

## Florida college students getting more free textbooks online

By LINDSAY PETERSON | The Tampa Tribune

Students who struggle to pay for college often hit a second obstacle after classes start — having to shell out hundreds of dollars for textbooks they may never use again.

But soon their books may be available free, online. Some already are.

The University Press of Florida and its imprint Orange Grove Texts Plus have made 120 textbooks and scholarly papers available online for students to read or print at no charge.

The titles cover a wide range of scholarship, including "A Comprehensive Outline of World History," "Advanced Calculus," "The Age of Einstein," and "Modernization in Colombia." Go here to see more, <http://bit.ly/3koivO>.

State University System Chancellor Frank Brogan plans to outline the new program today at the Board of Governors meeting in Tampa.

"This entrepreneurial partnership is testing new waters in book publishing," he said in a news release. "I'm excited about the future possibilities this experiment could bring to how we manage textbook costs."

With only a few dozen books available, the project is in its early stages. But the University Press is working with authors of its 1,600 titles, which include Carl Hiaasen, to bring more works to the site.

Stephanie Williams of Orange Grove sees this as the beginning of a whole new way to publish. No longer will scholars have to depend on publishing companies to make their works widely available. They will be able to publish or revise their works instantly and have them produced on demand.

"This is not the end of the bound book by any means," Williams said. Writers will still seek the permanence of hard-copy publishing and many readers prefer books to digital works.

"But it's a good way to provide inexpensive and free textbooks to students, which could have a tremendous impact on their ability to get a college education," she said.

The way it works, users can go online to download and read the books they need. They can print parts or all of the books on their own. But they can also get a bound copy for about half the price of what the book would cost in stores.

Surveys show most students prefer bound books to digital copies, Williams said. So the University Press set up a partnership with Integrated Book Technology to produce and deliver paperback copies of its online books.

One of the books on the University Press list, "Images of the Woman Reader in Victorian British and American Fiction," by Catherine J. Golden, has a retail cost of \$59.95. But through

Integrated Book Technology, students could get a bound paperback copy for \$29.50.

They can get color copies for an extra charge of about \$10.

Orange Grove was set up by the Florida Distance Learning Consortium to serve as a repository of free instructional materials, including multimedia files. Since it was created, it has gathered more than 1,200 digital resources.

It was natural that Orange Grove partner with the University of Press of Florida in this venture, Williams said. The University Press supplies the materials, "and we provide the logistics."

For more information about the project, go to [www.upf.com](http://www.upf.com)