Legislative Executive Summary

S.R. 1808: A Resolution In Support UT Libraries’ Advocacy for Open Education Resources

Summary: This resolution seeks to formally show support for the UT Library System’s goal to increase accessibility of academic resources by expanding the awareness and use of Open Education Resources (OERs). An OER is a type of digital education material that is free and available to all students. Comparable universities have database systems, such as Rice University, University of Illinois, and University of Connecticut, and their professors can create customized materials for their classes that students can access for free. Currently, the UT Libraries staff is looking for student support of their efforts to increase professors’ awareness of OERs on campus, which will encourage their wider use at UT.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why is this necessary?
   a. Open Education Resources are beneficial to students in that they ensure students have the ability to access relevant resources. Due to financial burdens, some students may not be able to afford textbooks and this hurts them academically. This piece of legislation will show the administration student support for faculty adoption of OERs.

2. Who does this apply to?
   a. OERs are accessible to any student taking a course at the University of Texas at Austin in which the professor decides to use texts available on an OER database.

3. How would this change take place?
   a. The UT Library System plans to further work with advocacy groups, such as COERLL, in order to make OERs a priority on campus and educate professors on OERs and how they can use them.
   b. A current budget is established for advocacy, however, further implementation will need to take place to establish an incentive fund for faculty.
Senate of College Councils

S.R. 1808

A Resolution In Support UT Libraries' Advocacy for Open Education Resources

WHEREAS, Students currently enrolled in courses at the University of Texas at Austin are required to purchase various textbooks and online homework access codes; and,

WHEREAS, The cost of textbooks creates a large financial burden for many students, unfairly hindering their academic success; and

WHEREAS, New low-cost resources, known as Open Education Resources (OERs), are being made available to students which provides them with free downloads and use of textbooks and other course materials; and,

WHEREAS, OERs are free to use, edit, and distribute to students, and offer professors the ability to adjust the readings to fit their lesson plans or curriculum; and,

WHEREAS, Comparable universities such as The University of Illinois\(^1\) and The University of Connecticut\(^2\) have offered incentives to professors adopting and utilizing Open Education Resources; and

WHEREAS, The University of Texas Libraries have shown support towards the encouragement of OERs for professor and students to utilize at The University of Texas, therefore, be it

\(^1\) https://researchguides.uic.edu/opentextbooks/incentiveprogram
\(^2\) https://open.uconn.edu/faculty-incentives-2/#
RESOLVED, That the Senate of College Councils here assembled advocates for the expansion of OER usage through the UT Library System; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, That the UT Libraries continue to encourage and assist professors in effectively adopting OERs in their curriculum at the university; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, That this resolution of the Senate of College Councils be sent to Mr. Gregory Fenves, President of the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Soncia Rengins-Lilly, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Dr. Maurie McInnis, Executive Vice President and Provost, Dr. Lorraine Harcombe, Vice Provost and Director of UT Libraries, Aaron Choate, UT Libraries Director of Digital Strategies, Catherine Hamer, UT Libraries Director of Academic Engagement, Dr. Wanda Mercer, Academic Affairs principal liaison to the UT System Student Advisory Committee, Dr. Paul Goldbart, Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, and Dr. David Vanden Bout, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education for the College of Natural Sciences,

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