

**RESOLUTION REGARDING REQUIRING COURSE
TEXTBOOKS TO BE PLACED ON RESERVE**

BACKGROUND

Khushboo Shah, 2007 Class Representative of the Rutgers College Governing Association, made a request to Michael Beals that all required textbooks for courses be placed on reserve in the libraries in order to help students save on costs of textbooks. Michael forwarded the request to Paul Leath, who in turn asked the Library Committee (LC) to review it, with the following charge:

CHARGE: Consider the advisability of requiring that all required textbooks for courses be placed on reserve in the libraries in order to help students save on costs of textbooks.

The LC has conducted an email and an in-person discussion of the proposal. Below are some of the ideas that emerged:

- 1) In favor: On its face, the idea is attractive since it would save financially strapped students a significant cost.
- 2) Against, prohibitive cost: On the other hand, the Rutgers University Libraries (RUL) has a policy against routinely purchasing textbooks, and the RUL is strapped for the considerable funds that routine acquisition of textbooks would entail, together with the additional resources of managing a substantial increase in the reserve materials.
- 3) Challenges if the policy were adopted: If there were to be a policy that all required textbooks for courses be placed on reserve in libraries, there are challenges in actually providing fair access to all students in each class. For example,
 - A) If access were to be fair for students, who live in different areas but who all take the same class, how many copies should there be in how many different libraries?
 - B) To make sure that no one student monopolized a book on reserve, there would have to be enforcement of a policy (e.g., 2-4 hrs at a time) to access to the book, which could not be removed from the library. Note: There already exists a time limit policy for the use of “hard copy” reserve items. Their use is limited to two hours per checkout, with repeated checkouts possible. If only one hard copy of an item is on reserve, there could well be a run on the item just before the readings are to be discussed in class, or appear on a quiz, etc., with several students vying for the same copy.
 - C) One way to address these access problems is to put e-versions of textbooks on electronic reserve. The question still remains, who is to pay for the acquisition of such e-versions if in fact they are available.
- 4) The need in some courses for every student to have their own personal copy. One respondent wrote: “I don't see a problem with suggesting textbooks be put on reserve. A firm requirement is more problematic in my opinion, given the different kinds of reliance on textbooks in different departments and disciplines. For example, I can't imagine a foreign language student taking a class without their own copy of the textbook.”
- 5) Activities faculty can be encouraged to do on a voluntary basis to meet the need:
 - A) Place copies (sometimes multiple copies) of complimentary textbooks that they receive on reserve.
 - B) Take advantage of putting electronic articles on reserve when these can replace textbooks.
 - C) If only sections of textbooks are used – e.g., only mathematics exercises, these sections could be duplicated and placed on electronic reserve.
 - D) Reducing the use of expensive textbooks for less expensive ones.

- 6) Longer-range solutions: A number of individuals suggested that a great deal of student money could be saved by finding an alternative to having the buying and selling of used textbooks take place via a university bookstore run by a for-profit company, as we presently have at Rutgers. In the e-version of this resolution, there is an Appendix with two articles documenting schools that have piloted alternative models.

RESOLUTION

In light of the above considerations, while the NBFC cannot at this point recommend a requirement that all course textbooks be put on library reserve, we do strongly recommend:

- 1) That individual faculty and departments be encouraged to initiate actions that will reduce where possible student textbook expenses, e.g.,
 - A) Reducing the use of expensive textbooks for less expensive ones.
 - B) Using electronic reserve articles and other online media instead of full textbooks where pedagogically feasible.
 - C) Having the instructors checking if the Rutgers University Libraries (RUL) does already own a copy of a textbook to be used in a course, in which case instructors can place the book on RUL reserve.
 - D) 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. (Note that this leaves open all questions of funding and whether the locations be tied to libraries or distributed through residence halls.)
 - E) Placing their complimentary copies of textbooks on RUL reserve.
(However, note that this use of desk copies, while done with the best of intent, may violate the publisher's reason for providing them. Some suggest that perhaps instead it would be better if faculty and departments solicited the cooperation of the publishers, e.g., developing a mechanism that would allow them to claim contributions to assure availability to all students. This could help their image and provide us with textbook copies. In particular, there may be many slightly damaged copies of popular books that can't be sold, but are perfectly usable for this purpose.)
 - F) Exploring the possibility of centralized purchases of e-versions of textbooks and making them available to all students through the electronic reserve process.
- 2) In line with Resolution #1, that the NBFC endorses the desirability of setting up an accessible database of specific faculty case examples of actions that reduce the cost of textbooks. (Examples might be allowing students to purchase any of the last three editions of a textbook; using an e-textbook on reserve for the whole class; and choosing for a class from among a number of pedagogically comparable textbooks the one that is least expensive.) The database should allow faculty to easily enter the case study examples and for students and faculty to gain easy access to these.
- 3) That the NBFC commits itself to continuing to work on the long-range goal of reducing the present, excessive cost to students of course textbooks. (One example would be to explore alternatives to having the buying and selling of used textbooks take place via a university bookstore run by a for-profit company, as we presently have at Rutgers.)

APPENDIX

THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE (California)

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SECTION: SAN FRANCISCO FRIDAY; Pg. F4

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HEADLINE: EDUCATION;

Colleges find ways to cut costs of textbooks;
Book loan programs open new chapter in helping students on a tight budget

BYLINE: Christopher Heredia, Chronicle Staff Writer

BODY:

City College of San Francisco has begun using free student-run book loan programs to counterbalance soaring textbook prices, the bane of many students who are struggling to pay rising education costs.

Throughout the Bay Area, students are looking for ways to save on prohibitive textbook costs. Some schools have launched textbook rental programs, while others offer programs for students to sell or exchange their books.

These are just some of the tactics Bay Area students and college campuses are taking to save students money.

"If we can remove one more barrier to students attending college, hopefully we can help them succeed and it will help the community at large," said Jai Kumar, bookstore manager at Cañada College in Redwood City, which this fall began offering rental textbooks, along with sister campus Skyline College in San Bruno.

Cañada and Skyline's programs are two of fewer than two dozen such rental programs in the country. City College of San Francisco's free student-run book loan program is another path some schools have taken, while others offer programs for students to sell or exchange their books.

The various programs are in response to textbook costs that have escalated at a pace that exceeds inflation. A Government Accountability Office report in July said textbook prices have risen 186 percent in the past 20 years, twice the rate of inflation. The report also said the average student pays \$900 per academic year for books. It cited publishers' practice of bundling materials with textbooks, CD-ROMs and other supplements, as the culprit for the cost increase. The supplemental material, critics claim, is of little use to students.

Students at Bay Area college campuses have taken matters into their own hands

in other ways. Some buy cheaper international editions of books online, share books with friends or, in some cases, photocopy books, despite the fact that this is a blatant violation of copyright laws.

"When I found out that all my books this semester were going to be over \$100 each, I was ready to faint," said Kelly Liu, a 20-year-old UC Berkeley student. "I'm only going to use them for six months. I can't sell them back and get my \$500 back. It makes me wonder about my investment."

Liu, a third-year business major at UC Berkeley, has heard of classmates photocopying entire books for their courses then returning them for a full refund. It costs about \$20 to photocopy a textbook, she said. Her classmates also buy their textbooks online at lower cost than at the college bookstore.

Liu's bill for textbooks this semester would have been \$500 had she not resorted to other means, including buying international editions over the Internet at half the cost she would have paid purchasing the American version.

At Cañada College, the program is limited to textbooks for early childhood development classes, although college officials hope to expand the program before the spring semester. Cañada College student Traci Siri, 41, of San Mateo, said she welcomed the chance to rent her textbook for the early childhood education course she is taking this fall. The new book sells for \$75; Siri paid one-third that using the textbook-rental program. Siri, who is studying to become a teacher, said without the rental program her textbook expenses could reach \$400 per semester.

Kumar, along with a committee of faculty members and San Mateo County Community College District administrators, developed the textbook-rental program, which began as a pilot last summer with 400 books rented. This fall, 1,800 students at both schools have rented books.

"The rental program is great because it's saving me a lot of money," Siri said. "Teaching isn't a field that pays all that well, so this helps subsidize the cost of going to school. To save even \$50 per book is a great deal to a student, especially if you're taking a full load."

Siri said the rental program is popular with her classmates. "We're getting the same exact book, the same information as somebody who bought the book new," she said.

Unlike students who own their books, borrowers can't write in or highlight passages in a rented book. Rental books are due back at the end of final exams.

"I write down what I would normally highlight," Siri said. "I think it helps me retain the information better anyway."

Laura Deehan, assistant organizing director for the California Public Interest Research Group, which is coordinating a campaign to pressure publishers to reduce textbook costs, praised the San Mateo County Community College

District textbook rental program.

"Whatever colleges can do to make it more accessible for students to read the text, we're in support of," Deehan said.

CalPIRG, located in Sacramento, has student chapters at colleges in 15 states including UC Berkeley and seven other UC campuses. The group's Web site suggests university and college campus institute textbook rental programs as a way of reducing student expenses. CalPIRG also recommends that students start book-swap groups and recommends that faculty members negotiate discounts with publishers and also allow students to use older editions of textbooks.

A publishing industry official said textbook rental programs are one of many ways colleges can defray rising college costs. Other tools schools have for cutting back include offering used copies and older editions. Professors can also select pertinent chapters and have them photocopied and made available at a cheaper cost.

"Publishers have no objection to colleges starting textbook-rental programs," said Bruce Hildebrand, executive director for higher education at the Association of American Publishers.

Hildebrand defended the rising cost of textbooks, which he said is a result of college instructors insisting that their students have the most up-to-date information and extra materials, such as CD-ROMs and workbooks.

Hildebrand said that there are about 20 book-rental programs in the country, including those at Cañada, Skyline and Cal State Fullerton.

"The whole issue is what do the students need?" Hildebrand said. "Will a low-cost, black-and-white abbreviated edition suit their needs? If so, then that's what they should get. ... You can't compare a black-and-white photocopy to a color textbook with interactive materials and the latest in technological advancements. It'd be like comparing a Model T to the most recent Corvette."

Starting a textbook-rental program can be cost-prohibitive for some colleges and university bookstores, which have suffered financially in the face of competition from online book sellers and large chains such as Barnes and Noble.

Skyline and Cañada colleges were able to pay the initial cost of the textbook rental program using First 5 grant money, from the state of California. College officials hope to expand the program in the spring and are looking for private donors to help with the program.

Don Newton, general manager of the bookstore at City College of San Francisco, said the solution to the problem is complex. One of the solutions that City College has tried is a free book loan program, run by students. The college bookstore pays the program costs to the tune of about \$30,000 per semester to purchase the books.

"Textbooks are expensive and editions keep changing, so it costs a lot of money to run a worthwhile program," Newton said.

"The reasons we started the book loan program are that we have a huge population of students, some of whom are homeless, and many others are in great financial need," said Lauren Nelson, the college's book loan program coordinator. "We wanted to provide a service that would help our students."

Students who qualify for financial aid or who have fee waivers get first dibs on borrowed books. After the first week of school, the remaining books are available to all students. About 1,600 students have used the book-loan program this fall.

The reason Newton hasn't started a rental program at City College is cost: "You need space to store the rental copies," he said. "It's also a big job."

The Associated Students, Newton said, took it upon themselves to use space in the student union to operate the book loan program. Newton said without support from a private donor to pay for a book rental program and expand the already cramped bookstore, it would not be feasible for the college to operate a textbook rental program.

Cañada early childhood education Professor Dianne Eyer, who wrote the grant for First 5 funding for the textbook rental program, said her department's faculty have been supportive of the textbook rental program. She hopes other departments at the college will respond to the rental program with equal enthusiasm.

"We've had an amazing partnership with the bookstore and faculty," said Eyer, coordinator for the college's early-childhood education and child development programs. "That's what it takes. Neither the bookstore nor the professors can do it on their own."

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SECTION: LOCAL; Pg. B-1

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HEADLINE: Textbooks to be rented at college

BYLINE: Chris Moran, STAFF WRITER

DATELINE: CHULA VISTA

BODY:

CHULA VISTA -- Southwestern College's bookstore and student government have found a way to cut the price of textbooks by about 80 percent -- by renting them.

For the spring semester, the college's bookstore will make five top sellers available for rent.

It's the first rental program of its kind among local public colleges and universities, and possibly among private universities, too.

The National Association of College Stores, based in Oberlin, Ohio, reports that only 1 percent of 3,200 members rent textbooks, among them California State University Fresno and Taft Community College.

Todd Summer, director of course materials at San Diego State University's bookstore, said he intends to offer textbook rentals for one or two courses in the fall. He said Cal State Fullerton is considered a leader in textbook rentals. Its college store offered eight textbooks for rent this semester, according to the university's Web site.

"Prealgebra," which retails at the Southwestern College Campus Store for \$94.50, is available for rent at \$19.25. The cost to buy a used book is about 75 percent of that of a new book, or \$70.90 for "Prealgebra."

Southwestern's store and the student government are experimenting with the rental program in response to the escalating cost of textbooks. In a survey of Southwestern students two years ago, the price of textbooks received the lowest satisfaction rating among more than 80 questions about campus services.

A federal Government Accountability Office report last summer found that textbook prices have risen at twice the annual rate of inflation the past two decades. At two-year public colleges nationwide, the GAO found, textbooks cost 72 percent as much as all other fees and tuition combined.

In some Southwestern classes, the textbooks cost more than the fee to enroll. The per-credit price of community college classes is set by the state at \$26, so a typical three-unit class costs \$78. Four of the five textbooks for rent cost more than \$78 to buy new.

Textbook prices are so high that they can affect which classes students choose, said Patti Larkin, campus store director, and Luis Quinonez, president of the Associated Student Organization.

"You don't want a student to have to make that decision," Larkin said. "We don't want that to be a barrier to whether to take that class or not."

A national survey by the campus store association found that 57 percent of college students do not buy all the required books for their classes.

Quinonez said he and his fellow senators strongly support the program. Quinonez said he has never decided against taking a class because of book costs, but they have strained his budget. Buying new books cost more than \$500 some semesters, he said, and in addition to buying used books he has shared books with fellow students to cut costs. Savings from rentals, he predicted, would be reinvested back into education as students would buy more books or take more classes.

There are a couple of barriers to starting a rental program. First is the upfront investment to buy the books. Southwestern's student association has put up the \$11,651 to buy the first rental books. Under Southwestern's formula, the textbooks must be rented about five semesters to cover the association's cost of purchasing them.

Another challenge in administering rental programs is that professors must continue to use the same textbooks long enough for repeated rentals to cover the costs of purchasing them.

But professors may find a book unsatisfactory the first time they use it and want to change books. In other cases, professors may go on sabbatical or get assigned to teach different classes.

That's why rental programs start with baby steps.

"Otherwise there is tremendous financial risk to the bookstore and subsequently to the university," Summer said.

Southwestern will rent books in prealgebra, algebra, economics, biology and health courses. Rentals will be due after final exams.

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