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Improving Student Preparedness,
Delivery of Course Materials,
and Bookstore Sell-Through with
IncludED[®] Course Fee Model

Samantha S. Birk is Associate Director for Instructional Technologies at the Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) at Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW). CELT enriches the university’s teaching and learning environment by providing a single “front door” to the variety of resource providers required for teaching in today’s classroom.

Partnering with Cengage Learning and other publishers, IPFW initiated a new program —includedED®—in the fall of 2012. Created by Follett and made available to institutions through partnerships with higher education publishers, includedED is a course fee model through which students’ required course materials are delivered as part of their fee payment. Says Birk, “Working with Follett and the publishers, our students enrolled in an includedED class are seeing between 40% and 60% savings on their course materials over the cost of new, physical materials. This program is also flexible, so institutions can customize it to meet their needs.”

THE CHALLENGE—ENSURING THAT STUDENTS HAVE COURSE MATERIALS

National studies show that one in three students have delayed purchase of course materials—or never purchase them at all. IPFW’s decision to pilot and implement includedED is aimed at addressing this problem, which also had repercussions for cost management, student preparedness, and student success.

In addition to ensuring that all students had course materials on the first day of class, IPFW is working towards alleviating complications often associated with the use of unique access codes and passwords. “One math course had 350 students with issues with their unique codes and some students couldn’t get in until 3 weeks after class had started,” recalls Birk. “When we went to includedED, seven students had issues and all were solved in 24 hours. A huge difference!”

THE SOLUTION—COURSE FEE MODEL INTEGRATED WITH UNIVERSITY LMS

With includedED, instructors no longer send students to an external URL; students access digital course materials through IPFW’s BlackBoard® learning management system (LMS). Faculty members opt in to the program and communicate their course material needs to the bookstore, which then works with the publisher on pricing. The cost, which is typically lower than the cost of a new, physical textbook purchased at a bookstore, is added as a course fee and students access their digital materials through the LMS.

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THE RESULTS—INSTRUCTOR PEACE OF MIND, IMPROVED STUDENT PERFORMANCE, STREAMLINED PROCESSES

The includedED program has delivered positive benefits to everyone involved—IPFW’s faculty, students, and bookstore. Faculty members know that all students have access to the same materials, and on the first day of class. Student performance has improved, too. “We saw a slight improvement in the GPA of one math class after one year in the includedED program,” says Birk. “We are still measuring, but making sure students have access on the first day of class seems to lead them to do better.”

Birk says that the majority of students who have used the program, most of whom are taking freshman core courses, appreciate not having to worry about getting course materials on their own. “The majority of students really like it. They wish more of their courses were like this,” she says.

The bookstore and the publisher get 100% sell through. The bookstore can also use floor space no longer needed for textbooks in new ways to complement students’ academic experience and augment sales. Says Birk, “Last summer they created a technology hub where students could buy laptops, tablets, and accessories. They are also planning to offer workshops on how to use electronic tools effectively.”

A LOOK AHEAD

By the fall of 2013, IPFW had 207 courses in the program. Plans call for a more comprehensive digital course material offering for freshmen by 2015. Birk and her team are in a series of ongoing dialogues with instructors to determine other enhancements, such as mobile offerings.

Birk recommends includedED to other universities. “You can either get on the train now and figure out how this will look for your institution, or just wait until it happens, but digital course materials are projected to be more predominant than traditional books within the next 3 years. Universities need to take a serious look at digital alternatives.”

ABOUT INCLUDED®

IncludedED® is a program that delivers required course materials, both print and digital, to students as part of their tuition and fee payment. The program drives engagement and academic success in higher education by ensuring that students have access to all required course materials on the first day of class, and are consequently more prepared to learn. Cengage Learning partners with Follett (includedED’s creator) and with bookstores at two-year, four-year, and career schools to implement the model.

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