Join Virginia’s Initiative to Help Balance the Cost of Educational Resources for Students

Are you worried about the burden that the cost of textbooks has on your students? Do you often hear students say they can’t afford to purchase the course textbook so they go without it? Textbook cost is a known barrier to college affordability for students. According to Covering the Cost, a study released in February 2016 by the U.S. PIRG, “Over the last decade, the cost of college textbooks has soared. Since 2006, the cost of a college textbook increased by 73% - over four times the rate of inflation. Today, individual textbooks often cost over $200, sometimes as high as $400.” A number of academic institutions across the country have developed programs to inform and/or link faculty and students to alternatives to costly commercial textbooks and educational resources. A few examples include University of Minnesota’s Center for Open Education, Rice University’s OpenStax, and the Virginia Community College System’s Z-Degrees program (zero-textbook-cost) which focuses on using open education resources in courses.

In order to help more students ease this burden, 31 academic libraries in Virginia are participating in a new initiative through VIVA (Virtual Library of Virginia) to increase awareness and usage of freely available (open) academic resources, such as textbooks. This initiative is called the Open Textbook Network (OTN), and Fintel Library has agreed to sponsor workshops that educate faculty on openly available textbooks and other educational resources that can be used in their courses. The educational workshops will be held in the spring semester, beginning in January, and will offer faculty information on open educational resources, the vetting process for selecting the textbooks found in the Open Textbook Library, and options to become a reviewer of these textbooks. If you are interested in more information regarding the Open Textbook Network go here: https://research.cehd.umn.edu/otn/.

The first Open Textbook workshop will be held on Wednesday, January 11, 2-4 pm in Fintel Library. We will be in Classroom 1 on the Ground Floor. For more information on this workshop please contact Piper Cumbo at cumbo@roanoke.edu.

On the Horizon
Streamlined Access to Library Resources!

Fintel Library and Wyndham Robertson Library at Hollins University share an online catalog, permitting users at each library to view library holdings information at both campuses. For the past few months, we have been searching for a new library management system (LMS). This fall we identified a new LMS which includes a discovery tool (i.e. search interface) offered by the Ex Libris company and contracted to implement it.

Why are we making this change? We’ve listened to the feedback from our faculty and students that our discovery tool needs to be simpler, easier to use. Although our Millennium system has served us for 20+ years, our next generation LMS offers a unified platform with improvements in functionality, flexibility, and streamlined user interfaces. Additionally, recent advances in cloud-based, software-as-service (SAS) technology will allow Fintel Library and Wyndham Robertson Library to take advantage of an established software development cycle, reduce the need for onsite server hardware and maintenance, and reap the benefits of our local colleagues at other Virginia institutions who have already implemented the system.

When will the transition happen? Migration to the new LMS will occur during spring and summer of 2017.

What impact will this have on our students and faculty looking for resources during the transition in the spring 2017 semester? NONE! We will be working behind the scenes to implement the necessary changes. Rollout of the new interface will occur during the summer.

What is the new system like? The LMS is named Alma. It is a known barrier to college affordability for students. According to Covering the Cost, a study released in February 2016 by the U.S. PIRG, “Over the last decade, the cost of college textbooks has soared. Since 2006, the cost of a college textbook increased by 73% - over four times the rate of inflation. Today, individual textbooks often cost over $200, sometimes as high as $400.” A number of academic institutions across the country have developed programs to inform and/or link faculty and students to alternatives to costly commercial textbooks and educational resources. A few examples include University of Minnesota’s Center for Open Education, Rice University’s OpenStax, and the Virginia Community College System’s Z-Degrees program (zero-textbook-cost) which focuses on using open education resources in courses.

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What is the new system like? The LMS is named Alma. It offers integrated functionality to facilitate purchasing, describing, and curating resources as well as circulation, reserves, and resource sharing. The new discovery tool (i.e. search interface) is named Primo. It will serve as the search interface between users and the physical and electronic resources that Fintel Library and Wyndham Robertson Library either own or provide access to. Users, for example, will no longer need to move between different sets of search results to view the availability of a book or DVD. Off-campus access to resources will also be improved and simplified.

Look for more information on the migration in 2017. For questions, please contact Dave Wiseman at dcwiseman@roanoke.edu.
**Fintel’s Print & E-Resource Collections**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is happening with Fintel’s print Book Collection?**
Print books are still in the library collection and will continue to be acquired in the foreseeable future.

**Are print books being removed from the collection?**
Yes, on occasion books are weeded from the collection. Liaisons periodically review books in their subject areas for relevance, currency, damage, duplication, and lack of use over time. The review begins with books older than 20 years with five or fewer uses in the past 10 years. Items that are chosen to be removed are first offered to the campus community then to select community organizations.

**Will Fintel prefer e-content over print?**
E-content is preferred for the flexibility offered in delivery to multiple users. However, Fintel will continue to acquire print resources in cases where significant discrepancies in the print vs. e-version are discovered (e.g. in the case of redacted images), when content is better served in print, when no other version is available, or, when the cost of the e-content is found to be unsustainable over the course of time.

**Why the focus on e-content?**
Providing our students and faculty access to quality resources with minimal barriers for use and with fiscal restraint is essential to the mission of Fintel Library. In many cases, electronic resources provide that flexibility by allowing multiple individuals to use the same resource simultaneously regardless of physical location, specific time of day, or preferred device. In addition, licensing models to acquire e-content can also offer flexibility in committing funds prior to long term purchase.

**Why isn’t the same e-resource available in the same way on different platforms?**
Publishers sell different content rights to vendors, even for the same title. Vendors deliver that content according to the contracts they sign with the publisher. For example, one vendor may have the rights to provide unlimited downloading or full-text access while another only has the rights to provide content in limited amounts. Fintel Library strives to acquire e-content that provides the greatest flexibility in use for the largest number of users.

**When should suggestions for content be submitted?**
Fintel Library is committed to working with faculty to deliver the best solutions for access to resources that support teaching, learning, and research. Suggestions for new resources may be submitted to your liaison at any time. If you are interested in a trial for a new database resource, please let your liaison know.

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**Resource Additions & Format Changes for 2017**

1. Online access will be available in 2017 for the following journals:

   - Animal Behavior
   - Annual Review of...
   - Entomology
   - Environment and Resources
   - Genetics
   - Microbiology
   - Neuroscience
   - Physiology
   - Plant Biology
   - Psychology
   - Trends in Ecology & Evolution
   - Trends in Genetics
   - Trends in Plant Science

2. Explore the new Global Road Warrior database to complement May term and semester courses offering cultural and country studies. Topical and geographic coverage is diverse and includes information on 75 countries and 121 topics such as:

   - Passport & visa requirements – Immunizations – Airport to hotel routes;
   - Basic words & phrases in the local language – Usual greetings & courtesies;
   - National symbols of the country - Local superstitions & Folklore;
   - Antique maps – Vintage postcards – School system structure & statistics.
STOP! Don’t skip this section just because you are not a member of the History Department. The Archives isn’t just for historians. Yes, the Archives does have a bit of that old book smell, but it’s more than that. An archives is a custodial location for non-current records of an on-going institution. But beyond the obvious – Trustee minutes (from 1845), faculty minutes (from 1855), catalogs, yearbooks, student newspaper, and various alumni magazines—there are treasures here that might interest you personally or professionally. The political records of Henry Fowler from 1961- early 1990s and 6th District Congressman Jim Olin, 1982-1992, are ready for researchers. The Cabell Brand/Stuart McGuire business records and catalogs tell the story of an early catalog company. Interested in early printing? How about 1477 for our oldest book! Or our many 16th c. Martin Luther pamphlets! Travelogues describe countries across the globe, e.g. Persia (1673), Palestine (1858), Japan (1890s). Other gems include records of the AAUW, Roanoke Valley Chapter; sketches and photographs of artist Walter Biggs; Mary Whitmire/Logan family papers; and the UDC records & scrapbooks from 1904.

Getting ready for a celebration—a colleague’s retirement, alumni weekend, a departmental milestone? Among our thousands of items, Archives may have photos, fliers or other memorabilia to enhance your event. Archives is also interested in information on your department’s activities—e.g. acquiring programs and honor society records.

Feel free to contact Linda Miller (540-375-2490 or lmiller@roanoke.edu) to arrange a visit or to schedule a class. If you plan class assignments, we encourage you to let us know due dates well in advance. Send a syllabus or describe the assignment ahead of time. This will help us to be prepared, having pulled needed sources. Your students’ Archives experiences will be more successful. Remember, a productive student means a happy professor!

Course Reserves for Spring 2017

The fall semester is mostly behind us which means you’re probably gearing up for your spring semester classes. If you plan to submit items (books, DVDs, articles/chapters) for Course Reserves, now would be a good time to collect those and bring them to the library. You should visit the Course Reserves web page (http://libguides.roanoke.edu/reserves) if you need a refresher on how all this works. You’ll also find links to the two forms (one for original materials and one for photocopies) you’ll need to submit with your items. (We also keep copies of the forms at the Lending Services Desk.) One of our newer Course Reserves services enables us to link to articles in our databases from your library course record, so keep that in mind if you anticipate using journal articles for one or more of your spring semester classes. Contact Sara Blaha (blaha@roanoke.edu) if you have questions or comments regarding Course Reserves at Fintel Library.