

# Highlighting Inclusive Access executive summary from pilot to full-scale implementation at San Jacinto College

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Key Findings

- Tasked with putting San Jacinto College's mission of providing equity for all students into action, the Open Books Plus program is helping students minimize their college costs.
- Successful implementation of the program is the result of multiple departments working as partners, all with distinct responsibilities that are coordinated, but not duplicated, at any stage.
- In Spring 2019, 49 sections were offered with Inclusive Access; by Summer 2019, the number increased to 129 sections, and in Fall 2019, San Jacinto expects more than 750 sections, exhibiting growth of over 1300% in just two semesters.

### Summary

The successful implementation of Pearson Inclusive Access at San Jacinto College began with top-down support and dedicated individuals in multiple departments working collectively to create a cohesive program with the goal of helping students save money on their course materials. Each team had defined roles that adapted as the program evolved and expanded. Beginning with a small pilot allowed those responsible to manage the details and identify potential barriers and complications early. As the program matured, communication between the teams was critical, enabling problem resolution across departments as they scaled the program to include hundreds of instructors and thousands of students. Tasked with putting San Jacinto College's mission of providing equity for all students into action, the Open Books Plus program is helping students minimize their college costs. An ongoing campaign about the program's goal keeps the importance front of mind for all faculty.

### Setting

- Locale: large, suburban, public, two-year college with four campuses located southeast of Houston
- Enrollment system-wide: more than 32,000 students
- Gender: 58.5% female, 41.5% male
- Ethnicity: 59.5% Hispanic, 21.7% Caucasian, 9.9% African American, 5.7% Asian, 3.2% Other

### Challenges & Goals

A core tenet of the mission and vision at San Jacinto College is to provide equity for all students, offering everyone an equal opportunity for success. This requires an understanding of all challenges and barriers students face in order to provide support and assistance to help overcome these obstacles. College costs are increasing, often creating difficult financial decisions for students. Leadership at San Jacinto College proactively sought solutions to eliminate the various economic barriers students face, and by 2017 had been encouraging faculty to consider alternative textbook and other course material options in order to lower these out-of-pocket student costs. By the Summer of 2018, San Jacinto College already had a program in place called [Open Books](#) to promote [Open Educational Resources](#) (OER); Pearson Inclusive Access offered instructors unable to find appropriate OER course materials another level of choice while still offering significant cost savings to students.

## Implementation

Hilda Boyce, Director, Auxiliary Services, learned about the Inclusive Access model during bookstore contract renewal conversations with Barnes & Noble in Summer 2018. At the same time, Niki Whiteside, Vice President, Educational Technology, attended a presentation by another in-state community college about the success of their Inclusive Access program. Jointly, Boyce and Whiteside approached both the San Jacinto College Deputy Chancellor and College President and the Vice Chancellor of Fiscal Affairs with the idea to pilot Inclusive Access as a cost savings program for course materials starting in Spring 2019. At that meeting, they were tasked with presenting the idea to the Board of Trustees in August 2018. Boyce said, *“Leadership at San Jacinto College was quick to act when they understood the savings that could be offered to students through this program. With their support and approval, we were given the charge to find ways to make it happen.”* With this approval to move forward, Boyce and Whiteside quickly identified other departments at San Jacinto College whose assistance would be necessary for a successful implementation.

*“Leadership at San Jacinto College was quick to act when they understood the savings that could be offered to students through this program.”*

—Hilda Boyce, Director, Auxiliary Services, San Jacinto College

As part of a broader campus program to lower course material costs, it was determined that for a course to be included in the Inclusive Access pilot, the digital course materials (eText, MyLab, Mastering) must be either less than \$100 or offer savings greater than 45% off the original price. It was also determined that working with just one publisher during the pilot would minimize potential problems, creating an environment of success on which they could build. The Inclusive Access pilot was branded at San Jacinto College as Open Books Plus, and 49 sections were offered in Spring 2019. By Summer 2019, the number increased to 129 sections. In Fall 2019, the college expects more than 750 sections in Open Books Plus, exhibiting growth of over 1300% in just two semesters.

Because the pilot was small, not all potential problems were identified during this early test of the program. Boyce cautions that as the program matures, previously unexplored details have emerged, and growing pains are unavoidable. The key is to maintain relationships across all involved teams so that unexpected issues are prioritized and solutions are researched and implemented promptly. Successful implementation of Open Books Plus is the result of multiple departments working as partners, all with distinct responsibilities that are coordinated, but not duplicated, at any stage.

The Open Books Plus initiative includes the involvement of the following departments:

<b>AUXILIARY SERVICES</b>	<b>EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY</b>	<b>FISCAL AFFAIRS</b>	<b>MARKETING &amp; PUBLIC RELATIONS</b>	<b>ON-CAMPUS BOOKSTORE</b>
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<b>AUXILIARY SERVICES</b>
Key responsibilities of Hilda Boyce, Director, Auxiliary Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research how Inclusive Access was successfully implemented at other institutions</li> <li>• Set up processes and procedures to initiate the Spring 2019 pilot</li> <li>• Coordinate roles of other internal partners/departments involved in program</li> <li>• Communicate with bookstore and publisher</li> </ul>

As part of her research into the Inclusive Access program, Boyce worked with her on-campus bookstore partner to learn how other schools were successfully implementing the program and created a list of criteria she felt would be necessary to pilot the program in Spring 2019. Decisions to be made included courses for inclusion, pricing, opt-in/opt-out guidelines, the course withdrawal/drop process, and procedures for refunds, with resolution processes labelled and constructed.

Boyce communicated with the internal departments whose involvement was necessary for implementation and shared with each a description of the program, rationale for the initiative, and their expected role in the process. Her role in managing the various internal participants allows her to maintain a top-down view of processes in place as well as the ability to adapt quickly to any necessary changes or improvements.

Boyce also worked closely with Mo Leghari, the Barnes & Noble bookstore manager, to automate the course information that is used to describe which classes are offered in Open Books Plus. Boyce and Leghari continue to work together as the program expands to include new courses with multiple publishers.

Additionally, Boyce communicates with publishers to ensure they understand the parameters that must be met in order for a course to be part of Open Books Plus. Her close partnership with publisher reps ensures that pricing and ISBN information is accurate, leading to decisions about the possible inclusion of courses.

Auxiliary Services continues to be a resource for Open Books Plus and trouble shoots issues as they arise, implementing and training on best practices to avoid any complications from reoccurring.

#### **EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY**

Key responsibilities of Niki Whiteside, Vice President, Educational Technology:

- Recruit and train faculty to participate in the Spring 2019 pilot and beyond
- Coordinate communications regarding program processes and responsibilities of all involved parties
- Develop process to adopt Inclusive Access materials in conjunction with other departments

After receiving approval for the Spring 2019 pilot, Whiteside worked with one publisher to keep the pilot manageable. For her initial outreach, she identified courses where the course materials met the pricing benchmark for inclusion in Open Books Plus, then began prospecting faculty for participation. During their August 2018 faculty in-service day, full-time instructors teaching these specific courses were invited to a private luncheon, funded by the Deputy Chancellor and President, where Open Books Plus was described and questions were answered. As instructors committed to the program, Whiteside communicated with both faculty and the bookstore throughout the Fall to solidify plans and develop options for training prior to classes in January.

Instructional design teams were set up in computer labs in early January to train participating instructors on accessing their course materials and introducing students to the new model, including suggested language for use in syllabi. Additionally, Barnes & Noble provided faculty with a brief user's manual promoting steps toward a positive experience, and the college's Educational Technology team created a companion quick start guide to support faculty through the process.

During the Spring semester, Whiteside began recruiting for the Summer session. She invited other publishers to participate, and with a significantly expanded list of potential courses, personally approached deans, department chairs, and faculty teaching those courses to explain the program and solicit their participation. Whiteside also conducted targeted presentations during faculty assemblies and department meetings. As the

size of the program expanded for Summer classes, support from more instructional designers was necessary, and additional labs were opened to accommodate the quickly growing number of participating faculty. With several hundred faculty participating in Open Books Plus for Fall 2019, continuous communication is critical.

To ensure that instructors are ready and confident, the following plans have been put in place by Whiteside's team:

- Email from the Provost to faculty outlining the cost savings of Open Books Plus initiative for students
- Division deans invited to a meeting to learn about the initiative and how they can encourage faculty participation
- Department chairs contacted to share details of Open Books Plus with their part-time instructors
- Labs open prior to the beginning of classes for faculty training and Q&A
- Open Books Plus flyer included in all faculty in-service packets
- "Three Things to Know" email sent to all participating faculty with tips for a successful start
- Targeted emails sent to faculty teaching the courses offered through Open Books Plus with additional information, reminders, and recommendations
- Open Books Plus website created with just-in-time training and additional information

#### **FISCAL AFFAIRS**

Key responsibilities of Bill Dickerson, Director, Accounting and Financial Services:

- Ensure appropriate set up in the college student and accounting systems
- Partner with bookstore to develop the reporting requirements related to billing
- Communicate with and manage third party payers

Because there were limited sections in the Spring 2019 pilot impacting a relatively small number of students, Dickerson created a charge detail code to be added to the specific courses in Open Books Plus so that the charge appeared as a separate line item on the student fee bill and was as recorded accurately in the college's accounting system. Initially, this was a seamless and simple way to test out the system for accuracy. Some limitations were identified: refunds and drops/schedule changes had to be addressed manually in the Banner system, and as the program grew, Dickerson identified the need to modify the payment structure. For Fall 2019 classes, a new tuition model will be implemented to eliminate all registration-related fees (lab fees, technology fees, distance learning fees, etc.), leaving the Open Books Plus fee as the only additional line item.

Dickerson also worked with the campus Barnes & Noble bookstore and student team to develop a reconciliation process for changes to student charges due to a variety of possible situations: cancelled courses, student withdraws within the appropriate refund period, students opting out of the program within the prescribed timeline, etc. In addition, Fiscal Affairs manages student account balances during the drop/add period.

Fiscal Affairs also maintains third party contracts that pay student tuition and fees, such as financial aid, employer tuition-assistance programs, and dual-credit high school programs. Because policies and payments vary among the many different programs, it was necessary to identify a process to ensure the charge is included initially in the third-party agreement.

Before implementation of the Spring 2019 pilot, Fiscal Affairs was responsible for identifying potential barriers to success and creating solutions. As the program grew quickly, it was necessary to automate the process for

tasks accomplished manually during the pilot, such as refunds and drop/add dates used for billing. Partnering with Information Technology to modify current processes proved critical to quickly resolving these issues.

### MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Key responsibilities of Janet Cowey, Director of Marketing and Andrea Vasquez, Senior Communications Coordinator:

- Create the Open Books Plus program brand (in conjunction with Auxiliary Services and Educational Technology)
- Develop and implement Open Books Plus marketing communications plan
- Design and distribute graphics and marketing collateral

Cowey and Vasquez participated in initial pilot program discussions about the official college-wide launch dates to prepare the timing and scope of their marketing messaging and collateral. The brand, Open Books Plus, was a natural extension of the current Open Books program, as it continued the cost-saving theme for course materials. The marketing team standardized language and centered all social media, student email, print postcards, and news release messaging around textbook cost savings for students. The marketing plan consists of the following:

- [Open Books program webpage](#) including program details, cost-saving benefits, and how to search for Open Books Plus courses in the college's CourseFinder, a class scheduling tool for students
- [Animation video](#) for the Open Books Plus webpage, also shared on the college's social media channels
- Campus-wide LCD information screens [advertising the program](#)
- [Postcards](#) listing courses in the program handed out at campus events
- Faculty and student testimonials shared at in-service and college community week meetings

Social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, are used as a quick introduction to or reminder of the program, while the official website includes more detailed information. In addition to print and electronic messaging, the admissions department and advising counselors are trained and provided with materials to explain the program to students during introduction sessions and registration, describing how to identify and choose courses in the Open Books Plus program.

### ON-CAMPUS BOOKSTORE

Key responsibilities of Mo Leghari, General Manager, Barnes & Noble bookstore:

- Act as liaison to faculty and students
- Communicate with publisher for information and pricing accuracy
- Upload the course fee/course information to the school's Student Information System
- Share program information with the Barnes & Noble home office

Working directly with faculty teaching courses using Open Books Plus materials, Leghari is responsible for collecting and confirming adoption information from participating instructors. To ensure a smooth implementation of the process, he manages student questions and requests regarding courses in the program, continually educating them about the Open Books Plus goal of minimizing the cost of course materials. He uses shelf tags in the physical store to identify courses and further promote the program. His role with each publisher involves the verification of pricing, title, and ISBN information, while working to identify other potential courses that fit the Open Books Plus pricing criteria.