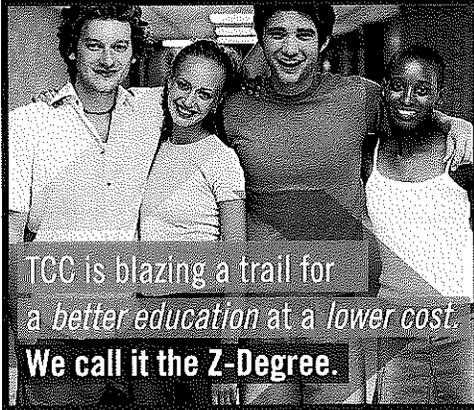




Tidewater Community College is making college more affordable.



The cost of college textbooks has risen 812% since 1978, more than the rates of inflation, health care, new home prices, and college tuition.

More and more, college students are unable to afford their textbooks, and as many as 70% of students have reported avoiding buying at least one textbook for their courses. Not surprisingly, these students do not do as well academically.

As of May 2013, if a TCC student purchased all of the textbooks required for a business administration degree, that student would spend \$3,678.95 on new books. While used textbooks may lower this price, their availability is, at best, uneven.

But the problem with printed textbooks goes beyond financial cost; textbooks “cost” students and teachers in other ways as well.

Because textbooks are frequently written for broad audiences in the hopes that they will fill the learning support needs and be adopted by large numbers of faculty and departments, they are filled with content and exercises that are superfluous to a specific course’s learning outcomes. The cost here is in teaching efficiency and effectiveness.

Fortunately a solution to both problems exists.

Beginning in Fall 2013, TCC became the first college in the U.S. to create an Associate of Science degree based solely on open educational resources (OER), academically vetted and publicly licensed content. After a one-semester pilot project, the true measures of accomplishment are student success and increased instructor effectiveness.

Early data suggest the Z-Degree will meet both goals. Z Courses experienced greater student retention and fewer student withdrawals. Grades were comparable with textbook-based courses. Almost 99% of students believed that their Z Courses met learning objectives and 95% would recommend a Z Course to another student, TCC is confident that the Z-Degree will be an effective alternative to counterparts that require the purchase of textbooks.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE OER CONTENT USED IN THIS COURSE?	RESPONSE %
WORSE than the quality of the textbooks used in my other classes	4%
ABOUT THE SAME as the quality of the textbooks used in my other classes	33%
BETTER than the quality of the textbooks used in my other classes	64%
TOTAL	100%

HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THIS COURSE IN MEETING THE LEARNING OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN THE COURSE SYLLABUS?	RESPONSE %
Not Effective at all	1%
Somewhat effective	14%
Very effective	85%
TOTAL	100%

