

# Telling PALSave's Story Through Data

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Midwestern Open Education Summit

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<http://bit.ly/49ISOT5>





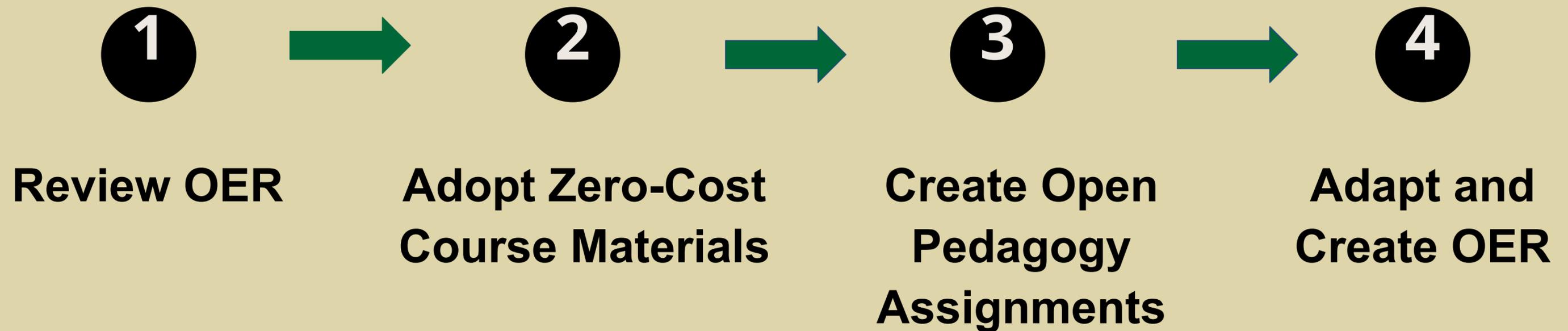
# PALSave:

## PALNI Affordable Learning Program

PALSave is PALNI's collaborative program to decrease textbook costs and support student success.

- Supported by Lilly Endowment Inc.
- Build awareness of OER
- Expand OER availability
- Offer incentives for faculty to engage

# PALSave's Progressive Path to Engagement



[palni.org/palsave/grants](https://palni.org/palsave/grants)



# What Data We Collect and Why

A person wearing a dark blue polo shirt with white buttons is holding a large stack of books. The books have various colored spines, including white, yellow, and blue. The person's hands are visible at the bottom of the stack. The background is a light beige color.

# Data Collection Tools

- What: Student & Faculty Textbook Surveys
- Why: Need, Barriers
  
- What: Course Tracker / OEN Data Dashboard
- Why: Adoption, Enrollment, Savings, Engagement
  
- What: Student Success Tracker
- Why: Academic Impact
  
- What: Perception Surveys
- Why: Quality of Experience, Student Success
  
- What: Participation Stats and Website Analytics
- Why: Engagement

# Who We Report To

- Who: PALNI Libraries
- Why: Library Impact, Student Success, Campus Impact
- Who: Participating Faculty
- Why: Student Success, Recognition
- Who: Granting Body
- Why: ROI, Impact
- Who: General Public
- Why: Information Gathering





# Data Visuals and Reports



# Textbook Affordability in 2025

In 2025, textbook affordability remains a significant concern in higher education. However, various initiatives and an overall shift to digital have decreased costs over the last decade.

## Student Challenges

- **7 in 10** students worry about textbook costs
- **65%** skipped buying textbooks due to price
- **57%** say cost influences how many classes they take
- **Negative effects** are rising compared to 2018-19
- **94%** of students have tried at least one method to reduce textbook costs



## Faculty Perspective

- **63%** of faculty prioritize textbook affordability (up from **57%** in 2021)
- **40%** need help understanding cost-effective course material

# PAL\$ave

Year in Review  
2024-2025

Thank You,  
Lilly Endowment Inc.!

\$3,298,891  
Total savings

\$163,644  
New savings this year



Of PALNI schools  
have participated  
in PAL\$ave

### Top 3 Savings Leaderboard

*Cumulative estimates*

1 \$356,351  
Marian University

2 \$340,262  
Trine University

3 \$338,009  
Butler University

### Top 3 New Savings

*Dollars saved in 2024-2025*

1 \$21,979  
Anderson University

2 \$18,258  
Marian University

3 \$15,109  
Manchester University



7 open textbooks  
completed



Total course  
transformations



99% of students reporting  
positive or neutral impact  
on studies and grades with  
zero-cost resources



Average of  
\$60.79 saved  
per student



2 workshops held  
101 reviews written



[www.palni.org/palsave](http://www.palni.org/palsave)

<https://palni.org/palsave/reports>



Karla Fribley '03

# NEXT-GEN TEXTBOOKS

A textbook affordability project saves students money and creates a more equitable system for acquiring and using textbooks.

*Story by Bill Engle / Photos by Josh Smith*

When Karla Fribley '03 heard about PALSave, a textbook affordability project in Indiana, she thought it was a “nice” concept. When Fribley, Earlham’s instructional technology director and seminaries librarian, dug deeper, she recognized the concept as a chance to promote equity and social justice, and support diversity on the Earlham campus.

“Social justice and equity can seem like such overwhelming concepts, and you often wonder how on earth you can possibly make a difference and change things,” Fribley said. “With PALSave, I realized there was an overlap with textbook access and equity in education, and then I thought, ‘Oh, I can make a difference here.’”

The goal of PALSave, a project of Private Academic Library Network of Indiana, is to encourage faculty at the state’s colleges and universities to build courses using library e-books and other digital textbooks and materials that are available under open license for free.

The project’s goal is to save students money by adopting Open Educational Resources (OER) to reduce costs for students, improve access to required texts and increase student success and retention.

Fribley worked with former Earlham Library director Neal Baker and current director Amy Bryant to invite PALSave administrators to Earlham and do training and spread the word through on-campus teaching circles. Instantly, they found strong faculty support.



## Student Perception Survey: American Literature II Findings Report

### Introduction & Methodology

This document reports the findings of the Spring 2024 PALSave Student Perception Survey, open to students at any PALNI campus enrolled in courses with zero-cost textbooks. Students accessed the survey via a link distributed by the course professor, and all responses were anonymous. 10 of 19 enrolled students in American Literature II completed the survey, for a response rate of 52.63%.

The Student Perception Survey consists of 28 questions, developed by the PALSave Team and informed by similar studies. Questions are a mix of multiple choice, Likert, and open-ended. For Likert questions, averages were determined by calculating "strongly disagree" as a numerical value of "1" and "strongly agree" as "4." Comments from students have not been edited.

A total of 201 students took the survey during the Spring 2024 semester. These students represented 20 courses at 11 PALNI institutions. The 24 courses encompass a wide range of disciplines, including behavioral science, education, mathematics, nursing, physics, and writing. A full list of courses can be found in Appendix 1.

The findings are reported in sections: how students accessed the text, student interest in print availability, impact on grades and study habits, experience using the text, and student perceptions of quality.

## ***Introduction***

For thousands of students, the cost of textbooks isn't just another expense—it's the difference between keeping up in class or falling behind, between staying enrolled or dropping out. PALSave is changing that reality, eliminating **\$2.8 million in textbook costs for 46,000 students** to date and giving them the freedom to focus on learning instead of worrying about how to pay for their books.



**“Money is stressful.** Having zero-cost textbooks not only helps better limit that stress so I can focus on studies, but it allows me to put my money towards another bill or payment and **not worry about** working another shift just in case. \$100 can **make or break** a payment, so not having to worry about buying a textbook at that price relieves a lot.” —Student quoted in PALSave perception survey, Fall 2024

# Goal 1: Build Awareness

- *Deliverable: Campus Awareness Campaign*
- *Workstreams: Community, Education, Integration*
- *Key Activities:*
  - *Embed in onboarding and course design*
  - *External promotion*
  - *Faculty recognition program*
  - *Impact outreach*
  - *Review stipends*
  - *Professional development*
  - *Showcase projects*
  - *Workshops*

During the first half of year one, PALSave focused on expanding awareness of affordable learning through faculty reviews, recognition programs, professional development, leadership in scholarly communication, and coordinated outreach and promotion across PALNI institutions.

## Activities this Period

- 1) The **PALSave Affordable Learning Program** offered Review Stipends to incentivize engagement across PALNI's institutions
  - a) 33 Brief Reviews completed
  - b) 48 Open Textbook Library Reviews completed
- 2) The **Open Educator Award Selection Committee** selected 10 faculty members as recipients of the 2025 Open Educator Awards. See: [PALNI recognizes affordable learning champions with 2025 Open Educator Award](#)
- 3) The **Scholarly Communications Steering Committee** convened and named awareness-building for PALNI Scholarly Communications activities via an infographic series as the key activity planned for the 2025-2026 program year. **Sue Wiegand (Saint Mary's College)** is serving as chair of the committee.
- 4) The **PALNI Faculty Onboarding Group** created the [Faculty Onboarding LibGuide](#), which will provide a key opportunity to incorporate PALSave awareness into faculty onboarding.

## PALNI Student Engagement

	Annual Engagement Target	Student Engagement to date (2025/2026)	Progress Toward Target
<b>Enrollments in Transformed Courses</b>	2,400	656	27.33%
<b>Dollars Saved on Textbooks</b>	\$147,477	\$61,807	41.91%

## Faculty Engagement

	Annual Engagement Target	Faculty Participation to date (2025/2026)	Progress Toward Target
<b>Transformation Grants</b>	89	58	65.17%
<b>Reviews</b>	101	81	80.20%
<b>Workshops</b>	48	0	0.00%

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## PALNI recognizes affordable learning champions with 2025 Open Educator Award

Molly Reed, Strategic Communications Director

Share:    



### **Janell Blunt**

Associate Professor of Psychology  
Anderson University

"I use open educational materials so students can study anywhere on any device without the need for logins, access codes, device limits, or heavy and costly textbooks to haul around. The team at PALNI have done the hard work of putting together information guides to identify available books, and generative AI fills the gaps by helping create custom resources like test banks and activity guides. Thanks to PALSave I no longer use any restrictive, high-cost textbooks."



### **Rishani De Costa**

Director of Placement Testing; Assistant Professor of French  
Marian University

"Everyone deserves access to quality education. That's why I believe open educational resources should be shared and promoted worldwide—especially in developing countries."



### **Abigail Dutcher**

Assistant Professor of Education  
University of Saint Francis

"I use OER because students who have their materials on the first day are more prepared and successful. Open education is about equity, ensuring that every learner has access to quality resources without barriers."



# Sustainability Considerations



# Things to keep in mind

- Keep data collection consistent
- Allow ample time to do it right
- Build complexity as capacity grows
- Prioritize internal sharing
- Prepare for limitations
  - data access
  - self reporting gaps
  - need to estimate savings
  - correlation over causation

# For More Information



LIBRARY

Home Read Sign in Search in book ... 

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES RESEARCH CASE STUDIES

## RESEARCHING THE IMPACT OF PALSAVE: ADVANCING AFFORDABLE EDUCATION IN PRIVATE COLLEGES

Amanda Hurford and Beth Daniel Lindsay

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The Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI) is a 501(c)(3) owned by 24 private academic institutions. PALNI shares systems and knowledge in many areas, including scholarly communication-focused programs for digital repositories, library publishing, and affordable learning. Its model of deep collaboration pools resources and leverages expertise to expand services available to supported institutions, while containing costs. Through the “Power of PALNI,” each school benefits from reducing the

<https://doi.org/10.22488/okstate.25.000011>

# Thank you!

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Inside Higher Ed reports:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/student-success/health-wellness/2024/08/26/college-students-avoid-courses-high-textbook-costs>

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2024/02/16/report-textbook-affordability-top-faculty-concern#>

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# Contact

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