

Hello to the Education Committee,

My name is Ashley Kane and I am a student at Portland State University.  
I am here to ask you to vote yes on HB 2919.

As the first person in my family to attend college, I am trying to be financially responsible and carefully budget so I can finish my degree. But right now, because we do not have HB 2919 in place, that is hard to do. I want to tell you a story: A timely example of textbook affordability impacting my success in school. I am currently enrolled in 2 courses that are mandatory for graduation in my degree program. However, when I registered for the courses there were no listed technology or required textbook fees in Banweb, which is our class registration software program. I found no updated syllabus listed on my department's website, nothing was on course reserves in the university library, and nothing was listed on the campus bookstore website. As a diligent student, I planned for that and took it at face value that when I looked for the requirements in all possible places, that was the reality. I took out the loans I needed to cover the costs my scholarships and tuition remission as a teaching assistant wouldn't cover- no more no less. I came to class day 1 and was given the syllabus and was shocked that not only did the course require textbooks-- but technology that I cannot access via the school resources was **required** for success in the class. The textbooks that were required were only available on Amazon digitally for over a hundred dollars and for over half that as a digital textbook rental, a hardcopy would take more than a month to receive, and I'd have to pay up front. I ordered the technology I needed to do the assignments but I did not order the textbook the first month because I did not plan for the cost and I accrued other medical costs that were frankly, more of a priority. Before the new month (and a new budget) could begin, an assignment was due that had required the text be read, because it is a digital textbook through a restricted service, I couldn't borrow the text from a classmate, they can't share screenshots, they can't even copy text into notes to send to me. So I did the assignment without the readings. I received a lower mark, not because I'm not a capable student but because I did not have access to a textbook that I needed to do the work. Now, I've ordered the textbook halfway through the term and am playing catch up. However, because it's a digital book on a restricted platform, there are severe limits to what I can do with it (I can't copy text or quotes) but that's another issue.

This is why having access to textbook and fee price amounts at the time of registration would absolutely better help me plan my academic term and success. As a student in a masters program who works in order to survive and go to school simultaneously, there are compounding factors that influence which classes I might take in order to satisfy degree requirements. In some cases, because the coursework is quite clear and there are required courses, I need to know textbook and technology requirements in advance of the class in order to budget for other life expenses because I don't have a choice, and it is the only thing I can plan for. When it comes to electives to satisfy my degree, the cost of the textbooks, the technology I need to pay for in order to succeed, especially without access to on campus labs and computers, are just a few of the factors in planning my academic term. If I can take a course that fulfills my educational and professional desires that will not add to my student loan debt, require me to work more than I already have to, or dig into other areas of my life I have budgeted for (chronic

illness healthcare, keeping my old car working, emergency trips to support my family, etc) then I would absolutely choose that course over another. When I get to day 1 of class and the instructor is showing me the syllabus and required technology and textbooks, and they have exorbitant fees, they have not only created an undue hardship that could've been planned for, they have also impacted my ability to take another class, as some have long waitlists or have seat caps that I could have been on or been vying for on registration day. If I need a course, if it fulfills some educational or professional goal, and it has clearly listed the required texts and fees- then I can plan for that. Registration occurs an entire month before the text or tech is needed, and I can plan for that with my scholarships or student loan requested amounts and I can factor it into next month's budget. Being able to plan for the fees and costs of education impacts multiple areas of my life, the least of which, is my success in a classroom.

My story is not unique, and this should not be happening to students in Oregon. The protections in HB 2919 can help make that better. This is already statute in our neighboring state of Washington. It's time for Oregon to address the textbook affordability crisis.

Please vote yes on HB 2919, and thank you for your time.

Best,

Ashley Kane