

Assembly Bill No. 2477

CHAPTER 556

An act to add Section 66406 to the Education Code, relating to postsecondary education.

[Approved by Governor September 16, 2004. Filed with Secretary of State September 16, 2004.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2477, Liu. Postsecondary education: production and pricing of college textbooks.

Existing law establishes the various segments of the public higher education system in the state. These segments include the University of California, which is administered by the Regents of the University of California, the California State University, which is administered by the Trustees of the California State University, and the California Community Colleges, which is administered by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.

This bill would express various findings and declarations of the Legislature with respect to the cost of college textbooks. The bill would urge textbook publishers to take specified actions aimed at reducing the amounts that students currently pay for textbooks.

The bill would require the Trustees of the California State University and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, and would request the Regents of the University of California, to work with the academic senates of each respective segment to encourage faculty to give consideration to the least costly practices in assigning textbooks, to encourage faculty to disclose to students how new editions of textbooks are different from previous editions and the cost to students for textbooks selected, to review procedures for faculty to inform college and university bookstores of textbook selections, and to encourage faculty to work closely with publishers and college and university bookstores in creating bundles and packages that are economically sound and deliver cost savings to students; to require college and university bookstores to work with the academic senates of each respective campus to review issues relative to timelines and processes involved in ordering and stocking selected textbooks and to work closely with faculty or publishers, or both, to create bundles and packages that are economically sound and deliver cost savings to students, to encourage college and university bookstores to disclose retail textbook costs and make this information otherwise publicly available, and to encourage campuses to



provide as many forums as possible for students to have access to used textbooks.

This bill would express the intent of the Legislature to encourage private colleges and universities to work with their respective academic senates and to encourage faculty to consider practices in selecting textbooks that will result in the lowest costs to students.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Textbooks are an essential part of a comprehensive and high-quality postsecondary education. The availability and affordability of textbooks directly impact the quality and affordability of postsecondary education. It is in the best interests of the state that high-quality course materials be available and affordable to students.

(b) Textbooks are expensive. Students report that they are required to purchase “bundled” materials that often include a textbook, workbook, and CD-ROM, and that they often do not use anything other than the textbook. Students also report that they are required to purchase new editions of textbooks and get very little money back when they sell the used edition back to the bookstore.

(c) To deliver high-quality materials to students that are affordable, all of the following should occur:

(1) Textbook publishers should provide students with the option of buying materials that are “unbundled,” disclose to faculty the cost to students of purchasing textbooks, and disclose to faculty how the new edition is different from previous editions.

(2) Faculty should consider the least costly practices in assigning textbooks when these practices are educationally sound, as determined by the appropriate faculty.

(3) College and university bookstores should work with faculty to review timelines and processes involved in ordering and stocking selected textbooks, disclose textbook costs to faculty and students, and actively promote and publicize book buyback programs.

SEC. 2. Section 66406 is added to the Education Code, to read:

66406. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that the production and pricing of college textbooks deserves a high level of attention from educators and lawmakers because they impact the quality and affordability of higher education.

(b) The State of California urges textbook publishers to do all of the following:



(1) “Unbundle” the instruction materials to give students the option of buying textbooks, CD-ROMs, and workbooks “a la carte” or without additional materials.

(2) Provide all of the following information to faculty and departments when they are considering what textbooks to order, and post both of the following information on publishers’ Web sites where it is easily accessible:

(A) A list of all the different products they sell, including both bundled and unbundled options, and the net price of each product.

(B) An explanation of how the newest edition is different from previous editions.

(3) Give preference to paper or online supplements to current editions rather than producing entirely new editions.

(4) Disclose to faculty the length of time they intend to produce the current edition so that professors know how long they can use the same book.

(5) Provide to faculty a free copy of each textbook selected by faculty for use in the classroom for placement on reserve in the campus library.

(c) The Trustees of the California State University and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges shall, and the Regents of the University of California are requested to, accomplish all of the following:

(1) Work with the academic senates of each respective segment to do all of the following:

(A) Encourage faculty to give consideration to the least costly practices in assigning textbooks, varying by discipline, such as adopting the least expensive edition when the educational content is equal, and using a selected textbook as long as it is educationally sound, as determined by the appropriate faculty.

(B) Encourage faculty to disclose both of the following to students:

(i) How new editions of textbooks are different from the previous editions.

(ii) The cost to students for textbooks selected for use in each course.

(C) Review procedures for faculty to inform college and university bookstores of textbook selections.

(D) Encourage faculty to work closely with publishers and college and university bookstores in creating bundles and packages if they are economically sound and deliver cost savings to students, and if bundles and packages have been requested by faculty. Students should have the option of purchasing textbooks and other instructional materials that are “unbundled.”

(2) Require college and university bookstores to work with the academic senates of each respective campus to do both of the following:



(A) Review issues relative to timelines and processes involved in ordering and stocking selected textbooks.

(B) Work closely with faculty or publishers, or both, to create bundles and packages that are economically sound and deliver cost savings to students.

(3) Encourage college and university bookstores to disclose retail textbook costs, on a per course basis, to faculty, and make this information otherwise publicly available.

(4) Encourage campuses to provide as many forums for students to have access to as many used books as possible, including, but not necessarily limited to, all of the following:

(A) Implementing campus-sponsored textbook rental programs.

(B) Encouraging students to consider on-campus and online book swaps so that students may buy and sell used books and set their own prices.

(C) Encouraging students to consider student book lending programs.

(D) Encouraging college and university bookstores that offer book buyback programs to actively promote and publicize these programs.

(E) Encouraging the establishment of textbook rental programs and any other appropriate approaches to providing high-quality materials that are affordable to students.

(d) It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage private colleges and universities to work with their respective academic senates and to encourage faculty to consider practices in selecting textbooks that will result in the lowest costs to students.

