

COVID response: Departmental workflows between Collection Development and Scholarly Communications

Justin M. White, Scholarly Communications Librarian –
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

2018: Starting a Textbook Affordability Purchasing Program

Library purchased unlimited concurrent user licenses for required course text. Reached out to faculty to ask if they wanted the library to make the purchase so they could add the book link to their syllabus.

Created an etextbook specific fund: TXBAF

Issues with textbook purchasing before COVID

The library collection development policy was focused on single license ebooks, and no consideration for required course textbooks was made. There were several ebook vendors we had not created purchasing contracts with which limited our purchasing options.

Push for more video collections to support courses also impacted ebook selection issues, prompting the library to pursue more contracts.

COVID-19 hits

We didn't know where faculty demand would come from. OER? Would they rely on temporarily free programs? Spring was actually quiet. Once Summer started, we received waves of requests through Course Reserves, something I hadn't expected.

Since we were not circulating physical books, we used the TXBAF fund to turn these requests into unlimited license ebooks.

The new workflow

Since Collection Dev. and ScholComm had been working together on TXBAF, we came up with a new workflow. A new materials request form was created, with options for required materials. Requests marked this way would go to ScholComm for ordering, in case the books were not available we could suggest OER or other materials.

All requests flagged in the new form as required course materials went into a textbook affordability workflow and will continue to do so.