FRESNO STATE SAVES BIG
WITH SUCCESSFUL INCLUSIVE ACCESS PILOT

TOTAL ENROLLMENT	STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM	LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
24,405	PEOPLESOFT	BLACKBOARD

Fresno State's Kennel Bookstore was facing a dilemma: How could they tackle affordability when their sell-through rates were low? When students avoid buying course materials, it not only affects their grades, it also affects the campus store's ability to work with publishers to offer low-cost materials. But when prices are high, students are hesitant to purchase materials until they're sure they need them for a course—even though they know this decision could have a negative impact on their grades. It's a vicious cycle that hurts both students and stores.

The answer to Fresno State's problem was Inclusive Access, which benefits students, stores, instructors, and publishers. The program offers students day-one access to their course materials with the option to opt-out. Universities see the benefits of Inclusive Access, too. With day-one access to course materials, students are more likely to succeed in their classes and therefore graduate—which helps increase retention rates. It's a win-win.

INCLUDING KEY PLAYERS FROM THE START
When Dusty Guthiér, the Course Materials Manager at Kennel Bookstore, wanted to bring Inclusive Access to his campus, he knew he would need to get all stakeholders involved for the program to succeed. He determined who needed to be involved and held a meeting including all the key players, from the provost and student affairs team to campus IT and financial aid. He also knew that with each step, he would have to keep everyone in the loop to ensure a smooth rollout of the program. "It was not our goal to get up and running as fast as we could, but to launch the program in a manner that was well thought out with all the key players involved," he said. "The last thing we wanted was for the program to fall flat because we rushed into the process without fully vetting it."

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>
> - Dr. Nicole Smith, Assistant Professor

The team then identified courses they thought would be good candidates for the pilot, working closely with publishers to secure student savings on all required course materials. These courses also needed to have an adaptive learning platform with online homework tied to the eBook, ensuring that both educators and students would need to use the platform as part of the course. The team focused on finding the right courses with adaptive learning that would offer significant savings to students. After narrowing it down to nine courses, they were finally ready to begin.

SMALL START, BIG RESULTS
The pilot kicked off with just 4,161 students split over two semesters, which kept the process manageable for all who were involved. IT staff were able to fix bugs

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without being overloaded, professors were given clear instructions for connecting the course with their LMS, and students received communications that covered everything from the opt-out process to how financial aid would tie in. Fresno State chose to use Verba Connect, the industry-leading Inclusive Access management application with tools that allowed the university to cover every aspect of the process—including billing. When it came time to charge students, Verba Connect helped the university know exactly which student accounts to bill and how much to charge.

During the pilot, the opt-out rate was only about 1% across all students, meaning that a total of 4,109 students benefited from lower prices and day-one access to learning materials. The best part? Fresno State saved students about $250,000 over the two semesters of the pilot. But it's not just students who benefit from Inclusive Access according to Dennis Nef, the university's Vice Provost, Accreditation Liaison Officer, and Senior Academic Technology Officer. He says, "Being able to provide students with instructional materials on day one is a benefit to faculty, who can immediately incorporate those materials into instruction."

BRINGING INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO MORE STUDENTS

What can other bookstores do to get started with the process of bringing Inclusive Access to their campus? According to Guthiér, laying the groundwork is key. Establishing relationships with stakeholders eases the way to putting a plan into place. Meeting with faculty, talking to core groups who will be involved, and setting clear goals for the program are all crucial for getting others on board. Dr. Bryan Berrett, the university's Director of the Center for Faculty Excellence, agrees. He says, "Our IA program at Fresno State has been

a success due to the efforts of our Kennel Bookstore team that brought together all of the campus stakeholders and outlined the potential impact. By having everyone in the room, potential challenges were identified from multiple vantage points. The real impact is on the students, who now have access to course content immediately and at a fraction of the previous cost."

Fresno State hopes to further their Inclusive Access program with the help of automation. In fact, there are over 50 courses that now want to enroll, as professors see how impactful the program can be. Assistant Professor Dr. Nicole Smith says, "The IA program enhances teaching and learning because every student has immediate access on day one. This allows teachers to begin instruction without delay and allows students an opportunity to get started without the stress of figuring out how they are going to navigate without the class resources. 100% of my students have opted in to the program, and I do think their literacy and fluency in the subject matter content is improving."