

THE FUTURE OF COURSE MATERIAL MANAGEMENT

*A Guide to Innovation in Affordability,
Access, and Convenience*



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In This Guide

Times of significant disruption create significant opportunity. As higher education evolves and adapts, we have the chance to update our approach to course material management and better serve administrators, faculty and students. This guide examines where we are today – and identifies the way forward, with solutions, practical recommendations and results that demonstrate how to deliver increased affordability, access and convenience.

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THE NEED TO UPDATE – AND FUTURE-PROOF

As the higher education landscape continues to evolve, the entire institutional ecosystem is facing disruption and finding ways to adapt in real time.

Spring 2020 brought one of the most extreme examples of disruption in the modern era of higher education. Every college and university in the U.S. navigated a rapid, mid-term pivot to online education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each found a way to ensure continuity of the term in progress and coordinate the summer term while preparing for fall amid many unknowns and variables.

It's in this environment of unprecedented change that institutions are tasked anew with meeting the challenges of today – and future-proofing against those ahead.

Institutions need to focus on what will provide increased value to all stakeholders. Students and parents increasingly view this in the lens of return on investment (ROI). Does the overall value justify the cost they are investing in higher education?

Now more than ever, it is important that colleges and universities deliver value not just when a student obtains their degree, but throughout the educational journey. Wherever possible, that means creating experiences built on convenience, flexibility and ease of use. Ensuring all students have convenient access to affordable course materials is a foundational step.

Need for Course Material Alignment

Right now, there's an opportunity before us to create greater value through updating the current approach to course material management. Not only can we improve the experience for students, faculty and administrators – we can create better alignment among all stakeholders.

Data shows that students and faculty understand the importance of course materials. In fact, *70% of students said they learn better in a class when they've read the*

assigned material in advance. Additionally, *85% of faculty agreed that students who obtain the required course materials typically achieve higher grades.*

However, in 2020, more than half of students (53%) *said they did not have their course materials on the first day of class.*¹

“Cost has a lot to do with why students aren’t prepared on the first day of classes. Some are waiting for their financial aid to clear, and they don’t have the funds to buy their course materials until then. No matter why they’re waiting, not having their materials can impact performance in class.”

**Store Manager,
Campbell University Bookstore**

The reason cited most often: the student wanted to check with professors before buying their course materials. This suggests a few potential underlying factors: a desire to save money and time, where possible, as well as a lack of confidence in the necessity of the course materials. Relatedly, the #2 reason cited was that the student couldn't afford the cost of a new/used book.

Cost concerns ripple throughout institutions: *89% of presidents also think course materials cost too much.* Many also say student needs should take precedence over faculty desires, as providing greater affordability for students justifies some loss of control over selection.

We need to get everyone back on the same page – identifying and resolving points of friction in the course material process to ensure all students have the right course materials at the right time to support their success.

¹ 2020 National Student Pulse Report, Barnes & Noble College

² 2020 Survey of College and University Presidents, Inside Higher Ed

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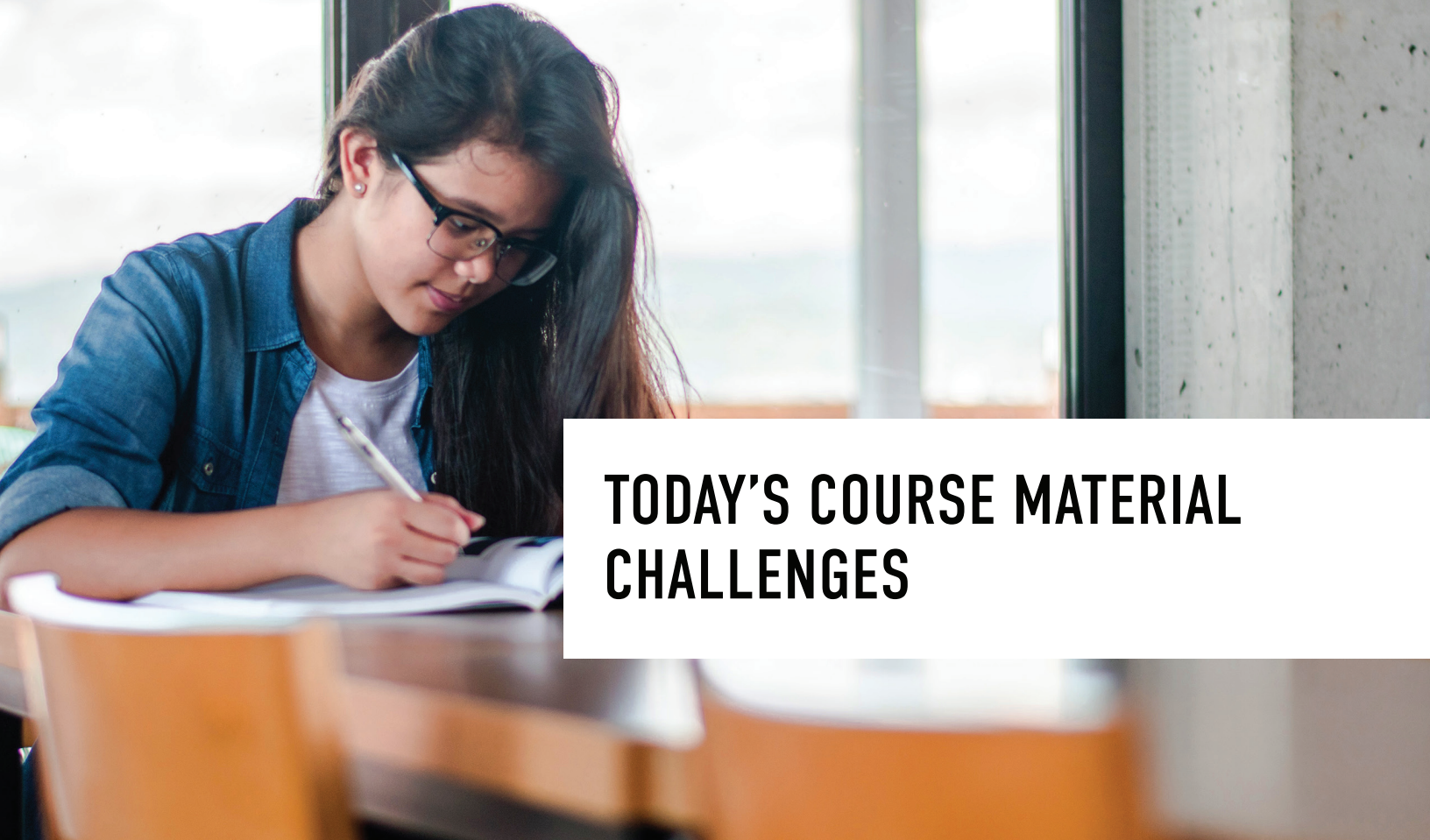
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TODAY'S COURSE MATERIAL CHALLENGES

Students

The data is clear: many students aren't getting the course materials they need when they need them – and much of that is due to affordability concerns. **We found that 41% did not believe their school was trying to improve affordability for them.**³

However, it's not just about money. The entire process can be confusing. For many students, textbooks and other required course materials were provided automatically by their school as part of their K-12 educational experience. As they embark on their higher education journey, they've already got a lot to figure out – especially for those living away from home for the first time. **That's why 58% of students told us that adjusting to college life has been stressful.**⁴ From navigating the campus to managing their own schedules and doing their own laundry, they are making a lot of adjustments.

When students don't have one place where they can find all their required course materials at the same time, it can delay or prevent them from getting what they need – especially if they already were concerned about costs. In fact, students using financial aid for course materials often have to wait for disbursement, which frequently occurs

after classes have already started. And, for some students, even getting to the physical bookstore can be a deterrent – especially for those living off campus and juggling work and family responsibilities.

For many students, not having their course materials only creates additional strain and anxiety. Of those who weren't prepared on the first day of the fall term, nearly 40% said it was stressful.⁵ If we don't help solve their challenges, we run the risk of having too many stressed-out students unprepared for class and at a fundamental disadvantage for academic success.

^{3, 4, 5} 2019 and 2020 National Student Pulse Report, Barnes & Noble College

*“How can you be successful?
How can you learn the materials?
How can you do your homework if you
don't have the books necessary?”*

**Dr. Casey Carbill, President,
SUNY Onondaga Community College**

87% of students are interested in lower-priced course materials bundled with tuition

Faculty

Faculty care deeply about maintaining the freedom to choose the best materials for their courses – but they also care about their students and are sympathetic to cost concerns. Some conduct extensive research to find the most affordable options. However, adoption processes and tools are not always simple or intuitive, often causing delays and submissions past the HEOA deadlines. Many faculty members don't realize that late adoption can negatively impact the ability to deliver more affordable course materials and, ultimately, the incentives for students to purchase.

Most critically, when students don't get their course materials, it impacts faculty's ability to teach, create robust learning experiences and support student success.

Administrators

Right now, administrators are balancing an increasingly complex – and sometimes conflicting – mix of student, faculty and institutional needs. They don't always have the visibility they need to make course material processes and services as effective as possible. Adoption often isn't centralized, so administrators can't track overall progress, and individual departments largely manage their own faculty. Institutions can do their best to offer affordable course materials, but they have little control over how and where students purchase. When students turn to online retailers or choose not to purchase at all, administrators are left looking for ways to re-engage them – and recapture lost revenue.

It's clear that course material services must be updated to benefit students, faculty and the institution.

What's Next

Course material services need to become as nimble as possible. Individual students and institutions likely will need to move more fluidly between traditional, in-seat education and online education over the next few years. The ability to reach all stakeholders wherever they are is vital.

In general, institutions and their college stores need to think of course material services in terms of customer expectations and experiences. Consumers are accustomed to ever-increasing levels of ease and simplicity in the delivery of goods and services – and they bring those expectations to their roles as students and faculty. We can't be afraid of disruption. We must be prepared to make bold changes that help us meet their needs and serve them more effectively.

With course materials, we know students have issues around price and preparedness. Why not address those challenges with solutions that feel familiar to students? For example, there are new course material delivery models that create savings through bundling. As consumers, it's likely that many students and their families have saved money by bundling multiple items for purchase. Students are open to ideas like this for course materials – when asked, **87% said they are interested in lower-priced course materials bundled with tuition.**⁶

That type of forward thinking can help institutions clearly support success for their students. The future can't be tied to any one format or method of delivery. The future lies in creating innovative ways to meet the evolving needs and preferences of students and all other stakeholders.

So, what's next in course materials? The complete access model. It's an innovative approach that resonates and creates value by delivering **affordability, access and convenience.**

⁶ 2019 National Student Pulse Report, Barnes & Noble College



THE OPPORTUNITY OF COMPLETE ACCESS

Complete access models offer a new way to ensure everyone in a campus community can access what they need to be successful. They benefit the entire institutional ecosystem, supporting greater simplicity and convenience for everyone as well as affordability for students.

In a complete access model, course material costs are bundled and included as part of students' tuition and fees – and delivered in time for the first day of classes. With so many students participating in the program, the volume of course materials increases and allows the institution to create significant savings for students.

Costs are noticeably lower, and students can see firsthand that affordability is a priority for their institution. They are better prepared for class and equipped for success. Faculty can plan for the term knowing that all students have access to the assigned materials and supports the teaching and learning experiences they want to create. While some bundling programs only allow selection of digital course materials, a complete access model offers greater choice for faculty, supporting print, digital and OER selections.

Administrators can be confident that they are achieving their primary goal of lowering costs and boosting preparedness for students. Moreover, by driving course material sales back through the campus store, they are recapturing market share and keeping revenue on campus.

“With our program, not only did 85% of our students have their materials on the first day, but in the first semester, we saw significant gains in persistence. In the past, we would have students who would just disappear during the semester. They didn’t have their books, couldn’t keep up with the coursework and would give up. And we made significant gains there. We also started to see progress as of the end of the first semester with certain subpopulations whose actual grades were improving, and that was encouraging.”

**Anastasia Urtz, Vice President and Interim Provost,
Onondaga Community College**



Removing the Friction

Complete access models bring greater clarity and convenience to the course material process.

With complete access, students receive their course materials automatically, just as most did during their K-12 education. They don't need to spend time piecing together what course materials they need or how to get them. They aren't waiting to talk to faculty or borrowing books from friends. They just receive all the right course materials at the right time to support their success.

Complete access also removes the burden of payment for students. And, it fundamentally levels the playing field for students using financial aid to purchase or rent their course materials. They no longer have to wait until leftover funds are disbursed, which often takes place after the start of the term.

Crucially, faculty don't need to change their behaviors or do anything differently in a complete access model. They have the freedom simply to select the best course materials for the term, knowing that the program's volume will ensure student savings.

For all stakeholders, complete access provides flexibility to match a student's individual circumstances or community needs. These programs move smoothly between traditional, in-seat education and online education as needed, with no disruption to service. In 2020, institutions using this model were well supported in the rapid, mid-term transition to all-online education as well as planning for the next few terms.

The complete access approach offers institutions the opportunity not only to deliver the convenience, affordability and access their stakeholders need now – but to start future-proofing for the days ahead.

“Obtaining all your textbooks – the right ones – in time for the very first class is such a huge step toward eliminating the anxiety of starting a new year and preparing for success!”

Michelle Perez, Associate Vice President for Student Success, Campbell University

“It's critically important to understand the access to all the publishers, the vertical and horizontal supply chain that BNC has access to make this program work like a clock. Also, the relationship we've built since 2006 is a very strong relationship. We were able to partner and really work with one another to make this program happen, and on fairly short order. That relationship really served us as we moved into this remote part of our year where we needed more devices and technology. Our BNC team was able to get us devices to help students out that we couldn't get anywhere else.”

Anastasia Urtz, Vice President and Interim Provost, Onondaga Community College

HOW TO GET STARTED



Prepare your physical footprint.

Schools will need to be prepared to distribute any print materials not shipped directly to students. This requires temporary storage space as well as space for staging, packaging and handing out the materials to students. Providing this type of concierge service to students and faculty helps simplify the process and facilitate a better experience. The physical college store space also needs to be prepared to support students through the add/drop process and meet other needs during the term.



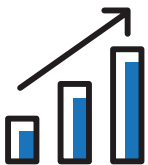
Secure access to a large inventory of physical and digital course materials.

Schools and/or their college store operators need to have relationships with as many publishers as possible and access to a wide range of OER and other digital materials to ensure faculty have the academic freedom to adopt the right course materials.



Make it simple for faculty to adopt course materials on time.

The easier it is for faculty to adopt, the easier it will be to meet the deadline and secure affordable pricing. Adoption platforms need to make it simple to search for course materials, reference materials used in previous terms and have any questions answered on the spot. Complete access works in part because of the efficiencies of scale that come with the large volume of course materials being purchased. It's vital that faculty submit adoptions on time – or early – to strengthen the institution's negotiating position and boost affordability for students.



Leverage adoption insights to enhance the course material management process.

Having real-time data on adoptions offers clarity into where faculty are in the adoption process and how they are adopting. In addition, insights on faculty assignments, course material requirements, and other data at the course, department and school level provides a holistic view of where process improvements can be made. Administrators can utilize this data to adjust or streamline the course material management process where possible.



Leverage your communications tools.

Administrators need to find effective ways to train faculty on adoption technology and reach out proactively during the adoption process to ensure deadlines are met. The ability to target/tailor communications to faculty who have yet to submit their adoptions can significantly enhance an institution's overall adoption rates.

Identifying the best ways to educate students, parents and faculty on the complete access model is crucial. The model is designed to be simple and convenient, but communicating early and often will help secure buy-in and minimize challenges during implementation.



BNC PILOT PROGRAMS STUDENT PREPAREDNESS RESULTS



90% *of students prepared
and ready for success*



75% *increase in student
readiness*



105% *increase in the number of
textbooks in students' hands*



PARTNER CLOSE-UP:



CAMPBELL
UNIVERSITY

“The decision to implement First Day Complete came down to our students having course materials on the first day – it’s right there in the name. Before, too many were waiting around to try to find their books online or to borrow from a friend or sibling. Once we adopted this program, branded Camel Direct for our campus, about 90% of our students had their materials from day one. That’s been very helpful to us.

From the faculty perspective, not much has changed in terms of choice. Our faculty members still get to select the materials they were selecting before – the only difference is the price structure. It’s one stable price all students know ahead of time that they’ll pay to pick up all their course materials. They’re boxed up and ready to pick up on day one.

Once faculty saw that, getting buy-in was pretty easy. Some of the humanities faculty pushed back at first. They worried that the humanities would be subsidizing the

STEM majors because those textbooks can be quite expensive. But looking at the overall price structure, it just wasn’t true. It was fair pricing for all. Students get the materials they need, and faculty get to select the materials they want. It’s been great.”

**Michael Wells, Professor of Chemistry and
Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences**

“Camel Direct allowed me to pick up my textbooks and materials easily and efficiently. When I arrived at the bookstore, my items were already packaged and ready to go. As a freshman, this program made my transitioning process run much smoother.”

Kaitlyn Stocks, student, Campbell University



PARTNER CLOSE-UP:



“Our initiative was faculty driven. They were largely at their wit’s end because our student population had reached a point where less than half – about 40% – would obtain their course materials at all. Students were literally trying to succeed in college-level coursework without books and materials. Faculty found this situation to be untenable, and they were seeking a solution. We worked on our Box of Books program with Barnes & Noble College for about a year and implemented in Fall 2019. Now, about 85% of our students have all their books and materials on the first day.

The Box of Books program has dramatically improved opportunities around instruction because all the students have what they need, when they need it. This was important to us from an equity perspective.

And, with the price structure we were able to build, many full-time students are paying around half of what they were paying before we put the program in place. Students

certainly can opt out, but most of them chose to stay in. The program is flexible, and it conveys important messages from the first day. We were expecting you. We knew you would be here. We’re glad to see you. Everything is ready for you. That has come across very powerfully for our students. Our student government even adopted a resolution of support and appreciation for the initiative.”

Anastasia Urtz, Vice President and Interim Provost

“The whole thing was pretty simple. I typed in my classes online, it told me the books I needed, I came to the bookstore and they were waiting for me in a box. It took five minutes, and I was in and out.”

**Tyler Czyz, student,
Onondaga Community College**



"I love the fact that all of the students have their books the first day of class. It makes it a lot easier to teach when all of the students have their required books from the beginning."

**Dr. Karen Benn-Marshall, Vice President,
Academic Administration, Oakwood University**



"There has been a growing trend for students to avoid purchasing textbooks for classes due to increased costs over the years. This is especially true for the students who are economically disadvantaged. By not purchasing textbooks, students are missing important information that may lead to improved grades. The partnership between Ocean County College and Barnes & Noble College will ensure that students receive their books on the first day of class because the cost is included as part of tuition. By reducing the cost and providing a greater level of access to course materials, we are confident that students will be more equipped for greater levels of success."

**Dr. Joseph Konopka, Vice President of Academic Affairs,
Ocean County College**



"When students come to Cumberlands, they know exactly what they will pay for tuition, as well as room and board, but the cost of their textbooks has been an unknown figure until they arrive and receive their class syllabi. With this new program we hope to eliminate that unknown while providing the books students need to succeed in their classes and ultimately the workforce."

**Jerry Jackson, Vice President for Enrollment and Communications,
University of the Cumberlands**



SOLUTIONS FROM BARNES & NOBLE COLLEGE

First Day® Complete

This complete access solution provides every student with all their course materials, digital and print, in time for the first day of class. Leveraging economies of scale with top publishers, Barnes & Noble College secures significant savings for students (an average savings of 40-50%), and a flat-rate, per-credit-hour cost is included in their tuition and fees as a course charge. With no additional costs and no surprises, First Day® Complete provides added value for students and their parents, enhances the college experience and sets the stage for better student outcomes.

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The Adoption & Insights Portal (AIP)

This centralized platform provides faculty and administrators with the right tools to support timely adoption of course materials. AIP makes it easy for faculty to browse over 10 million ISBNs and a range of textbooks, eBooks and courseware from a large and diverse group of publishers, then adopt (and re-adopt) the best course materials. School administrators get real-time access to adoption rates, providing the insights they need to send timely reminders, both automated and on-demand, through the portal.



Our forward-thinking solutions are designed to help colleges and universities navigate the fast-paced changes occurring in higher education, solve pressing challenges on campus and drive much-needed revenue. Let Barnes & Noble College help your institution achieve success today! For more information visit www.bncollegesolutions.com.