

The McMaster Students Union

PRESIDENT'S PAGE



STEPHANIE BERTOLO

Vice President (Education)

vped@msu.mcmaster.ca
905.525.9140 x24017

From September 10 to 21, the McMaster Students Union is running the #TextbookBroke campaign with the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and McMaster's Campus Store. The campaign aims to highlight the rising cost of textbooks and supplementary learning materials and raise awareness to a more cost-effective alternative, Open Educational Resources (OERs). The goal of the campaign is to encourage faculty, institutions, and governments to fund, adopt, and adapt OERs in place of high-cost textbooks.

OERs are teaching and learning resources that are open for public use or are under the open copyright license that allows them to be used for free and repurposed by others. While most of the discussion is around open textbooks, OERs also includes other course materials, modules, videos, and even full courses. They can be reformatted and customized, giving professors greater flexibility over their course material while providing students with more applicable learning resources.

In 2017, the provincial government made a \$1 million investment to support the development of OERs for post-secondary institutions in Ontario. There was a particular focus placed on the development of textbooks for high enrolment first and second year courses. These textbooks can be easily generalized and have the potential to save countless students hundreds of dollars each year. Currently, there are 264 open textbooks in the eCampus Ontario's Open Textbook Library. It is estimated that the eCampus library saved Ontario students \$1.7 million in one year alone.

“Adopting OERs ensures all students have access to the learning materials necessary to excel in their educational endeavours.”

The use of OERs is not limited to saving students a few dollars each term, but can also play a significant role in allowing students from lower socio-economic backgrounds to excel in post-secondary institutions. Students who lack financial resources may choose not to buy textbooks for their courses, in order to have enough money for tuition, rent, and food. However, students with the learning materials are more likely to perform better in their courses. Adopting OERs ensures all students have access to the learning materials necessary to excel in their educational endeavours.

While there is not currently a suitable OER for every course offered at McMaster, there are certainly a number of courses that could replace high-cost textbooks with OERs. For professors, it can be challenging to be one of the first to adopt an OER. However, we only need to look to British Columbia to see how successful these resources can be –

#TextbookBroke

Tweet us a picture of your textbook receipt using #TextbookBroke

SEPTEMBER 10 TO 21

MSUMCMASTER.CA/TEXTBOOKBROKE
/MSUADVOCACY
@MSU_ADVOCACY

Campus Store
OUA Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance
MSU McMaster Students Union

over one-third of professors have used open textbooks in their classrooms. If professors slowly start to adopt OERs in Ontario, it can start a movement whereby it is common practice to choose or create an OER rather than resorting to expensive textbooks. OERs will be seen as a public good that contributes to a

high-quality, affordable education at McMaster.

The MSU encourages students to tweet a picture of their textbook purchase receipt using #TextbookBroke and #McSU to share the impact of textbook costs. Those using the hashtag could win a \$50 TwelvEighty gift card.

The President's Page is a space sponsored and used by the McMaster Students Union (MSU) Board of Directors (BoD) to communicate with the student body. It functions to highlight the Board's projects, goals, and agenda for the year, as well as the general happenings of the MSU.



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