A Resolution Supporting the Maryland Open Source Textbook (MOST) Initiative

1. WHEREAS, The Graduate Student Association (GSA) exists to represent the graduate student body at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; and,

2. WHEREAS, one of the foremost responsibilities of the GSA is to ensure college affordability; and,

3. WHEREAS, the College Board estimates that students spend an average of $1,200 on textbooks and materials annually; and,

4. WHEREAS, textbook prices have increased 812% since 1978, outpacing tuition, health care costs, and inflation¹; and

5. WHEREAS, seven out of ten students surveyed did not purchase a required textbook because of cost and one in four first-year students and one in three seniors frequently did not purchase required academic materials because of cost²; and

6. WHEREAS, without an affordable option to fulfill their academic responsibilities, students have increasingly put themselves in legal jeopardy; and,

7. WHEREAS, during the Spring of 2013 34% of students reported downloading course content from an unauthorized website, up from 20% in 2010, and 31% said they photocopied or scanned chapters from other students' books, up from 21% in 2010³; and,

8. WHEREAS, open source textbooks are “textbooks that are accessible online at no cost, and affordable to purchase printed as a book⁴; and,

9. WHEREAS, open source textbooks are a proven cost savings alternative by programs such as OpenStax which has saved 42,000 students an estimated $4.2 million in total⁵; and,

10. WHEREAS, A Florida Legislative Task Force, charged with extensively exploring open source textbooks, found “compelling academic reasons to use open access textbooks such as: improved quality; flexibility and access to resources; interactive and active learning experiences; currency

¹ Perry, M. (2013) The college textbook bubble and how the “open educational resources” movement is going up against the textbook cartel http://www.aei-ideas.org/2012/12/the-college-textbook-bubble-and-how-the-open-educational-resources-movement-is-going-up-against-the-textbook-cartel/
of textbook information; broader professional collaboration; and the use of teaching and learning technology to enhance educational experiences\(^6\); and,

11. WHEREAS, the University System of Maryland Student Council, in collaboration with the GSA, will launch the Maryland Open Source Textbook (MOST) Initiative this Fall 2013, and;

12. WHEREAS, the MOST Initiative will sponsor a Fall 2013 professional development workshop to explore open source textbooks for interested faculty of high-enrollment, high-impact, entry-level courses; and,

13. WHEREAS, the Fall 2013 workshop will educate faculty about the features and benefits of open source textbooks, engage with the open source resources, assess the feasibility of adopting open source texts, and discuss the feasibility of scaling up the program; and,

14. WHEREAS, the MOST Initiative will sponsor a Spring 2014 pilot to collect data and analyze the effect open source textbooks have on student outcomes and savings; and,

15. WHEREAS, the MOST Initiative will continue to encourage the segments to come together to create a workgroup to begin evaluating the feasibility of developing a state supported repository and development process that all Maryland faculty across the segments can access and contribute toward; and,

16. THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the GSA fully supports the mission and objective of the MOST Initiative; and,

17. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the GSA encourages interested faculty at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County to participate in the MOST Initiative this 2013-2014 academic year.

Passed By the UMBC GSA Senate:

For-46
Opposed-0
Abstain-3