

Textbook and Homework Access Code Costs in Higher Education:

Student, Academic Dean, and Department Head Perspectives on Costs and Implications for Learning

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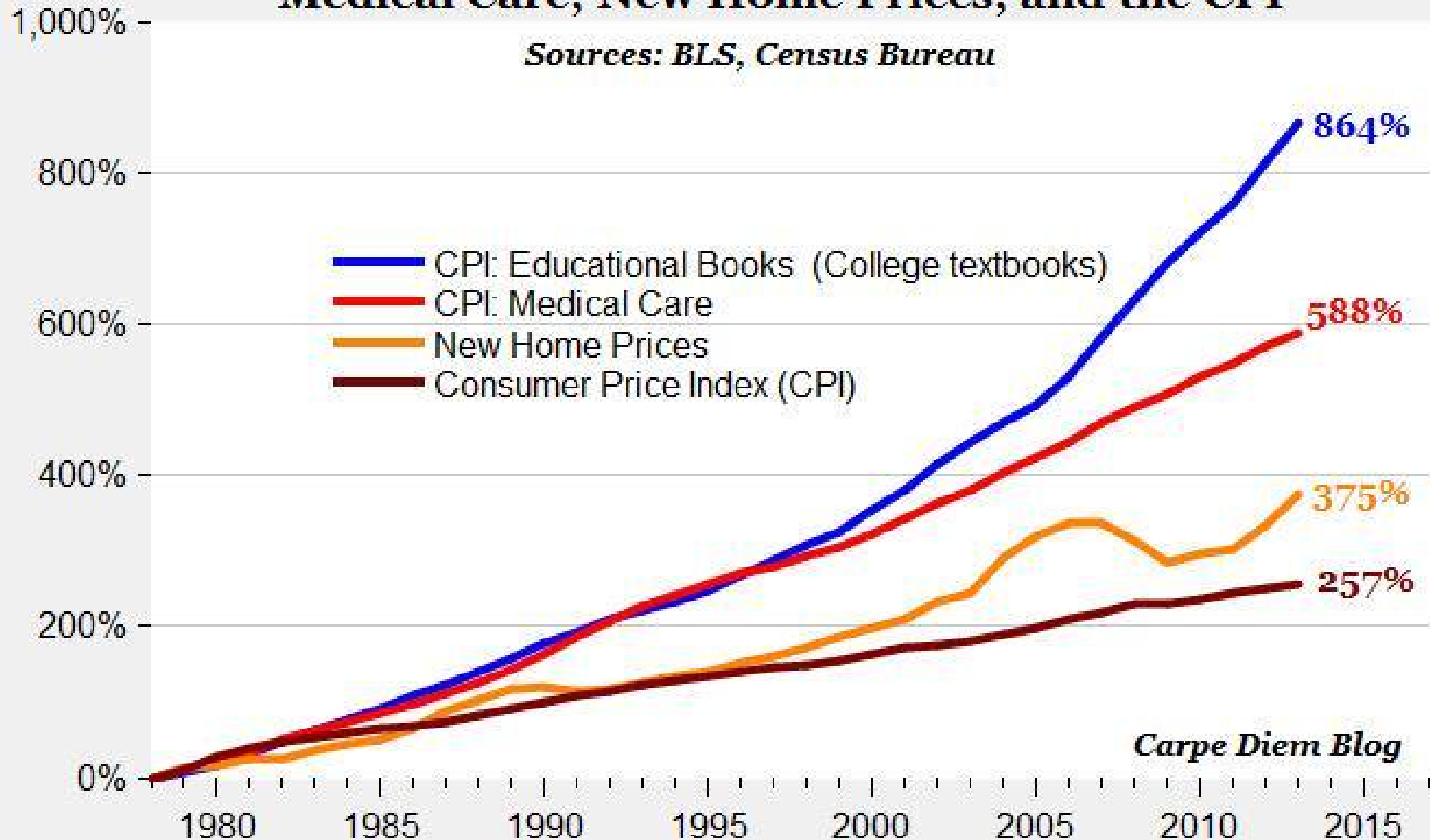
February 16, 2017

Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy, Blacksburg, Virginia



Percent Change From 1978 to 2013 for Educational Books, Medical Care, New Home Prices, and the CPI

Sources: BLS, Census Bureau



Carpe Diem Blog

<http://www.openaccess textbooks.org/projectinfo.html>

Open Access Textbooks
A FIPSE Grant Project

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Combining Openly Licensed Resources

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The 2012 Promise of Open Access Textbooks: A Model for Success

The 2012 Promise of Open Access Textbooks: A Model for Success (Revised Edition) by Florida Virtual Campus is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. This revised edition draws from the 2011 edition, authored by Susie Henderson and David Nelson of the Florida Distance Learning Consortium.

Open Access Textbooks Project

About the Open Access Textbooks Project - A FIPSE grant project

The Open Access Textbooks Grant Project worked with others involved in open content to create a sustainable model for Florida and other states to discover, produce, and disseminate open textbooks. This three-year initiative was funded by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The project built on efforts in Florida and across the U.S. to create a sustainable open textbook model and a collaborative community to further implementation of open textbooks.

Student Surveys

These surveys were conducted to assess Florida postsecondary students' experiences and perceptions of textbooks, digital resources, and open educational resources (OER).

- 2012 Executive Summary
- 2012 Survey Report
- 2010 Survey Report

Faculty and Administrator Surveys

These surveys were conducted to assess Florida postsecondary faculty and staff awareness of open educational resources (OER), open textbooks, and open courseware, and respondents' experience with open materials.

- 2012 Executive Summary
- 2012 Survey Report
- 2009 Survey Report

2016 Student Textbook and Course Materials Survey

Results and Findings

FLORIDA VIRTUAL CAMPUS
Office of Distance Learning & Student Services

October 7, 2016

<https://florida.theorange grove.org/og/items/3a65c507-2510-42d7-814c-ffdefd394b6c/1>

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A Tale of Two Surveys

Students

How much do students **spend** on textbooks and required learning materials?

How do students **respond** to textbook/required learning resource costs?

What are students **perceptions regarding the impact** of the cost of required textbooks/learning materials on them and their learning?

Are students **going beyond learning materials assigned to them**? How and what are they using?

Deans & Department Heads

Are student learning resource costs important to Colleges and/or Departments?

How are Colleges or Departments **responding** to learning resource costs?

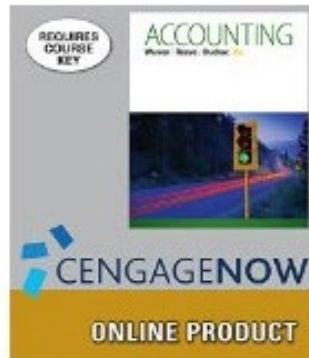
What are the general **attitudes** toward student learning resource costs by Colleges and Departments?

A Tale of Two Surveys

Students	Deans & Department Heads
<p>Online survey: Jan 29-Feb 29, 2016</p> <p>Population: all local Virginia Tech students</p> <p>Sample: 3,100 currently-enrolled undergrad and grad students <i>representative sample</i>. Selected and provided by VT's Office of Institutional Research</p> <p>Respondents: 362 (11.6% response rate)</p> <p>Instrument: Email invited Qualtrics survey (24 questions)</p>	<p>Online survey: August 1-September 1, 2016 (invited by Library Dean)</p> <p>Population: All Virginia Tech Deans & Department Heads</p> <p>Sample: 92 people. All academic Deans and Department Heads/Chairs</p> <p>Respondents: 35 (38% of departments)</p> <p>Instrument: Email invited Qualtrics survey (2 questions)</p>

Defining “Required Learning Materials”

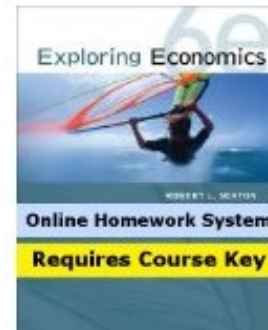
- Textbooks
- Homework software access codes (i.e. Sapling, Wiley Plus, Connect, etc.)



CengageNOW Online Homework System
[Instant Access... Jul 1, 2015
by Cengage Learning

Instant Access
\$164.00
Available now

More Buying Choices
\$164.00 used & new (2 offers)



Aplia Online Homework System, 1-Semester Access
Access] Jul 20, 2012
by Cengage Learning

PC/Mac
\$125.00
Available now

More Buying Choices
\$125.00 used & new (2 offers)

- Other required learning materials

How much should students **expect** to spend on required textbooks & learning resources?

Virginia Tech

Additional Expenses

Costs for books and supplies vary, but are estimated at about \$1,000 per year. This figure does not include personal expenses for computers, travel, entertainment, or other items that vary with an individual's lifestyle.

<http://www.admiss.vt.edu/cost>

National

2015/16 “Cost of Books & Supplies”

\$1,209-1,298

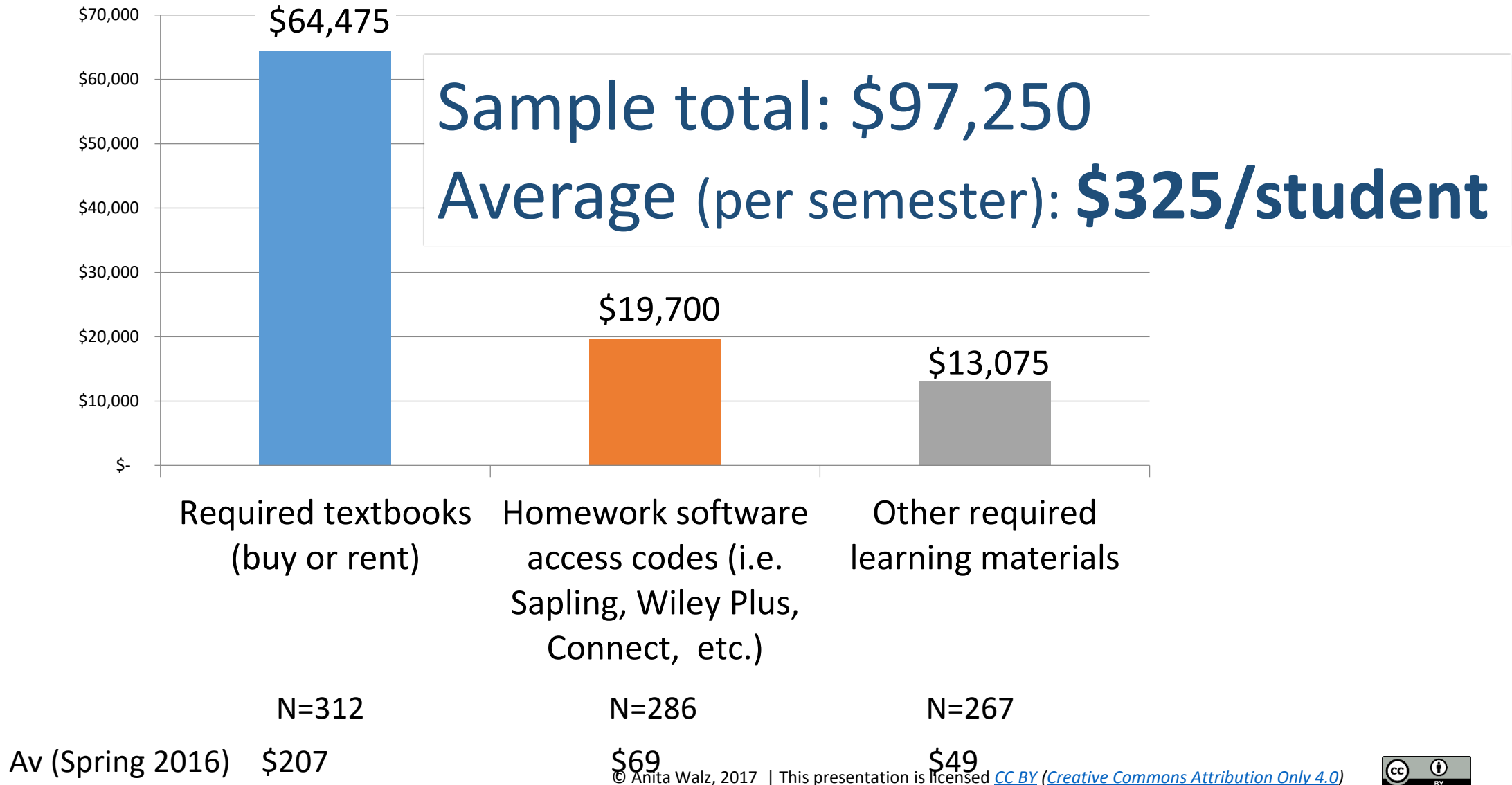
<http://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/average-estimated-undergraduate-budgets-2015-16>

Students should expect to pay: \$500-600 / semester

Anticipated vs. Reported Spending

	Anticipated	Reported
Total Respondents	\$187,200	\$97,250
Individuals (average)	\$600 / semester	\$325 / semester

What did students ACTUALLY spend?



Students' textbook acquisition decisions

Spend Money	Not spend money
54%	46%

Students' textbook acquisition decisions

Own	Not Own
34%	66%

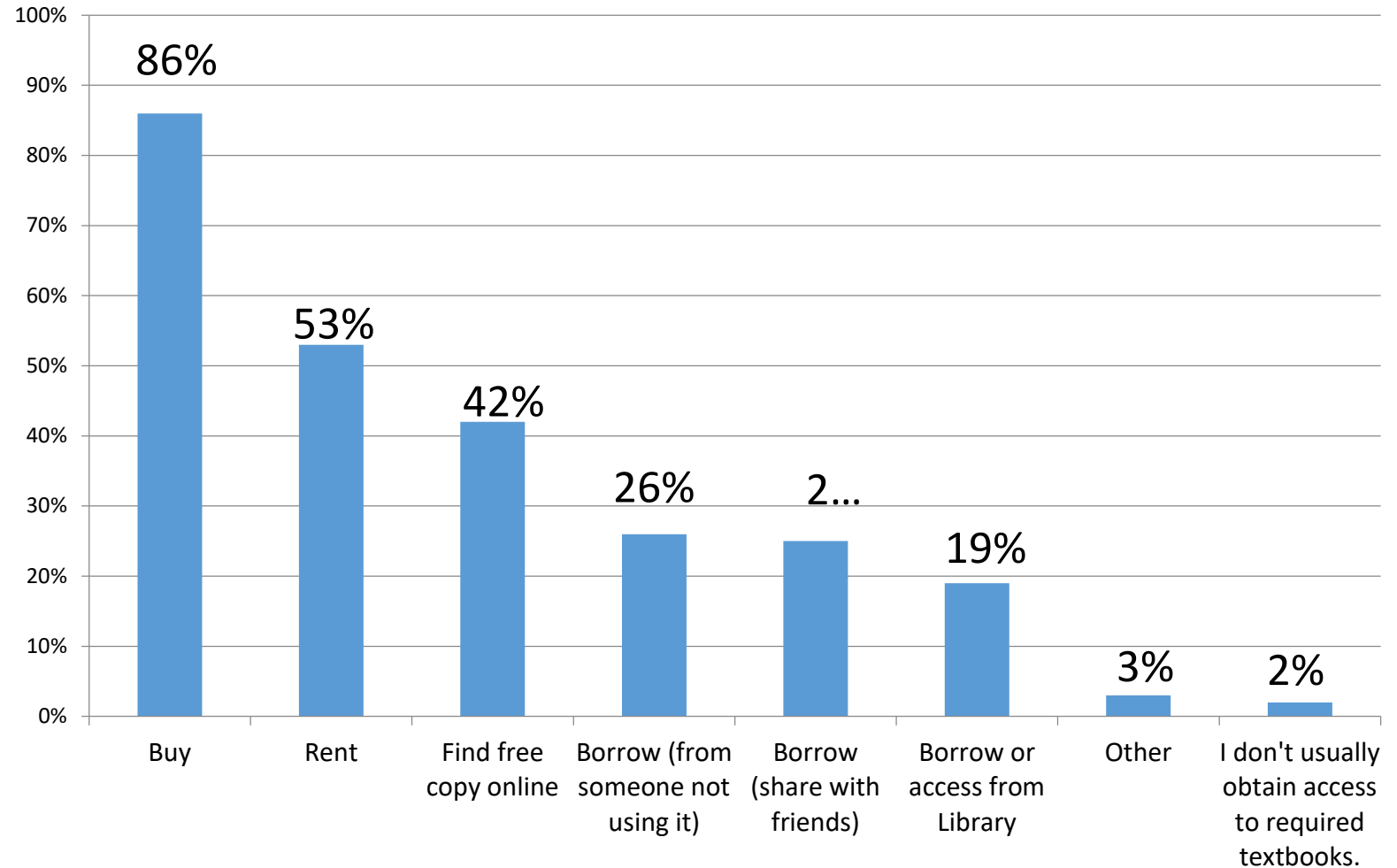
Students' textbook acquisition decisions

Not Share/Borrow	Share/Borrow (from friends, share with friends or borrow from library)
73%	27%

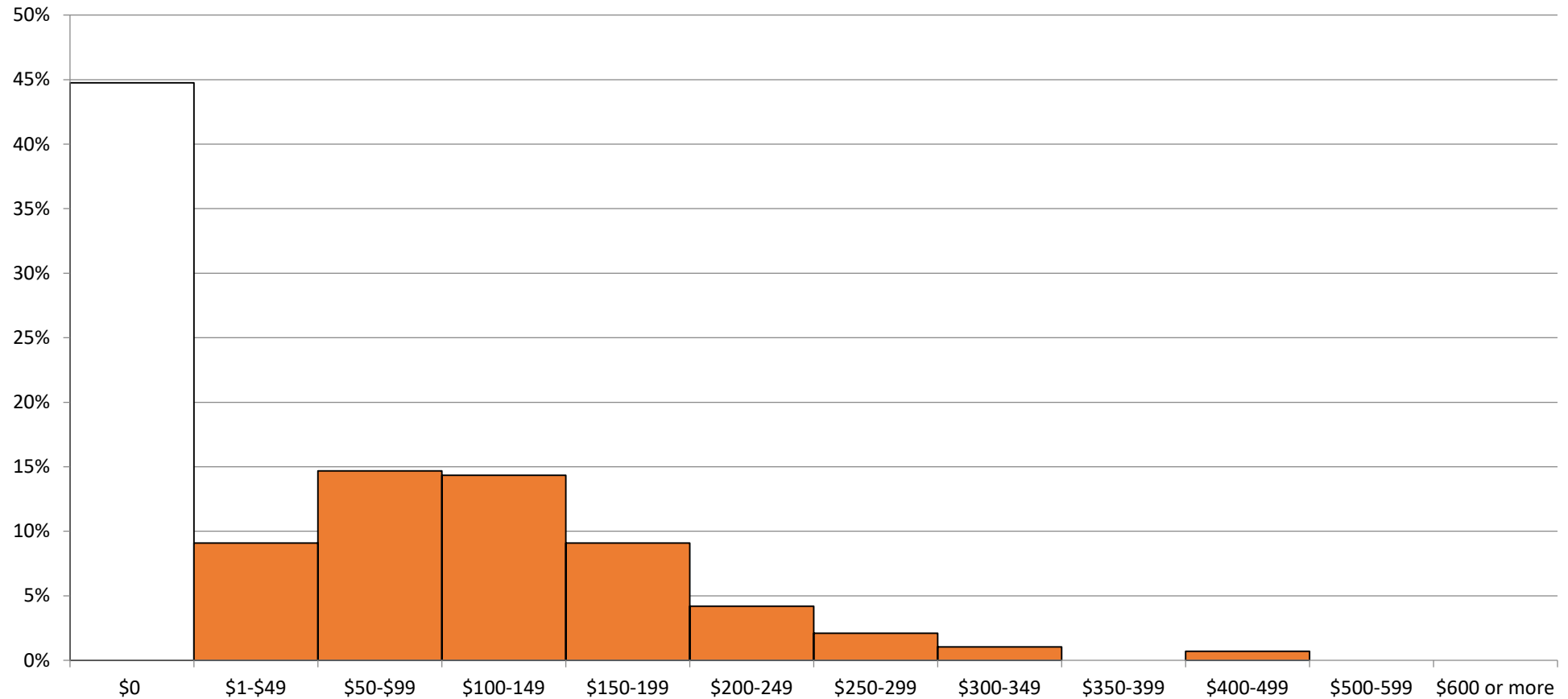
Student textbook acquisition decisions

Q: How do you obtain access to required textbooks for the courses you take?

86% Buy
53% Rent
42% Find free online copy
19-26% Borrow (3 options)
2% Don't usually access



Student reported spending on Homework software access codes (i.e. Sapling, Wiley Plus, Connect, etc.)

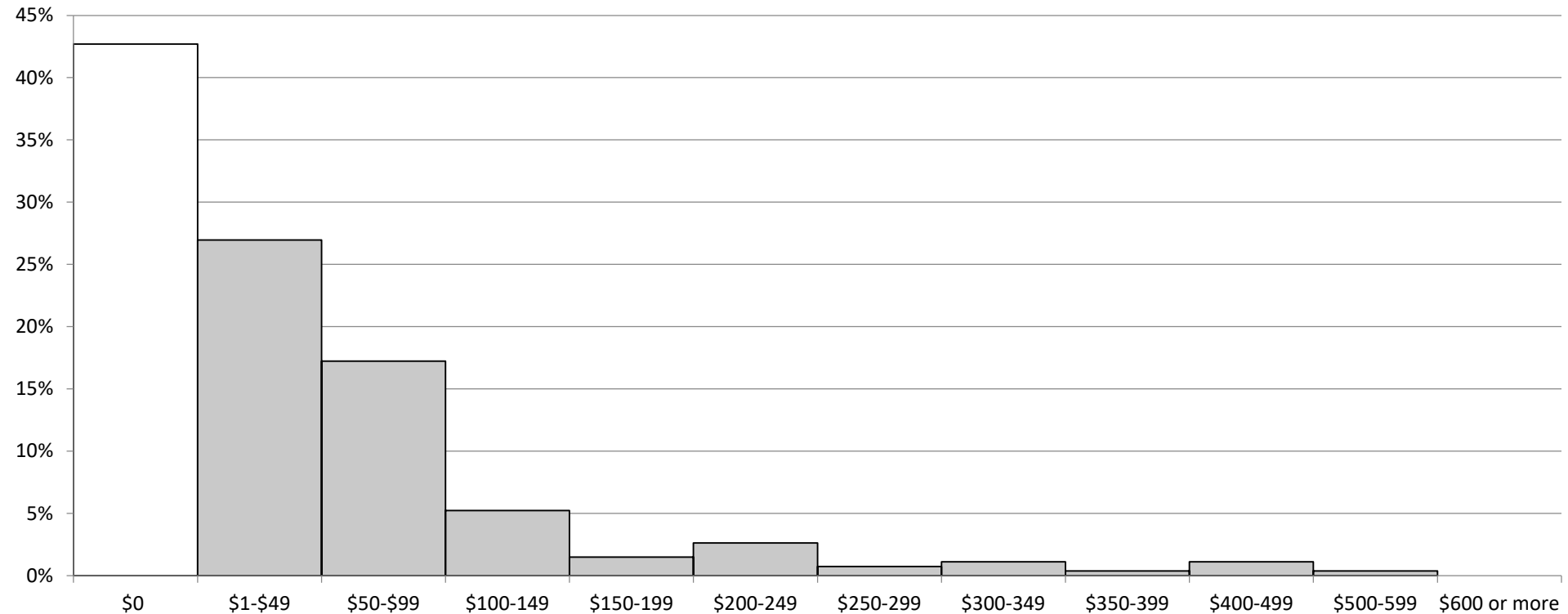


55% reported spending \$ on homework software

Average reported spending \$69/semester

N=286

Student reported spending on other required learning materials



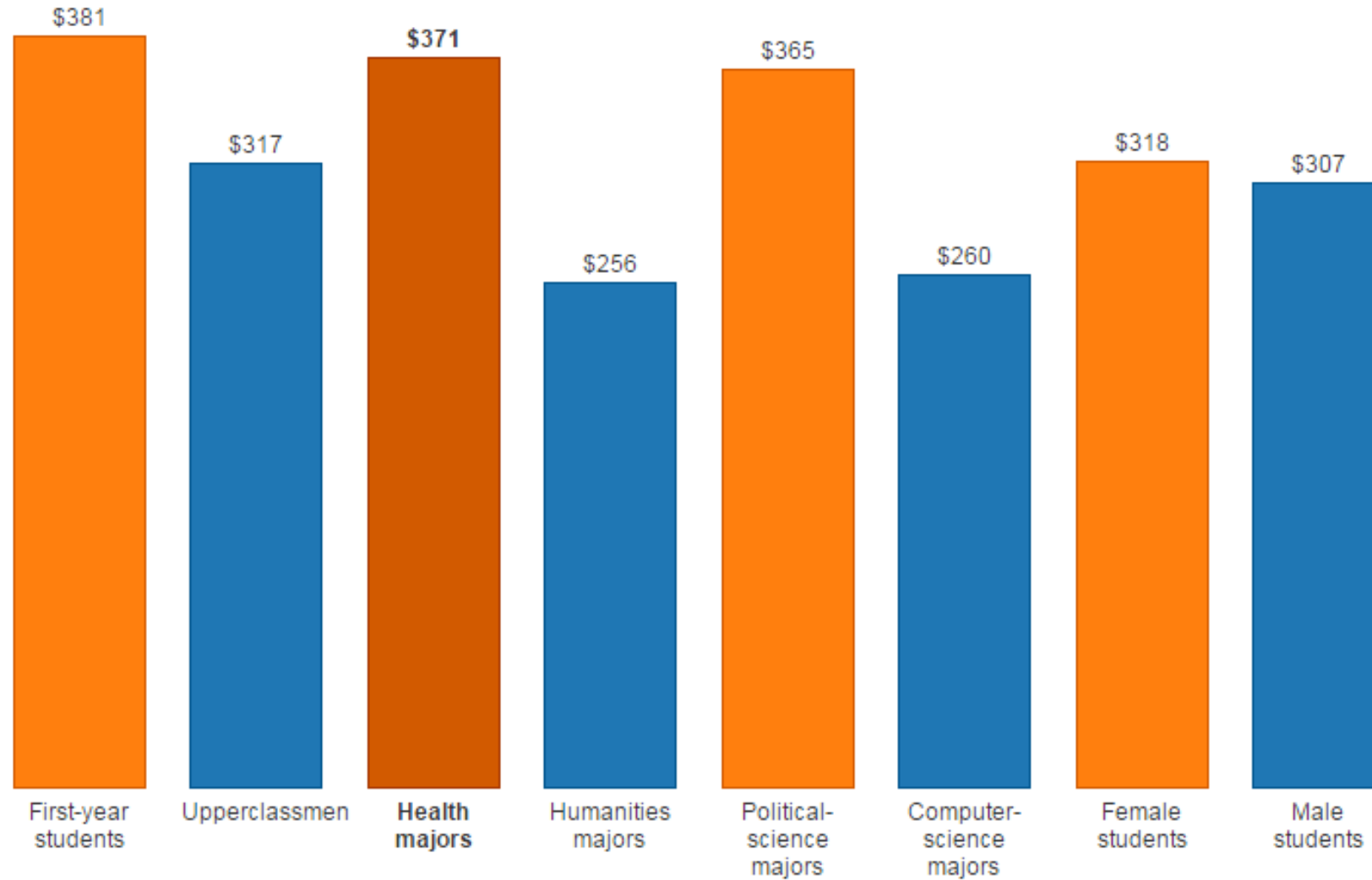
55% reported other required spending **(at the time of survey)**

Average spending: \$49/semester

N=267

Spending on Course Materials Varies Among Groups

First-year students spent more than upperclassmen for the Fall 2014 term.

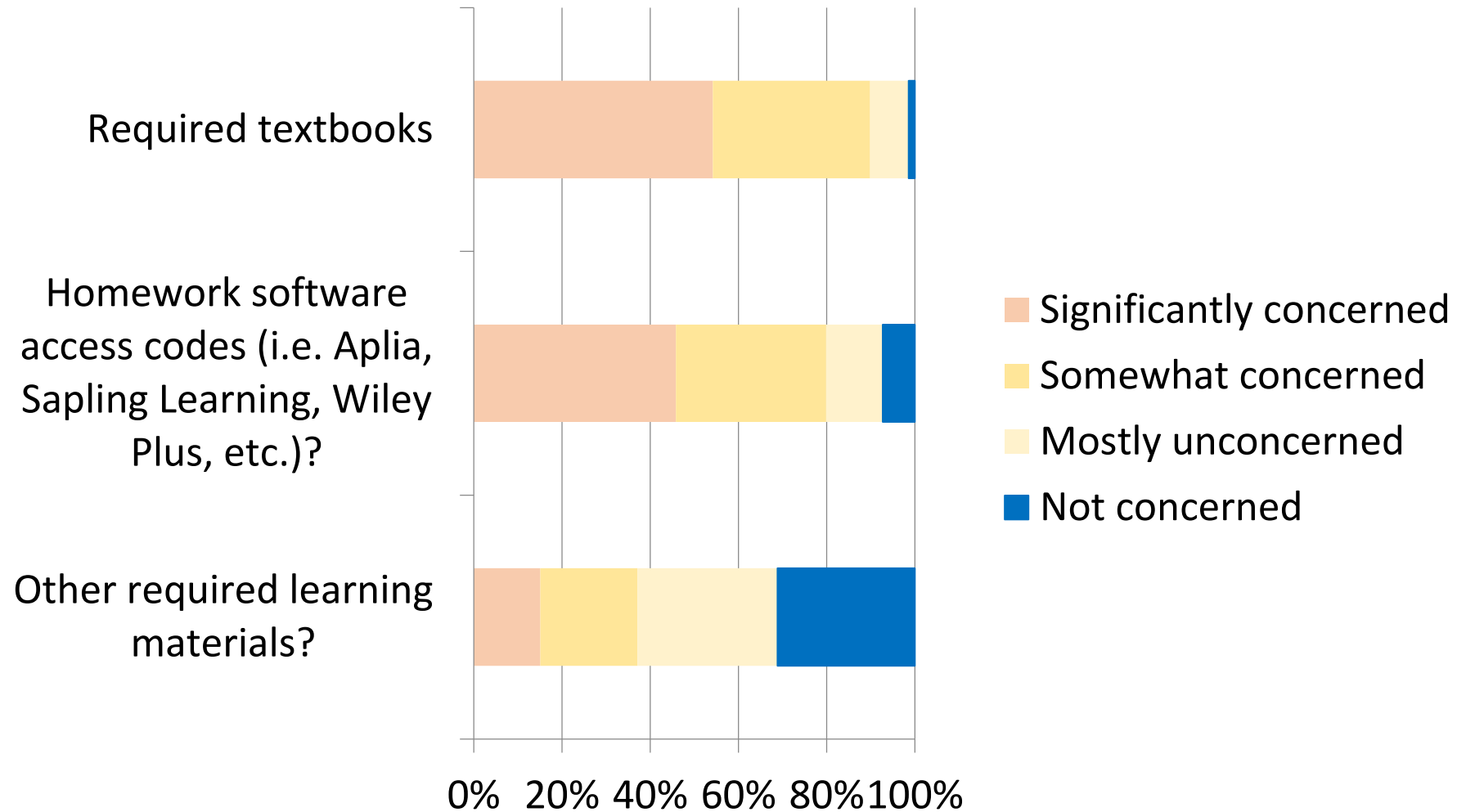


Spending differences by group (National)

<http://chronicle.com/article/Students-Are-Spending-Less-on/235340>

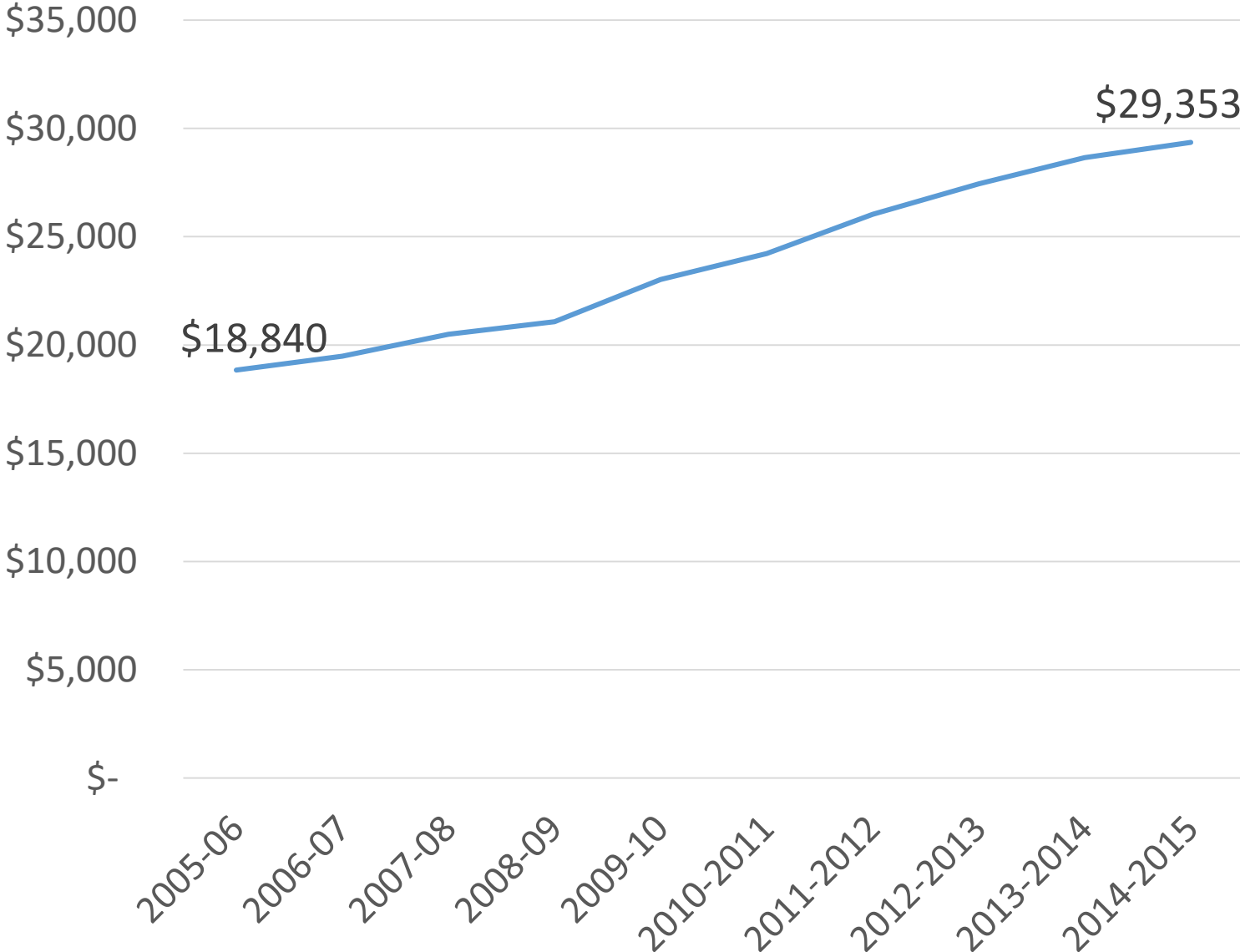
<http://mfeldstein.com/data-to-back-up-concerns-of-textbook-expenditures-by-first-generation-students/>

Students' level of concern regarding cost of required learning materials



N=275 (textbooks); N=273 (homework software); N=186 (other required learning materials)

Average debt for 4-year VT graduates



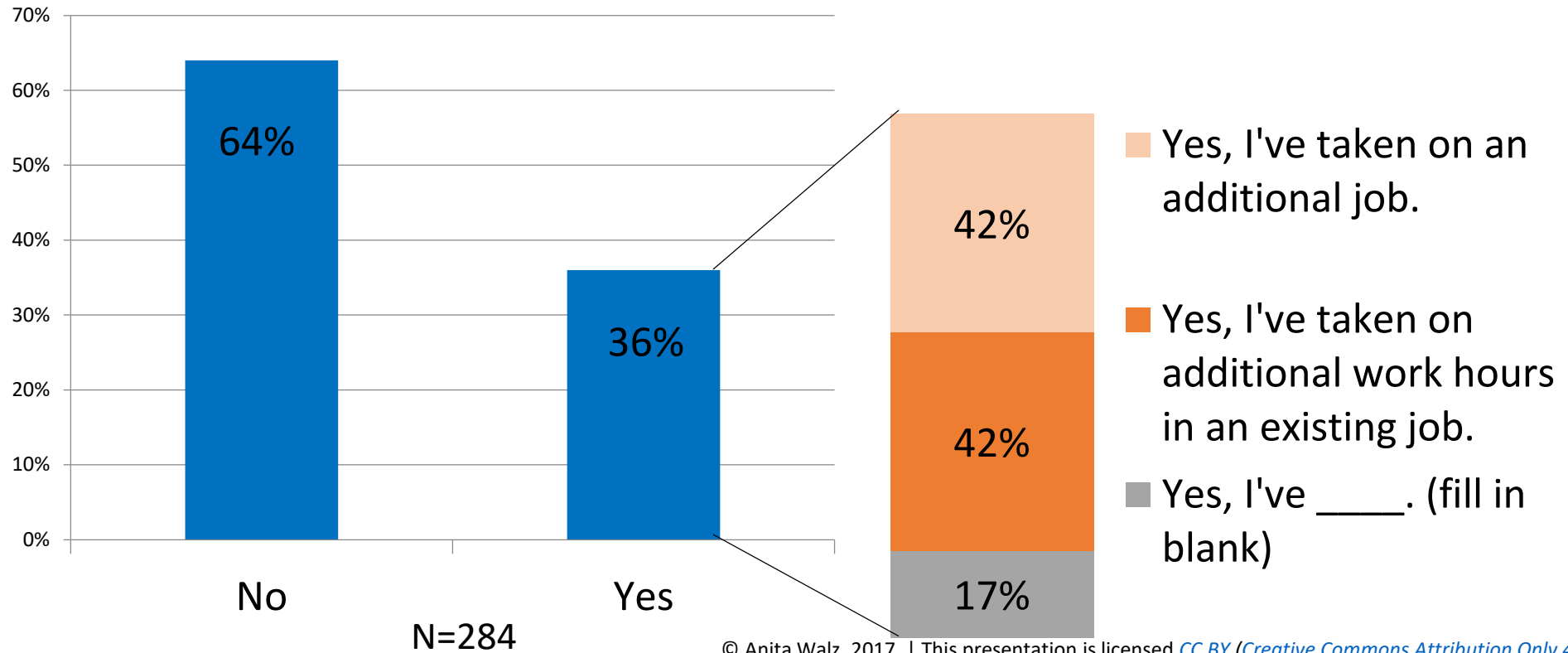
An increase of 56% in 10 years

Source: State Council of Higher Education Virginia



Earning money to afford learning materials

Q. Have you ever tried to make more money during the semester in order to afford the required textbook or other required learning materials?



What are the academic impacts of learning material costs?

Q: In the course of your college career has the cost of textbooks caused you to:

Florida (2012)	Florida (2016)	Local (2016)	
63.6%	66.6%	73.8%	Not purchase the required textbook
49.1%	47.6%	25.0%	Take fewer courses
34.0%	37.6%	34.3%	Earn a poor grade because I could not afford to buy the book
45.1%	45.5%	24.8%	Not register for a specific course
26.7%	26.1%	19.7%	Drop a course
20.6%	20.7%	8.6%	Withdraw from a course
17.0%	19.8%	7.5%	Fail a course because I could not afford to buy the textbook

Q: Have you ever decided against buying a textbook because it was too expensive?

National (2014)	N=2,039	.628-.672
Virginia Tech (2016)	N=289	.732-.828

VT Study: With 95% confidence, I estimate that *between .0732 (73.2%) and .828 (82.8%) of all surveyed students decided against buying a textbook because it was too expensive.*

National-level study: By contrast, in the national-level study, given a larger sample, "with 95% confidence, they estimate that between .628 (62.8%) and .672 (67.2%) of all surveyed students decided against buying a textbook because it was too expensive."

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Deans & Department Heads

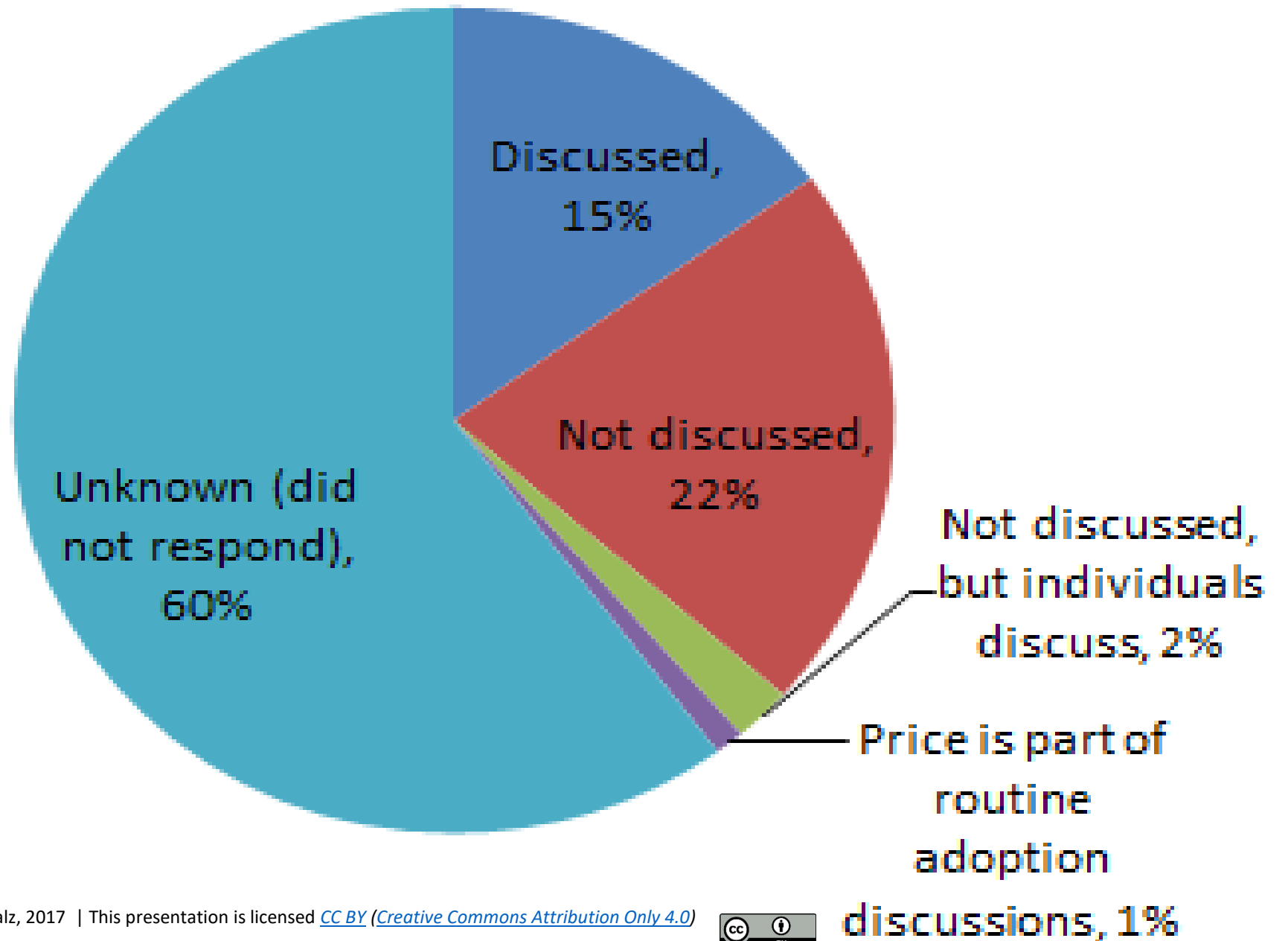
Are student learning resource costs important to Colleges and/or Departments?

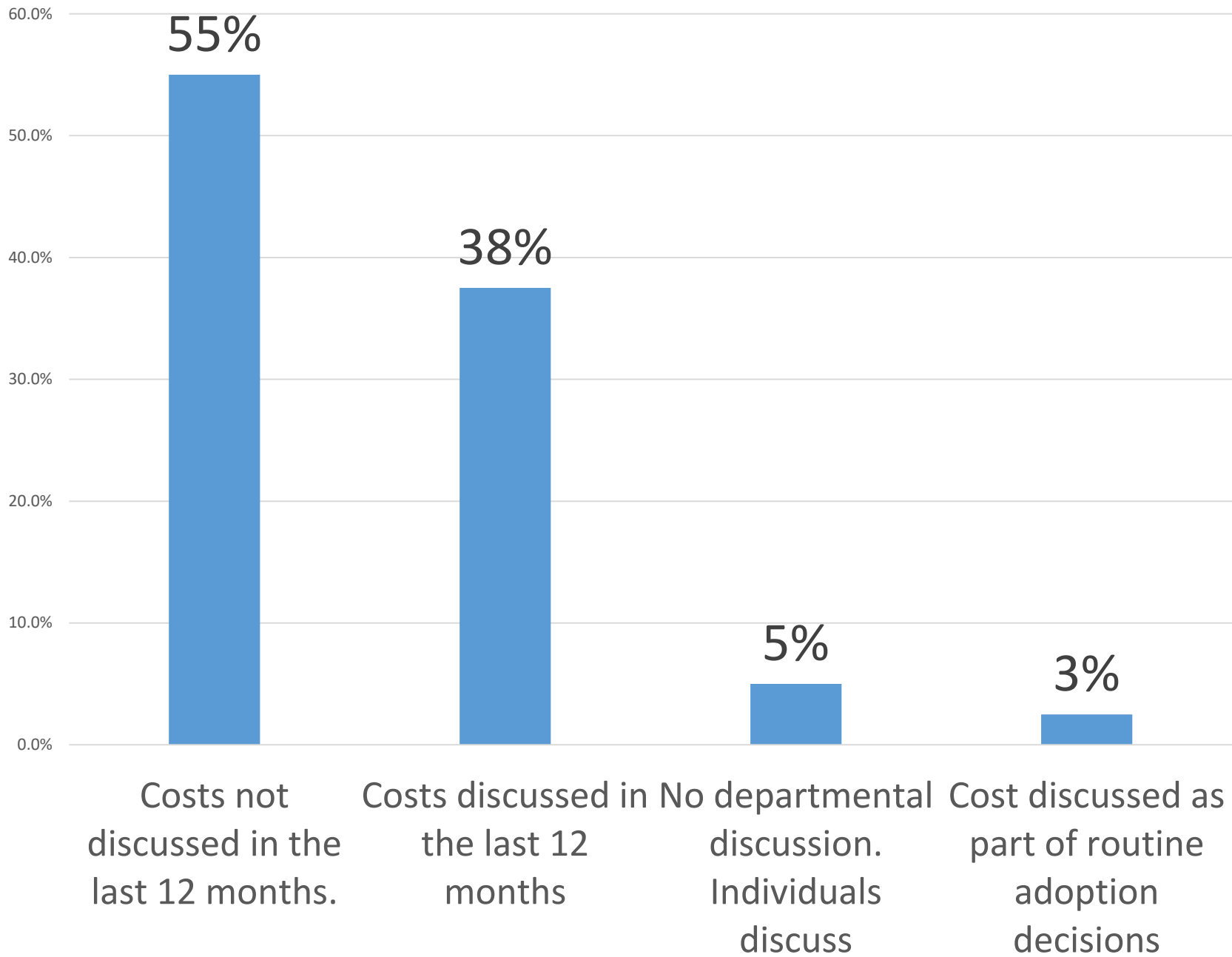
How are Colleges or Departments **responding** to learning resource costs?

1 - Minute Survey

- 1) In the last 12 months has your College or Department discussed the high cost of textbooks, homework software access codes, or other learning resources?
- 2) Describe how the college or department plans to respond to the issue.
- 3) Additional comments or questions

N=35





Varying levels of Dean/Department Head concerns

More concerned	Less Concerned
<p>“... I am sure it is a burden on many students”</p> <p>“I was amazed at how much prices have gone up when I went to the campus bookstore last week.”</p> <p>“This is a very important issue and I'd be interested to know about other department efforts or policies in regard to costs.”</p>	<p>“I think over the years, many faculty have moved away from requiring textbooks for their classes. Some require them to buy case studies or lab experimental procedures, but I don't think this is a large burden on students.”</p> <p>“In our discipline, textbooks (in general) tend not to be terribly expensive.”</p> <p>“As long as we have steak houses on campus, I am less concerned about this issue compared to tuition, bloat of the [unnamed campus unit] ...and I could [go] on and on.”</p> <p>I have “received no complaints and as such, am not preparing a response.”</p>

Actions to address high costs

“We try to pay attention to prices and look for alternatives when a price that seems too high catches our attention.”

Actions to address high costs

“We have **not been using any textbook** for the past several years...”

“[We] use **lower-cost options** published by professional societies . . . [We] also look to publishers which are known to be more price conscious.”

“We are implementing OpenStax **open textbooks** as either standard text (General Biology) or optional text (Principles of Biology) in our introductory classes.”

“We **use library materials** a lot and link to them through our course management tools. Library resources are critical for making course materials affordable to students.”

“We use our market power to **negotiate with publishers** of the textbooks used in lower division traditional classroom courses. “

“...we **ask the bookstore to stock all choices** - hardcover, loose-leaf, and e-book.”

“We are in the process of **developing our own [text]** for one course.”

“**We write and provide free access to online textbooks** for all Math Emporium courses.”

“We examine the required materials for each course **on a regular basis.**”