



Course Material Insights Report

Institutional Leadership Survey 2022



The first step toward change is awareness.

The past few years have seen the purchasing, delivery, and usage of textbooks and other course materials shift dramatically. How do industry peers view the course material shift, what opportunities have surfaced because of it, and what changes have been added to strategic plans in response?

To provide more insight and increase awareness, we enlisted the help of over 300 institutional leaders to better understand their beliefs and actions as it pertains to textbooks and course materials.

KEY FINDINGS

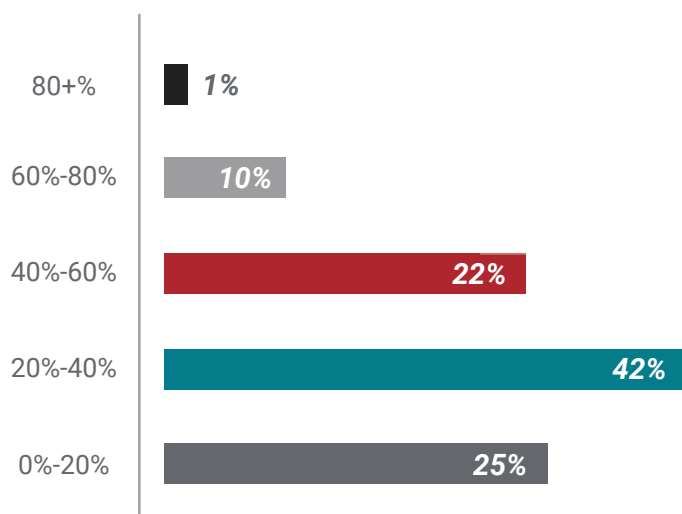
- *Nine out of ten higher education leaders agree that having access to course materials supports student success and increases completion rates*
- *Nearly all respondents believe that course materials are accessible on their campuses, yet acknowledge that students do not always purchase the materials. One third said that 40-80% of students are not purchasing their required materials*
- *Nearly all respondents agreed that an equitable access program would improve student success*
- *The proportion of college courses that currently use inclusive access materials is very low*
- *84% of respondents believe student engagement data from digital course materials is valuable, though an underused resource*



A disconnect between course material access & acquisition

98% of respondents said that students on their campus consistently had access to required course materials. However, they acknowledged that many students are not purchasing all of the required materials.

What percentage of your students do you believe are lacking course materials for every class?



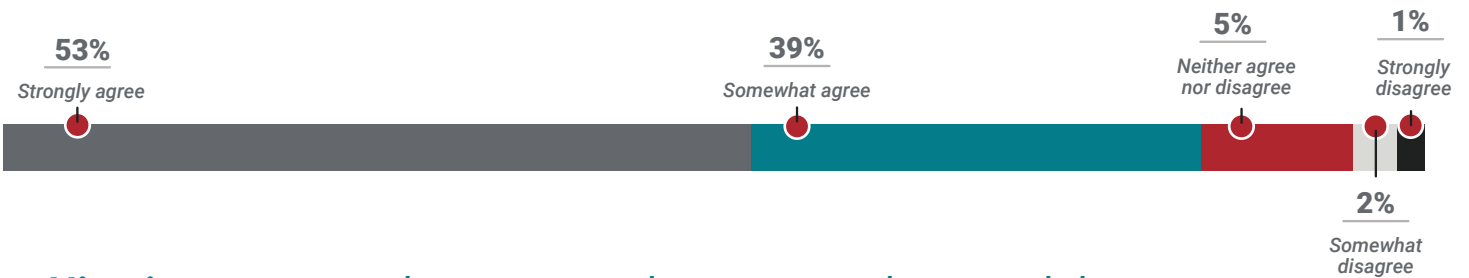
Over three-quarters of respondents said at least 20% of their students are not purchasing the required materials, and approximately *one third* said that *40%-80% of students are not purchasing the required materials*

Course material acquisition seems to be a bigger challenge at **community colleges** - nearly half of respondents said that at least **40%** of students are not purchasing the required materials.

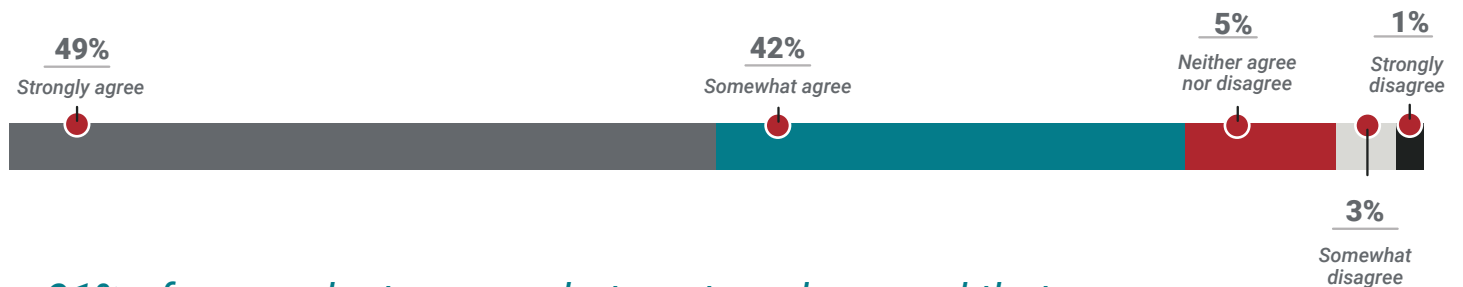


Connecting course materials and student success

Higher education leaders believe that having course materials by the first day of class is integral to students' academic success.



Nine in ten respondents, somewhat or strongly agreed that **access to course materials impacts student outcomes and retention.**

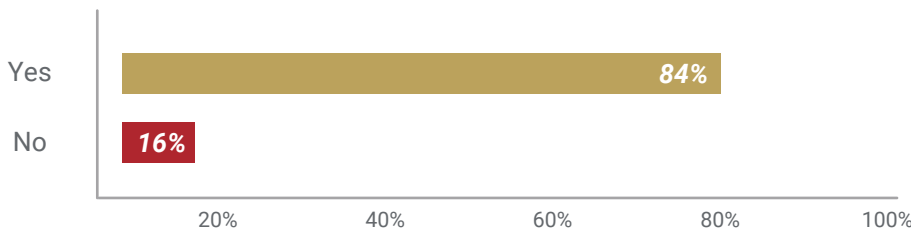


91% of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that **course completion rates would increase** if students had access to all required course materials on the first day of class.



Seize the data

Course materials that provide information on student engagement with course materials (opening the book, time spent in the material, etc.) can also help institutions identify students who are struggling academically and intervene.

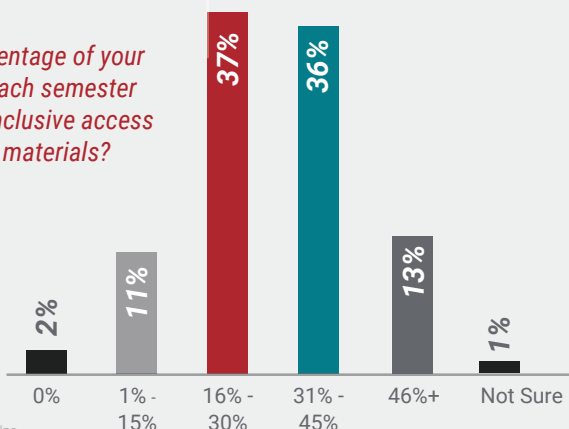


84% of respondents agree that access to data such as how long they engage with digital materials is valuable to student success

When student engagement data is received, the groups with the most access are academic advisors, academic departments, instructors, and administration.



What percentage of your classes each semester are using inclusive access course materials?



A step toward the future with inclusive access

In an inclusive access program, students automatically receive access to digital course materials/courseware before the first day of class, at a discounted rate, for participating classes only. The cost is added as a line item on the tuition bill or charged to the bursar account.



Equitable Access: Fad or Future?

In an equitable access program, students receive all of their course materials (physical or digital) before the first day of class. The cost of the books is a low flat fee and is included as part of their tuition.

Do you believe an equitable access textbook program would help your students?

95% of institutional leaders responded that an equitable access program would help their students succeed

Nearly four in five respondents - **78%** believe textbooks should be included in tuition

93% of higher ed leadership believe prospective students would find the institution more attractive if the cost to attend included textbooks

Community college leadership had varying opinions:

Over one-third - 34% - said that textbooks should not be included in tuition prices, even as 96% said it would help attract students

Respondents identified a mix of concerns about equitable access programs. The top three:

- *The complexity of implementation* - 44%
- *Limited material choices* - 43%
- *Unequal cost of materials across programs* - 41%

The Bottom Line

College and university leadership see the value in equitable access to course materials



Awareness is the greatest agent for change.

Throughout this report are several key findings to consider when thinking about the future of course material access and student success at any institution. First, access to course materials does not always equal the acquisition of course materials. Second, the majority of surveyed leadership believes that inclusive access and equitable access programs, as well as access to student engagement data, will positively impact student success. Finally, most respondent institutions are considering implementing an equitable access program, but there are still concerns that need to be addressed. It is clear that equitable access is not just a fad. It continues to gain interest at institutions nationwide due to increasing data that supports its connection to student success.

METHODOLOGY AND RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Akademus commissioned a survey of 304 higher education administrators about course materials and equitable access, fielded by Qualtrics. The survey took place in August of 2022. All of the respondents work for unique institutions, ranging from four-year colleges and universities to community and technical colleges to trade schools. They were not asked to identify their institutions due to privacy concerns, but their institutions are located in at least 170 different cities across 40 states.

- 48.4% work at four-year colleges or universities, 37.8% work at two-year institutions, and 11.8% work at less-than-two-year institutions.
- 67.0% work at public institutions, 23.0% work at for-profit institutions, and 9.9% work at private nonprofit institutions.
- 31.6% work at public two-year institutions, 29.6% work at public four-year institutions, and 12.5% work at for-profit four-year institutions.
- 59.5% of respondents work in executive roles, 40.5% in C-suite roles.

By department - 31.3% finance/business office, 31.3% in auxiliary services, 28% in academic affairs, and 9.5% in student success or student support

- 44.4% have 5-10 years of experience working at a college or university; 10.9% have less than five years of experience and 9.2% have more than 15 years of experience.
- 50.7% of respondents have a large population of non-traditional students, 40.8% said the same for African-American students, 39.1% said the same for Hispanic students, and 37.8% said the same for Native American students.

About twice as many respondents said that their institutions serve a large share of urban students versus rural students.