

What They're Saying: Students Embrace Access Programs, Praise Affordability and Convenience

Students currently enrolled at colleges and universities with access programs share their insights on the impact of the current programs on their studies.

College students are voicing support for textbook affordable access programs amid a regulatory push from the Department of Education that could gut these popular programs and dramatically increase textbook prices.

A proposed rule currently under consideration by the Department could restrict colleges from continuing to offer these successful access programs, which automatically provide students with all their required textbooks and course materials at competitive below-market prices. Currently embraced by more than 1,500 colleges nationwide, access programs with an opt-out model automatically deduct course materials fees from students' accounts, eliminating the need for students to search for textbooks on their own and ensuring that students have materials on day one regardless of the status of payment. Through the opt-out model, access programs have reduced student spending on course materials by an estimated 57%. Additionally, [studies confirm](#) these programs are very popular with students who appreciate the convenience and cost savings they provide.

Here's what students are saying about the benefits of affordable access programs:

- “About half the courses at Long Beach State University now participate in an affordable access program that automatically delivers course materials to students at the beginning of the term, and at a significantly reduced price. **My financial aid package automatically covers the cost of these books, and I have the chance to shop around to make sure I'm getting the best price before being charged** ... It's no surprise that our student Senate [passed a formal resolution](#) in support of access programs in November 2023.” – [Mitali Jain](#), Long Beach State University
- “**If immediate access went away, I would definitely experience an increase in stress.** The beginning of every semester for college students is extremely stressful. Having to find all the required course materials online or go to a bookstore - it would be incredibly stressful and incredibly difficult.” – [Madison Lewis](#), Iowa State University
- “Having the ability to use the GI Bill to get my education was terrific. However, it required me to spend hours doing paperwork, days waiting for the college to complete their part, and weeks to receive my reimbursement. To ensure I had course materials in time for class, I had to purchase all of them out of pocket. Luckily, I was working and had the money to do so. I know many students do not have that privilege. **With a program like First Day, I would have received access to my course materials up front, and I could have easily used the GI Bill to pay for the course materials and my tuition fees once my reimbursement came in.**” – [William Glover](#), Broward College
- “**What I love about the All Access system is that everything was where I needed it to be.** All my textbooks were a part of my digital library. No matter what class it was, I can just easily go there and then find all the textbooks that I needed.” – [La'Qusha Bivens](#), Alumna of Edward Waters University

- “As a first-year, I think it would be really beneficial because there’s so many other things that you’re adjusting to when you get here ... **To not have to worry about books and getting what you need is probably really beneficial.**” – [Ella Kocina](#), Drake University
- “...Coming into UCLA, [**affordable access**] **just helped me tremendously with so many other aspects, like financial reasons** or just getting started with the workload and getting adjusted to the fast pace that’s offered here at UCLA along with the curriculum. And I think for me, more than anything, **inclusive access became something that I started to depend on because of how beneficial it was for me** ... and there’s many more other students who are also benefiting from this program ... even if you’re not able to see it immediately.” – [Jennifer Calderon Zavala](#), Fourth-Year Transfer Student at UCLA
- “[It’s] amazing that **I have immediate access to all my course materials without having to do anything.**” – [Natalie Silva](#), University of Houston
- “It’s **nice to not have to worry about going to the bookstore and having to deal with buying a textbook** ... It’s also nice that it’s all in one spot.” – [Sammi Trost](#), University of Minnesota
- “I used a lot of hard copy textbooks in high school; we were very traditional. Everything was pen and paper, hard textbook, and they were just so heavy, and now everything's online here, and **it's much easier just to have everything in one place.**” – [Olivia Thomas](#), North Carolina State University

To stay informed about the ongoing rulemaking effort, visit www.keeptextbooksaffordable.com or the Department of Education’s [website](#).