

Survey Brief

Undergraduate Education &
Student Affairs

The Impact of Rising Tuition on Students

What can we do to help students at UC Riverside?

The purpose of this brief is to bring visibility to the impact that rising cost of college attendance is having on our students and to understand the resources that are available to address the decline in textbook purchases brought on by these costs.

Tuition is now \$13,607 per year. Tuition and fees increased nearly \$2,000 from the 2010-2011 academic school year. At the same time, the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario region experienced one of the sharpest increases in poverty in the nation¹. A parent of our students may be unemployed; families may have lost their homes. Many families may be struggling to pay for the necessities of life. As a result, the rise in tuition and fees has altered student behavior.

A survey administered to 5,396 UC Riverside undergraduate students in spring 2011 found that more than 70 percent of students skipped and/or postponed buying required textbooks to meet college expenses².

During the current school year have you done any of the following to meet college expenses?

Postponed buying required textbooks	73%
Skipped buying required textbooks	74%
Postponed buying school supplies	66%
Skipped buying school supplies	63%
Spent less money on food	81%
Gone out less often with friends	83%

VCSA Spring Survey administered to 5,396 students in 2011

Over 80 percent said they spent less money on food and socializing. The University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey³ administered in 2010 to 4,822 UC Riverside undergraduate students found similar results; about 78 percent stated that they bought fewer books, bought cheaper books, and read books on reserve to meet college expenses.

Over 47 percent of students reported cutting down on personal/recreational spending. Additionally, nearly 56 percent of students stated that they worried very often or often about their family's debt and financial circumstances.

The most worrying adjustment is the decline in textbook purchases. Below are a few suggestions to help make course materials more accessible to students.

Resources to provide materials for students:

- Reserve Services:**
Course materials from the libraries' collection or personal textbooks can be placed on reserve so that students may check out materials from the library.
 - Electronic Reserves:**
Articles, book chapters, and course materials can be placed on electronic reserves so that students can view and/or print these materials.
 - Multimedia Library Reserves:**
Personal, departmental, or library materials can be placed on reserve for student use.
- For more information visit library.ucr.edu

Many faculty members are already using these resources. We hope others will consider using them. In addition, please let students know that they can use R'Books to buy and sell textbooks.

Contact us with follow-up questions at:
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¹ Kneebone, E. (October 2010). The great recession and poverty in metropolitan America. Brookings Institution: Washington D.C.

² Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. (Spring 2010). VCSA Spring Survey.

³ Student Experience in the Research University Project. (2010). University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey.