



STUDENT WATCH 2025

Trends and Highlights



THANK YOU!

2025 PARTICIPANTS

27 two- and four-year campuses in the U.S.

2 Canadian institutions

12,400+ responses

Fielding ended in March 2025

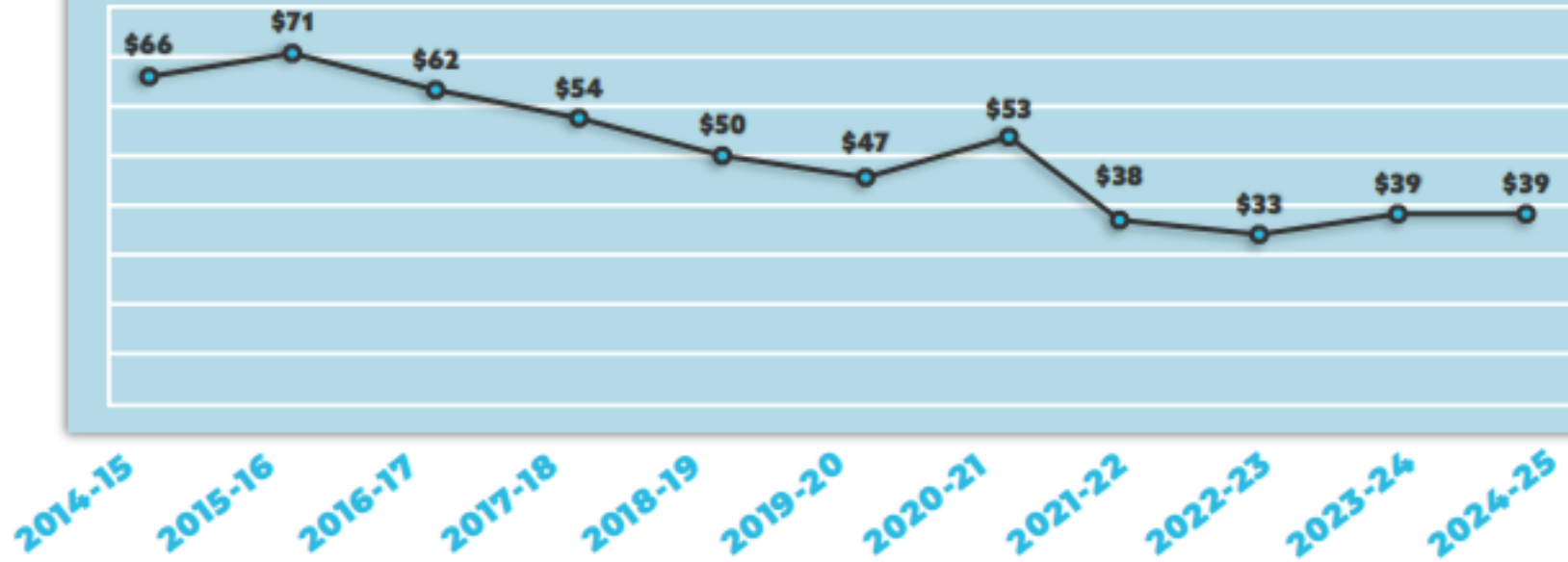
COURSE MATERIAL SPENDING

Students spent **\$341** on average on required course materials for the 2024-25 academic year

U.S. COURSE MATERIAL SPENDING



SPENDING PER COURSE



VARIATIONS IN SPENDING

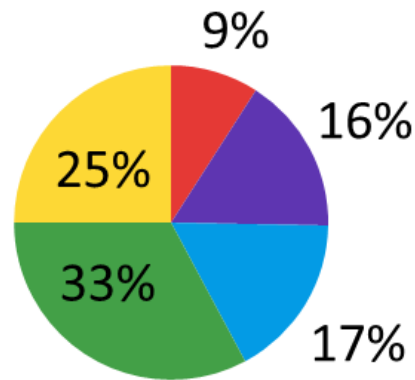
Location: Low of \$227, on average, for students in the Northeast to a high of \$356 in the West

Major: Those with the highest spending included business, politics and law, and the health professions and clinical sciences

Public or Private: Students attending public schools spent \$80 more on average than their private school counterparts

HOW DO STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT COST?

- March 2025 Student Panel
- 44% said they paid *more* for course materials than what they felt was reasonable last term
- **On average, students felt \$66 was the maximum reasonable cost for a textbook**



- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

I HAVE ENOUGH RESOURCES TO COVER THE COST OF MY
COURSE MATERIALS

WHAT ABOUT TECHNOLOGY?

Tech spending
only \$167 (just like
last year), down
from \$629 two
years ago

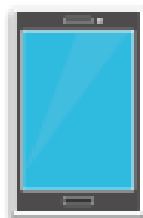
Far fewer students
buying tech for
classes

TECHNOLOGY USED IN COURSES BY STUDENTS



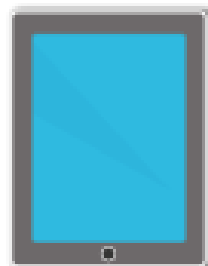
96%

**Laptop or
desktop
computer**



43%

Smartphone



30%

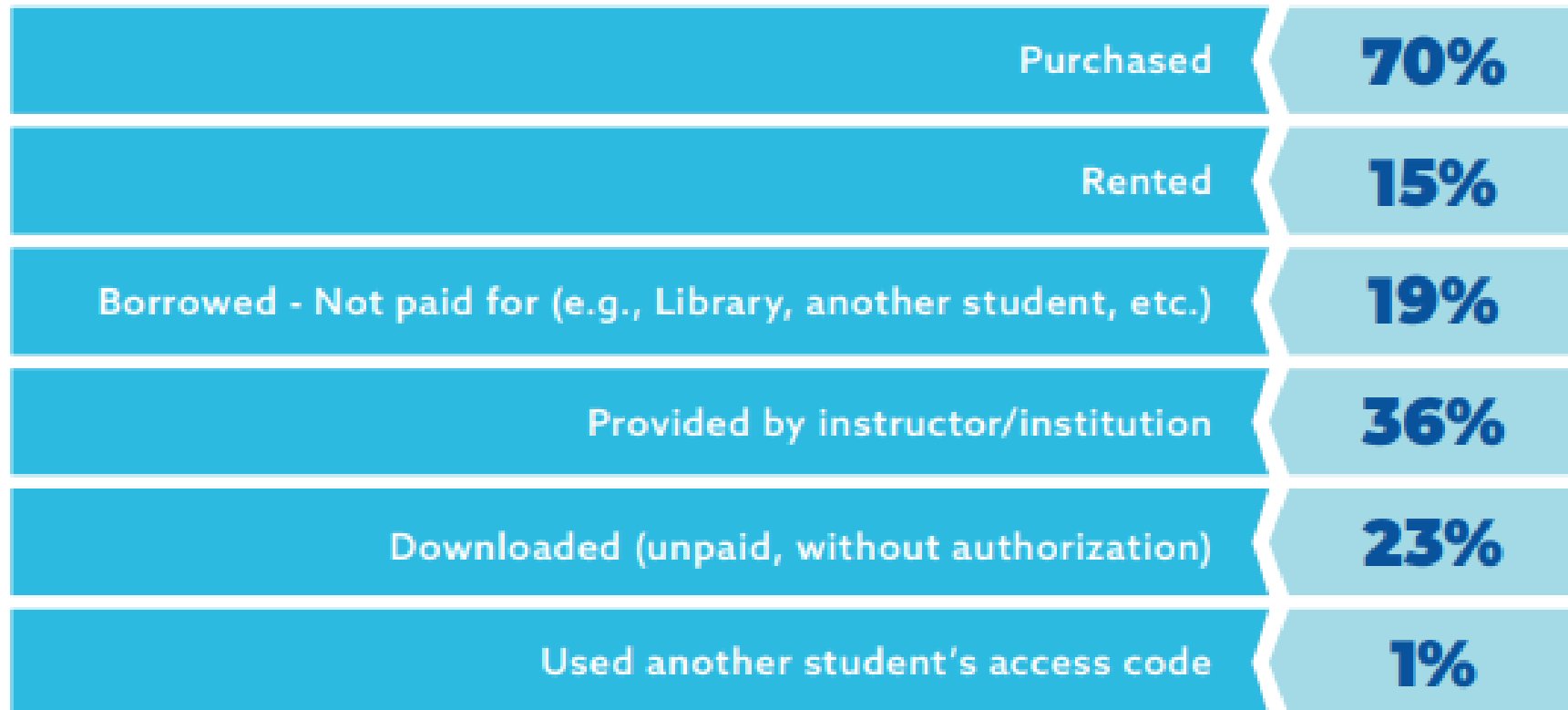
Tablet



1%

**None of
the above**

SPRING 2025 METHODS OF OBTAINING MATERIALS



WHERE DO STUDENTS OBTAIN COURSE MATERIALS?

Of students who bought materials, 41% purchased online from the college store, 34% from the campus store's physical locations

51% of course materials were purchased from campus stores as well as 51% of rentals

PERCENT OF STUDENTS OBTAINING FROM EACH SOURCE	PURCHASE
Official campus store (in-store)	34%
Official campus store (online)	41%
Official campus store COMBINED	65%
Amazon	33%
Chegg.com	3%
Publisher website (e.g., Cengage, Pearson, McGraw Hill, Wiley)	26%
From a peer/student	6%
Other sources (websites, stores, etc.)	22%

WHAT ABOUT RENTALS?

More than half of students (58%) who rented materials did so through the campus store

About the same percentage of students rented through the campus store in-person than online

21% of students who rented did so from a publisher

Amazon is now the third leading source (20%), decrease from 22% last year



PREFERENCE

STUDENTS PREFER DIGITAL TO PRINT



- Print preference = 33%
- Digital preference = 37%
- Older students (30+), first generation students had stronger print preference
- Racial and ethnic minorities more likely to prefer digital

DO ONLINE STUDENTS PREFER DIGITAL?

- Print and digital preferences very similar for online and in-person learners
- 37% of in-person students prefer digital compared to 39% of online students
- 36% of mixed-mode students prefer digital



SUSTAINABILITY



- 28% of students would like more focus on the topic of **sustainability** and **climate change** in their course materials.
- More than a third (38%) would like to see more sustainably produced print materials.

DON'T HAVE MY PREFERRED FORMAT? (CAMPUS STORE)

- 24% said they would just purchase whichever format the store had available
- More than half (55%) stated they would seek their preferred format elsewhere—if it cost less
- 8% of students were willing to pay more to buy their preferred format elsewhere
- 13% of students stated they would skip buying a material altogether

DON'T HAVE MY PREFERRED FORMAT? (ACCESS PROGRAMS)

- 50% said they wouldn't do anything
- 16% percent said they would stay in the access program but purchase their preferred format elsewhere
- 29% said they would opt-out of the access program and purchase their preferred format elsewhere
- 5% said they would both opt-out of the access program and skip buying the material entirely

NOT OBTAINING MATERIALS

1 in 4 students skip obtaining at least one course material

Students who skip obtaining a course material **spend \$30 less** on average than those who obtain all their materials

Students who skipped materials were more likely to consider dropping out, had lower GPAs



REASONS STUDENTS SKIPPED OBTAINING REQUIRED MATERIALS



PIRATING MATERIALS

- Phrased as “internet download (unpaid, without proper permission or authorization)”
- 23% of students
- These students spent \$88 less, on average, on course materials



HOW STUDENTS PAID FOR MATERIALS



STUDENTS WORRY OVER DEBT

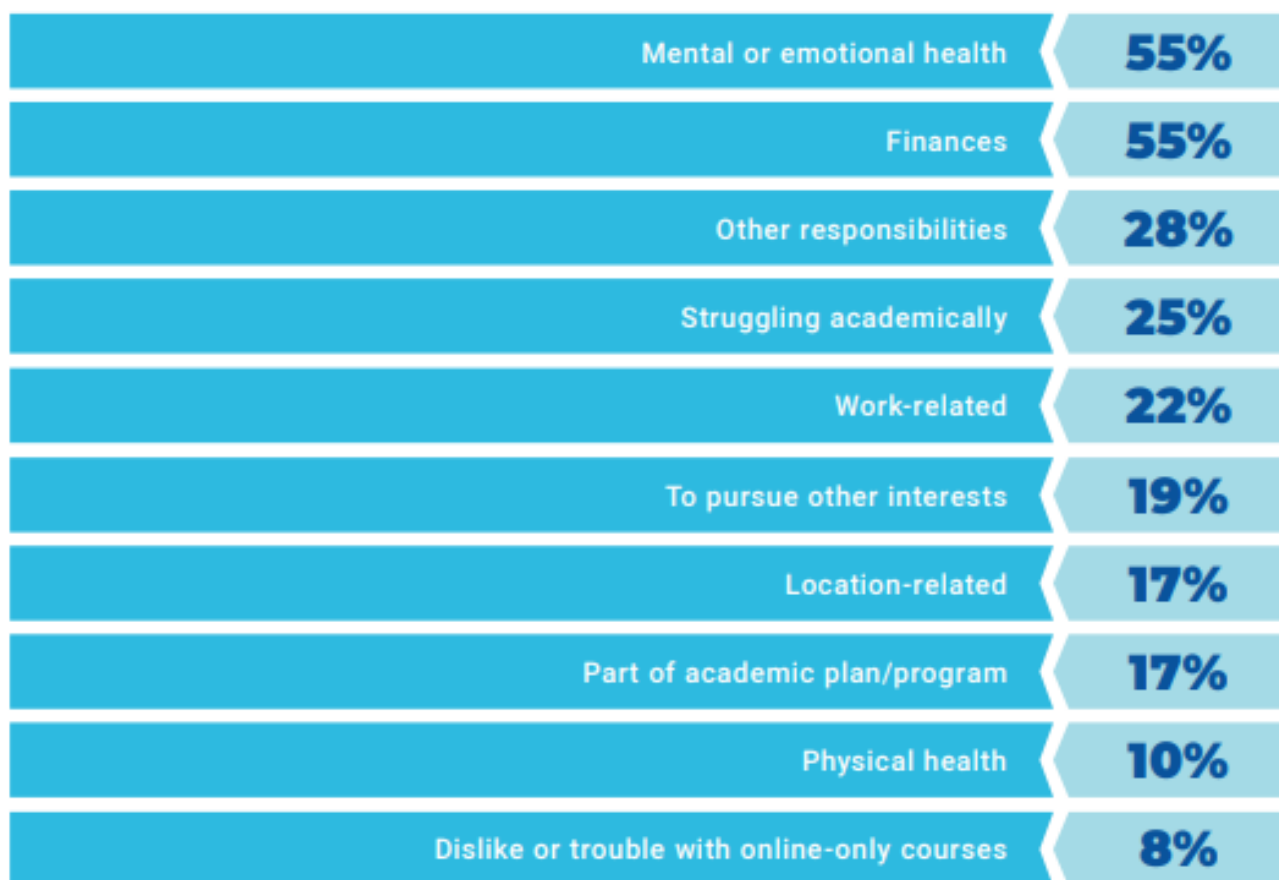
- 36% of students have loans
- Of these, 31% said they were **extremely concerned** about their ability to pay off student loan debt and 20% were **very concerned**
- More concern among first generation students and racial/ethnic minorities

ESTIMATED DEBT LOAD

- Two-year students expect an average debt load between \$10K and \$19K
- Four-year students expect \$20K to \$30K
- **Only 19%** of students with loans believe their debt will be forgiven at or after graduation



WHY STUDENTS CONSIDER DROPPING OUT OR CHANGING SCHOOLS





Students may not understand what OER refers to or what counts as OER



Students may not realize what they are using is OER



We ask students about “free” or “non-paid” materials as an alternative

OER MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES

FREE OR NON-PAID MATERIALS USED



WHAT ABOUT AI?

- 23% of students said they use AI tools once a week or more.
- Most common uses:
 - researching/learning about topics (65%)
 - generating ideas (64%)
 - editing or proofreading (50%).
- About 18% of students who used AI said their professors had incorporated AI into assignments.

Extremely dissatisfied
4%

Somewhat dissatisfied
12%

Neutral
28%

Somewhat satisfied
42%

Extremely satisfied
15%

DAY-ONE ACCESS
PROGRAM
SATISFACTION

WHAT DO STUDENTS LIKE MOST?

1. Convenience of not having to shop for materials
2. Had materials first day of class
3. Knowing I'd have all of the materials and correct editions
4. Materials cost less
5. Preferred the digital format of materials



GRIPES

1. Materials were not cheaper through the program
2. Prefer print/don't like digital materials
3. Felt like it removed choice or limited options
4. Material wasn't necessary
5. Difficult to opt out or didn't know I could opt out



OPT-OUTS

Students who opted-out of access programs were more likely to say they obtained their materials through **borrowing, being provided materials by the instructor, or pirating content**



FIXED-FEE PROGRAMS

59% satisfied with the program

20% dissatisfied

21% 'meh'

1. Convenience of not having to shop for materials
2. Knowing I'd have all the materials & correct editions
3. Had all materials first day of class
4. Total cost of materials was less
5. Predictable cost of materials

WHAT DO FIXED-FEE STUDENTS LIKE MOST?

The background of the slide is a dark, textured surface covered with numerous question marks. Some question marks are in a light beige color, while others are in a dark grey color. They are scattered across the entire background, creating a sense of depth and focus on the central text.

QUESTIONS?