available, and are being used by more than 3,000 faculty.
- The average savings are 80% over traditional texts, which can be over \$10,000 in student savings per class!

Take Action: Open textbooks are a great solution, but the challenge is that not many professors know about them. *Pitch them on a specific action. (ie. This is an open textbook that is available for your xxCLASSxx – would you give it a read and consider it for next semester?)*

Closing: Thanks for your time! I'll send you an e-mail later today with sample materials for ___ (whatever they agreed to do), and I'll also follow up with you in a couple of weeks to see how it's going. Thanks!

PLANNING AN EVENT:

1. Build a coalition: The more organizations you have involved, the bigger and better the event can be. Groups you should contact are the student government, the library, the bookstore, and the faculty senate.

2. Line up speakers/VIPs (if press event):

- PIRG speaker: your campaign coordinator or chapter chair
- Student speaker: a “victim” of high textbook prices or SGA representative
- Faculty speaker: a professor who is concerned about textbooks costs, possibly from the faculty senate
- Library speaker: someone to talk about textbooks cost savings programs on campus
- VIP speaker: local politician, school president (or provost, VP, etc.), or local celebrity

3. Plan the event logistics

- Set the time, date and location of the event as soon as possible. Choose a high-traffic visible area.
- Reserve the location and any necessary equipment and materials, like tables, tents, flyers, posters, etc.

4. Coordinate publicity/Invite Media: Publicizing the event will be critical to turning people out. Start by choosing the message for your event – what will catch peoples’ attention and make them want to attend?

- Set up a Facebook event and announce the event on twitter. Also send out emails to your student email list.
- Make announcements in classes, and ask sponsoring groups to announce the event in their meetings.
- Put up posters, hand out flyers, chalk classrooms and sidewalks.

5. Recruit volunteers: Start by identifying a coordinator for each hour of the event, and then organize phonebank the two nights before the event to sign up volunteers. Remember to schedule twice as many volunteers as you need, and remind everyone the day before via text or a quick phone call.

6. Hold the event: Be there early - check in and train volunteers, monitor supply levels to make sure they don't run out, especially survey forms. Take pictures or video and upload them immediately to Facebook, YouTube or Flickr.

7. Wrap up: Follow up with any media you contacted to confirm that they're covering the event. Post highlights and pictures on your website and social networks. Send thank you notes to your speakers.



Event Ideas

- **How Much Did You Pay** — This event is a guaranteed success at the beginning of the semester, and it's one of the easiest to set up! Take a piece of poster board or cardboard and make a graph, with \$100, \$200, etc. up the side. Set up a table and have students plot how much they paid for their books.
- **Open Education Week: March 27th-31st** — Each year during this week, people around the world celebrate open textbooks and open educational practices. Organize an event on your campus – any idea here would be great, or create your own! Register and check for nearby events at www.openeducationweek.org.
- **Open Book Fair** — Organize a Textbook Affordability "Book Fair" to showcase open textbooks and other exciting solutions. Like a normal book fair, set up showcase tables, including sample copies and posters comparing textbook prices. Make it an even larger event by inviting local authors or faculty supporters to come speak with passersby, add live music or food.
- **Panel Discussion** — Organize a panel or roundtable discussion with various perspectives about textbook affordability on campus. Key people to include are a professor, a student, the bookstore, an author, and a librarian.
- **Used Book Graveyard** — Illustrate the bad impact of new editions by setting up a graveyard for books that can't be sold back. Cut gravestone shapes out of cardboard and paint them with creative epitaphs like "Here lies Calculus, killed by new edition" or "R.I.P OFF!" Prop the gravestones up in a busy place on campus, and have a table set up nearby. Top it off by holding a funeral with a priest, mourners dressed in black and Kleenex.
- **Giant Textbook** — Take a large cardboard box and fold it (or cut it up and re-tape) to create a textbook with two covers and a spine. Decorate the front with a creative title like "Intro to Textbook Rip-Offs 200th Edition," an absurdly high price tag, ads for CDs packaged inside, and other features that mock bad publisher practices. Decorate the back and inside with facts on textbook costs, or turn it into a costume by adding shoulder straps or arm holes.

SAMPLE FACULTY OUTREACH- Add faculty to email list

Hi Professor [**PROF NAME**],

My name is _____, a [**year**] here at [**college**] and a volunteer for **XXPIRG**'s campaign for affordable textbooks. As you probably know, textbooks have become very expensive and pose a real financial burden for many students.

One way faculty can make a difference for students is to consider using "open textbooks," which are faculty written, peer-reviewed textbooks that are published under an open license, meaning they're free online and hard copies cost just \$10-40.

Thousands of faculty are already using open textbooks, and saving students millions of dollars.

I'd love to add you to our faculty email list so you can learn more about our campaign and stay updated on our progress. If you'd like to meet with me to learn more about our campaign, please let me know. I hope we can work together to make textbooks more affordable at **xxYOURCAMPUSxx**.

Thanks,

[Your Name, PIRG, Contact Info]

P.S. You can check out [**link to open textbook available for their course on the Open Textbook Library (open.umn.edu) or at OpenStax**] to see an open textbook available for your **xxCOURSExx**.

Sample Coordinator Roles

Media Coordinator – Responsible for getting 3 media hits throughout the semester to increase visibility for the campaign. Will recruit volunteers to help outreach and pitch media for stand up press events as well as do paper releases and follow up to on campus and local news outlets, set up Letter to the Editor writing parties and trainings for groups, schedule meetings with campus media to pitch editorials and interviews.

Events Coordinator – Responsible for organizing fun events on campus to educate students about the problem with publisher textbooks and open source alternatives. Will create props and tabling displays, recruit and train volunteers, and generate grassroots product (e.g., signatures on giant textbook, photo petitions).

Top 25 Coordinator – Responsible for building relationships with campus and community VIPs to increase support and leverage on our campaign. Will outreach and meet with deans, Student Government reps, student leaders, and faculty, and get them to sign-on to our OER campaign, switch to open source materials in their classes and join us at our press events.

Social Media Coordinator – Responsible for increasing our Facebook and twitter accounts and actively following/updating our accounts with textbook photo petitions, other chapter posts related to the Textbook campaign. Also responsible for further developing and driving a social media arch with potential ideas including buzzfeed lists etc. Will network through social media sites to increase our follower and fan base, bottom-line in charge of making sure all of the emails we collect get databased on our email list, and work with other volunteers to help advertise our online presence in creative ways.

Research Intern– Will research who on their specific campus is a key player in making these decisions or who is already working on OERs already. This could start with the librarian, key faculty etc. Researching classes and professors to work with.