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Local College Pioneers \$5 Textbook Program, Saving Students over \$65,000 in First Year

PALM DESERT, CA (October 9, 2024) – The costs of textbooks, transportation and housing often create significant barriers to higher education for underserved members of the community. Through generous donations made to the College of the Desert Foundation by COD Friends of the Library, the Lisa Wendel Memorial Foundation, H.N. and Frances C Berger Foundation, Fogelson Foundation, College of the Desert has been able to begin to alleviate the burden of the cost of textbooks through the \$5 Textbook Rental program. In its first semester, the program was able to save students \$65,798 in textbook fees.

Through this program, students can rent select textbooks for \$5 for the semester. For some academic programs, required course material can cost several hundreds of dollars. Such fees demand many students choose between their basic needs or their class books.

“When I conducted my listening tour in 2023, the peripheral costs of college became a reoccurring theme,” said Interim Superintendent/President Laura Hope. “It became clear that one of the things the community wanted to see more of was help for basic needs. The \$5 Textbook program became a very tangible way for us to meet one of those needs.”

College of the Desert has made great strides in making higher education more accessible to more people through a variety of programs. Roadrunner Express, for example, provides students with free transportation between COD’s campuses. This transportation service was introduced around the same time as \$5 Textbooks. Haul Pass, a partnership with Sunline Transit Agency, provides students with free, unlimited transportation along their routes. The pLEDGE program gives local high school graduates two years of free college and connects them with wrap-around services through EDGE.

“No students should ever have to make the heartbreaking choice between their education and essential needs like food or utilities,” said COD

Foundation Chair Diane Rubin. "\$5 textbook rentals are one more way we can ease students' financial burdens and make their education and careers more achievable. It's not the end of the battle, but it's a good step forward."

In addition to \$5 textbook rentals, COD faculty are committed to considering their students when making decisions regarding their required course material. When possible, they choose more affordable options for their textbooks.

To learn more about the \$5 Textbook program, please visit www.collegeofthedesert.edu/students/textbook-rental.php

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