VCU and the Virginia Course Materials Survey
Executive Summary

Background

In Fall 2021, VIVA, Virginia's Academic Library Consortium, distributed the Virginia Course Materials Survey to 41 Virginia colleges and universities. The survey hoped to explore:
1. The relationship between educational equity and textbook costs, and
2. Which textbook features most benefited students' learning experiences.

VIVA's website includes a formal report of statewide findings and corresponding analysis.

At VCU, the survey was disseminated to a 20% random sample of students. 603 VCU responses were received (10% response rate). Due to the IRB approved protocols and efforts to maintain respondent anonymity, VCU data is only available on the summary level.

Key Findings from VCU Data

1. VCU students are worried about textbook costs more than their peers across the state and at other Virginia doctoral institutions.
2. VCU students are taking steps to reduce their textbook costs.
3. Textbook costs impact VCU students' academic performance (e.g. grades, DFW rates).
4. Textbook costs impact VCU students' choice of class, major, and minor.
5. If cost were not an issue, a majority of VCU students would prefer print resources.
6. VCU students are concerned about accessing course materials.
    a. VCU students want to reduce barriers to obtaining and reading course materials.
    b. VCU students want to be able to access resources beyond the class in which they are assigned.

Other notable findings from VCU Data

1. Disabilities impact how VCU students use course materials, including format preference.
2. VCU students prefer when textbooks are used in the class for which they are assigned--and feel cheated when books are not actively used in that class.
3. VCU students are frustrated by the textbook industry.

More information

A full exploration of the findings is available in the Full Report.

All data supporting the findings in this report can be found on a downloadable Excel sheet.

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