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How the University of Dayton Delivers Affordable Course Materials with Choice Through Complete Digital Access (CDA)

Impact by the Numbers

$267,600
in student savings

$299.99
semester cost
per student

~7,100
students enrolled
in CDA

2,247
participating
course sections

99.7%
participation
since launch

78% - 80%
digital materials
adoption across
CDA courses

The Vision: The University of Dayton, the second-largest private university in Ohio, serves a growing student population through a campus store that is shaped by a long-standing, student-first approach to course materials and is focused on affordability, predictability, and access. In 2017, as textbook costs continued to rise, campus leaders recognized the need to reduce financial barriers and create a more consistent experience for students and families.

The campus store team took a deliberate, phased approach to expanding access by starting with Course Access (also known as Inclusive Access) and continuing to add flexibility as digital adoptions grew. Rather than disrupt faculty workflows or introduce new platforms, Dayton focused on improving affordability while preserving the tools students and instructors already used. The goal was straightforward: ensure every student has access to required materials from the first day of class while lowering overall costs.

As the program scaled, Dayton began to see the limits of Course Access. While it improved affordability and day one access, costs still varied from term to term and high-cost programs remained a challenge. Complete Digital Access (CDA), Dayton's Flexible Access program, became the natural next step, as it simplified and stabilized access at scale while preserving student choice and existing workflows.

> "As our Course Access program grew and feedback stayed positive, it made sense to look at the next step. With over 70 percent digital adoption, Flexible Access just fit."
> — **Kevin Poindexter, Course Materials Manager, University of Dayton**

The Journey: After launching Course Access in 2017, Dayton's program grew organically through peer conversations and targeted education. As more faculty learned that digital course materials were a cost-effective option and saw their impact in practice, adoption levels continued to rise. The campus store led the conversation by advocating for affordability and simpler access so students had what they needed from the first day of class. At the same time, in partnership with campus leadership, they tested new workflows, modeled pricing scenarios, and aligned campus stakeholders to support a smooth transition to CDA.

The Outcome: When CDA launched in Fall 2025, the transition was seamless for students and faculty. Participation was nearly universal at 99.7%, with only 22 students opting out and strong engagement across campus. Students benefited from immediate access to all required materials under a single flat rate, while faculty continued using the same platforms and tools. High-cost programs, such as Nursing and Art and Design, saw significant savings, with materials that previously exceeded $1,000 per student now bundled at $299.99 per student. For the campus store, CDA simplified distribution, improved service, and delivered clearer insight into how materials are actually used.

> "We knew it was the right model when we launched in the fall, and it was basically a non-event. It was embarrassingly smooth."
> — Julie Banks, Director of Retail Operations, University of Dayton

The Impact: CDA did more than reduce costs. It simplified day one access for students, strengthened collaboration across campus, and reaffirmed the store's role as a strategic partner in advancing student success.

> "The nursing bundle used to cost over $1,000. Now those students receive all of their materials for $299.99. The department chair called it a total game changer for recruitment."
> — Kevin Poindexter, Course Materials Manager, University of Dayton

> "It's nice to be the bookstore and be the hero. We don't always get those accolades, so the acceptance and appreciation have been really meaningful for our team."
> — Julie Banks, Director of Retail Operations, University of Dayton

What's Next: The University of Dayton is refining adoption guidelines, adjusting billing timing, exploring self-service options, and evaluating opportunities to extend CDA to additional programs and student populations.

VitalSource + University of Dayton
Simplifying access. Lowering costs. Supporting student success.

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