

Course Materials Affordability Committee 2025-2026 Report

Committee Membership:

Faculty Committee Members: Qifan Chen, Chene Heady (chair), Kat McCleskey, Gregory Mole, Kevin Schattenkirk, Wendy Snow

Ex-Officio Committee Members: Amanda Alter, Susan Hines, Brent Roberts

Issues the Committee Addressed in 2025-2026

The work of this committee over the last several years has consisted (broadly) of managing the transition to Follett as our bookstore provider and (more specifically) of overseeing the transition to the Book Bundle program. In the Fall semester (and over the summer the preceded it), we received many faculty complaints about problems with the Book Bundle program and the Follett system more generally. One large problem was that Follett's textbook adoption website defaulted to assigning e-books even if the faculty had clicked on the button to assign print books. This issue resulted in many e-books being mistakenly assigned for the Fall 2025 term. The second largest problem was that the Follett adoption website did not restrict faculty to assigning books for their own courses; as a result, some faculty accidentally assigned books for sections of courses they were not teaching. Two sources of concern (rather than problems) were that faculty were unsure how to indicate in the Follett system that they were assigning OER materials, and they were skeptical as to whether the Book Bundle program could work for graduate students. The committee chair and Brent Robert spoke to Faculty Senate on September 4, 2025 and listened to the concerns brought by senators. The committee first met to discuss these issues on September 22, 2025.

Improvements the Committee Made in 2025-2026

Among the improvements we managed in Fall 2025 were:

1. Directions about book ordering that are sent from Follett to all faculty now include clear instruction on how to assign a print book.
2. Faculty now receive automated emails about their book adoptions (so that they cannot be uncertain as to whether they submitted an order or whether Follett has the right book assigned).
3. We reached an agreement that the email sent to faculty would also include more explicit instruction about how to assign OER materials and how the Follett system registers and records OER orders.

Among the improvements we managed in Spring 2026 were:

1. The Follett system now ensures that faculty will be able to assign books only for their own classes (a change that went through via the "My Materials" link employed after the switch to doing course adoptions through Banner).
2. We worked to keep new problems from popping up as old ones were corrected (Follett initially forgot to include the print book instructions on the new instructions designed to keep faculty from assigning books for the wrong classes).
3. We clarified the status of graduate programs with regard to the Book Bundle (they will not be included in the program).

Ongoing or Continuing Business

This committee has two main functions: 1) To represent faculty to the bookstore (and vice-versa), working out bugs in the bookstore system so that students easily receive the correct materials that the faculty assigned. 2) To encourage the use among faculty of effective and academically reliable Open Education Resource (OER) materials, so as to bring down the cost of course materials for students.

For obvious reasons, the committee has spent the last several years primarily occupied with function #1. It was also the function that I, as current chair, could best oversee. I used to work at a college bookstore, but my technological skills are limited and I teach in a field (20th and 21st century literature) in which copyright protections severely limit the use of OER materials.

My time as chair is inherently over, since I have now reached the number of consecutive years that I am allowed to serve on the committee. We seem also now to be over the most difficult part of the Follett transition and the bugs seem to have largely been worked out of the Book Bundle program. 2026-2027 would be a logical time for the committee to return to its suspended work on OER materials. I have suggested to Brent Roberts that the next chair should be someone suited to that work.

Location of Committee Records

Committee records were kept primarily in the form of e-mail chains. I have them, and can forward them to the new chair if requested.

Chene Heady, Chair, May 7, 2026