TOPcast Episode 51: How Can We Make Textbooks More Affordable for Students?

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(upbeat music)

Kelvin Thompson: From the University of Central Florida’s Center for Distributed Learning, I’m Kelvin Thompson.

Tom Cavanagh: And I’m Tom Cavanagh.

Kelvin: And you are listening to TOPcast: the Teaching Online Podcast. Hey Tom.

Tom: Hey Kelvin. How are you?

Kelvin: You know, fair to partly sweaty.

Tom: (laughter) It is once again summer in Florida.

Kelvin: Oh, I just was thinking in this little closet here. (laughter)

Tom: Oh, in this closet, yeah.

Kelvin: How do you measure humidity? It’s not a humidifier. That takes out humidity. Humidi-meter?

Tom: Humidi-meter.

Kelvin: Humidi-meter?

Tom: Yeah. Something.

Kelvin: We need one of those because boy it gets a little… (laughter)

Tom: There are probably actual meteorology scientists or somebody listening to this and just cringing at our ignorance.

Kelvin: (laughter) On so many topics.

Tom: (laughter) Yeah. It’s funny. This room that we record in—which is a great facility. It’s great in every respect except in HVAC, apparently.
Kelvin: It really is! I mean, we were looking just a minute ago and there’s an air vent and a return, and why isn’t it cooler in here?

Tom: Yeah, well, it keeps the sound nice and quiet. We don’t hear the hum.

Kelvin: The hum. Maybe that’s it.

Tom: That must be it.

Kelvin: Our producers went out one time after the building was built like ka-bam! “Let’s block that stuff.” That could be it. Well, I hear you just diligently stirring frouf into your coffee. (laughter)

Tom: Yeah, I’m whitening my coffee. Thank you for pre-pouring before we kicked off the episode. So, what am I diligently stirring at this moment?

Kelvin: Well, there’s a lot of frouf in there. (laughter)

Tom: Not as much as you think!

Kelvin: Okay, and some coffee. Before I tell you, Tom, first a word about coffee reputation.

Tom: Oh dear. Okay.

Kelvin: Single-origin coffees—I’ve been thinking about this lately—are a bit like higher education.

Tom: (laughter) …Okay.

Kelvin: There are so many wonderful, unique, and tasty coffees from around the world. While, they cost a bit more than the pre-ground blend on the grocery store self, they are generally quite affordable. But then there are what I’ve begun calling—get this, I’m gonna trademark it—the Ivy League of Coffees.

Tom: Oh dear. Okay.

Kelvin: Single-origin Kona from the Big Island of Hawai‘i and single-origin Blue Mountain from Jamaica. Undoubtedly, these single-origin coffees can be quite good, but their cost is, in my opinion, disproportionate to their excellence. Believe this—I don’t know if you’d know this—it’s easy to spend four times as much on these Ivy League Coffees than other quite excellent single-origin coffees.

Tom: Alright, so Ivy League Coffees. So, I know you’re probably going to say more about this—

Kelvin: Yes.
Tom: I guess I will interject.

Kelvin: Yes, please. Take a breath.

Tom: Yeah, well, maybe two thoughts. One is that you’re clearly saying that the Ivy League schools are not worth their sticker price.

Kelvin: *(stammering)* I didn’t say that! *(laughter)*

Tom: *(laughter)* Uh huh… one could infer, and then the second thing is that I guess not to over-deconstruct your metaphor, but part of the Ivy League appeal is its exclusivity. I’m not sure these coffees only have a 2% ability from anybody who wants it to get it, but I get what you’re saying. I’m going to go with it.

Kelvin: Yeah! Please do!

Tom: So, what am I drinking now? Which Ivy League am I drinking now? *(laughter)* Hmm, it’s a lovely Cornell!

Kelvin: That’s right. *(laughter)* Well, don’t get too excited because today’s coffee is a Blue Mountain blend.

Tom: What?! After all of that?

Kelvin: So, here’s the deal.

Tom: I thought I was getting some fancy coffee!

Kelvin: I know! That’s it! So, I did consider last night purchasing the single-origin Blue Mountain coffee, but I found myself just staring at the price tag for several minutes, and I picked up the bag and I looked at it and I smelled it and I put it down and I walked away and I came back and I looked at it some more and I just couldn’t convince myself to spend six times the price for the single-origin as I ended up spending for what you’re drinking, which is the blend.

Tom: On my plebian, unrefined palette.

Kelvin: Six times!

Tom: You’re not going to waste that money on me. *(laughter)*

Kelvin: Six times, Tom!

Tom: Wow. That’s a lot.

Kelvin: It is! So, as a reminder, “blend” is coffee-code for “approximately 10% of this coffee comes from the place it says on the label.” That’s Kelvin-ese there. So, while unlike the “Jamaica Me Crazy” flavored coffee from back in episode #49, some of the beans that you’re drinking actually came from Jamaica, the great
majority of this coffee sources back to Central and South America, though. So, I think it’s a perfectly fine tasting cup of coffee in my opinion, but the “Blue Mountain” on the label might lead some to believe that it’s better than it actually is and might lead some to spend more money than, in my opinion, they should.

Tom: That’s why we need our coffee sommelier, Dr. Kelvin Thompson. I think it tastes fine.

Kelvin: I thought so, too! So, that’s the “how’s the coffee?” So, you know what we’re talking about today, Tom.

Tom: I do!

Kelvin: How’s the connection?

Tom: The connection is good.

Kelvin: Oh!! Can somebody record this?

Tom: Yeah, no. I get it.

Kelvin: Play it back! (laughter)

Tom: Well, and just to comment on the broader topic of Ivy League and reputation stuff: so, I have three college degrees. I’ve got one from a top fifty private university, one from a for-profit, and one from a large public research university.

Kelvin: Because you figured diversify your portfolio! (laughter)

Tom: That’s right! And I’m going to set the for-profit aside, but the private school and the large public school? I don’t think—based on what they each charge today—that the private school is x-times a better education than the public school.

Kelvin: Even though the price tag is x-times more.

Tom: It is. It’s a lot higher now than when I went there. Yeah, it’s definitely, I think, a matter of reputation. You charge what you can get. Now, the for-profit? That’s a whole different discussion, and it was much more transactional, utilitarian, and frankly, in my experience, the quality was entirely dependent upon the faculty member teaching that course. Some were good, some not. Alright, so your connection. I get it. We are once again back in the Bermuda Tri—I mean, the Iron Triangle.

Kelvin: (laughter) We never leave the Iron Triangle it seems like!

Tom: No, we are stuck in the Iron Triangle, but we’re talking today about the bar called affordability.

Kelvin: Affordability. I’m in favor of affordability.
Tom: Quality, cost, and access. Cost equals affordability. Another word for it. [We’re] trying to find value and make things affordable for people in the wonderful world that we call higher education. One area that has been particularly difficult when it comes to affordability is in course materials—textbooks—and this whole initiative of textbook affordability. We haven’t really talked about it in the past, and we may have touched on it, but we certainly haven’t dug in. Today, get your shovel, because we’re digging in.

Kelvin: (laughter) Okay. I get it.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: We’re going to dig in.

Tom: So, we’re going to talk about textbook affordability, and I guess our plan is to talk about what we are trying to do here at UCF, and it is very much in the early stages of a larger strategy. The hope is that by talking about what we are doing, it’s extrapolatable—

Kelvin: Yeah, sure.

Tom: If that’s a word.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: —to kind of broader contexts and what others are doing. Everything that we’re going to talk about today we recognize that there are others in the country who are way ahead of us, so we get it. We know, but we’re going to sort of talk about where we are, and hopefully this will be something that will be useful to the people that are listening.

Kelvin: And hey, if you’ve got a great thing that you’re doing, boy, we’d sure love to hear about it and bring you on, let you talk about it, and share those good ideas. So, topcast@ucf.edu. Send us a message.

Tom: Absolutely.

Kelvin: So, how do you want to do this, Tom?

Tom: Alright, so, maybe I’ll start by kind of painting the broad picture—

Kelvin: Paint us a picture. Via audio.

Tom: —of our strategy. Yeah. A word picture. So, in the past, we’ve talked about our accessibility strategy, and we had this kind of visual representation of a Parthenon. Well, picture something similar for textbook affordability. So, textbook affordability is sort of the umbrella that sits on top of everything, and underneath that are pillars holding it up, and I’m just going to kind of go through
them quickly and maybe we can kind of dig into them in a little more detail. So, one pillar would be first day access.

Kelvin: What is first day access, Tom?

Tom: We’ll get to that.

Kelvin: Okay. Sorry.

Tom: The next one would be e-texts: basic electronic texts [and] digital materials. The next one would be open educational resources, or as we like to say…

Kelvin: OER.

Tom: OER.

Kelvin: *(sounding it out)* “Orrr.”

Tom: “Orrr.” I’ve never actually heard it called that before.

Kelvin: I hadn’t either. *(laughter)* Let’s not do that.

Tom: We’ll sound like a bunch of goobers.

Kelvin: That’s right.

Tom: The next pillar would be library-sourced materials.

Kelvin: Oooh. That’s intriguing. Want to hear more about that one.

Tom: And then the last one is something that maybe only people in the state of Florida know what we’re talking about: Affordability Counts.

Kelvin: Affordability does count, Tom.

Tom: It does, and then kind of underneath all that as a foundation is promotion and outreach, specifically to faculty and students.

Kelvin: Yeah, just because you’re doing great stuff doesn’t mean that it’s disseminating through the enterprise.

Tom: That’s right, and I think there’s a certain amount of external communications that are a part of that because textbook affordability has become a policy issue. It has shown up in legislation. Legislators are talking about it because they’re hearing from their constituents about how much textbooks cost their kids at college.

Kelvin: Yeah, and all you need—Right? We’ve experienced this. All you need is one anecdote. Doesn’t even need to be actually factual. *(laughter)* And it crystallizes quickly.
Tom: Yeah, this is not a hypothetical example.

Kelvin: It really is not.

Tom: Someday if you’re near me in a bar, buy me a drink and I’ll tell ya that story at a Board of Governors meeting.

Kelvin: That was crazy. (laughter)

Tom: Oh my gosh. I’m having flashbacks.

Kelvin: First day access, Tom.

Tom: First day access!

Kelvin: That’s a better story to tell.

Tom: Sometimes called inclusive access.

Kelvin: Yup.

Tom: And the idea behind it is that on the very first day of class, students will have access to their electronic materials whether that be books or courseware or some combination thereof, and it just shows up in the course. They don’t have to go through some ecommerce portal. They don’t have to go to the bookstore. It’s just in the course and then it gets charged to them on their student account. So, they would pay for it just like they would pay for everything else at the university whether that’s your tuition, your fees, your housing, whatever, your meal plan, and you could apply your financial aid package against it if it’s eligible. It guarantees access on the first day and eliminates that barrier of the hassle of purchasing it. So, this does a couple of things. It makes it cheaper for students because the adoption rate is very high, and the publishers are willing to discount the per unit cost of those materials because they’re almost guaranteed—and in some contracts they are guaranteed—certain percentage adoptions. So, you’re trading off a little bit of margin on each unit in order to get a larger number of units.

Kelvin: Careful, your MBA’s showing.

Tom: (laughter) That’s right. It’s a good deal for them, and it’s a good deal for our students because they end up getting cheaper materials. Interestingly…I wonder if I should go here. I’ll go here. I believe Florida is the only state that requires opt-in.

Kelvin: (laughter)

Tom: And I might be wrong about that. I’d love to be corrected. But most states? They have to provide an opt-out option for students on first day access.
Kelvin: So, you’re doing this good thing for students and it’s like, “Hey, we’re just going to do this, and if you don’t want to play, fine. Take yourself out, but otherwise, we’re going to take care of you.”

Tom: “Otherwise you’re getting it and you’re getting billed, unless you tell us otherwise.” And if you know nudge theory and theories about people who sign up for their 401(k) or health insurance, if you just give it to them and make them take an action to not take it, the adoption rate is very high.

Kelvin: Of course! Because we’re all lazy. (laughter)

Tom: Well, that’s part of it. It’s like over 90%. Something like that.

Kelvin: Sure!

Tom: Well, Florida has an opt-in statute.

Kelvin: Because we wouldn’t want to force someone to do anything good for them. (laughter)

Tom: We should probably check. I know that statute was up for consideration.

Kelvin: Oh, that’s right!

Tom: I actually don’t know where it stands.

Kelvin: I don’t know wither.

Tom: The legislative session just ended.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: I should have known that before I walked in here.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: Anyway, at the moment—

Kelvin: We’re going to pretend that it’s status quo.

Tom: Yeah. Which requires our students to take an action to join the first day access program.

Kelvin: Which is a tougher nut to crack.

Tom: It is! You kind of have to explain to them what it is, the value proposition, and get them to do something, but we’ve done a pilot on it this semester. As I said, there are schools and systems around the country that are way ahead of us. Indiana might be the best alpha case, but there are others. I go to presentations at
conferences all the time and am impressed by what others are doing, community colleges and universities alike. And we had a—I don’t know—77% adoption rate—something like that—in our pilot.

Kelvin: Yeah. A really high enrollment course. Really outstanding faculty member, Dr. Carolyn Massiah.

Tom: Yeah, she’s awesome.

Kelvin: She’s worth a shout out. Everything she does is wonderful, I’m pretty sure, but yes, a lot of that was her selling. We helped every way we could, but 77% opting in is mindboggling.

Tom: First time! Students didn’t know what it was, and we took that as a win. It’s only going to go up.

Kelvin: Yeah!

Tom: So, we’re pushing first day access very aggressively. At the moment we’re recording this, we’re about to go into our summer semester here in 2019, and we’ve got a number of courses lined up for summer and then several dozen in the fall. We’ve been doing a lot of outreach with faculty and working with our publisher partners, who’ve been great, to kind of get this going. So, we think this will do two things. This is an affordability episode, so obviously our goal is to save our students significant amounts of money. We have 68,500 students. That’s a lot of students, and I think we can save them millions and millions of dollars in the aggregate.

Kelvin: Sure.

Tom: That’s not trivial.

Kelvin: Right.

Tom: On the other side, getting your materials delivered to you no muss, no fuss, so that you have access to them on the very first day has to improve your chances of success.

Kelvin: One would think.

Tom: Yeah. We know from surveys that we do here on campus that 60% of students—I may have this number wrong, but I think that’s right—have said that they have not bought the materials for a course because they cost too much.

Kelvin: And I’ve seen various surveys like that [from] different places, and I mean every context is a little bit different, but it’s funny because several of them have hovered around that 60% number. 62% at another place.

Tom: Ugh. It just breaks my heart.
Kelvin: It’s crazy! Sad!

Tom: These students are investing all of this time in this course and this money in tuition, and they’re hamstering themselves because of cost of these materials. We want them to be successful.

Kelvin: Absolutely.

Tom: And if we can give them their materials at a lower price in the LMS, then we’re going to do it.

Kelvin: Yeah, and like you said, that’s just a good thing. Saves money, and you would think, increases the likelihood of learning and success.

Tom: Absolutely.

Kelvin: Those are good.

Tom: So, I mean, that touches on two bars of the Iron Triangle: the cost and quality angles. Okay. So, maybe I’ll do e-text and then you do OER.

Kelvin: Sure.

Tom: So, I think e-text is pretty straightforward. Beyond just first day access, making materials available to students in a digital format in a kind of ubiquitous way has to save them money because we know that digital materials cost less than printed materials, and most of these students are not keeping their books. If they want to keep a book because it’s their major or something, then they have that option, but if they’re not going to—which as I said, most of them don’t—let’s give them what they need in a digital format at a significantly reduced price through some sort of eBook reader platform—and we have one here—and it has to make it cheaper for them. That really is as much about reducing the cost as anything, and I think that that’s a scale play for us because we don’t have to convince faculty to pick a different book. We don’t have to ask them to pick a different platform or something. It’s just, “You keep using that book from that publisher that your course is sort of structured around, and we’re just going to make sure that the students have access to it in multiple formats.” So, that’s e-text.

Kelvin: That’s e-text.

Tom: So, open educational resources.

Kelvin: Open educational resources. So, you could argue that [in] most cases, OER (open educational resources) are a subset of e-texts. Technically, you could have print open educational resources. There are organizations like OpenStax out of Rice University. If I remember right, the last time I looked, it’s generally electronic, but they have an option if you wanted to get like a print version, you could. I’ve seen some other university presses who’ve offered things like that, because you know, allegedly, some students just want—and I believe that—a print thing, but
mostly it’s electronic. So, in addition to the access affordances that you mentioned, not only is it cheaper, it’s like generally free.

Tom: Right. Yeah, and well, thank you for drawing that distinction, because when I was talking about e-text, I was talking about just straight up publisher materials, not the kind of OER that you’re talking about.

Kelvin: Yeah, but technically e-text would include both branches there, but I think often we do think of it as publisher stuff. But open educational resources? Wonderful, if you can get the cost down to zero or even like some kind of a minimal courtesy fee or something, that’d be great. I think the challenge we’re seeing there is—OpenStax is maybe a good example—a lot of big general education program kinds of rollouts of open educational resource initiatives where you could maybe get a Chemistry 101 or Econ 101 kind of a textbook, but the higher you go up—upper division undergraduate or graduate—[it’s] a lot harder to find your edge case OER resources. So, it only goes so far, and then, you know, sometimes faculty [say,] “I would like Periwinkle.”

Tom: *(laughter)* Yeah.

Kelvin: You know? I have a friend once who years ago said, “Periwinkle? That was not in the Crayola box I had. I only had eight colors.” *(laughter)* “I don’t even know what that color is!”

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: And so, you get all of these idiosyncratic choices for faculty adoption of textbooks.

Tom: And OER, I think, obviously has the biggest impact because it goes from something to nothing in most cases.

Kelvin: Of course.

Tom: But it also, I think, is one of the highest lifts, the biggest lifts, because you gotta go faculty to faculty as I described it. It’s like taking every hill on the battlefield.

Kelvin: Well, and so, again, that idiosyncratic thing, right? Gosh. If you don’t like it, you’re gonna pass.

Tom: Yeah, and I’ve heard faculty complain about the level of rigor—

Kelvin: Of quality.

Tom: Yeah, quality in some of these open materials. So, finding something that meets their expectations and course objectives is sometimes a challenge, and sometimes even though it might be free to acquire, it isn’t free to maintain.

Kelvin: Free like a puppy, not like beer.
Tom: Right. Exactly, because, you know, we’re working with Pressbooks.

Kelvin: Yup.

Tom: For a number of titles, and just maintaining that platform and using it and having somebody trained in it and getting faculty trained, it’s an investment.

Kelvin: Yup.

Tom: Alright.

Kelvin: Library-sourced materials?

Tom: Why don’t you do that one?

Kelvin: Okay. I think I’ve got this right. So, you know, I’ve actually had students who say, “Hey, is version X of this text really required? Because I got version Y out of the library, and money’s tight right now. Can I just use that?” And I’m like, “Well, you know, there are some differences. You’re welcome to give it a shot.” Right? What am I going to say?

Tom: Right.

Kelvin: But the idea in that case, that student was using the library to source their materials, and that’s a very simplistic version of what library-sourced materials are, where the library provides access via physical media or digital media that they own and can allow access to students, so it helps students avoid the cost of acquiring materials themselves because the university’s already acquired it as a part of the library’s collections. How’s that?

Tom: Yeah. That’s exactly right, and this began as a very straightforward comparison. We looked at the bookstore list and compared it against—and by “we” I mean our library. Not me personally. It’s them. They’re doing great work. They’re also leading our OER initiative. This is a multi-disciplinary partnership, this textbook affordability leadership. But they compared the booklist from the bookstore with what they actually pay licenses for in the library, and there was—if you drew a Venn diagram—there would be some overlap between these two circles, and in that overlap, they said, “Let’s just tell students that these things are available for free to them through the library license.” So, that’s where it began, and now we’re trying to be a little more intentional about it to see if we can acquire things through the library that can be used in courses so that’s sort of like the next phase, but just asking the question “Are we already paying for some of this stuff?” led to that kind of a win.

Kelvin: It’s really kind of a genius thought.

Tom: Yeah!

Kelvin: Make a difference. And then the last but not least pillar?
Tom: Affordability Counts! So, we’ve got to give credit to our friends at Florida International University—Joseph Riquelme and his team—for coming up with this, and they’ve expanded it to others within the state university system.

Kelvin: It’s a great idea.

Tom: Yeah, and we’ve signed on. So, kind of in a nutshell—I probably won’t do it justice—they have identified courses or have faculty identified courses where the cost of the materials is $20 per credit hour or less, and if they are, then they become a part of Affordability Counts. The faculty get some recognition. They get a little badge. I think they get a letter for their promotion tenure file.

Kelvin: There’s an event.

Tom: Yeah, they do! They have like a little party, like a banquet or something, and recognize these faculty for kind of going above and beyond to try and save students money, and then they kind of escalate these courses that have reduced course materials prices to students through an interface on the web. So, they’ve been doing this at FIU and have expanded it to others within the system, and we’re signed on to be a part of this because I think it’s great.

Kelvin: There’s like a whole database of these now across the state, these courses, and that’s kind of cool.

Tom: Yeah. Affordability Counts. So, yeah. I think that becomes a piece of the pillar as well, so a lot of the things that we’ve just talked about, whether it’s first day access, e-text, OER, library-sourced materials, could become a part of Affordability Counts.

Kelvin: Another nuance on that, because you just listed those from left to right, those pillars. The first one (first day access) and the last one (Affordability Counts)? Set those aside for a second. The middle three (e-text, OER, library-sourced materials) are all about faculty adoption of course materials. First day access and Affordability Counts are more meta. They’re more systemic kinds of issues and initiatives that at scale allow us to really change the culture through promotion and outreach and otherwise. Look at first day access. When you’re a large institution with a lot of adoption of the learning management system, first day access makes a real difference potentially.

Tom: Yeah! And I know Carolyn said that she had students in her course saying, “How come the rest of my courses don’t have this?”

Kelvin: That’s right. And then Affordability Counts, I think, you can’t underestimate the power of that recognition and callout and drawing attention. You’ve heard me tell this story. I have a colleague, an instructional designer, John Raible. He and I talked for a while about this course that I was teaching and how expensive the textbook was, and I was like, “Yeah, I need to try to do something different about that.” One day, he printed out a digital photo of the shelf card in the bookstore with the price tag on it and just left it at my workstation.
Tom: Ooh. Mic drop! *(laughter)*

Kelvin: And I picked it up and I walked toward him later in the day and I held it there, I looked at him, I looked at it, I shook my head, and said, “Alright. Fine. I gotta do something. I can’t unsee this.”

Tom: Good for John! Public shaming is a very effective strategy.

Kelvin: But I mean really! I think a lot of us who teach were not in direct awareness of the price tag, and so Affordability Counts is great in that it draws attention and it celebrates heroes.

Tom: Yeah, and I think it’s changing, though, because I keep hearing stories from faculty or from instructional designers who work with faculty that faculty do not want to pick certain choices whether it’s courseware or a platform or it’s a book or something because of the price.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: They’re going to some other strategy or some other choice.

Kelvin: Which those “some others” could be those middle three pillars: e-text, OER, library-sourced materials.

Tom: Absolutely! So, there’s no silver bullet when it comes to textbook affordability, at least not in our view as we’re kind of in the early stages of what we think as an institution-wide strategy with these—

Kelvin: Multi-faceted.

Tom: Yeah! With these multi-layers. We’re working with our Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, our library, our Center for Distributed Learning. It’s really across the campus, and so we’re hopeful that this will move the needle for affordability for students. So, maybe that’s a good transition for the bottom line?

Kelvin: Why don’t you try to bottom line it for us?

Tom: Okay! So, making textbooks and other required course materials affordable by students is definitely an important part of increasing access to higher education by everyone and making education more equitable. So, we need to continue to identify and act upon strategic efforts that will reduce the functional costs for students, and as we said, also as a byproduct, we expect to see student learning gains because they actually have the materials.

Kelvin: Yeah! What a concept.

Tom: Yeah, so we’ll keep you posted if things develop or change as time goes on with our textbook affordability initiative. We’ve got a website we’ve got under construction. If it’s up by the time this show drops, we’ll put it in the show notes.
Kelvin: Yeah, for sure.

Tom: You can check it out.

Kelvin: Absolutely. We have time for like one shameless plug?

Tom: Sure!

Kelvin: Why are they always shameless plugs, Tom?

Tom: (laughter) I think that’s a reflection on us, not them.

Kelvin: Oh, okay. That’s good. Our colleague Shannon Riggs, who is Executive Director for Course Development and Learning Innovation at Oregon State University’s eCampus, left the following review on Apple Podcasts recently. She said, “I have been binge-listening to TOPcast and I am finding many useful insights and takeaways that have me thinking about my work in online education more deeply. What I am also finding, though, is that Tom and Kelvin seem to derive - and share - real joy in this work. I find the podcast very inspiring.” Inspiring.

Tom: Wow.

Kelvin: That’s nice.

Tom: That’s awesome! Thank you, Shannon.

Kelvin: That’s really kind. We appreciate that.

Tom: We’ve got friends at Oregon State.

Kelvin: We do! Katie Linder.

Tom: Katie Linder’s been on the show.

Kelvin: A couple times.

Tom: Lisa Templeton.

Kelvin: Yeah! For sure.

Tom: Well, she hasn’t been on the show, but…

Kelvin: She could be!

Tom: A friend.

Kelvin: That’s right! (laughter) And you, dear listener, you could be on the show!
Tom: That’s right! Just send us a voicemail and we’ll put it on.

Kelvin: And possibly a case of coffee!

Tom: Yeah. *(laughter)* That’s shameless right there.

Kelvin: *(laughter)* I recant. I retract. Alright. Well, I think we probably need to get off the plane.

Tom: *(laughter)*

Kelvin: We’ve landed it. We just need to get off.

Tom: It’s got a bow on it.

Kelvin: That’s right. Well, until next time for TOPcast, I’m Kelvin.

Tom: And I’m Tom.

Kelvin: See ya.