HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE, 2019
STATE OF HAWAII

H.B. NO. 915

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.

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

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

The legislature also finds that a growing number of higher education institutions are turning to open educational resources as a more affordable alternative to traditional textbooks. Open educational resources are online or printed materials, including textbooks and other learning content, that are free or openly licensed. These open educational resources are peer reviewed...
like traditional textbooks and may include sample problems and quizzes like those that publishers often bundle with traditional, printed textbooks. Most significantly, because of their open nature, these materials are much more affordable than traditional textbooks and can therefore make a higher education more accessible.

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

The North Dakota University System has also experienced positive results from the use of open educational resources. During the 2015 legislative session, the North Dakota legislature appropriated $110,000 to create an open educational resources initiative. The North Dakota University System used this appropriation to fund system-wide faculty training and institution-level grants. The initiative was successful, as six hundred fifty courses across the system now exclusively use open
educational resources, affecting at least fifteen thousand
students. An audit of the North Dakota initiative estimated
that students enrolled in these courses saved between $1.1
million and $2.4 million in textbook costs over two years,
equivalent to at least ten times the amount of the legislature's
initial investment in the program.

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

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

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

(1) Open educational resources training, including
training for faculty; and
(2) Individual grants for faculty to incentivize the use of open educational resources in their courses.

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

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

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

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

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

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.