

B.R.2018.01

CALLING UPON THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH TO ADOPT OPEN EDUCATIONAL
RESOURCES

STUDENT GOVERNMENT BOARD UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

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09 JANUARY 2018

President Kneis introduced the following resolution; which was read for the first
time.

16 JANUARY 2018

Read the second time and voted on.

A RESOLUTION

CALLING FOR THE ADOPTION OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- 1 WHEREAS, the cost of college textbooks is often a major
2 affordability issue for students, who take on additional
3 debt to pay for textbooks, or undercut their own
4 learning by forgoing the purchase of textbooks;
- 5 WHEREAS, The College Board places the annual cost of books and
6 supplies at \$1,250¹ with individual books costing
7 upwards of \$300;
- 8 WHEREAS, for the 2017-2018 school year, the Office of Admissions
9 & Financial Aid estimates the cost of textbooks for
10 each student to be \$772²;
- 11 WHEREAS, rising costs of higher education place an immense
12 financial burden on students, with the average

[1] <https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing>

[2] <https://oafa.pitt.edu/financialaid/costs/>

13 graduate in 2016 holding \$37,172 in debt, severely
14 limiting the ability to make future investments³

15 WHEREAS, in-state tuition at the University of Pittsburgh is the
16 highest in the country for public universities⁴;

17 WHEREAS, Open Educational Resources (OERs) are defined as:
18 syllabi, lesson plans, lab books, worksheets, video
19 lectures, textbooks, and full courses published under
20 an Open License that allows their reuse and
21 repurposing by others and are freely available for
22 anyone to use online;

23 WHEREAS, an ‘open textbook’ is defined as: a textbook written by
24 education professionals and released online under an
25 Open License permitting everyone to freely use, print,
26 share, and adapt the material;

27 WHEREAS, open textbooks offer an affordable, comparable, and
28 flexible alternative to expensive commercial textbooks;

29 WHEREAS, it is the prerogative of faculty members to select the
30 course materials that are most appropriate for a class;

31 WHEREAS, it is appropriate for faculty members to seek and
32 consider using OERs, including open textbooks, in
33 their courses as long as there is no reduction in
34 educational quality;

35 WHEREAS, The University of Pittsburgh should do everything in
36 its power to control the cost of higher education and
37 OERs could relieve some of the financial burden facing
38 students; *now, therefore, be it*

39

40 RESOLVED, on this 16th day of January in the year 2018, the
41 University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board
42 supports the expanded use of OERs at Pitt; *and be it*
43 *further*

44 RESOLVED, that the Student Government Board encourages
45 faculty members to consider open textbooks and other
46 low-cost course materials when selecting materials for
47 their classes; *and be it further*

[3] <https://www.forbes.com/student-loan-debt-statistics-2017>

[4] https://www.usnews.com/highest_instate_tuition

48 RESOLVED, that the Student Government Board calls upon the
49 University Administration to create grants and other
50 incentives to reward faculty members who both use
51 and create OERs; *and be it further*

52 RESOLVED, that the Student Government Board encourages the
53 University Library System to join the Open Textbook
54 Network in order to develop best practices and offer
55 extensive knowledge regarding OERs; *and be it further*

56 RESOLVED, that the Student Government Board fully supports the
57 federal Affordable College Textbook Act⁵, which would
58 allocate federal funding for the expansion of OERs;
59 *and be it further*

60 RESOLVED, that members of Student Government Board will work
61 with numerous stakeholders of the University to
62 educate and encourage faculty members to design and
63 implement OERs in their courses; *and be it finally*

64 RESOLVED, this resolution shall be effective immediately upon
65 adoption and shall reflect the official position of the
66 University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board.

67 ADOPTED: this 16th day of January 2018 by a vote of 8 for, 0
68 against, and 0 abstentions.

Max Kneis, President
University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board