

Rutgers University Senate Committee on Instruction, Curricula, and Advising

S-0602: Course-Textbook Reserve Requirement: Consider the New Brunswick Faculty Council's [Report and Resolution Regarding Requiring Course Textbooks to be Placed on Reserve](#), and make recommendations for review and action by the University Senate on this issue.

1. The Senate Instruction, Curricula and Advising Committee agrees with the New Brunswick Faculty Council that it would not be feasible to mandate that all required textbooks be placed on reserve in the libraries in order to help students save on the costs of textbooks.

2. NBFC Recommendation 1A: *“That individual faculty and departments be encouraged to... [reduce] the use of expensive textbooks for less expensive ones.”*

Where the educational value is equivalent, using the less expensive version is certainly desirable. However, it is the sense of the Committee that many faculty select textbooks without knowing what the actual cost to the student will be. There is a need to sensitize the faculty to the costs involved.

As book expenses for each course can be automatically generated by the bookstore, departments should be encouraged to collect and distribute this information to their faculties.

It is also important for faculty members to get their textbook orders in on time so that students know what books they will need early enough to investigate alternative sources for acquiring these books.

3. NBFC Recommendation 1D: *“Exploring , independent of the usual acquisition process of RUL, a process for obtaining copies of textbooks and distributing them to locations where they may be consulted by students.”*

Purchasing textbooks, regardless of the acquisition process, comes with major issues relating to funding, cost recovery, storage, and the matching of specific texts to appropriate locations.

It might, however, be feasible to begin a program on each campus where students would donate copies of used textbooks which could then be available at the Learning Centers, or in departmental “Mini-libraries” [which could just be a shelf in the departmental office].

4. NBFC Recommendation 1E: *“Placing...complimentary copies of textbooks on RUL reserve.”*

Many faculty are already placing personal copies of books on reserve. More can certainly be encouraged to place personal copies on reserve.

5. NBFC Recommendation 1F: *“Exploring the possibility of centralized purchases of e-versions of textbooks and making them available to all students through the electronic reserve process.”*

While this is certainly something that can be investigated further, there is a question of how many textbooks are actually available in electronic format. To some extent this seems to be a movement which has stalled.

E-Books that the Rutgers Libraries have purchased/subscribed to and cataloged are available to the entire University community—in all likelihood they could be linked to from either the reserve system or a CMS such as Sakai or Blackboard. Usage restrictions (for example, use by multiple simultaneous users) would depend on the publisher/program through which each specific title was obtained.

6. Rental programs

While the NBFC resolutions did not specifically address rental programs, the two articles appended to the report did deal with rental programs. However, it was the sense of the Committee that while some smaller schools have had success with rental programs both the costs and logistics of setting up such a program in an institution the size of Rutgers would be prohibitive. Cost recovery would require each book to be used for multiple semesters; in some disciplines change is so rapid that using the same content over five or six semesters would not be appropriate. Where this has been used, it’s been done only for a few targeted courses—it would appear to be a solution that lacks scalability.

7. Textbook Exchange program

The Committee also discussed the possibility of setting up some sort of a regular textbook exchange program. However a viable exchange program for an institution of this size would be extremely labor intensive and would also require significant storage space.

8. Alternative Textbook Sources

In addition to resources such as the Amazon Textbooks site [http://www.amazon.com/New-Used-Textbooks-Books/b/ref=sv_b_9/104-7387415-9845535?ie=UTF8&node=465600] and the Barnes & Noble Textbooks site [<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/textbooks/index.asp?z=y>], there are a number of web sites from which used textbooks may be purchased at considerable savings. These include:

- The Campus Book Swap: <http://www.campusbookswap.com/help.asp>
Sponsored by the Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs), this bulletin board is organized by schools and allows buyers and sellers to find each other.
- BIGWORDS.com: <http://bigwords.com/>
Searches across multiple sites to find the best price for your textbook.
- AbeBooks.com: <http://www.abebooks.com/>

Searches the inventory of a huge number of used books dealers; arranges results by price.

Some effort should be made to remind students of some of these options at the beginning of each semester.

9. Campus Bookstores

At the beginning of this year the Newark Campus Bookstore switched from Follett to Barnes & Noble; the Committee did some textbook price comparisons to see if there was a difference between the stores in terms of costs as well as buyback and resale policies. [Appendix A].

While there were occasional very small price differentials, there was no consistency as to which had the better price.

Both Barnes & Noble and Follett sell used textbooks at 25% below the cost of a new book. Only Barnes & Noble specify their best buyback price: 50% of the selling price, i.e., about 37.5% of the original “new” price. This price is only offered if the book is a designated textbook for the following semester, and the Bookstore still needs copies to satisfy demand. Again there didn’t seem to be any significant difference between the bookstores.

The Rutgers Newark Bookstore also has a page¹ breaking down “where the money goes” in terms of textbook pricing:

New \$50 Textbook	\$	%
1. Publisher	33.50	67%
2. Author	4.50	9%
3. Freight Company	1.25	2.5%
4. Revenue given to college or university for academic programs, student activities, capital improvements, systems automation, and/or reduction of school operating expenses.	4.50	9%
5. Bookstore		
a. Employee salaries and benefits	5.00	10%
b. Earnings and other direct expenses including taxes, equipment, maintenance, repairs, supplies, etc.	1.25	2.5%
Total:	\$50.00	100%

This breakdown is based on information compiled by the National Association of College Stores and is not specific to the Rutgers situation. While some of the information struck us as rather ingenuous (the bookstore is not, for example, actually sending 9 percent of the sales price to the author of the textbook), all in all it does not appear that the bookstore’s profit margin is unreasonable.

¹ <http://newark-rutgers1.bkstore.com/bkstore/content?st=409&m=0704>

**Appendix A
Campus Bookstores**

Camden: Follett
New Brunswick: Follett
Newark: Barnes & Noble

Sample Titles & Prices (Print/New)

Textbook	Barnes & Noble	Follett
Baker. <i>Advanced Financial Accounting</i> 5 th edition	\$175.70	\$171.00
Marshall. <i>Accounting</i> 7 th edition	\$151.65	\$158.00
Allen-Meares. <i>Social Work Services in Schools</i>	\$88.00	\$88.00
Johnson. <i>Social Work Practice</i>	\$92.40	\$92.40
Klug. <i>Essentials of Genetics</i> 6 th edition	\$118.00	\$117.33

Sample Titles & Prices (E-Books)

Textbook	B&N	Printing	Follett	Printing
Alloy. <i>Abnormal Psychology</i> 9 th edition	\$75.40	Unlimited	\$74.01	25 times per 7 days
Barlow. <i>Abnormal Psychology</i> 4 th edition	\$77.20	100 pages per 7 days	\$65.66	70 times per 7 days
Halgin. <i>Abnormal Psychology</i> 5 th edition	\$71.20	Unlimited	\$68.75	25 times per 7 days
Hoyle. <i>Advanced Accounting</i> 8 th edition	\$98.40	Unlimited	\$96.45	25 times per 7 days
Baker. <i>Advanced Financial Accounting</i> 6 th ed	\$98.40	Unlimited	\$96.45	25 times per 7 days
Santrock. <i>Adolescence</i> 11 th edition	\$68.00	Unlimited	\$66.32	25 times per 7 days

Buyback Policies:

Barnes & Noble:

“Our Buyback pricing is based on 2 criteria: we can pay you 50% of the selling price if the professor has told us the book will be used again the following term and we still require more to meet demand. If this is not the case, we will be happy to give you the latest national pricing.”

Follett:

“There are several factors we use to determine how much CASH you can get back for your used textbooks, including:

Condition –Your textbook must be in good condition in order to receive compensation...All materials listed on the packing list as accompanying the book must be received in order to be paid full value for your buyback shipment...

Course Materials Orders – If an instructor has requested your textbook for next term, then the value increases. Books falling into this category may be worth more and get you a higher percentage of the original purchase price. Generally speaking, textbooks will be purchased until we reach the amount we think we can resell.”

Resale Policies:

Barnes & Noble: Used is 25% below New

Follett: Used is 25% below New