



### Exploring sustainability of affordability initiatives: a library case study

Journal:	<i>Reference Services Review</i>
Manuscript ID	RSR-03-2020-0016.R3
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	Textbook affordability, Academic libraries, Streaming video, Open educational resources, Sustainability, E-books

SCHOLARONE™  
Manuscripts

This is an accepted manuscript(AM) copy of the published article available here: <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-03-2020-0016>. The AM is licensed under a CC BY-NC 4.0 license.

## Exploring sustainability of affordability initiatives: a library case study

Jeanne Hoover, [hooverj@ecu.edu](mailto:hooverj@ecu.edu)

Cindy Shirkey, [shirkeyc@ecu.edu](mailto:shirkeyc@ecu.edu)

Lisa Barricella, [barricellal@ecu.edu](mailto:barricellal@ecu.edu)

### Abstract:

**Purpose:** The cost of textbooks continues to rise for college students along with the cost of tuition. These costs can impact student success. In response to the rising costs, higher education institutions have started affordability initiatives. These initiatives are frequently housed in academic libraries. Joyner Library at East Carolina University addresses affordability through three initiatives: Course-Adopted Textbook program, Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant program, and Streaming Video licensing.

**Design/methodology/approach:** This paper will explore these three programs in-depth and perform a sustainability analysis on each program as well.

**Findings:** After reviewing the affordability initiatives discussed in the case study, the authors found there were varying degrees of sustainability for the programs.

**Originality/value:** ECU is not alone in addressing affordability through multiple initiatives and this paper will address the long-term sustainability of these initiatives, especially during a time when libraries are experiencing shrinking budgets.

### Keywords:

Textbook affordability; academic libraries; streaming video; open educational resources; sustainability; eBooks

### Article Classification:

Case study

### Introduction

1  
2  
3 The cost of textbooks has risen for college students along with the cost of tuition  
4 over the years. Between 2006 and 2016, textbook prices increased three times  
5 the rate of inflation, which was more than the rise of college tuition during the  
6 same period (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). The costs of textbooks have led  
7 some students to not purchase required textbooks, take fewer classes, earn poor  
8 grades, and even fail courses (Florida Virtual Campus, 2018). The open education  
9 movement has worked to help address textbook costs through developing open  
10 educational resources (OER) which are free to students and openly licensed to  
11 allow flexibility. According to a recent report by SPARC (the Scholarly Publishing and  
12 Academic Resources Coalition), libraries are the top campus entity involved with  
13 OER initiatives (SPARC, 2017). Due to the multitude of scholarly resources they  
14 provide, libraries are in a unique position to support textbook affordability. OER,  
15 along with other initiatives, have led some libraries to be involved in multiple  
16 textbook affordability initiatives.  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

25 East Carolina University (ECU) is a Doctoral, High Research Activity university  
26 according to the Carnegie classification schema. It has almost 29,000 students and  
27 is part of the 17-school University of North Carolina (UNC) System. Seventy-five  
28 percent of first-time, full-time undergraduate students receive financial aid (ECU,  
29 2019). ECU simultaneously runs three affordability programs that benefit  
30 students: the Course-Adopted Textbook program (CATs), the Alternative Textbook  
31 Mini-Grant program, and Streaming Videos licensing. Each of these programs  
32 saves students money in a unique way. For CATs, the library partners with the  
33 bookstore to see which library-owned texts faculty are using or could be  
34 purchased to save students book fees. The Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant  
35 program encourages faculty, through a monetary incentive, to retool courses to  
36 take advantage of OER or library-supported resources, sparing students hefty  
37 textbook fees. And finally, streaming video licensing saves money because  
38 students no longer must join Netflix or pay for movies on Amazon or iTunes. At  
39 ECU, these programs have been funded through special library monies, the  
40 traditional book budget, and grant funding. While most involved -- students,  
41 faculty, librarians, administrators -- see that these programs are worthwhile, the  
42 library has yet to formally explore the sustainability of each. By sustainability, the  
43 authors simply mean the ability to continue to offer these programs in a robust  
44 manner.  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

## Course-Adopted Textbook Program (CATs)

### *Initiative*

ECU's textbook affordability initiative's Course-Adopted Textbook program, or CATs program, started in 2015 with Assistant Director Patrick Carr at the helm. Carr had heard about this type of program from Liz Siler, Electronic Resources Librarian at University of North Carolina Charlotte (Carr *et al.*, 2016). To institute the program, Carr received support from the Provost, which led to cooperation from the Dowdy Bookstore, a key player.

Although the process has evolved over the years, the basic method is as follows: in October and May Dowdy Bookstore shares a list of all course-adopted textbooks with the library. This list is an Excel file that must be cleaned up by purging it of non-book items and books with access codes, which are not workable for the library. The revised book dataset is then compared to a running list of titles that the library has already purchased with an unlimited user license. (Unlimited user access is preferred because it allows a whole class to use the books in this program at once.) Unowned titles are searched against Serial Solutions, an electronic resources management system, to see if they can be bought. Each year the library sets aside a budget line for buying CATs books. For two years, 2016-2018, the library had a State of North Carolina funded grant, which helped to build up a nice database of CATs books because the library was able to spend \$5,000 per term of grant money (Thomas & Bernhardt, 2018). This current fiscal year, 2020, the spend per term was reduced to \$3,500 because funding is coming from the library materials' budget only. When buying CATs books, the library generally tries to maximize the number of books purchased, so the library tends to buy the cheaper ones. A spreadsheet of links for all available CATs books is maintained, and that spreadsheet, in turn, gets fed into a database. The database is searchable and publicized to faculty and students through emails, word of mouth, and by linking to it on the library's homepage.

### *Assessment*

There are several ways to measure success with the CATs program. Metrics include the number of unique course sections, the number of students in those sections, and the potential maximum savings. The number of unique sections is simply the number of a classes minus any repeats for texts for the same class

1  
2  
3 (when two or more texts are used in one class). The potential maximum savings is  
4 the bookstore price of the text multiplied by the number of students in the class.  
5 This kind of assessment is not a perfect way to measure return on investment  
6 (ROI), but it provides some way to gauge the impact this program is having on  
7 campus.  
8  
9

10  
11 [Insert Table I

12  
13 Table Title: Cumulative Course Adopted Textbooks Data]  
14  
15

### 16 *Analysis*

17  
18 With potential maximum savings figures like those, we would be hard pressed to  
19 say this program is not sustainable. Additionally, we have invested \$3,000-\$5,000  
20 every semester in the program, so there is a tangible investment as well. This  
21 tangible investment is very modest in comparison to the goodwill and publicity  
22 that the library is receiving for its efforts. When the CATs program first started,  
23 the funding was carved out from our materials' budget. Then the 2-year grant  
24 allowed the library to expand spending amounts by \$1,500, and allowed for funds  
25 from a completely different source, a most welcome turn of events. In 2019 the  
26 CATs program returned to a line item in the library materials' budget.

27  
28 Unfortunately, the library could not afford to maintain spending at \$5,000 per  
29 term, so the CATs funding amount was reduced to \$3,500, then \$3,000. In  
30 analyzing the CATs program, it was noted that single use eBook titles purchased  
31 as faculty requests were often accessed by students. This caused several  
32 turnaways in our eBook data. As a result, liaisons are asked to purchase an  
33 unlimited use eBook license, if available, for eBook requests. This saves the  
34 library from upgrading titles from a single use eBook to unlimited use eBook. And  
35 finally, end of year funds were used to purchase collections of unlimited eBooks  
36 and the library has begun participating in consortial collection development  
37 programs with other UNC system schools for publishers such as Wiley and  
38 Cambridge.  
39

### 40 *Results*

41  
42 This program costs so little compared to the library's overall materials' budget,  
43 gains so much goodwill, and helps so many students, that the authors feel it is  
44 very sustainable.  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49

## Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant Program

### *Initiative*

The Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant program started in 2016 and featured a \$1,000 incentive to faculty who switched from a commercial textbook to open educational resources (OER) or library materials. Faculty participating in this program have the option to adopt OER, remix materials, or create their own OER. If faculty create an OER, they are asked to deposit materials in the university's institutional repository and an appropriate OER repository. The program provides faculty with funding to support their efforts in transitioning to free materials, which takes considerable time. Unlike larger grants, the funding is intended to have fewer restrictions and requirements for faculty - attributes which prompted the library to call it a mini-grant program. The Library Director was interested in starting the program and provided \$15,000 from the director's fund to support the first year. Our mini-grant program was modeled after University of North Carolina-Greensboro (UNC-G) and North Carolina State University's programs (Miller, 2016; NCSU Libraries, n.d.). The following year, the Assistant Director for Collections and Scholarly Communication and the Head of Collection Development partnered with UNC-G to apply for a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant from the North Carolina State Library to collaborate on a Course-Adopted Textbook and Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant programs. The grant lasted two years and provided funding toward the Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant program (Thomas & Bernhardt, 2018). Since the conclusion of the grant, the Library Director has provided funding up to \$10,000 for the last year. To date, 52 faculty have participated in the program from a range of disciplines including biology, foreign languages and literatures, geological sciences, history, and theatre. The program requirements allow any faculty member who is teaching during the next academic year to apply. Additionally, faculty can use a variety of materials from OER to library resources, provided they are free for students to use. Faculty participating in the program have used OER, streaming videos, unlimited user eBooks, government resources and more. Additionally, the program pairs faculty with personal librarians. The librarian provides subject-specific, copyright, and other types of support for faculty.

### *Assessment*

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

Currently, potential savings on textbook costs for students total about \$677,481.18. This cost savings is calculated from the number of students enrolled and the cost of the previous textbooks during the awarded year (Hilton *et al.*, n.d.). For example, one health education and promotion course had a textbook that was \$96.00 new. The course had an enrollment of 50 students during Fall 2018 and 55 students in Spring 2019. The potential savings for this course with the free textbook is \$10,080. The potential savings data is based off one year of using the new course materials.

In total, \$52,000 in funds has been invested in the mini-grant program with about \$25,000 paid by the library for faculty awards. The other \$27,000 in mini-grant awards came from the two-year LSTA grant funding. After adjusting for the library's monetary investment in the program, the total potential cost savings is \$625,481.18. However, these totals do not include staff time. Additionally, this calculation does not include other courses that may have shifted to using OER, streaming videos, or Course-Adopted Textbooks as the result of faculty participation in the Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant program. For example, one biology faculty member was able to pilot an OER textbook through the Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant program and help her colleagues move other biology sections to the same OER text in later semesters.

[Insert Table II

Table Title: Cumulative Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant Data]

### *Analysis*

The funding for the program has changed over the years. During the first year, as well as most recently, the program was funded through the library's budget, typically from the director's fund, by the Director. This funding is renewed on a yearly basis based on the availability of monies and faculty interest. Two years of the program were funded by the LSTA grant from the North Carolina State Library (Thomas and Bernhardt, 2018). Currently, textbook affordability is included in the joint strategic plan for the library which supports the program's sustainability through the conclusion of the plan in 2022 (ECU Library Services, 2017). However, this does not confirm that funding will be available for future Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant program participants.

1  
2  
3 The sustainability of the program also depends on interest from faculty at the  
4 university. During the first two years of the program, interest was very high. While  
5 the program is still popular, last year yielded the least amount of applications.  
6 Some possible reasons for the decrease are the change in guidelines and  
7 submission timeline, outreach and advertising, and the possibility that faculty  
8 with a high interest in the program have already participated. However,  
9 applications for the coming 2020-2021 year have increased from the previous  
10 year. Additionally, the authors have seen faculty reapply for the program to  
11 switch a new course. This is an area that will be assessed on a yearly basis to help  
12 determine if the program is sustainable in both funding and interest.  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18

19 Recently, our university experienced a hiring freeze due to reduced enrollment  
20 numbers (WITN, 2019). While the mini-grant program is still in place for the year,  
21 hiring freezes may impact the ability to continue with the program due to reduced  
22 staffing and availability of funds. Unfortunately, the library also experienced some  
23 turnover of positions during the hiring freeze. Some of the departing individuals  
24 served as personal librarians to faculty participating in the mini-grant program.  
25 Since the vacancies resulted in increased workload for other librarians, it may be  
26 difficult to maintain the same level of subject expertise support for faculty  
27 participants.  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32

### 33 *Results*

34  
35  
36 There is continued interest in the Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant program from  
37 faculty. Recently, faculty applying to the program are interested in incorporating  
38 free materials into the development of new courses. Designing courses with free  
39 materials in mind is one of the program's goals. As mentioned earlier, the  
40 monetary incentive for the program is supported through the library's budget  
41 from the director's fund. If funding is not available to support future iterations of  
42 the program, there are several options to explore. According to a recent SPARC  
43 Connect OER Report (Nyamweya, 2019), incentive programs for faculty adopting  
44 OER include financial incentive grants, instructional design assistance, technical  
45 assistance, awards or public recognitions, letters of commendation, course-  
46 release time, or other types of incentives. For our library, providing staff time to  
47 support adoptions and usage of OER or library resources is a long-term  
48 sustainable option if funding for the program becomes unavailable in the future.  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 This staff time may be limited to the Scholarly Communication Department and  
4 may not include subject liaisons or other librarians if reduced staffing is an issue.  
5 The Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant program and OER outreach are based in the  
6 Scholarly Communication Department, which would continue to support faculty.  
7 However, the capacity of support may be limited depending on the department's  
8 staffing level.  
9  
10  
11  
12

## 13 **Streaming Video Licensing**

### 14 *Initiative*

15  
16  
17 Over the past 4 years, the library has seen an increase in requests from faculty for  
18 streaming versions of films shown in the classroom or for course assignments.  
19 Many times, the films are documentary, educational, or created by  
20 independent/small filmmakers, but the university does offer a few courses that  
21 make heavy use of studio and recently released films. As with textbooks,  
22 accessing streaming video content may result in an expenditure for the student.  
23 The library has tried to minimize this expenditure by licensing streaming videos  
24 and making them available at no cost to the student.  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29

30 While it is easy to make assumptions about a student's ability to access streaming  
31 videos, the library is mindful that not every student can subscribe to their own, or  
32 have access to a friend/family member's, Amazon Prime, Hulu, or Netflix account.  
33 Nor can every student afford to pay for per title rental fees, of perhaps \$3.99-  
34 \$4.99, at sites like Amazon Prime or Vudu. Another factor is the ability to have a  
35 mechanism for payment to an online site - only 57% of college students have a  
36 credit card, and only 89% have a debit card (Sallie Mae, 2019). These factors  
37 result in a small number of students for whom it is important for the library to  
38 provide access to the films required for them to succeed in their courses.  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44

45 Encouraging legal access to streaming videos is also a factor for the library. As  
46 suggested above, it would be easy to make assumptions about a student's  
47 willingness to download from a P2P file sharing site or to engage in digital piracy.  
48 However, not all students are comfortable engaging in this behavior. Research  
49 conducted at a university in Canada surveyed students who were enrolled in film  
50 studies courses and while 42% deemed legal access not at all important, 30%  
51 deemed it extremely or very important (Rodgers, 2018).  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 The library offers streaming videos from a variety of sources: Alexander Street  
4 Press Collections, Ambrose, Films on Demand, Henry Stewart Talks, and On the  
5 Boards. In addition, titles are licensed from Kanopy and Swank. Teaching faculty  
6 submit requests for streaming video via a form available on the library website.  
7 The form collects information about department, course section, anticipated  
8 number of students, and if the course mode is distance education.  
9  
10  
11

### 12 *Assessment*

13  
14  
15 The library began licensing titles from Swank in 2016. The library buys credits in  
16 bundles and each credit equates to a 1-year license. Initially the library had an  
17 agreement for 66 credits for \$5000. Later, the library negotiated pricing for a 300-  
18 credit bundle over 3-years deal, with the option to purchase additional credits in  
19 bundles of 25. This agreement began in July 2017 and runs through June 30, 2020.  
20 It is billed annually at 100 credits and the university's Education & Technology  
21 Department pays \$5000 of this yearly cost, while the library pays the balance. The  
22 library also pays the entire cost of additional bundles it may opt to purchase,  
23 which for example, it did in December 2019. From March 2016 through December  
24 2019 the library licensed 250 unique titles. Many of these titles were licensed  
25 repeatedly, accounting for why the library used all the yearly credits and had to  
26 purchase an additional bundle in December 2019. A total of 372 credits were  
27 used. Usage statistics gathered at the end of December 2019 showed that of the  
28 250 titles, 22 of them had zero views, 56 had more than 100 views, 5 had more  
29 than 500 views, but none had over 1,000. It should be noted that the pool of titles  
30 included licenses to fulfil requests for spring 2020 classes. The semester had not  
31 begun at the time the usage was pulled, accounting for some of the titles with  
32 zero plays. There was a total of 20,909 views; based on the negotiated price per  
33 license, cost per use is \$1.28.  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44

45 The library ran a Patron Driven Acquisitions (PDA) plan with Kanopy from  
46 September 2015 to June 2019. During this period, the library paid \$88,680 for 592  
47 licenses, many of them repeated titles triggered over multiple years. The library  
48 stopped the Kanopy PDA because during each of the past two years the budget  
49 was overspent, and it was unsustainable to continue to let it run. Of the 592  
50 licenses, all but 2 had plays beyond the triggering use, 62 had more than 100  
51 plays, 4 had more than 500, and 2 had more than 1,000. Total plays during the  
52 time of the Kanopy PDA program was 27,650, making the cost per use \$3.21.  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 The library switched Kanopy to a mediated request only plan in July 2019. In the  
4 first five months, the library licensed 54 titles for a total of \$8,615. As of  
5 December 2019, 15 had zero plays, 7 more than 30 plays, and 3 had more than  
6 100. As with Swank, some of the titles were purchased for spring 2020,  
7 accounting for some of the titles with zero plays. Total plays of the mediated  
8 Kanopy titles is 1,249, making the cost per use \$6.90.  
9

10  
11  
12  
13 [Insert Table III

14  
15 Table Title: Cumulative Streaming Video Data]

16  
17 *Analysis*

18  
19 To be able to sustain streaming video, the library considered several factors.  
20 During the time that the Kanopy PDA plan was running there were titles that were  
21 repeatedly triggered after the license expired. Kanopy offers a pricing structure of  
22 \$150 for a 1-year license or \$350 for a 3-year license, therefore realizing a savings  
23 of \$100. There were 27 titles that had 3 or more renewals and 69 had 2 renewals.  
24 Since switching to mediated licensing, all Kanopy titles that faculty ask to renew,  
25 and that are found to have a previous license with acceptable usage, will likely be  
26 renewed at the 3-year rate.  
27

28  
29 Any subsequent renewal request for a title, whether on Swank or Kanopy, is  
30 checked for previous usage. If the usage is low, then the Collection Development  
31 Librarian will reach out the faculty member for a conversation. One of the things  
32 that the library found is that faculty were not always aware that the acquisition of  
33 streaming videos was not perpetual, and that, instead, the library paid for these  
34 videos every year. Not realizing there was cost to have “speculative” film choices,  
35 some faculty were assigning films merely for extra credit. Still other faculty were  
36 indicating a pool of several films and telling students to pick one for their  
37 assignment. In discussions with faculty, the library now stresses the importance of  
38 each film being “required” viewing. If a low use title is renewed based on a  
39 conversation with a faculty member and the use remains low, the library will it  
40 assign it low priority. The limited amount of funds/credits will be expended on  
41 higher priority titles first.  
42

43  
44 Finally, the library is being more strategic in choosing which films to license.  
45 Requests for videos that are specialized, educational, or documentary in nature,  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52

1  
2  
3 or which can only be found on the Kanopy or Swank platforms, are assigned a  
4 high priority. Films to be used in distance education classes, courses with multiple  
5 sections or those that have a high expected enrollment are also high priority. The  
6 library also tries to spread support over a variety of subject areas so that a  
7 medium priority title might be licensed simply because it is the sole film  
8 requested in a discipline or by a department.  
9  
10  
11

### 12 *Results*

13  
14  
15 Academic and commercial streaming videos are a popular resource provided by  
16 the library. There were 135 titles requested for fall 2019, 118 titles requested for  
17 spring 2020, and 98 titles requested for fall 2020. Some of these titles are  
18 duplicates and used by more than one professor in more than one class or subject  
19 area. Additionally, some of the requests are not able to be fulfilled due to lack of  
20 availability. However, it is clear there is a sustained need. University faculty make  
21 a point of thanking the library for making the titles available, rushing to submit  
22 their titles immediately after notification that the request form is open, and  
23 promoting the service to their colleagues. The library has not previously mapped  
24 course enrollment data to the licensed titles to calculate student impact, as is  
25 done with the CATs program, but that will be started with the titles licensed for  
26 fall 2020. Should the library have to advocate for continued funding, such as if the  
27 university's Educational and Technology Department no longer wants to pay a  
28 portion of the Swank yearly invoice, then the student impact data will  
29 complement existing usage and cost per use statistics to demonstrate need.  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38

### 39 **Conclusion**

40  
41 In reviewing the affordability programs, the authors found that each is sustainable  
42 to a varying degree. The CATs program is the most sustainable with a significant  
43 return on investment that seems to grow every term. This program has earned  
44 ECU a lot of goodwill from students and faculty, and for that reason alone it is  
45 likely to remain a high priority in the materials' budget. The Alternative Textbook  
46 Mini-Grant program also has a good return on investment. Faculty continue to be  
47 interested in participating in the program and library administration places  
48 emphasis on funding for this program. Even if the library is unable to fund  
49 incentives, the services that the library staff offer to faculty to assist with  
50 converting to OER will continue. Additionally, there are other initiatives on  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 campus, such as the push to publicize textbook costs in the course catalog, that  
4 will likely encourage faculty to explore course materials that are free for students.  
5 Since stopping the Kanopy PDA model, converting to mediated acquisitions, and  
6 implementing a decision matrix from the information submitted on the video  
7 request form to prioritize which titles to license, Streaming Video licensing has  
8 scaled back to a level that is likely to be sustainable for the time-being. For long-  
9 term sustainability to be assured, the license model for titles used in repeated  
10 semesters must change, or a new supplier with a new business model needs to  
11 enter the market. In an era of access over ownership, unless new money is added  
12 to the materials' budget there will be a lack of growth due to the need to  
13 consistently rebuy what has been purchased before. There are currently few  
14 options to secure perpetual access licenses for many of the blockbuster, big  
15 studio films that teaching faculty want to use in their courses. In addition, aside  
16 from the discount achieved by licensing a Kanopy title for 3 years vs. 1 year, there  
17 are no other pricing discounts the library can leverage to reduce the cost of  
18 repeat titles. The library will pay the same price for each license period no matter  
19 if it is the first year it has been licensed, or the seventh. There may be a more  
20 sustainable future for libraries wanting to stream small filmmaker, independent  
21 studio, or documentary titles by exploring the possibility of purchasing the rights  
22 directly from the producers and then self-hosting. Our library self-hosts less than  
23 seven films and this is not a model that the library has previously been very  
24 enthusiastic about expanding upon due to various issues. However, there are a  
25 few major players in the streaming video marketplace that are now offering to  
26 host library-purchased content alongside the titles licensed through the vendor.  
27 Films on Demand is one such example where a library can have custom content  
28 added to an existing subscription (Infobase, 2019). This type of model is  
29 interesting for our library and will be worth exploring.  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44

### 45 **Next Steps**

46  
47 The authors plan to adjust the programs, as needed, to help ensure sustainability.  
48 In the coming year, the library will experience a budget cut which may affect the  
49 current programs. Currently, the CATs and streaming video funds are separate  
50 lines in the materials' budget. The authors anticipate protecting the CATs and  
51 streaming video lines due to the library's commitment to these programs. These  
52 cuts may be shifted to other portions of the materials' budget. For example,  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

liaison librarians may use book funds towards CATs purchases. As noted earlier, liaison librarians are already shifting to a mindset of fulfilling faculty eBook requests with unlimited versions instead of single use copies. As also noted earlier, the Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant Program could continue functioning without the monetary incentive, if needed. However, faculty spend a considerable amount of time restructuring their course to the new course materials. A smaller monetary amount or fewer awards can help the program continue as the library's overall budget shrinks. Additionally, librarians can partner with their Teaching and Learning departments to add OER to their course development programs. As with the CATs purchases, the library will likely protect the streaming video budget by cutting the book materials' budget, if necessary. In addition, the library will continue to watch for new suppliers entering the marketplace and for licensing model changes that may impact the cost of titles used repeatedly. Further exploration into self-hosting is another logical next step the library will take.

### **Lessons Learned**

In developing these types of affordability initiatives, it is important to be strategic, flexible and creative with funding. Libraries will continue to experience budget cuts which may require shifting funds towards priority programs, such as these affordability initiatives. Additionally, there are political implications for these initiatives and a strong commitment from library administration is needed to protect these material budget lines as much as possible. As noted in our sustainability analysis, there are ways to support these initiatives even with a reduced budget. It can be helpful to develop a pilot study to determine if these programs will be successful at other institutions. Faculty and students will expect that these programs will continue. This can make it difficult to easily stop these programs. Ideally, senior administration recognizes the benefits of these programs and supports these affordability initiatives with additional funding. Unfortunately, this may not be the case, so monitoring the effectiveness and sustainability of these programs is paramount in determining next steps.

### **References**

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (2019), "College tuition and fees increase 63 percent since January 2006", *The Economics Daily*, available at

1  
2  
3  
4 <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2016/college-tuition-and-fees-increase-63-percent-since-january-2006.htm>. (accessed 1 December 2019).

6  
7 Carr, P. L., Cardin, J. D. and Shouse, D. L. (2016) "Aligning collections with student  
8 needs: East Carolina University's project to acquire and promote online access to  
9 course-adopted texts", *Serials Review*, Vol. 42 No. 1, pp. 1–9. doi:  
10.1080/00987913.2015.1128381.

13  
14 ECU. (2019) "ECU by the numbers", available at <https://facts.ecu.edu/> (accessed  
15 16 May 2020).

17  
18 ECU Library Services (2017), "Joyner and Laupus strategic plan 2017-2022",  
19 available at [https://library.ecu.edu/wp-content/pv-](https://library.ecu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/100/2018/06/ECU-Library-Services-Joyner-and-Laupus-Strategic-Plan-2017-2022.pdf)  
20 [uploads/sites/100/2018/06/ECU-Library-Services-Joyner-and-Laupus-Strategic-](https://library.ecu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/100/2018/06/ECU-Library-Services-Joyner-and-Laupus-Strategic-Plan-2017-2022.pdf)  
21 [Plan-2017-2022.pdf](https://library.ecu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/100/2018/06/ECU-Library-Services-Joyner-and-Laupus-Strategic-Plan-2017-2022.pdf) (accessed 25 January 2020).

24  
25 Florida Virtual Campus (2019), "2018 Student textbook and course materials  
26 survey", available at  
27 [https://dlss.flvc.org/documents/210036/1314923/2018+Student+Textbook+and+](https://dlss.flvc.org/documents/210036/1314923/2018+Student+Textbook+and+Course+Materials+Survey+Report+---+FINAL+VERSION+--+20190308.pdf/07478d85-89c2-3742-209a-9cc5df8cd7ea)  
28 [Course+Materials+Survey+Report+---+FINAL+VERSION+--](https://dlss.flvc.org/documents/210036/1314923/2018+Student+Textbook+and+Course+Materials+Survey+Report+---+FINAL+VERSION+--+20190308.pdf/07478d85-89c2-3742-209a-9cc5df8cd7ea)  
29 [+20190308.pdf/07478d85-89c2-3742-209a-9cc5df8cd7ea](https://dlss.flvc.org/documents/210036/1314923/2018+Student+Textbook+and+Course+Materials+Survey+Report+---+FINAL+VERSION+--+20190308.pdf/07478d85-89c2-3742-209a-9cc5df8cd7ea) (accessed 16 May  
30 31 2020).

34  
35 Hilton, J., Wiley, D., Fischer, L., and Nyland, R. (n.d.), *Guidebook to Research on*  
36 *Open Educational Resources Adoption*, Open Textbook Network, Minneapolis,  
37 MN. Available at [http://research.cehd.umn.edu/otn/wp-](http://research.cehd.umn.edu/otn/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/OER-Research-Guidebook.pdf)  
38 [content/uploads/2016/08/OER-Research-Guidebook.pdf](http://research.cehd.umn.edu/otn/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/OER-Research-Guidebook.pdf) (accessed 1 March  
39 40 2020).

42  
43 Infobase (2019), "Films on Demand Hosted Custom Content", available at  
44 [https://infobase-fod.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360034662353-Films-On-](https://infobase-fod.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360034662353-Films-On-Demand-Hosted-Custom-Content)  
45 [Demand-Hosted-Custom-Content](https://infobase-fod.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360034662353-Films-On-Demand-Hosted-Custom-Content) (accessed 10 May 2020).

47  
48 Miller, B. (2016), "Ten UNCG professors save students \$150,000 in textbook costs  
49 with \$10,000 in pilot project mini grants from the office of the provost and the  
50 university libraries", available at  
51 [http://scholarlycommuncg.blogspot.com/2016/01/ten-uncg-professors-save-](http://scholarlycommuncg.blogspot.com/2016/01/ten-uncg-professors-save-students.html)  
52 [students.html](http://scholarlycommuncg.blogspot.com/2016/01/ten-uncg-professors-save-students.html) (accessed 15 February 2020).

1  
2  
3 NCSU Libraries (n.d.), "Alt-Textbook project", available at  
4 <https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/alttextbook> (accessed 15 February 2020).  
5  
6

7 Nyamweya, Mo. (2019), *Connect OER Annual Report, 2018-2019*, SPARC,  
8 Washington, D.C. Available at [https://sparcopen.org/our-work/connect-](https://sparcopen.org/our-work/connect-oer/reports/)  
9 [oer/reports/](https://sparcopen.org/our-work/connect-oer/reports/) (accessed 1 March 2020).  
10  
11

12 Rodgers, W. (2018), "Buy, Borrow, or Steal? Film Access for Film Studies  
13 Students." *College & Research Libraries*, Vol. 79 No. 4, pp. 568-591.  
14 doi:10.5860/crl.79.4.568.  
15  
16

17 Sallie Mae (2019), "Majoring in Money 2019", available at  
18 <https://www.salliemae.com/about/leading-research/majoring-in-money/>  
19 (accessed 27 February 2020).  
20  
21  
22

23 Thomas, W. J. and Bernhardt, B. R. (2018), "Helping keep the costs of textbooks  
24 for students down: Two approaches", *Technical Services Quarterly*, Vol. 35 No. 3,  
25 pp. 257-268. doi: 10.1080/07317131.2018.1456844.  
26  
27

28 WITN (2019), "Students and faculty react to ECU budget reduction", 4 June,  
29 available at [https://www.witn.com/content/news/16-million-budget-shortfall-at-](https://www.witn.com/content/news/16-million-budget-shortfall-at-ECU-prompts-hiring-freeze-510807731.html)  
30 [ECU-prompts-hiring-freeze-510807731.html](https://www.witn.com/content/news/16-million-budget-shortfall-at-ECU-prompts-hiring-freeze-510807731.html) (accessed 1 March 2020).  
31  
32

33 Yano, B. (2017). *Connect OER Annual Report, 2016-2017*, SPARC, Washington, D.C.  
34 Available at [https://sparcopen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Connect-OER-](https://sparcopen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Connect-OER-2016-2017-Annual-Report.pdf)  
35 [2016-2017-Annual-Report.pdf](https://sparcopen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Connect-OER-2016-2017-Annual-Report.pdf) (accessed 1 March 2020).  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



FY	amt. pd	grant	match	number of titles
2015	2974.85			34
2016	6854.71			74
2017	10974.84	9845.9	1128.94	148
2018	12866.24	9486.06	3380.18	133
2019	3408.73			25
2020	3665.19			40 note to CS: these figure

Reference Services Review

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

es now reflect only the fall 2019 portion from entire FY

Reference Services Review

Cumulative Course Adopted Textbooks Data				
Student Impact				
Semester	Number of Sections	Total Enrollment	Maximum Potential Savings	Fiscal Year
Spring 2015	33	401	\$ 20,010.71	
Fall 2015	23	587	\$ 27,517.90	2015
Spring 2016	49	934	\$ 43,538.11	2016
Fall 2016	235	4966	\$ 241,876.66	2017
Spring 2017	169	5746	\$ 255,644.77	2018
Fall 2017	<i>Data from this semester is unavailable</i>			2019
Spring 2018	204	4340	\$ 186,460.59	2020
Fall 2018	144	3410	Unavailable	
Spring 2019	198	4717	\$ 234,964.90	2017
Fall 2019	338	9001	\$ 424,662.48	2018
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1393</b>	<b>34102</b>	<b>\$ 1,434,676.12</b>	<b>Totals</b>

<b>Expenditures</b>	
Total Spent	Number of Titles Purchased
<b>Library Funds</b>	
\$ 2,974.85	34
\$ 6,854.71	74
\$ 1,128.94	14
\$ 3,380.18	28
\$ 3,408.73	25
\$ 3,665.19	40
<b>Grant Funds</b>	
\$ 9,845.90	134
\$ 9,486.06	105
<b>\$ 40,744.56</b>	<b>454</b>

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Number of Mini-Grants</b>
2016-2017	14
2017-2018	16
2018-2019	15
2019-2020	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>

Reference Services Review

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

<b>Library Funding for Mini-Grants</b>	<b>Funding from External Grant</b>
14,000	0
1,000	15,000
3,000	12,000
7,000	0
<b>25,000</b>	<b>27,000</b>

Reference Services Review

<b>Cumulative Alternative Textbook Mini-Grant Data</b>		
<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Number of Mini-Grants</b>	<b>Library Funding for Mini-Grants</b>
2016-2017	14	\$ 14,000.00
2017-2018	16	\$ 1,000.00
2018-2019	15	\$ 3,000.00
2019-2020	7	\$ 7,000.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>\$ 25,000.00</b>

Reference Services Review

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

ata	
External Funding from LSTA for Mini-Grants	
\$	-
\$	15,000.00
\$	12,000.00
\$	-
<b>\$</b>	<b>27,000.00</b>

Reference Services Review



### Cumulative Streaming Video Data

#### *Expenditures*

Date Range	Swank Library Funded	Swank ECU Education & Technology Department Funded	Kanopy PDA
September 2015-June 2016			\$ 5,820.00
FY 2016-2017	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 14,700.00
FY 2017-2018	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 20,460.00
FY 2018-2019	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 47,700.00
July-December 2019	\$ 5,650.00	\$ 5,000.00	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 14,850.00</b>	<b>\$ 15,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 88,680.00</b>

#### *Usage*

Type	Number of Licenses	Usage Through December 2019
Swank	372	20,909
Kanopy PDA	592	27,650
Kanopy Mediated	54	1,249

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

**ata**

Kanopy Mediated	Total Spent
	\$ 5,820.00
	\$ 19,700.00
	\$ 27,560.00
	\$ 54,800.00
\$ 8,651.00	\$ 19,301.00
\$ 8,651.00	\$ 127,181.00

Cost Per Use	
\$	1.28
\$	3.21
\$	6.90