

105.03 F24 Encouraging Transparency and Eliminating Automatic Billing Practices in Course Material Access

Whereas, Publishers and bookstore vendors have introduced programs that require students to pay a per unit fee for course resources and refer to these automatic billing programs with deceptive names such as “inclusive,” “equitable,” or “first day” access although the costs of the program may exceed the actual costs of the required resources, misleading students to believe they are saving money or putting the burden on the students to opt out of the arrangement if it is not financially beneficial;

Whereas, The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges opposes the use of automatic billing strategies and other approaches that maintain reliance upon commercial publishers (F22 17.02¹) and encourages faculty and colleges to carefully consider the impact of such programs and recognize that while they may address immediate student needs, they may not work in students’ long-term interest (F19 09.06²);

Whereas, California community colleges are required by law to mark their sections that have no textbook costs (California Education Code 66406.9³), and all California community colleges have received Zero Textbook Cost Program funds to increase the availability of course sections with no textbook costs, yet no course section is truly zero cost when students are automatically billed for their course resources; and

Whereas, College-wide automatic billing programs that require students to opt-out establish a system that requires students to act in order for a course section to be no-cost.

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges encourage faculty and colleges to use the term “automatic billing” in lieu of euphemisms such as “inclusive,” “equitable,” or “first day” access; and

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges request that the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office require that course sections that have no textbook cost be excluded from automatic billing programs.

¹ <https://www.asccc.org/resolutions/textbook-automatic-billing-concerns>

²

<https://www.asccc.org/resolutions/consider-implications-publisher-developed-lower-cost-%E2%80%9Cinclusive-access%E2%80%9D-strategies>

³

<https://casetext.com/statute/california-codes/california-education-code/title-3-postsecondary-education/division-5-general-provisions/part-40-donahoe-higher-education-act/chapter-6-academic-materials/section-664069-operative-712024-highlighting-course-materials-available-free-of-charge#:~:text=2024%20Legislative%20Session.-,Section%2066406.9%20%2D%20%5BOperative%207%2F1%2F2024%5D%20Highlighting,Clearly%20highlight%2C%20by%20means%20that>