

# A Higher Education Reimagined: How to Ensure Affordable Learning Solutions for All Students



It's no surprise that college students struggle to afford college tuition and course materials. How then, does the post-pandemic landscape affect this historic higher ed problem?

With college costs rising, and economic fallout leaving millions without jobs, college students are put at a significant disadvantage that has forced many to unenroll. In a recent **Princeton Review survey**, more than 10,000 high school students shared their biggest college admission and financial aid concerns. A resounding 69% of survey respondents estimated that their college costs will be more than \$75,000. And within that survey cohort, 45% estimated college costs will exceed \$100,000. This report ultimately conveys the uncertainty of college admission during the pandemic, highlighting major anxieties around remote learning and affordability. In fact, 20% of students worry that family income will affect their admission into college.



However, affordability concerns are not always assuaged once students are accepted into college. In reality, the cost of higher education not only includes tuition and room and board, but also the high cost of required course materials.

There is pervasive **evidence** that the cost of course materials has a significant impact on student behavior, which in turn, affects their success in learning, retention, and on-time graduation. Additionally, research published by the **Florida Virtual Campus** has found that 43% of students surveyed now take fewer courses per semester and 23% of students reported they dropped a course because of the cost of required textbooks.

## Ultimately, to address such barriers to learning, many institutions look to deliver equitable and accessible learning experiences.

One of the surest ways institutions can provide a frictionless pathway for their students to access an education is through the implementation of an **Affordable Learning Solutions** plan. Affordable Learning Solutions (AL\$) is an institutional strategy for reducing the cost of course materials for students while providing faculty greater choice in quality educational content.



### What Does An Affordable Learning Solutions Plan Look Like?

As students are often burdened with the **challenges of paying for rent**, tuition and course materials, it is critical that AL\$ are structured in such a way that systematically addresses these obstacles.

Successful AL\$ on the institutional level is twofold. First, institutions must ensure the affordable solutions are available and effective for all students and second, that the initiatives centralize the needs of faculty.



### How to Ensure Affordable Learning Solutions for All Students

Providing equal access to required course materials is one way to ensure student economic and academic success. For example, many faculty have been able to offer an affordable courseware solution through OER+ courseware solutions designed to utilize high-quality OER content and customize it around the curriculum. Such courseware provides:

- Customization to meet various learning needs
- Contextualized content for complete student understanding
- Complete access to required learning materials

“To achieve a learning solution, you need the content, but you also need the various assessments, assignments—and having it [available] in multimedia enables you to pursue a universal design for learning strategy because our students have many different skills and capabilities. Providing multiple formats really can help create learning solutions for your students.”

— **Gerry Hanley, Ph.D.**

*Executive Director, MERLOT & SkillsCommons,  
Chief Academic Officer, Partner in Publishing*



### Focus on Faculty Needs

The second priority in any successful affordable learning initiative is making sure the needs of faculty are met. Furthermore, one of the benefits to an Affordable Learning Solutions plan is its capability to provide faculty a greater choice in quality educational content.

Affordable solutions allow faculty to repurpose, customize and redistribute OER to students in a highly efficient way.



### Adopt XanEdu FlexEd

**XanEdu FlexEd** is a powerful courseware tool that improves affordability for students and enables faculty to design and produce educational content that aligns with the needs of students and curriculum.

FlexEd is used by thousands of students across colleges and universities. All courseware is editable for your needs and can be used with, or in place of, a traditional textbook – at a substantially lower cost – supporting affordability initiatives while improving engagement and student performance.

Through a strategic partnership with XanEdu, many faculty have successfully implemented AL\$ within their institutions.

“[Our] faculty loves the XanEdu [FlexEd] platform because it’s easy to edit...all the faculty resources are there, [including] test banks, quizzes, and interactive case studies.”

— **Jessica Dwork**

*Service-Learning Faculty Liaison,  
Phoenix College,  
A Maricopa Community College*

Let us help you deliver a quality, low-cost solution that will engage your students.  
To learn more visit [xanedu.com/flexed](https://xanedu.com/flexed)