

Mel Ferrari Bio and Background

Name: Melanie Felicia Ferrari

Born: January 3, 1989 in Brownsville, Texas

Hometown: Devine, Texas

High School: Devine High School Class of 2007

Expected College Graduation: May of 2012

Major: Mass Communication – Public Relations

Minor: Leadership Studies

Texas State Involvement

- Freshman Year
 - Falls Hall Council-President
 - Residence Hall Association Representative (Met Colter)
 - New Student Orientation Leader
 - PAWS Preview PAL (Peer Assistance Leader)
 - Falls Hall Homecoming Duchess- 07-08
 - Awarded RHA Outstanding Student Leader-07-08
 - Awarded Ms. RHA-07-08

- Sophomore Year
 - Residence Hall Association-Vice President
 - Executive advisor of RHA Quality of Life Committee.
 - Associated Student Government Supreme Court Justice
 - Associated Student Government RHA Advisor
 - New Student Orientation Leader
 - New Student Orientation Chair
 - Cat Camp Counselor- First Generation
 - PAWS Preview Co-Chair
 - Inducted into Student Foundation Fall 2008
 - Bobcat Pause Committee Member
 - Jackson Hall Homecoming Duchess-08-09
 - Awarded Texas's State Who's Who -08-09
 - Awarded National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) Conference Case Study "Best Problem Solver"- 08-09

- Junior Year
 - Residence Hall Association- President
 - Associated Student Government Senator
 - Associated Student Government Student Relations Chair

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- Student Foundation- Member
- Bobcat Pause Committee Member
- National Residence Hall Honorary
- PAWS Preview PAL (Peer Assistance Leader)
- San Marcos Branding Task Force member
- ASG Scholarship committee member
- Food Services committee member
- Parking and Transportation committee member
- Honor Code Council committee member
- New Student Orientation Planning committee member
- Awarded South Atlantic Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls (SWACURH) RHA President of the Year

Future Plans and Career Goals: After graduation I would like to pursue my Master's of Mass Communication with a focus in Strategic Communication. From there I would like enter work in Public Relations and Marketing for a major business/company. Eventually I would like to own my own Public Relations firm based in Texas. After working in PR I would like to return to working with students in student affairs. Eventually I plan to get my PhD in Higher Education.



Melanie Ferrari

Student Body President- Texas State University-San Marcos

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Submitted: 9/20/10

My name is Mel Ferrari, and I am the Student Body President of Texas State University-San Marcos. Representing over thirty thousand students I feel obligated to be here today and speak to you about the pulse of the students when it comes to the specific issue of textbooks, and give some recommendations. I would first like to say thank you for allowing me to testify on an issue that directly impacts me as a student.

Our Associated Student Government is working towards indentifying student needs. One issue that many students have approached us with is the cost of a higher education, and specifically the increasing cost of textbooks.

There are a myriad of reasons why textbooks are expensive, and the real work of reducing textbook costs will come from multiple avenues of reform. However, today I would like to speak about technology and the implications it holds for students in the digital generation.

Digital textbooks present an exciting alternative for students as the cost of traditional paper textbooks increases. However, we do not recommend that the legislature use digital e-books as the **only** solution to deal with textbook costs, which is the underlying issue. The issue for students is not accessibility and convenience; the issue is the cost of textbooks. In fact, students generally feel that digital textbooks are an inconvenience to read and less user friendly than paper textbooks. The reason being, digital textbooks on a screen are harsh on the eyes and don't allow for markings and highlighting that readers find so important to their comprehension. While we realize digital textbooks are generally cheaper than paper textbooks, this small reduction in cost does not outweigh the additional burdens of a digital textbook. We feel it is important to give students a choice between the two, but if this committee is looking to solve the textbook crisis, I assure you that digital textbooks are not the answer.

In order to provide quantifiable data on textbooks and how they affect students, our plan as a student government is to distribute a survey focused around textbooks; their costs and possible alternatives. We will compile the data from our campus, and then send the survey out to schools within TSA. We will be working with the Texas Student Association (TSA) to represent not only the interests of our university, but of those across the state of Texas. We have already been in contact with many student leaders around the state, and they are very interested in participating in this survey.

We will be using the results to establish policy goals and support those goals that take the burden of excessive costs off the students. I will be back with the results when the Senate is in session. I plan to testify on the results, and suggest specific policy changes that we garner from the results.

Students are deeply concerned about their higher education, rumored budget cuts of up to 15%, financial aid, and the rising cost of tuition and textbooks has resulted in an atmosphere in which students are pressured to choose between furthering their education, and deferring that education. Addressing the textbook issue is critical to alleviating that pressure.

Thank you very much for your time. I leave in hopes that some of what I said today will resonate, because it is the truth, and it is a burden to students.