Report to the Board of Regents
University System of Maryland Student Council
September 7th, 2013

USMSC Summer Retreat

The University System of Maryland Student Council met as a full body to discuss the council's new structure and upcoming initiatives at its summer retreat on August 25th at Hidden Waters. Karen Shaheed, Executive Vice President and General Counsel to Bowie State University, joined the USMSC to discuss the state of higher education in Maryland and give an overview of the University System of Maryland. The USMSC also received Andy MacCraken, Executive Director of the National Campus Leadership Council, to discuss student advocacy and the national issues facing university students.

The Maryland Open Source Textbook Initiative

The Council has continued to pursue the creation of an open source textbook program with an emphasis on collaborative effort and coalition building. After considerable discussion with faculty, administrators, and experts across the country, USMSC and the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Learning and Teaching will launch the Maryland Open Source Textbook (MOST) Initiative.

During the Fall of 2013 an introductory workshop to open source textbooks will be held for interested faculty of high-enrollment, high-impact, entry-level courses. The workshop will be constructed and conducted in close collaboration with experienced experts. Prior to attending, faculty will be asked to review an open source textbook in their field. During the workshop, faculty will learn more about the features and benefits of open source textbooks, compare their reviews, assess the feasibility of adopting open source texts, and discuss the feasibility of scaling up the program.

The workshop will be followed by a Spring 2014 pilot that will collect and analyze data to accurately evaluate cost savings, learning gains, and other impacts of adopting open source textbooks. To ensure the evaluation is as accurate as possible, the data will be analyzed with the assistance of national programs that have the existing methodology to assess student outcomes from the pilot. A more involved spring workshop will be potentially held for faculty members in order to most effectively utilize the materials.

USMSC will continue to encourage the segments to come together to create a workgroup to begin evaluating the feasibility of developing a state supported repository and review process that all Maryland faculty across the segments can access and contribute toward.

The various student governments and graduate student governments of the System plan on passing resolutions in support of this initiative.

Federal Lobby Day
The Council has collaborated with Congressman Hoyer's office to reserve a room in the Capitol on November 12th to hold its first annual USMSC Federal Lobby Day. USMSC is working alongside the National Campus Leadership Coalition, the Young Invincibles, and USM administration and staff to identify appropriate federal legislation and how to most effectively advocate for students.

Early Voting Sites
The Council has begun to conduct a survey of all institutions to identify their early polling site proximity to campus. The Governor's office has offered to assist the council in reaching out to County election boards to ensure early polling sites will be in an appropriate location to empower students to fully utilize the new provisions in the Improving Access to Voting Act of 2013.

Sustainability
The Council is extremely proud of the progress the System has made to become a leader in sustainability in the state and the nation. Follow a meeting with Vice Chancellor Boesch, the Council has begun to plan the most appropriate actions to encourage increased sustainability from the system and students. The Council hopes to create a unified action plan this semester.

Health Insurance
With the roll out of the Affordable Care Act, the Student Council wants to ensure that students are fully aware of the impact the legislation will have on them. The Council will construct an outreach plan in collaboration with Enroll America, the Young Invincibles, and System administrators to educate targeted students. The Council hopes to host Associate Vice Chancellor JoAnn Goedert to brief the Council within the coming weeks.

Mental Health & M-Urgency
Mental health and public safety remain a top priority for the Council. While not much progress has been made this past month, the Council hopes to continue to explore areas for improvement and expansion.

The Council will have their first official meeting at the University of Baltimore on September 8th.

Respectfully submitted,
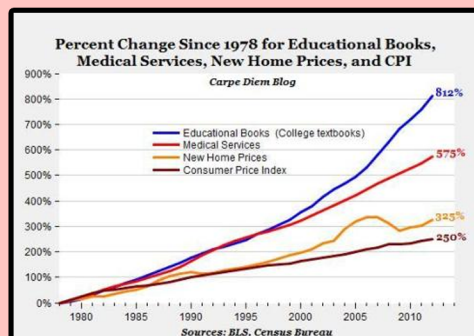*James Jalandoni, President*

USMSC
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND
STUDENT COUNCIL

MARYLAND OPEN SOURCE TEXTBOOKS

THE PROBLEM

Textbook costs have become an enormous barrier to college affordability. College students in Maryland have enjoyed the smallest increase in tuition over the past seven years compared to any other state, but have not been spared from the increasing financial burden of textbooks.

■ The price of college textbooks has **increased 812% since 1978,** faster than tuition, health care costs and housing prices, all of which have risen faster than inflation.[1]

Percent Change Since 1978 for Educational Books, Medical Services, New Home Prices, and CPI
Carpe Diem Blog
Educational Books (College textbooks) — 812%
Medical Services — 575%
New Home Prices — 325%
Consumer Price Index — 250%
Sources: BLS, Census Bureau

■ *College Board* estimates that the **average student spends $1,200** per year on textbooks and materials.[2]

■ A survey conducted by the *U.S. Public Interest Research Group* found that **high textbook costs prevented 7 out of 10 students from purchasing an assigned book.**[3]

■ *Student Monitor* reports that **students buy only 77 percent of all required textbooks.**[4]

OPEN SOURCE TEXTBOOKS

Open Source Textbooks are published under an open copyright license and made freely available to the public. Open source textbooks not only have the potential to save students millions of dollars per year, but also empower faculty with digital tools that traditional textbooks lack.

■ A Florida Legislative Task Force found *"compelling academic reasons to use open access textbooks such as: improved quality; flexibility and access to resources; interactive and active learning experiences; currency of textbook information; broader professional collaboration; and the use of teaching and learning technology to enhance educational experiences."* [5]

■ Open Source initiatives are underway in states and universities around the country *(Washington, Ohio, California, Texas, Florida)*

THE MOST INITIATIVE

The *Maryland Open Source Textbook (MOST) Initiative* is a student driven effort to promote the adoption and development of open source textbooks within Maryland. With the collaborative effort of faculty, staff, administrators, and experts in open source, USMSC hopes to launch the MOST Initiative in three parts:

1. A Fall 2013 workshop on exploring open source textbooks, tailored for interested faculty of high-enrollment, entry level courses. Faculty will learn more about the features and benefits of open source textbooks, how to engage with the technology, and assess the feasibility of adopting the open source text.

2. A Spring 2014 pilot program that will gather and analyze data in order to evaluate textbook costs, explore how students are using their textbooks, and gauge faculty willingness to move to open source textbooks.

3. A state-wide workgroup to evaluate the feasibility of a state-supported open source program.

1. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/04/college-textbook-prices-increase_n_2409153.html
2. https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/quick-guide-college-costs
3. http://www.studentpirgs.org/news/ap/high-prices-prevent-college-students-buying-assigned-textbooks
4. http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2012/08/28/how-your-textbook-dollars-are-divvied-up?page=2
5. http://www.openaccesstextbooks.org/pdf/OATTF_Final_Report_All_sections.pdf

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