

University Co-op at The University of Texas at Austin

Expanding Student Access with Longhorn Textbook Access

Impact by the Numbers (Fall 2025)

24,986

students participating in LTA

2,141

course sections using LTA (1,972 sections added since launch)

62.6%

participation rate

\$2,526,235

total program value

\$7,059,263

total student savings since Spring 2021

Campus Snapshot

55,000 student enrollments

18,000

students receive course materials scholarships each year

The Vision: The University Co-op at The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) operates as an **independent, not-for-profit bookstore**. Originally founded in **1896** to address the rising cost of course materials for students, the Co-op today reinvests all profits and donations into course material scholarships to help Longhorn students afford academic materials.

Like many campus stores, it experienced a shift as students increasingly chose alternative course materials options. This highlighted the broader challenges students were facing, including high costs and delayed access.

Building on their commitment to affordability, the Co-op explored a Course Access (also known as Inclusive Access) model to support students while strengthening the bookstore’s role in course materials. This culminated in the launch of **Longhorn Textbook Access (LTA), which provides lower cost materials, first-day access, and a simpler way for students to obtain course content.**



“The Co-op has been around since 1896, and we are a not-for-profit. Every penny of profit and donations goes directly to course material scholarships for UT students.”

— Kate Mounger, VP of Marketing, University Co-op

The Journey: Since the University Co-op already used several VitalSource tools, continuing this partnership was a natural fit. Still, success required more than the right technology. As an independent entity, the Co-op needed strong relationships across campus, which took time, coordination, and collaboration.

One of the most important steps in moving the program forward was identifying a faculty champion. They played a critical role in introducing the concept of LTA on campus, partnering with university leadership to bring together stakeholders across departments, including IT, finance, and academic leadership.

LTA launched with a small pilot in Spring 2021. The pilot included **169 course sections**, anchored by one large freshman biology course, and the rollout was **highly successful.**



“For students, the goal was first-day access, lower pricing, and convenience.”

— Michael Kiely, Director of Course Materials, University Co-op

The Outcome: Today, **nearly 25,000 students benefit from LTA**, which is a testament to its strong momentum. With **2,141 course sections** now participating, LTA has expanded year after year.

Students demonstrate high engagement with **strong participation rates**, typically in the mid-to-high 80-percent range early in the term. As the University Co-op operates independently, it handles course materials charges separately from tuition and fees. This allows students flexibility and more time to opt out or complete payment, impacting final participation later in the term.

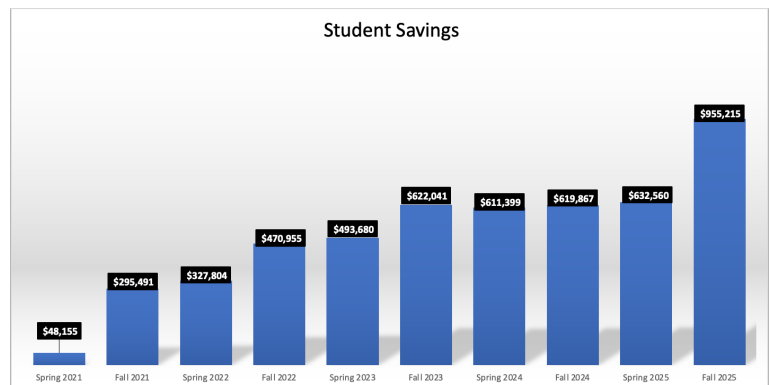
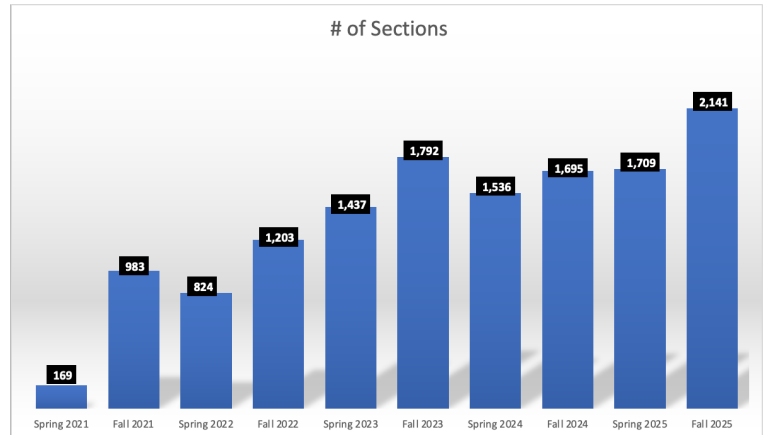


“Faculty who have been around for a while know it can take weeks to get materials to students. When we tell them they can have it tomorrow, they’re blown away.”
– Michael Kiely, Director of Course Materials, University Co-op

The Impact: The impacts of LTA are felt all across UT Austin. Students are prepared from the first day of the semester without waiting for materials to arrive. Beginning the semester fully prepared sets students up for academic success. UT Austin sees strong student success outcomes with four-year graduation rates approaching 75 percent and six-year rates are near 89 percent.

Instructors benefit from the program’s flexibility, allowing students to access materials as soon as the next day once the material is adopted.

LTA directly stretches the Co-op’s scholarship dollars further by lowering the cost of required materials for students. Since launching in 2021, the program has **generated more than \$955,000 in student savings**.



“Verba, now VitalSource, probably single-handedly saved the independent bookstore with their tools and their foresight.”
– Michael Kiely, Director of Course Materials, University Co-op

What’s Next: The team’s immediate focus is growing LTA by increasing awareness among instructors and strengthening communication with students. Looking ahead, the Co-op will explore ways to further improve affordability as conversations around LTA and similar models continue to evolve.



VitalSource + University of Texas at Austin
Supporting student success through partnerships that deliver first-day access to course materials.