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**NACS Faculty Report: Pandemic Spurred Increased Use of Digital Course Materials**

*While Faculty Think Shift to Digital Formats and Online Classes May Be Long-Term, Faculty and Student Format Preferences Still Matter*

**OBERLIN, OHIO (Feb. 23, 2021)**—When higher education institutions were forced to shift to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many classes also switched to digital course materials in various formats, according to the Faculty Watch™: Attitudes and Behaviors toward Course Materials 2020 Report, the National Association of College Stores’ (NACS) annual survey of college and university faculty members. That switch may remain for a long while, faculty respondents indicated.

In addition, 55% of faculty reported their course structure had been affected either a lot or a great deal by changes related to the pandemic. About 65% said these changes negatively impacted the quality of education, with only 15% saying the changes had positively affected the quality of education students were receiving.

“Many faculty, 62%, reported the pandemic affected the format of materials in their course. High numbers also reported the pandemic impacted the level of rigor of their courses, the number of students in courses, and even the content covered in their courses,” said Brittany Conley, research analyst, NACS OnCampus Research. “Looking more at the course material side of things, 30% of faculty reported the pandemic affected how much course materials were used in their courses.”

Faculty Watch™ is developed by OnCampus Research™, the research arm of the National Association of College Stores. Other highlights from the report, which compiled responses from approximately 968 faculty members at 17 two- and four-year institutions in the U.S. and Canada, include:

* **Print usage declined.** Use of traditional print materials declined much quicker than it had in previous years. Print usage, despite the increase in remote learning, remained strong at 77% of faculty in 2020, however, that was down from 86% the year before and 88% the year before that. Among all formats, though, 24% of faculty still prefer to use traditional print materials and 20% prefer a print textbook with a digital component such as an access code. Similarly, the Student Watch™ 2020 Report showed 48% of students preferred some type of print course materials.
* **E-book usage increased.** E-book usage saw the largest year-over-year rise in usage of all measured formats. In 2020, 62% of faculty used e-books for their courses, up from 53% the previous year.
* **LMS usage increased.** The use of learning management systems (LMS) also rose this year with 84% of faculty using an LMS to provide course content to students. In 2020, faculty used an LMS more widely than traditional print materials, the first year this has occurred.
* **Inclusive access usage increased.** The percent of faculty who have used inclusive access has nearly doubled each year since the 2016-17 academic year. In 2020, 21% of faculty members had used inclusive access at least once before, up from 12% the year before. (Inclusive access programs enable students to access digital course materials by the first day of class at a reduced cost, usually through an optional fee or charge.)
* **Format changes aren’t temporary.** The majority of faculty (73%) believe more frequent use of technology or digital content will continue in higher education long-term. And 73% also reported they personally had been exposed to new technology or courseware this year that they plan to continue using for the long run.
* **Course changes also aren’t temporary.** The majority of faculty think some of the changes seen in 2020 will remain in higher education even after COVID-19 is no longer an issue. More than 70% of faculty believe more hybrid/HyFlex models (mixed online and in-person course structures) will continue long-term and more than half also believe more online-only courses will stick around.