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**ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON STUDENT FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE**



**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
ASKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO STUDY COLLEGE TEXTBOOK COSTS**

Washington, D.C.— In a bipartisan letter from Congressman David Wu (D-OR) and House Committee on Education and the Workforce Chairman Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (R-CA), the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (Advisory Committee) has been asked to conduct a one-year study of the cost of college textbooks and its impact on students, and to make recommendations on ways to make textbooks more affordable.

Advisory Committee chair Mr. Clare Cotton responded to the letter, “The Advisory Committee welcomes the opportunity to assist members of Congress in their efforts to make higher education more affordable by calling attention to this important issue. I am honored that Congressman Wu and Chairman McKeon have asked the Advisory Committee to investigate the nature of this financial barrier for students and make recommendations that could potentially help to increase access to college.”

As the letter states, a primary objective of this study will be to “continue to shed light on this issue so that consumers are aware” of the rising costs of textbooks. Recently, there has been growing attention paid to the issue of escalating college textbook prices and how they compound the overall financial barriers that hinder access to a college degree.

The letter cites recent news reports and a congressionally requested U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) study that detailed the significant increases in textbook prices over the last decade, which outpaced the rate of overall inflation. In response to these reports, the House of Representatives recently included in their Higher Education Act reauthorization bill, H.R. 609, a Sense of the House encouraging institutions, faculty, bookstores, and publishers to make efforts to reduce the cost of college textbooks for students.

In addition, the letter specifically requests that the Advisory Committee fulfill the following objectives in conducting the study:

- Investigate further the problem of rising textbook prices.
- Determine the impact of rising textbook prices on students’ ability to afford a postsecondary education.
- Make recommendations to Congress, the Secretary, and other stakeholders on what can be done to make textbooks more affordable.

“As we have done in the past, the Advisory Committee will work closely with members of the higher education community and with other stakeholders to examine the nature of the problem and its impact on students, and to develop policy solutions to help alleviate any financial burden resulting from increases in college textbook prices,” commented Ms. Judith Flink, Advisory Committee vice chairperson. The Advisory Committee will report back to the House Education and the Workforce Committee with its findings and recommendations by May 2007.

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An independent committee created by Congress to advise on higher education and student aid policy**