

Follett ACCESS + *University of New Orleans*

Proven course materials program empowers institutions to deliver course materials as part of tuition or course charges

The Challenge

Located on the southern shore of Lake Pontchartrain, The University of New Orleans (UNO) is a comprehensive urban research university committed to providing educational excellence to a diverse undergraduate and graduate student body. UNO occupies a 195-acre campus in one of the finest residential areas of the city and as of Fall 2020, is home to over 8,200 students from all 64 Louisiana parishes, all 50 U.S. states and more than 140 countries.

When students enroll in college, they have their sights set on bettering their lives through education. But often when they arrive on campus, they wait until their financial aid refund arrives before deciding which course materials to buy. The result? According to a recent Follett Survey of students at over 1,000 universities, 50% of students surveyed wait until after class starts before buying or renting course materials and over 54% said that their ability to complete homework and reading assignments was impacted due to the lack of course materials¹.

In 2018, The Louisiana State Board of Educators issued a call to all colleges in the state to submit a plan on how they would reduce college costs and increase academic success. UNO was eager to find a partner to help generate potential savings for students and simplify course materials logistics.

The Solution

Recognizing that learning can be challenging but obtaining course materials doesn't have to be, Follett



introduced Follett ACCESS, a proven program that enables colleges and universities to deliver all course materials (textbooks, courseware, lab kits, supplies, etc.) by the first day of class directly to the student as part of tuition or course charges. Over 230 institutions across the nation are using Follett ACCESS to strengthen recruitment, class retention, graduation rates and academic performance.

Noticing that another university in the region had implemented Follett ACCESS with favorable results, UNO was ready to try for themselves the stress-free, affordable and effortless approach that empowers students for academic success regardless of economic background or social status. After a successful pilot in Fall 2019, the university voted to roll out the program campus-wide in January 2020.

¹ Survey of college students ("Follett Student Survey") by Follett Higher Education Group, Fall 2021.

Course materials in UNO's program are 80 percent digital and 20 percent physical (rental textbooks plus supplies like calculators, lab coats, etc.). Students are charged a flat fee of \$25 per credit hour and can set up a payment plan to cover both tuition and flat fee course material costs or can use financial aid.

Starting a program mid-year can be challenging, but the UNO President and Provost jumped right in with proactive communications to faculty and students alike – including a new landing page on the UNO website for the Follett ACCESS program; departmental/faculty meetings outlining the program and adoption deadlines; and Bursar's office emails to students alerting them to the benefits of the program. In addition, the bookstore partnered with the school's Orientation Leaders and Freshman Life to ensure Follett ACCESS program information was featured in incoming freshman materials.

The Results

"We implemented the Follett ACCESS Program in the spring of 2020 and have been very pleased with it ever since," said Patrick Linn, Director, Auxiliary Services for University of New Orleans.

“ This program is a win for the students, a win for the university, a win for faculty and a win for the bookstore. Students are guaranteed their course materials at a reasonable price and in time for the first day of class. ”

- Patrick Linn

*Director, Auxiliary Services
University of New Orleans*

For UNO students, Follett ACCESS lightens not only the backpack but the wallet. Students are appreciative the transparency of the total cost of attendance and save an average of 62% or more over printed books².

UNO faculty members are also supporters of the program. Knowing that everyone in class will have the same edition on day one means instruction can start right away. With the majority of course materials in digital format, even late submissions can be accommodated with the flip of a switch and made available to students by the end of the day. This translates into the freedom to choose the most relevant course materials and formats, and more time to focus on teaching.



Another unexpected benefit of the program: UNO's campus store is recognized as an extension and partner of the university. The bookstore is more integrated into campus life -- with many students choosing to stop by the bookstore to pick up any physical course materials and stock up on popular student convenience items, drinks, clothing etc. Bookstore staff are also now included in planning meetings for orientation and freshman week.

"Follett is proud to partner with institutions like UNO to improve outcomes and retention while lowering the cost of college learning materials," concluded Ann Barlow, Regional Manager at Follett. "But Follett ACCESS is bigger than cost or convenience. It's about reducing stress and increasing preparedness, so students can succeed."

² <https://www.uno.edu/follett-access>.