
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the cost of
2 textbooks has risen four times faster than the rate of inflation
3 over the last decade. According to the College Board, the
4 average college student now spends more than \$1,200 on books and
5 materials each year, which is a large sum for students whose
6 budgets are already stretched thin from tuition, fees, and other
7 educational expenses. In fact, the high price of textbooks has
8 caused sixty-five per cent of students to skip buying required
9 textbooks at some point in their college career. Therefore, the
10 legislature finds the high cost of textbooks to be a matter of
11 statewide concern.

12 The legislature also finds that a growing number of higher
13 education institutions are turning to open educational resources
14 as a more affordable alternative to traditional textbooks. Open
15 educational resources are online or printed materials, including
16 textbooks and other learning content, that are free or openly
17 licensed. These open educational resources are peer reviewed



1 like traditional textbooks and may include sample problems and
2 quizzes like those that publishers often bundle with
3 traditional, printed textbooks. Most significantly, because of
4 their open nature, these materials are much more affordable than
5 traditional textbooks and can therefore make a higher education
6 more accessible.

7 Students at institutions that have adopted the use of open
8 educational resources have experienced a dramatic decrease in
9 the cost of textbooks. For example, students enrolled at a
10 community college in Massachusetts that adopted open educational
11 resources in three of its six required general education courses
12 spent as little as \$31 per course on course materials, compared
13 to the national average of \$153 per course.

14 The North Dakota University System has also experienced
15 positive results from the use of open educational resources.
16 During the 2015 legislative session, the North Dakota
17 legislature appropriated \$110,000 to create an open educational
18 resources initiative. The North Dakota University System used
19 this appropriation to fund system-wide faculty training and
20 institution-level grants. The initiative was successful, as six
21 hundred fifty courses across the system now exclusively use open



1 educational resources, affecting at least fifteen thousand
2 students. An audit of the North Dakota initiative estimated
3 that students enrolled in these courses saved between \$1.1
4 million and \$2.4 million in textbook costs over two years,
5 equivalent to at least ten times the amount of the legislature's
6 initial investment in the program.

7 Given the positive results that other jurisdictions have
8 experienced adopting open educational resources, the legislature
9 finds that it is worth exploring whether an open educational
10 resources initiative would be successful within the University
11 of Hawaii system.

12 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the
13 University of Hawaii to study the feasibility of adopting an
14 open educational resources initiative.

15 SECTION 2. (a) The University of Hawaii shall study the
16 feasibility of adopting an open educational resources
17 initiative. The initiative shall include the adoption of a
18 strategic plan, including a strategy to increase the use of open
19 educational resources. The initiative may also include:

20 (1) Open educational resources training, including
21 training for faculty; and



1 (2) Individual grants for faculty to incentivize the use
2 of open educational resources in their courses.

3 (b) The University of Hawaii shall submit a report of its
4 findings and recommendations, including any proposed
5 legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior
6 to the convening of the regular session of 2020. The report
7 shall include:

8 (1) The recommended parameters of an open educational
9 resources initiative at the University of Hawaii;

10 (2) The estimated cost to implement the initiative; and

11 (3) The projected savings to students as a result of the
12 initiative, if any.

13 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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H.B. NO. 915

Report Title:

UH; Open Educational Resources Initiative; Feasibility Study;
Report

Description:

Requires the University of Hawaii to study the feasibility of adopting an open educational resources initiative. Requires the University to report to the Legislature its findings and recommendations, including the cost to implement the initiative and any projected cost savings.

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