

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS CHANGES THE FUTURE OF COURSE MATERIAL ACCESS WITH EQUITABLE ACCESS

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	FULL TIME ENROLLMENT	RETAIL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
CANVAS	40,000	MBS

## THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUITY

All students deserve to have access to the resources they need throughout their collegiate career. Some course materials models often put students in a position of having to choose whether they can afford to purchase their required materials, creating inequity among students. In the fall of 2020, the team at the University of California, Davis, launched a groundbreaking Equitable Access program to reduce inequities with a first-of-its-kind program to drive down course materials costs while increasing access to required materials.

Equitable Access is a day-one access model providing course materials in a digital-first, flat-rate subscription program. Digital course materials are delivered through the learning management system (LMS) and print materials are shipped to the student or picked up in store. The program's mission is to reduce inequity among students by eliminating textbook access issues, while ensuring that costs are predictable and equal for all undergraduate students. At UC Davis, all students are automatically enrolled in Equitable Access for \$169 per term. Should students prefer a different method of obtaining course materials, they can choose to opt out of the program. Equitable Access

first launched at \$199 per term, leading to a surplus in funds. That surplus will provide scholarships for 1,000 of the lowest income students for the fall 2021 term.

**“Equitable Access offers students the one thing they never had before when it comes to course materials: stability.”**

- Aaron Ochoa, Director of the UC Davis Stores

## CREATING AFFORDABLE AND PREDICTABLE COSTS

The team at UC Davis is no stranger to driving affordability initiatives, as they were pioneers in launching Inclusive Access across the campus in 2014. “We saw an opening and need for digital content to help drive down course materials costs. Any content that could be provided digitally, should be provided digitally, and that led us to Inclusive Access,” says Aaron Ochoa, director of the UC Davis Stores. “As inclusive access scaled, we began looking at how other types of content were delivered and how students were consuming things like music and movies. Since our students now immediately turn to streaming platforms, we wanted to fashion our content to meet those expectations while creating the ability for students to predict course materials costs. That’s where the idea for Equitable Access came from,” explains Aaron.



## PRESERVING ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The team has been able to launch Equitable Access while maintaining academic freedom. "Academic freedom is a key component of this program. This program will deliver paid publisher content from a commercial publisher, free resources from an open educational resource, organization, or library resources," highlights Jason Lorgan, executive director of UC Davis Stores. "All of those options are available for adoption. The choice is still in the hands of faculty."

"We aren't limiting what anyone orders," says Aaron Ochoa. "Instructors can choose any book for their course. We are focusing on providing the student with the best format option for both accessibility and affordability."

## STUDENTS SUCCEED WITH 100% ACCESS

Not only has this program allowed for 100% access for students, but correlations to learning outcomes are being reviewed. During the first term of Equitable Access at UC Davis, students who stayed opted into the program were 17% less likely to drop a course than students who opted out, suggesting that having required course materials helped them persist in the course. Participating students were asked in a survey about their primary reason for choosing to remain part of Equitable Access, and 60% answered that "Equitable Access was easier and more convenient than finding textbooks on my own." When participating students were asked if they felt free to choose classes without worrying about textbook prices because they knew that all their books were included, 69% of students agreed.

In the year prior to the start of Equitable Access, the number of UC Davis students with access to all their required textbooks was 6,819 students, and 78% of students reported they did not have access to at least one required textbook in the previous 12 months. During the first term of Equitable Access, in fall 2020,

17%

Lower Course Drop Likelihood for Opted-In Students

the number of students with access to all their required textbooks increased to 22,661 students, a dramatic 70% increase realized in a single term.

## TECHNOLOGY SIMPLIFIES ACCESS AT SCALE

The vast increase in student access leverages the existing technology ecosystem at UC Davis that includes Verba | VitalSource tools which manage student messaging, content fulfillment, and student access directly in the LMS. Scaling digital usage to all UC Davis undergraduate students has streamlined the content procurement process while promoting equity and affordability.

Aaron says, "Equitable Access offers students the one thing they never had before when it comes to course materials: stability. Now students can choose their classes based on need and desire, without the cost of course materials being a factor."