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AFFORDABLE AND OPEN TEXTBOOKS: An Exploratory Study of Faculty Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

The textbook industry is in significant flux, fueled by evolving technologies, increased availability of open content and curricula, active used textbook markets, and, most recently, a rash of textbook rental start-ups, just to name a few of the factors at play. Concerns about textbook affordability are at the forefront of conversations about the future of the textbook. At the same time, Open Educational Resources (OERs)—learning materials distributed openly for either no or minimal cost—may have become commonplace enough that a credible, viable infrastructure for open textbooks, one that mainstream faculty would accept, could be imagined.

The Student Public Interest Research Groups (Student PIRGs)—who have been at the forefront of raising awareness about textbook affordability for much of the past decade—launched a two-year campaign (MakeTextbooksAffordable.org/statement) in 2007 to drive mainstream faculty's acceptance of open textbooks and other affordable alternatives in place of traditional textbooks. UC Berkeley's Center for Studies in Higher Education was awarded a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, via the Student PIRGs, to conduct an independent, objective, and exploratory analysis of the campaign using an online survey and focus groups. We also more generally addressed faculty perceptions about affordability and open textbooks.

Our results show that faculty want a diversity of choices. They are independent thinkers, exceptionally busy, suffer from extreme information overload, are generally dedicated to ensuring their students' success, and do not take well to “one size fits all” solutions. It was clear from our

¹ This work was conducted under the aegis of the Higher Education in the Digital Age Project at the Center for Studies in Higher Education: <http://cshe.berkeley.edu/people/dharley>

focus groups and survey that any discussion about textbook affordability solutions must also take into account that most faculty are active and independent decision makers when it comes to choosing a textbook or other curricular materials for their courses; the top-down high-school model of textbook adoption is anathema to many professors and instructors. Complicating the picture are the natural, heterogeneous needs among the institutions, disciplines, and courses encompassed by higher education; the type of institution and the level and content of the course will ultimately determine which curricular forms offer the best solutions. Faculty made clear that their students represent a plethora of learning backgrounds and goals, and desire flexibility and choice in textbook options. What is notable and cannot be ignored is that purely electronic solutions will not be universally embraced in the near term. Reasons for resistance included students' need for the safety net of a printed textbook and the positive pedagogical practice of engaging with the text by "writing in the margins" (which is not a practical reality in current electronic platforms).

Regarding the demand for open textbooks, there simply are not enough currently available in enough disciplines to satisfy the multitude of faculty and student needs in lower and upper division courses; a much wider array of high-quality, easy-to-use, and reliable open textbooks will have to be produced for more widespread faculty adoption to be realized. Even then, open textbooks will likely be only one of many players in the curricular materials market. A single, predetermined solution (e.g., "open textbooks" or "open educational resources") and such jargon may very well work against the OER movement and faculty's willingness to explore new options. Finally, we strongly recommend that a wide range of faculty (and student) input be considered essential to any conversation about the future of textbook affordability.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Abstract..... | 1 |
| Introduction | 3 |
| Context for Research..... | 4 |
| Summary of Results | 4 |
| Methods | 5 |
| Results | 7 |
| Focus Groups..... | 7 |
| Survey | 13 |
| Appendix: Survey Instrument..... | 19 |

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INTRODUCTION

The Student Public Interest Research Groups (Student PIRGs) have been working on the problem of textbook affordability for college students since 2003. At the same time, Open Educational Resources (OERs)—learning materials distributed openly for either no or minimal cost—may have become commonplace enough that a credible, viable infrastructure for open textbooks, one that mainstream faculty would accept, could be imaginable.²

In 2007, the Student PIRGs launched a two-year campaign ([MakeTextbooksAffordable.org/statement](http://www.makertextbooksaffordable.org/statement)) to drive mainstream faculty's acceptance of open textbooks and other affordable alternatives to traditional textbooks. The goal of the campaign was to instigate a shift in the market toward lower-cost materials like open textbooks. The strategy was to elevate the visibility of open textbooks as a solution to create more faculty (and public) demand for those curricular materials. Specifically, the campaign encouraged faculty to sign a public statement of support, as stated on its website:

*Faculty members share students' concerns about the high cost of college textbooks, but they often find it difficult to find appropriate course materials at an affordable price. Free, online open textbooks represent a promising way to expand the existing textbook market to include more low-cost, comparable options. By signing this statement, faculty members state their intent to include open textbooks in their search for the most appropriate course materials, and they declare their preference to adopt an open textbook in place of an expensive, commercial textbook, if the open textbook is the best option.*³

UC Berkeley's Center for Studies in Higher Education was awarded a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, via the Student PIRGs, to conduct an independent, objective, and exploratory analysis of the campaign. In 2009, we employed a short survey and conducted a small number of focus groups to determine whether or not faculty had been influenced by the Student PIRGs' campaign. Our research questions included: Did the Student PIRGs' campaign have an effect on faculty behavior and/or attitudes regarding open textbooks and other affordable alternatives? If so, how? And if not, why not? We also more generally addressed faculty perceptions about affordability and open textbooks. For the purposes of this study, "open textbooks" were defined as: *affordable (in some cases, free) online textbooks. The content of open textbooks is licensed to allow anyone to use, download, customize, or print without expressed permission from the author.*

We make no claims as to the scientific validity of the results reported here. The samples were not chosen randomly, the Ns were relatively small, and the individuals we sampled were surely not fully representative of the entire faculty population of interest to the Student PIRGs and other stakeholders involved in achieving textbook affordability. The purposes of the study were purely exploratory and were intended to provide the Student PIRGs with a snapshot of the effectiveness of their campaign, and also to provide them and others a bead on some general aspects of faculty attitudes about textbook affordability and open textbooks.

² The Student PIRGs are particularly interested in open textbooks that look and act like traditional hard-copy textbooks—not innovative replacements for the printed book.

³ The full text of the statement is reproduced at the Student PIRG website: <http://www.makertextbooksaffordable.org/statement.asp?id2=37614>

CONTEXT FOR THE RESEARCH

By way of introduction to our results, it is important to note the national context of our research. Quite simply, the textbook industry is in significant flux.⁴ In an era of escalating across-the-board-college costs, evolving e-reader technology like the Kindle, new forms of open content and curricula, electronic versions of textbooks, entrenched used book markets, and burgeoning textbook rental start-ups are just some of the elements that will impinge on predictions about the future of textbooks in higher education. What seems clear is that there will likely be multiple paths to solving the problem of textbook affordability, which may or may not include all of these models, and others not yet envisioned. One constant will be the desire of faculty to have the ability to easily find, and choose from, an array of high-quality materials that fit with their and their students' pedagogical needs in an affordable and discipline-appropriate context.

Regarding the context of Student PIRGs' campaign itself, it must be noted that this organization has been at the forefront of raising awareness about textbook affordability for much of the decade. And although our research did not show that the "statement of intent campaign" specifically drove faculty toward more affordable options, the national publicity generated by the campaign in news outlets like *Time* magazine, *USA Today*, the *Washington Post*, and the *LA Times*, as well as its citation in government reports, such as the Department of Education's 2007 [ACSFA](#) textbooks report,⁵ very likely increased awareness of the problem of textbook affordability and open textbook alternatives both within and beyond the academic community. A significantly more far-reaching research investigation perhaps could determine more precisely just how Student PIRGs' efforts worked in concert with parallel developments to affect the general *zeitgeist* of the national textbook affordability and open textbook conversation.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

We present below a brief summary of our findings based on our focus groups and survey. The full description of the survey and focus group results follows this section.

Faculty are independent thinkers, exceptionally busy, suffer from extreme information overload, are generally dedicated to ensuring their students' success, and do not take well to "one size fits all" solutions. Any discussion about textbook affordability solutions must take into account that most faculty are active and independent decision makers when it comes to choosing a textbook or other curricular materials for their courses; the top-down high-school model of textbook adoption is anathema to many professors and instructors. Complicating the picture are the natural, heterogeneous needs among the institutions, disciplines, and courses encompassed by higher education. Faculty made clear that their students represent a plethora of learning backgrounds and goals, and desire flexibility and choice in textbook options.

A number of culprits regarding the problem of high costs were identified by our informants. These include the used book market, rapacious markups by college bookstores, the bundling of unnecessary supplements, and the creation of unnecessary new editions. It is also clear that any discussion about textbook affordability solutions must ask the questions: Which students are we concerned about? Are they taking advanced courses or introductory ones? Are they remedial, technical, or in the humanities? Is the course in their major or just a requirement to get out of the way? Are they studying at a community college, where textbook bills are a large proportion of

⁴ See, for example, recent stories from *Inside Higher Education*: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/08/11/books>, <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/09/24/textbooks>, <http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2009/10/06/hess>, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, <http://chronicle.com/blogPost/iPhone-Textbook-Apps-Just-Keep/7674/>

⁵ Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, *Turn The Page: Making College Textbooks More Affordable*, May 2007. United States Department of Education. <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/acsfa/edlite-txtbkstudy.html>

overall education costs, a large state four-year institution, or an exclusive private college with high overall tuition relative to annual textbook costs?

Given the powerful influences generated by this granularity in the student population, a single solution to the textbook affordability problem (e.g., “open textbooks”) is probably not practical or desirable. Indeed, a predetermined solution of “open textbooks” or “open educational resources” and the jargon surrounding these concepts may work against the OER movement and actually dissuade some faculty who are otherwise concerned about the economic situation of their students. Not surprisingly, faculty want a diversity of choices, and there simply are not currently enough open textbooks to satisfy the multitude of faculty and student needs; a much wider array of high-quality, easy-to-use, and reliable open textbooks will have to be produced for more widespread faculty adoption to be realized. Moreover, in addition to the heterogeneous needs of faculty regarding textbook options, it is clear that their students—who represent a plethora of demographics, learning backgrounds, and goals—desire flexibility and choice. What is notable and cannot be ignored is that many faculty suggested that purely electronic solutions will not be universally embraced. Reasons for resistance included students’ need for the safety net of a printed textbook⁶ and the positive pedagogical practice of engaging with the text by “writing in the margins” (which simply is not a practical reality in current electronic platforms).⁷

We strongly recommend acknowledging that a diversity of faculty input (and student voices), which represent valid ideas about the best solutions given their experiences, be included in any conversation about textbook affordability options. Such an approach is essential to moving toward an acceptable environment for affordable and effective teaching and learning in the different sectors of higher education.

METHODS

The specific aspects of (1) the focus group and (2) the survey methodologies are described separately below. Both of the protocols, developed in consultation with the Student PIRGs, were informed by the following general set of questions:

- Did the Open Textbooks Statement of Intent influence your thinking on open textbooks? Did you sign? Why or why not?
- Do you or don't you use open textbooks? Why or why not?
- Would you support a change in the published medium of a textbook (e.g., paper vs. electronic) if the only change to your textbook was the manner in which students could access it (online, downloadable, printable, affordable, etc.)?
- What features in an open textbook would be necessary for you to consider it a viable choice for your class(es)? What features in current textbooks need to be changed or improved?
- Are you aware of discussions about textbook affordability (among faculty and/or administrators) in your department or college? If so, what is the nature of those discussions? What actions, if any, have been taken by your department or elsewhere in the administration? Who makes decisions about textbook adoption?

All faculty in our sample were from California community, state, and private colleges, and all samples were derived from the Student PIRGs’ campaign lists. As far as we can discern, the lists

⁶ See, for example, the results of a Student PIRGs report, based on a survey of students, regarding desirable criteria in digital textbooks: affordable, printable, and accessible. The Student PIRGs. 2008 (August). *Course Correction: How Digital Textbooks are Off Track and How to Set Them Straight*.
<http://www.maketextbooksaffordable.org/newsroom.asp?id2=44596>

⁷ Hyung Lee, 2009 (September 28). “Kindles yet to woo University users.” *The Daily Princetonian*.
<http://www.dailyprincetonian.com/2009/09/28/23918/> Also republished at futureofthebook.com by Bob Stein as “The Kindle Gets Poor Grades at Princeton.”
http://www.futureofthebook.org/blog/archives/2009/09/the_kindle_gets_poor_grades_at.html

included faculty who had been contacted by the Student PIRGs (according to the group's records). The campaign lists were comprised of and specifically limited to faculty, adjuncts, and instructors teaching in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields, as well as business and economics. The diversity of "department" types and monikers, especially at the community colleges, makes it difficult to compare disciplines across higher education sectors. We did not sample faculty in the social sciences (other than economics) and humanities, as there were certainly no quality open textbook options available based on our scan of "open" textbook or other curricular material sites, and it was deemed likely that these fields are more likely to use custom materials, such as course packets and primary literature and sources, and are less likely to use canned "textbooks."⁸

FOCUS GROUPS

A total of 468 faculty at five institutions were invited directly to participate via email during April 2009. These five institutions were selected in consultation with the Student PIRGs based on: (1) the number of faculty contacts in the Student PIRGs' database, (2) institution type, and (3) representativeness of department types, including: business, biology, chemistry, economics, engineering, and math. Sites were also chosen based on convenience. Additionally, department chairs and deans in the identified departments at each institution were contacted by email with a request for guidance in soliciting department faculty.⁹

Focus groups were conducted in April and May 2009 with a total of 22 participants from three institution types: community college (N=10), California State University (N=6), and University of California (N=6). Focus group participants included faculty in business, biology, chemical engineering, chemistry, computer science, English, geography, management and informational systems, mathematics, and physics.

Focus groups were held on the campus of each participating institution and lasted for approximately two hours. Lunch was provided. We guided discussions around a semi-structured set of questions (see above). Focus groups were digitally recorded and transcribed. We also took into account in the summary various emails and phone conversations with individuals who could not attend but had strong opinions, as well as the opinions of others with whom we had spoken about these topics. The focus group results below also include the thoughts offered by survey takers.

SURVEY

Instrument

We developed a set of questions around the following broad topics: (1) attitudes about the campaign, (2) attitudes about textbook affordability, and (3) attitudes about open textbooks and open educational resources in general. The survey protocol can be found in the appendix.

A pilot survey, developed in consultation with the Student PIRGs, was tested with a small group of faculty in early 2009. The final version of the survey included a total of 15 questions, including yes/no, multiple-choice, ranking, and open-ended questions that utilized skip logic. All questions had write-in responses, which we deemed an important opportunity for the expression of opinions we might not have anticipated in the protocol questions. The survey was launched using online

⁸ Harley, Diane. "[Why Understanding the Use and Users of Open Education Matters.](#)" In *Opening Up Education: The Collective Advancement of Education through Open Technology, Open Content, and Open Knowledge*, edited by Toru Iiyoshi and M.S. Vijay Kumar. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008.

⁹ Because our sampling method expanded beyond the contact database provided by the Student PIRGs, not all focus group participants had been previously contacted by that organization. Additionally, some focus group participants were from disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. The majority (N=15, 68%) of focus group participants were in the Student PIRGs database.

survey software via Zoomerang.com in May 2009 for two weeks. All research was approved by the University of California Office for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Sample

As suggested by the Student PIRGs, the original sample for the survey included 5397 possible participants. A total of 1596 invalid email addresses were identified, reducing the total number of invited faculty to 3801. To create an incentive for participation, faculty were also invited to enter their name into a separate prize drawing. Two winners were chosen after the survey was closed. At the request of the Student PIRGs, only one follow-up reminder email was sent to nonresponders to the survey invitation. We did not conduct a nonresponse survey. Of the 3801 invited participants, a total of 224 faculty responded to the survey, resulting in a 5.9% response rate.

The majority of faculty respondents were from community colleges and California State Universities. While respondents represented various disciplines, mathematics instructors, as well as faculty in business and biology, were over-sampled relative to the other disciplines. Response rates by discipline did not appear to be highly variable. More than three-quarters of the survey respondents reported that they had publication experience as authors (which was defined loosely by many and included posting lecture notes). The majority had not signed the affordable textbooks statement of intent prior to completing the survey. Due to the low number of responses from private college faculty, these responses will be considered an exception throughout and will not be discussed in our analyses.

RESULTS

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Perceptions of print textbooks and the publishing industry

These results also incorporate many of the relevant write-in responses we received from those who took the survey.

Textbook affordability

Our sense was that many institutions and departments have the textbook affordability issue on their radars. In fact, participants (who had self-selected to participate in the study) were in general keenly aware of textbook affordability issues. As described in the introduction, we did not (and perhaps could never) measure the Student PIRGs campaign's direct effect on this perception; however, we suspect that it, as well as other factors, had an influence on faculty awareness of these issues (even unconsciously).

The vast majority of the faculty with whom we spoke were sympathetic to concerns about exorbitant textbook costs, and several noted that they were already making efforts using available means to address this issue. These "stopgap" solutions encompass publisher negotiations (including negotiations for custom textbooks), textbook loans or temporary library reserve programs, recommending previous editions or cross-listing suggested readings with pages from other textbooks, and encouraging students to take advantage of the used textbook market. One group of faculty worked with the publisher to offer a "split" edition across multiple semesters, but the cost proved to be more expensive for students within the major who took the entire series. Both CSU and community college faculty briefly mentioned online publisher alternatives, such as popular textbooks available online for a reduced fee, but these were quickly dismissed by others due to the still-high costs (e.g., \$40-\$50) and limited access (e.g., expiring after a semester to 1-2 years). Still other faculty had replaced textbooks in their courses with low-cost photocopied "readers," or placed significant amounts of self-generated educational materials online for student access. The faculty

we interviewed indicated that none of these alternative means were satisfactorily solving the problem of what they perceived as a dysfunctional system, but temporary solutions were “better than doing nothing.”

In some fields, an introductory textbook includes “fundamental principles” and can be an important part of a personal library for majors. In such cases, it was noted that textbook costs can be spread over many classes. Students in advanced courses may also need a textbook to understand complex principles that cannot be taught during class time. Students taking introductory courses outside of their major may not need to or have interest in keeping the book, which many faculty noted as problematic. We also heard that some international students, including those who are bi- or multilingual, can purchase textbooks abroad (e.g., Asia) at considerably cheaper rates.

Some faculty also pointed out particular problem areas, such as exceptionally high price markups at university bookstores,¹⁰ particularly for book titles in large lecture courses, which tend to subsidize the high costs of textbooks in smaller courses (and large markups in the professional fields is commonplace). UC faculty noted that textbook cost was a minor concern compared to other higher educational expenses and distributions of fees.

Rental programs were not discussed widely in the focus groups, although there has been much recent public press about universities exploring this as a possible alternative. One mention of textbook rental referred to a student council lobbying effort. Several faculty in our focus groups did note that they personally loaned books to students or made them available on reserve through the campus library.

Supplementary materials

Many faculty valued supplementary materials and flexibility in picking and choosing such add-on options. Graphics/illustrations/animations, detailed exercises, and especially homework sets and solutions (particularly graded homework, which was an essential feature for departments without TA support) are useful adjuncts to standard textbooks. Additional problem sets were particularly noted as useful. A few complained that bundled textbooks (with DVDs, or CD-ROMs) made the books more expensive, and were often not used by the students or the faculty.

Several of the instructors in our focus groups explained how they create their own online supplements, either by pointing students to existing online resources (including but not exclusive to OERs) or, in some cases, making their own. For these faculty, the idea of being able to customize online materials was perceived as attractive. Some faculty expressed concern that essential supplementary materials might not be included with an open or free textbook. Others, however, noted that online supplements could be made open source, which would enable more frequent updates, particularly by users (with editorial oversight).

One individual noted that some high-tech options are not always better and may actually confuse and overwhelm students. For instance, drawing a figure or graphic by hand on a whiteboard can enable, pedagogically, a better type of learning than seeing an animation. In this particular case (which had been “tested” by the faculty member), the hand drawing simplified the concept for students and better met the needs of both faculty and students.

New editions

The faculty in our focus groups had strong opinions about new editions. Many lamented what they perceived as the often-unnecessary publication of new editions, which was problematic for both instructors and students. This was especially seen as a nuisance in the case of textbooks that covered unchanging fundamental principles in a discipline. It was noted, however, that emerging or

¹⁰ See, for example, a discussion of the used textbook market in: Why Are Textbooks So Expensive? Academic Observer, January, 2005, Vol 18, No. 1. <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer>

fast-moving fields may require a medium that can keep up with new research; updated information and electronic media can be an effective solution to that problem.

Particularly in introductory courses, most faculty prefer to use textbooks to teach students “the basics” and supplement these with new information only as they see fit. Faculty also pointed out that new editions may not be written by the original author, but instead by the publisher’s staff. Some annoyance was also expressed about the fact that, once a new edition was published, previous editions disappeared from the used textbook marketplace. Keeping previous editions in circulation somehow, so that students are not forced into buying newer editions, seems to be desirable. Some faculty also mentioned that they routinely access free online content from previous editions that is made available by publishers.

Publishers

While many faculty had complaints about publishers—ranging from hard (or constant) sales pitches to a lack of editorial oversight—the publishing industry was not universally vilified. Some of the faculty in our focus groups noted that publishers provide a real service (editorial, production, illustrations/artwork, etc.) and that those relevant support personnel have to be remunerated.

Some mentioned that they would appreciate assistance with finding new textbooks and negotiating with publishers, and discussions often returned to the notion of power in numbers, regardless of institution type. Faculty perceived publishers as more responsive to negotiating good deals with instructors of large, introductory classes, especially those at large or multi-campus institutions.

Some faculty suggested that more could be done at higher levels within the university/college structure to leverage bargaining power with publishers. Some coordinated effort could also give faculty from smaller schools or faculty with smaller class sizes the opportunity to band together and garner negotiating power for lower-cost custom textbooks. The fly in the ointment, of course, is that, just as with used books, the campus bookstores will probably raise the markup to offset the lower publisher price. Additionally, as discussed below, faculty may well resist fiats about what texts they have to use.

Choosing a textbook

Most faculty we spoke with select their own textbooks; this autonomy is a *sine qua non* of college-level teaching in many departments. Faculty indicated that they were careful to consider cost when choosing textbooks, but that issues around quality of content, including reliability and accuracy of answers, often do (and should) trump price.

In larger or sequential courses where multiple faculty are involved, it is not uncommon for a small number of faculty to informally or formally reach consensus regarding a specific textbook or series of books. One example was proffered about a mathematics department, in which a department committee selected the required introductory textbooks and faculty had no leeway in deviating from the chosen text.

Some faculty can face quandaries. They want flexibility and control over content, the ability to customize textbooks, to pick and choose supplementary materials, and to incorporate their own materials at will. Some expressed frustration, particularly with publishers, that that flexibility was seldom provided. But even when they had access to such amendments, faculty lamented that limited personal time and resources often prevented them from fully taking advantage of these options.

Perceptions of “open textbooks”

Faculty expressed concerns about open textbooks as an affordability solution, citing, particularly, issues around remuneration for authors, protection of intellectual property, quality of the content,

and overall accessibility. Some said that they wanted the ability to make their own choices (or have some say) about possible solutions rather than have those solutions dictated to them, including those that put blame exclusively in the publishers' laps. Some participants mentioned that open-textbook solutions in general did not consider the value that publishers bring to the table, and that the educational professionals involved in textbook writing, illustration, and production need to be paid for their work.

A common understanding of open textbooks did not emerge from our conversations. Some faculty were concerned that "open/free/affordable" and "high-quality" were oxymoronic. A fair number of concerns were expressed about intellectual property protection, loss of compensation to the author, and low production values. Faculty were also wary that open textbooks may reflect the idiosyncrasies (or biases) of their authors, and may not always provide a more objective or comprehensive portrayal of the field. Discussions around open textbooks sometimes morphed into a broader discussion about available online resources or online courses. The landscape is complex because many faculty replace textbooks with a pastiche of self-generated and other resources, rather than a so-called "open textbook."

Many faculty wanted more (or easier to find) information on the issue of open textbooks and some felt that there was not yet a "critical mass" of viable and trustworthy open textbooks in many subjects. Content and quality were foremost among the necessary inducements to switch to open textbooks, followed closely by good supplementary materials and built-in flexibility. Faculty might be amenable to using open textbooks, but noted that there were no high-quality and reliable open textbooks currently available in their subjects that were comparable to the printed/traditional textbooks they used. It is clear that there are many, many fields and subfields with no viable and acceptable open textbooks at this time. Some faculty suggested that there is a need for a trustworthy entity to compile and maintain easily discoverable online lists of open textbooks and online educational resources.

Faculty were generally supportive of the concept of sharing free and open knowledge and could envision open textbooks playing some role. CSU faculty, in particular, were eager to embrace an alternative to their current textbook options. Even those individuals with concerns about intellectual property, quality assurance, and author compensation were willing to use open textbooks if these issues were clearly addressed. Several faculty cited a lack of free time as a reason that they have not adopted open textbooks, since it takes time to navigate through the available options and customize them. Several community college faculty noted that seasoned instructors might be more likely to use open textbooks, while beginning instructors may prefer to use an established textbook to develop a course and anchor their teaching until they were better able to rely on lecture notes.

The few faculty who have worked with open textbooks and/or open educational resources have been disappointed in the low quality or lack of easy access/usability (e.g., the ability to only print by topic). From these conversations, it was apparent that an electronic book (in any form) must, first and foremost, function like a printed book (e.g., the ability to print in its entirety). Vigorous peer review and editorial oversight are essential components for open textbooks, and it may be possible to tap disciplinary associations to serve these functions.

There were mixed perceptions about contributing to the creation of an open textbook. Some noted that seasoned instructors were more likely to contribute. Several cited limitations of time and resources, or the need for a good editor. Some at CSU suggested that their institutions could encourage faculty to contribute to the production of curricular materials by offering paid leave and/or acknowledgement in the promotion system. Some community college faculty, on the other hand, envisioned the development of open textbooks as a collective, rather than a solo, effort. A few faculty in our sample did develop their own course materials, such as lecture notes, and made them available for free to their own students and colleagues. Faculty take their commitment to teaching

very seriously, and some believe their efforts to produce and customize OERs should be incentivized by their institutions as part of the teaching process.

Supporting faculty in the effort of writing and producing open textbooks could also help to saturate the market with open textbooks. Faculty sabbaticals for textbook writing, academic “credit” for open textbook publications, or low-cost technical and editorial support for faculty, as well as liaising between these faculty and open textbook publishers, are all possible incentives. The creation of a monetary “prize” or form of recognition for high-quality, well-received open textbooks in particular fields may also spur more open textbook development. Any move to incentivize open-textbook production will help create more alternatives for open-textbook consumption.

The fact remains that, to satisfy the diversity of needs of faculty in different fields and the different types of courses that are taught, a wider array of high-quality, easy-to-use, and reliable open textbooks will be needed before widespread faculty adoption can be realized.

Student needs and demands

Faculty acknowledged that textbooks are often one of many resources students use; students have access to (and use) a variety of both good and bad resources on the Web. Faculty teach, and choose their textbooks, with that understanding. Some faculty seek out and incorporate these supplementary Web resources into their courses and/or point students to them.

CSU and, particularly, community college faculty noted the diverse demographic backgrounds and uneven preparation of their students. Consequently, they were attuned to the wide diversity of student needs and learning styles that are present in the classroom and the challenges that arise in choosing effective curricular materials.

Most faculty perceived that students in introductory/lower-division courses needed the textbook as an anchor, particularly as fundamental concepts in most fields are unchanging. Faculty mentioned that students, particularly freshmen and sophomores, want a “real” physical book, just like they want a “real” brick-and-mortar classroom. They just want it for less.¹¹ In fact, faculty recounted several instances in which students demanded hard-copy textbooks as a safety net if one was not provided or assigned by the instructor.

Each course has unique values and requirements for textbook use. The nature of upper-division and graduate student coursework in some disciplines may not lend itself to a traditional textbook model, as evidenced by the extensive use of readers and other cobbled-together resources. Then again, some lower-division courses use readers, and some faculty noted that textbooks can anchor sophisticated concepts in higher level courses. In organic chemistry, for instance, students are very attached to their textbooks since they may need several routes to the content to aid understanding, and instructors do not have the time to present all of the material in one semester (and majors will want the textbook as a reference in subsequent coursework). Thus, this upper/lower division distinction may be more dependent on particular course materials or thematic subject areas than larger disciplinary divides.

The ability of students to mark up hard text is important to faculty and students. Some faculty cited evidence (both from research and personal experience) that learners who actively engage with the text in this way perform demonstrably better in their courses. Some faculty expressed concern that online reading may not facilitate this type of “writing in the margins.”

¹¹ The Student PIRGs. 2008 (August). *Course Correction...*
<http://www.maketextbooksaffordable.org/newsroom.asp?id2=44596>

The adoption of open textbooks, ironically, will result in the need for institutional facilities (and considerable costs) that support significant amounts of printing as students prepare for classes. (One faculty member saw the move to OERs as an environmental concern due to the likelihood that much material would be printed out multiple times, often unnecessarily.) But some faculty thought that increased printing needs could be a short-term transitional “cost” as learning practices (such as reading online) or new technologies (particularly marking up on screen) become more prevalent.

Some faculty identified themselves as having generational biases regarding the formal textbook, both as paper in the hand and as a shelf-bound resource. They also recognized that not all younger students may share these preferences (despite having students tell them they do). Several faculty mentioned “inevitable” change, in which some form of electronic learning via e-books and/or online textbooks is a “given.” Much seems to depend on the student: “serious” students may want a textbook as an ongoing in-hand resource, while other students want a cheap “good-enough” version to get them through the final exam of a required course. What emerged is that, just like faculty, students’ needs are equally as diverse, and they value choice and flexibility.

Differences among sectors

Some general impressions about differences among the three institution types (that emerged uniquely in each individual focus group) are noted below. Given the small Ns (one focus group per institution), these distinctions are speculative at best. Differences of opinion were marked by differences in age, personality, background, region, or type of institution. Some variation of perspective may also be attributed to individual teaching experience, course content or level of course, the broader field or disciplinary area of study, or personal idiosyncrasies.

Faculty at the UC campuses seemed more homogeneous than those at the other institutions we visited. They were aware and sympathetic to concerns about textbook affordability, but did not perceive textbook cost as the most pressing financial issue facing students today.¹² UC faculty expressed concern about quality of the materials they assigned to students, the (over)abundance of available resources to students, and their roles as information filterers. When faculty were prompted, open textbooks were viewed as a potential solution to affordability (one of many), but no one perceived that open alternatives addressed problems with content quality and intellectual property. Discussions around very large introductory classes, which include non-majors, were prevalent, and several faculty noted that institution or lecture size enabled negotiating effectively with publishers to control costs.

CSU faculty appeared to be less aware than UC faculty about what was happening in the publishing industry and open textbooks and wanted more information, but they were sympathetic to the issue of textbook affordability. These faculty emphasized textbook quality over a hasty solution to cost and were willing to expend effort to produce their own materials. CSU faculty expressed a keen interest in open textbooks, but also a concern about how open textbooks would effectively meet both their own and their students’ needs. Textbooks play an important role in student feedback for CSU faculty, which could affect their advancement (via course evaluations). We got the sense from this small focus group that CSU faculty saw themselves on the “front line” of teaching and were very aware of quality issues surrounding textbooks. Individual faculty seemed to spend a lot of time thinking about how to choose textbooks and present material. They really wanted to learn more about alternatives and seemed eager to contribute to them, if they were given credit for doing so.

Community college faculty expressed disparate interests and perspectives. These faculty seemed attuned to a wide range of student needs, including the particular needs of English-language

¹² In fact, many speculated that textbook costs have remained constant, adjusted for inflation, or have lowered as a percentage of cost for overall educational expenses and were curious to see if there were studies that explored this notion.

learners. Overall, community college instructors were interested in the idea of open textbooks and were amenable to the idea of helping with the development of these resources, though they viewed such an undertaking as a collaborative effort, not a route to sole authorship. Faculty felt they had to negotiate multiple teaching and learning styles and spent a fair amount of time thinking about how to present information effectively to students. They were skeptical about open textbooks because they want students to have a “correct” repository of information to refer to, and did not see open textbook options as yet providing an effective solution to that need.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey consisted of 15 questions in total: 14 multiple-choice, yes/no, and open-ended questions, and one ranking question. The survey instrument can be found in Appendix A. Not all respondents answered all questions because the skip logic feature guided respondents through the survey questions as appropriate; respondents were not required to answer every question. Thus, each question represented in tables below shows the corresponding total number of responses.

The overall demographic breakdown of survey respondents (relative to the number of invitees) is shown in Table A below. The demographic breakdown of responses by question did not reveal any additional information due to the small number of respondents and, therefore, they are not included in the analysis of individual survey questions.

| Institutional Affiliation | Invitations N=3801 | | Responses N=224 | | Response Rate (5.9%) |
|--|-----------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|----------------------------|
| | | % | | % | |
| Community colleges (CC) | 2379 | 62.6% | 125 | 55.8% | 5.3% |
| California State University (CSU) | 1117 | 29.4% | 81 | 36.2% | 7.3% |
| University of California (UC) | 209 | 5.5% | 16 | 7.1% | 7.7% |
| Private | 35 | 0.9% | 1 | 0.4% | 2.9% |
| Disciplinary Affiliation | | | | | |
| Biology | 462 | 12.2% | 34 | 15.2% | 7.4% |
| Business-related | 831 | 21.9% | 37 | 16.5% | 4.5% |
| Chemistry-related | 279 | 7.3% | 14 | 6.3% | 5.0% |
| Computer science-related | 148 | 3.9% | 13 | 5.8% | 8.8% |
| Earth science-related | 133 | 3.5% | 9 | 4.0% | 6.8% |
| Economics | 155 | 4.1% | 10 | 4.5% | 6.5% |
| Geography-related | 111 | 2.9% | 9 | 4.0% | 8.1% |
| Information management | 194 | 5.1% | 8 | 3.6% | 4.1% |
| Math-related | 1251 | 32.9% | 71 | 31.7% | 5.7% |
| Physics-related | 236 | 6.2% | 19 | 8.5% | 8.1% |
| Other | 1 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Publication Experience | | | | | |
| Authors | n/a | n/a | 173 | 77.2% | n/a |
| Not authors | n/a | n/a | 41 | 18.3% | n/a |
| Unknown/no response | n/a | n/a | 10 | 4.5% | n/a |
| Petition Signatory Status | | | | | |
| Signed statement prior to survey | 221 | 5.8% | 40 | 17.9% | 18.1% |
| Had not signed statement prior to survey | 3580 | 94.2% | 184 | 82.1% | 5.1% |

Q1. As Table 1 shows, fewer than half of the respondents were aware of the statement regarding textbook affordability. This is relatively consistent among faculty affiliated with different institutions. Only chemists (79%) and information management faculty (63%) reported more awareness of the petition than faculty in other disciplines.

| Table 1: Survey Question 1 | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Have you heard about the <i>Open Textbooks Statement of Intent</i> that was issued by the Student PIRGs? (See http://MakeTextbooksAffordable.org to view the statement.) | | | | | |
| | Yes | % | No | % | Total |
| Overall responses | 94 | 42% | 130 | 58% | 224 |
| * Of the 224 possible survey takers directed to this question, a total of 224 (100%) answered. | | | | | |

Q2. Slightly more than half of respondents who had heard of the statement reported that they were notified by an email from the Student PIRGs. An additional 13% (N=12) discovered the statement at the campaign website. No respondents indicated that their departmental chair informed them of the statement, though a small number heard of the statement through general or conference communications (N=4) or through their institutions (N=2). Only a small percentage of respondents (4%, N=4) reported hearing about the statement upon receiving an invitation to participate in our survey.

Q3. Slightly more than half of the respondents (N=50, 55%) reported that the Student PIRGs' statement influenced their opinions about open textbooks. Those who signed the statement prior to taking the survey (N=24) reported at a higher rate (N=17, 71%) that they were influenced by the statement. Thirteen of the respondents also commented that the campaign reflected their sentiments.

Q4. Slightly more than half of the respondents (N=53, 56%) who had previously heard of the statement (N=94) did not sign it. Within this small sample, more respondents from CSUs and private institutions reported signing the statement than respondents from community colleges or the UC system. Eighteen respondents (26%) who had not signed the statement prior to the survey reported signing the statement after taking the survey. Other demographic factors did not seem to influence the response to this question.

Q5. Survey respondents who signed the statement reported that they were motivated primarily by textbook costs (N=35, 85%), a positive perspective about the open sharing of knowledge (N=28, 68%), and the importance of students being able to access their textbooks (N=22, 54%). Few respondents reported being motivated by being asked to sign, and no respondents reported being influenced to sign by a peer or superior.

| Table 5: Survey Question 5 What was your motivation for signing the <i>Open Textbooks Statement of Intent?</i> (choose all that apply) | N=41* | %** |
|--|-------|-----|
| Textbooks are too expensive | 35 | 85% |
| It is important that students can access their textbooks | 22 | 54% |
| Open textbooks would better fit my instructional needs | 11 | 27% |
| I believe in the open sharing of knowledge as a matter of principle | 28 | 68% |
| A student asked me to sign | 1 | 2% |
| Someone else suggested that I sign (e.g., colleague, department chair, etc.) | 0 | 0% |
| Other (please specify): | 2 | 5% |
| * The total represents the number of respondents who were directed to this question by answering "yes" to Q4. Of the 41 possible survey takers directed to this question, a total of 41 (100%) answered. | | |
| ** Total percentages may add up to more than 100% since individual respondents could select more than one answer. | | |

Q6. Those who chose not to sign the statement had various reasons. Most respondents either needed more information about the statement (N=12, 23%) or simply did not want to use open textbooks in their classes (N=11, 21%). A nearly equal number of respondents (N=10, 19%) did not want their name displayed publicly. A smaller number of respondents (N=7, 12%) did not have the time to sign the statement and, presumably, follow through with the commitment to open textbooks. Others had concerns about intellectual property, did not see open textbooks as a viable solution, or did not believe that the timing was right for a switch to open textbooks. Nearly all of the survey respondents directed to this question (N=52, 98%) did not sign the statement prior to taking the survey.

| Table 6: Survey Question 6 Why did you choose not to sign the <i>Open Textbooks Statement of Intent?</i> (choose all that apply) | N=53* | %** |
|---|-------|-----|
| I don't want to use open textbooks for my classes | 11 | 21% |
| Textbook affordability is not an important issue | 1 | 2% |
| I didn't have time | 7 | 13% |
| I forgot | 4 | 8% |
| Someone in a position of authority (e.g., my department chair) asked | 0 | 0% |
| None of my respected colleagues had signed | 2 | 4% |
| I didn't want my name to be accessible online | 10 | 19% |
| I did not understand the statement | 0 | 0% |
| Other (please specify) | 28 | 53% |
| * The total represents the number of respondents who were directed to this question by answering "no" to Q4. Of the 53 possible survey takers directed to this question, a total of 53 (100%) answered. | | |
| ** Total percentages may add up to more than 100% since individual respondents could select more than one answer. | | |

Q7. Those survey respondents who indicated that they did not sign the statement because they did not want to use open textbooks in their classes were directed to Question 7, which asked them to indicate why they did not want to use open textbooks from a series of options. A total of 11 respondents answered this question and provided varied reasons for not wanting to use open textbooks, as Table 7 shows. Most respondents (N=7, 64%) reported that they are satisfied with their current textbook. Others relied on their own supplements, indicated that there were better ways to lower textbook costs for students, and/or didn't trust the quality of open textbooks. Few respondents (N=1, 9%) marked time constraints, loss of royalties, or inability to make textbook decisions as reasons for not using open textbooks.

| Table 7: Survey Question 7 | | |
|--|--------------|------------|
| I don't want to use open textbooks because (choose all that apply): | N=11* | %** |
| I don't have time to switch to another textbook | 1 | 9% |
| I have a tried and true text I use | 7 | 64% |
| I use course packs or other materials that I can adapt to fit my course | 3 | 27% |
| I rely on my own supplements (PowerPoint, test banks, etc.) | 4 | 36% |
| Students need flashy color illustrations found in traditional textbooks to pay attention | 2 | 18% |
| My students don't have online access or don't like to use e-books | 3 | 27% |
| There are better ways to lower costs for students (e.g., rentals, custom/Dover publishing, course packs, etc.) | 4 | 36% |
| I don't trust the quality of the content and/or accessory materials | 4 | 36% |
| I am the author of a textbook that I use and I wouldn't get royalties or I rely on selling course notes to students for extra income | 1 | 9% |
| There are no open textbooks available for my course(s) | 0 | 0% |
| I don't make textbook adoption decisions for my department | 1 | 9% |
| Other (please specify) | 2 | 18% |
| * The total represents the number of respondents who were directed to this question by answering "I don't want to use open textbooks for my classes" on question 6. Of the 11 possible survey takers directed to this question, a total of 11 (100%) answered. | | |
| ** Total percentages may add up to more than 100% since individual respondents could select more than one answer. | | |

Q8. Most (N=59, 77%) survey respondents were not aware whether or not their colleagues had signed the statement. Eighteen respondents (N=23%) indicated that other faculty in their department had signed the statement.

Q9. Most survey respondents (N=59, 66%) were aware of discussions about textbook affordability at their institutions. Those respondents affiliated with community colleges (N=51, 57%) seemed more aware of these discussions (N=37, 73%) than their counterparts at other institutions. Those respondents affiliated with CSUs (N=29, 33%) seemed least aware (N=16, 55%).

Q10. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents (N=88, 95%) were not influenced in their decision to sign or not sign the statement by the list of published signatories posted on the Student PIRGs' campaign website.

Q11. A majority of respondents (N=187, 85%) had not assigned open textbooks at the time of the survey. Twenty (25%) CSU faculty reported assigning open textbooks. Those in computer science (N=5, 38%), business (N=9, 25%), and information management (N=2, 25%), in particular, reported assigning open textbooks. Those who signed the statement prior to taking the survey assigned open textbooks more than twice as much as those who did not.

Of those who provided comments to this question (N=35), more than three-quarters of these respondents (N=27, 77%) reported that they were open to the idea of using open textbooks and were currently using them or planning to do so in the future (N=15). Others open to the idea of using open textbooks were constrained by a lack of available open textbooks in their subject (N=7). Respondents also reported that they used alternate resources (N=6), such as lecture notes, readers, or outdated texts as a means to provide affordable textbook choices.

Q12. An overwhelming majority of respondents (N=209, 95%) indicated that they would be willing to use open textbooks that mirrored the quality and functionality of traditional textbooks. There appears to be no measurable difference based on respondents' institutional or disciplinary affiliations, publication experience, or whether or not they signed the statement. Respondents offered myriad explanations, including issues of quality, cost, and access.

| Table 12: Survey Question 12 | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Would you consider assigning an open textbook for any of the classes that you teach if the only change (to your traditional textbook) was the manner in which students could access it (online, downloadable, printable, affordable, etc.)? | Yes | % | No | % | Total |
| Overall responses | 209 | 95% | 11 | 5% | 220 |
| * Of the 224 possible survey takers directed to this question, a total of 220 (98%) answered. | | | | | |

Q13. Survey takers reported that the most important features in textbooks are the quality of content (N=212, 95%) and graphics/illustrations (N=157, 70%). The ability to adapt contents to course needs (N=104, 46%), the ability to integrate personal materials, including interactive data (N=95, 42%), and the author's reputation (N=91, 41%) were also seen as useful features. Comments reiterated the importance of these features. The imprimatur of the publisher (N=29, 13%) and integration of social networks (N=34, 15%) were reported as least important.

| Table 13: Survey Question 13 | | |
|---|-------|-----|
| What features in an open textbook would be necessary for you to consider it a viable choice for your class(es)? (choose all that apply) | N=224 | % |
| Name/reputation of author | 91 | 41% |
| Brand/reputation of publisher | 29 | 13% |
| Quality of content, including editorial review | 212 | 95% |
| Illustrations and other graphics (e.g., charts, tables, diagrams, photographs, animations, video, etc.) | 157 | 70% |
| The flexibility to adapt the textbook to contain only chapters and materials relevant to my course | 104 | 46% |
| The ability to integrate my own teaching materials and supplements, such as PowerPoint slides, self-grading homework, test banks, etc. | 95 | 42% |
| Printing quality/looks like a traditional book | 76 | 34% |
| The inclusion of supplementary materials, such as test item files and slides | 85 | 38% |
| The ability to modify content to suit local circumstances | 62 | 28% |
| The ability to have open commenting by a community of users (e.g., social networks) to suggest improvements and modifications to the textbook's content | 34 | 15% |
| * Of the 224 possible survey takers directed to this question, a total of 224 (100%) answered. | | |

Q14. Survey respondents, when asked to rank textbook features that most or least needed to change, reported that textbooks need to be lower priced (N=74, 41%), and that new editions should be strategically issued (N=55, 28%). The need for modifiable content (N=48, 24%) and access to specific chapters (N=30, 18%) were rated by respondents as less in need of change.

Table 14.1: Survey Question 14 (merged responses)

Below is a list of options/features in current textbooks. Please rank the option that, in your opinion, most needs to be changed or improved with a "9," then continue ranking options in decreasing order of importance. (1=little or no change needed, 9=most change needed; each number can only be used once.)

| | Little or no change needed (sum of 1-3) | Some change needed (sum of 4-6) | Most change needed (sum of 7-9) | Don't Know |
|--|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| I want access to only the chapters that I need | 66 40% | 50 30% | 38 23% | 10 6% |
| The availability of unbundled versions | 41 25% | 57 35% | 44 27% | 22 13% |
| The addition of multimedia content | 44 27% | 62 37% | 40 24% | 18 11% |
| Less watered-down content | 52 30% | 62 35% | 40 23% | 17 10% |
| Lower cost | 27 15% | 21 12% | 118 65% | 16 9% |
| More variety (textbooks all seem the same) | 56 33% | 58 34% | 40 23% | 18 10% |
| Updated material/fewer errors | 43 24% | 70 39% | 52 29% | 16 9% |
| New editions only when necessary | 30 16% | 34 18% | 115 58% | 17 9% |
| Modifiable content that can be updated by the community of users | 90 44% | 51 24% | 38 18% | 23 11% |

APPENDIX: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1) * Have you heard about the Open Textbooks Statement of Intent that was issued by the Student PIRGs? (See <http://MakeTextbooksAffordable.org> to view the statement.)

- a. Yes (skip to 2)
- b. No (skip to 11)
- c. Comment

2) How did you first hear about the *Open Textbooks Statement of Intent*? (choose one)

- a. Email invitation from Student PIRGs
- b. Department Chair
- c. Colleague
- d. Student
- e. Article in newspaper or blog
- f. At <http://maketextbooksaffordable.org> (the Student PIRGs' campaign website)
- g. Other, please specify:

3) Did the *Open Textbooks Statement of Intent* influence your thinking on open textbooks?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Comment

4) * Did you sign the *Open Textbooks Statement of Intent*?

- a. Yes (skip to 5)
- b. No (skip to 6)
- c. Comment

5) What was your motivation for signing the *Open Textbooks Statement of Intent*? (choose all that apply)

(skip to 8)

- a. Textbooks are too expensive
- b. It is important that students can access their textbooks
- c. Open textbooks would better fit my instructional needs
- d. I believe in the open sharing of knowledge as a matter of principle
- e. A student asked me to sign
- f. Someone else suggested that I sign (colleague, department chair, dean, etc.)
- g. Other. Please specify

6) Why did you choose not to sign the *Open Textbooks Statement of Intent*?

- a. I don't want to use open textbooks for my classes (skip to 7, all others skip to 8)
- b. Textbook affordability is not an important issue
- c. I didn't have time
- d. I forgot
- e. Someone in a position of authority (e.g., my department chair) asked me not to sign
- f. None of my respected colleagues had signed
- g. I didn't want my name to be accessible online
- h. I did not understand the statement
- i. Other. Please specify

7) I don't want to use open textbooks because:

- a. I don't have time to switch to another textbook
- b. I have a tried and true text I use
- c. I use course packs or other materials that I can adapt to fit my course
- d. I rely on my own supplements (PowerPoint, test banks, etc.)
- e. Students need flashy color illustrations found in traditional textbooks to pay attention
- f. My students don't have online access or don't like to use e-books
- g. There are better ways to lower costs for students (e.g., rentals, custom/Dover publishing, course packs, etc.)
- h. I don't trust the quality of the content and/or accessory materials of a low-cost or no-cost alternative
- i. I am the author of a textbook that I use and I wouldn't get royalties or I rely on selling course notes to students for extra income
- j. There are no open textbooks available for my course(s)
- k. I don't make textbook adoption decisions for my department
- l. Other (please specify)

8) To the best of your knowledge, did other faculty in your department sign the *Open Textbooks Statement of Intent*?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Comment

9) Are you aware of discussions about textbook affordability (among administrators) in your department or college?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Comment

10) Did the list of signatories from the *Open Textbooks Statement of Intent* on the Student PIRGs' website (<http://MakeTextbooksAffordable.org>) influence your decision to sign the statement?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Comment

11) Do you currently, or have you ever, assigned an open textbook for any of the classes that you teach?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Comment

12) Would you consider assigning an open textbook for any of the classes that you teach if the only change (to your traditional textbook) was the manner in which students could access it (online, downloadable, printable, affordable, etc.)?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Comment

13) What features in an open textbook would be necessary for you to consider it a viable choice for your class(es)? (choose all that apply)

- a. Name/reputation of author
- b. Brand/reputation of publisher
- c. Quality of content, including editorial review
- d. Illustrations and other graphics (e.g., charts, tables, diagrams, photographs, animations, video, etc.)
- e. The flexibility to adapt the textbook to contain only chapters and materials relevant to my course
- f. The ability to integrate my own teaching materials and supplements, such as PowerPoint slides, self-grading homework, test banks, etc.
- g. Printing quality/looks like a traditional book
- h. The inclusion of supplementary materials, such as test item files and slides
- i. The ability to modify content to suit local circumstances
- j. The ability to have open commenting by a community of users (e.g., social networks) to suggest improvements and modifications to the textbook's content
- k. Other. Please specify

14) Below is a list of options/features in current textbooks. Please rank the option that, in your opinion, most needs to be changed or improved with a "9," then continue ranking options in *decreasing* order of importance. (1=little or no change needed, 9=change is most needed; each number can only be used once.)

- a. I want access to only the chapters that I need
- b. The availability of unbundled versions
- c. The addition of multimedia content
- d. Less watered-down content
- e. Lower cost
- f. More variety (textbooks all seem the same)
- g. Updated material/fewer errors
- h. New editions only when necessary
- i. Modifiable content that can be updated by the community of users

15) To help us better understand your answers to the previous questions, please provide the following information:

- a. Type of courses taught
- b. Number of courses taught (per year)
- c. Average number of students taught (per course)
- d. Total number of textbooks you have authored