B.R.2018.01
CALLING UPON THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH TO ADOPT OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

STUDENT GOVERNMENT BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

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CO-SPONSORED BY: Board Members Ciara Barry, Ian Callahan, Ami Fall, Maddie Guido, Zuri Kent-Smith, Nihita Manem, Alex Spenceley

09 JANUARY 2018
President Kneis introduced the following resolution; which was read for the first time.

16 JANUARY 2018
Read the second time and voted on.

A RESOLUTION
CALLING FOR THE ADOPTION OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

1 WHEREAS, the cost of college textbooks is often a major affordability issue for students, who take on additional debt to pay for textbooks, or undercut their own learning by forgoing the purchase of textbooks;

5 WHEREAS, The College Board places the annual cost of books and supplies at $1,2501 with individual books costing upwards of $300;

8 WHEREAS, for the 2017-2018 school year, the Office of Admissions & Financial Aid estimates the cost of textbooks for each student to be $7722;

11 WHEREAS, rising costs of higher education place an immense financial burden on students, with the average 

[1] https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing
WHEREAS, graduate in 2016 holding $37,172 in debt, severely limiting the ability to make future investments; 

WHEREAS, in-state tuition at the University of Pittsburgh is the highest in the country for public universities; 

WHEREAS, Open Educational Resources (OERs) are defined as: syllabi, lesson plans, lab books, worksheets, video lectures, textbooks, and full courses published under an Open License that allows their reuse and repurposing by others and are freely available for anyone to use online; 

WHEREAS, an ‘open textbook’ is defined as: a textbook written by education professionals and released online under an Open License permitting everyone to freely use, print, share, and adapt the material; 

WHEREAS, open textbooks offer an affordable, comparable, and flexible alternative to expensive commercial textbooks; 

WHEREAS, it is the prerogative of faculty members to select the course materials that are most appropriate for a class; 

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for faculty members to seek and consider using OERs, including open textbooks, in their courses as long as there is no reduction in educational quality; 

WHEREAS, The University of Pittsburgh should do everything in its power to control the cost of higher education and OERs could relieve some of the financial burden facing students; now, therefore, be it 

RESOLVED, on this 16th day of January in the year 2018, the University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board supports the expanded use of OERs at Pitt; and be it further 

RESOLVED, that the Student Government Board encourages faculty members to consider open textbooks and other low-cost course materials when selecting materials for their classes; and be it further 

RESOLVED, that the Student Government Board calls upon the University Administration to create grants and other incentives to reward faculty members who both use and create OERs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Student Government Board encourages the University Library System to join the Open Textbook Network in order to develop best practices and offer extensive knowledge regarding OERs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Student Government Board fully supports the federal Affordable College Textbook Act, which would allocate federal funding for the expansion of OERs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that members of Student Government Board will work with numerous stakeholders of the University to educate and encourage faculty members to design and implement OERs in their courses; and be it finally

RESOLVED, this resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption and shall reflect the official position of the University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board.

ADOPTED: this 16th day of January 2018 by a vote of 8 for, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

Max Kneis, President
University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board