



March 1, 2023

The Honorable JB Pritzker  
Governor  
555 W. Monroe St., 16th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60661

The Honorable Don Harmon  
President of the Senate  
309-G Capitol Building  
Springfield, Illinois 62706

The Honorable Emanuel "Chris" Welch  
Speaker of the House  
300 Capitol Building  
Springfield, Illinois 62706

The Honorable John Curran  
Senate Republican Leader  
110-D Capitol Building  
Springfield, Illinois 62706

The Honorable Tony McCombie  
House Republican Leader  
316 Capitol Building  
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Public Act 102-0122 created the College Course Materials Affordability and Equitable Access Collaborative Study Act. The Act established a 23-member Governor- and General Assembly-appointed College Course Materials Affordability and Equitable Access (CCM) Task Force directed to conduct "a collaborative college course materials affordability and equitable access study" (the Study) to examine "the cost-saving methods and practices utilized by public and private institutions of higher learning in this State and throughout the United States for improving students' equitable first-day-of-class access to required course materials and conduct an affordability comparison of providing students' course materials, including digital learning tools." More specifically, the Study was statutorily required to cover 10 related areas of interest that are outlined in the Act, and those were used to form the 10 Study Questions that provide the framework for the report.

To complete the Study and comply with the timelines in the Public Act, the Task Force developed a plan that included: conducting secondary research to collect state and/or national data covering the various topics the Study was to address; surveying both public and private colleges and universities in Illinois and students at Illinois colleges and universities on college course materials; and providing discussion forums/presentations at the Task Force meetings with/from subject matter experts, schools, organizations, associations, groups, etc. on relevant topics related to college course materials. About 8,800 Illinois college students made their voices heard through our survey.

National data indicates that new college textbook prices have plateaued in the past few years and the average course material spend (purchased + rented course materials) per student has trended downward due to increased use of free and lower-cost digital and rental materials. Efforts by the higher education community, publishers, and bookstores to make course materials more affordable for students have continued to emerge and expand and are comprised of campus-wide textbook rental and equitable access programs, program- or course-specific inclusive access programs, open educational resources (OER), and digital subscriptions. Whether a student can take advantage of some of these cost-saving methods depends on what format(s) assigned materials are available in and/or on what programs are offered at each institution, and whether course materials are available on the first day of class can depend on which



method(s) are offered at the institution and whether materials are self-procured or institution-provided. This Study includes Illinois-specific data on the current course materials landscape and provides available information on the areas of interest outlined in the Act. Notably, the Act did not direct the Task Force to make recommendations, and it did not do so. The report serves instead as a resource for those interested in the topic.

Should you wish to discuss the information provided, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 847.831.8379 or Katharine Gricevich, Director of Government Relations, at 217.785.9278.

Sincerely,

Eric Zarinkow  
Executive Director