Faculty response to the Student Association resolution regarding textbook prices

There’s no “THEY” here
We’re all “WE”
Factors Affecting Textbook Costs to Students

- Publishers’ pricing of textbooks
- Choice of textbooks
- Textbook format
- Bookstore’s pricing of textbooks
- Pricing and availability of used textbooks
- Availability of book assignment information to students

Response to specific points in Student Resolution on Textbooks

1. The Student Association encourages academic departments to consider selecting a single or a limited number of textbook options to be used for each course offered.

2. The Student Association encourages academic departments to use the same edition of a textbook for as long as possible to enable student to resell textbooks and/or to purchase used books at reduced cost.

3. The Student Association urges academic departments and faculty within those departments to consider, in addition to the quality of the material, the total expense of the texts selected and the impact that text selections may have on the transferability of a course.
1. The Student Association encourages academic departments to consider selecting a single or a limited number of textbook options to be used for each course offered

- Academic freedom ensures that departments and faculty are able to choose textbooks that maintain the quality of education and provide a diversity of perspectives. We should be aware, however, that larger adoptions get better pricing. Also, it makes it easier for students to change sections and identify their textbooks earlier. These decisions would need to be made on a case-by-case basis by the department and faculty who are responsible for the courses.

- Therefore, departments and faculty agree to:
  - Consider using the same textbook(s) for all sections of a course, when it can be done without sacrificing quality of teaching.
  - Alternatively, consider having one book in common for all sections of courses that require multiple books.
  - Alternatively, consider a standardized text assignment for sections taught by pre-probationary adjuncts or faculty teaching the course for the 1st time.

1. The Student Association encourages academic departments to consider selecting a single or a limited number of textbook options to be used for each course offered

- Departments will strive to provide textbook assignment information by bookstore deadlines for courses that have instructors assigned, or are using the same book for all sections, by the following deadlines.
  - Fall semester deadline – April 1
  - Spring semester deadline – Oct 15
  - Summer semester deadline – March 1
2. The Student Association encourages academic departments to use the same edition of a textbook for as long as possible to enable student to resell textbooks and/or to purchase used books at reduced cost.

- Faculty members agree to limit their use of new edition textbooks when previous editions do not significantly differ in a substantive way as determined by the appropriate faculty and when the bookstore can ensure an adequate supply of the older edition books are available.
- If a student wishes to use an older edition than the one adopted for the course, it will be their responsibility to identify and make adjustments for any differences that exist between editions.

- The faculty would like to see the Student Association be allowed to do the following:
  - Sponsor used book fairs for students to buy/sell books to each other.
  - Work with the college to create web resource for students to buy/sell textbooks directly to each other.
  - Work with local company CashNow4Books.com to give the students a better deal for buying/selling used books.

- The above activities are not allowed under the current contract between the college and Barnes and Noble. The faculty recommends that it would be in the best interest of the students to remove those restrictions when the contract comes up for renewal in the next year.
3. The Student Association urges academic departments and faculty within those departments to consider, in addition to the quality of the material, the total expense of the texts selected and the impact that text selections may have on the transferability of a course.

- Academic departments and faculty within those departments will consider, in addition to the quality of the material, the total expense of the texts selected and the impact that text selections may have on the transferability of a course.
- Publishers are now required by law to disclose prices to faculty during the book selection process. Faculty will require the publisher to verify the actual selling price to the students with the bookstore.
- Publishers are now required to make their books available without extras like CDs, access codes, etc. Faculty will order textbooks without extra materials, unless they intend to make use of them.

3. Faculty will be mindful that custom packages can save students money by combining select chapters from several different books. The OCC bookstore will buy custom books back if they are being used the next semester, but other places may not want to buy them.
- Faculty will continue evaluating “Open Textbooks” and other free online resources for use in courses.
  - The bookstore could provide “print-on-demand” capabilities for students who want a printed copy of online textbooks.
3. The Student Association urges academic departments and faculty within those departments to consider, in addition to the quality of the material, the total expense of the texts selected and the impact that text selections may have on the transferability of a course.

- The faculty recommends that the Student Association work with the college to provide a central repository for information on “affordable alternatives” for particular textbooks, provided by the faculty, such as using an old edition, buying the cheaper e-Book directly from the publisher, or buying from cheaper online sources like Amazon and such.

- Faculty/departments will request additional desk copies of textbooks to put on reserve in the library, as well as electronic version of books for DSO. In the interest of efficiency, we recommend that the bookstore be assigned responsibility for these tasks when the contract is renewed.

- When feasible, faculty will help by not requiring the textbook during the first week or so of the course, to give students more time to wait for their aid and/or order books from other sources.

These measures are just band-aids

We can do a LOT more ...
WHEREAS, textbooks represent an increasingly significant expense to students…

• **We could save the students over $400,000 per year** by re-negotiating our contract with Barnes and Noble.

  • On an annualized basis, Barnes & Noble must pay OCC the guaranteed payment or the percentage of gross sales, whichever is greater:
    - Guaranteed Amount: $400,000 each year
    - Sales:
      - 11.5% of all gross sales up to $2,000,000;
      - 12.5% of all gross sales $2,000,000 to $3,000,000; and
      - 13.5% of all gross sales over $3,000,000

WHEREAS, textbooks represent an increasingly significant expense to students…

• The money that Barnes and Noble pays to the college every year comes from our students paying too much for their books at the campus bookstore.

• While many students are able to order their books from less expensive sources, our poorest students often have no other choice but to buy their books from the OCC Bookstore, since their financial aid doesn’t arrive in time to buy them anywhere else.

• This recent practice of making the college bookstore into a revenue stream has been facing condemnation and lawsuits at other colleges and state systems.
WHEREAS, textbooks represent an increasingly significant expense to students...

- Furthermore, there is a discrepancy between proposal and final contract wording regarding our bookstore's ability to charge more than the “list price” for textbooks.

WHEREAS, textbooks represent an increasingly significant expense to students...

- Example:
WHEREAS, textbooks represent an increasingly significant expense to students...

- From the B&N Proposal:
  "New textbooks will be sold at no greater than the publisher’s list price or a 25% gross margin on net priced books, inclusive of restocking fees, return penalties and freight surcharges, (Net priced books are defined as books purchased from publishers that do not have a publisher’s suggested list price or where the publisher’s discount to the bookstore is less than 20%)."
  - Based on this wording, the bookstore should charge the list price, $170.63, because they do get the book from the publisher at a 20% discount.
- From the B&N Contract:
  "New textbooks will be sold at no greater than (i) the publisher’s list price or (ii) a 25% gross margin on net priced books, inclusive of restocking fees, return penalties or other surcharges."
  - When we asked for clarification on when a book would be considered "net priced" under these terms we were told: “After verifying with Barnes & Noble, the price of new texts is determined by the invoice B&N receives from the publisher. The invoice lets our bookstore know if they are being charged net price or list price (similar to a suggested retail price), this then determines how the text is priced to be sold at our store.”
  - The bookstore has added a 25% gross margin to the net price*, and is charging $182.00 for the book. That’s more than $11 difference for each copy of the book they sell, and this book is used for many course sections.

* This is assuming that B&N pays the full standard net price. The college will not allow us to view the invoice, or tell us the price that B&N is actually paying for this book.

New “revenue streams” are good...
...but our students shouldn’t always be the source!

Actions to Reduce Textbook Costs

- Order books on time
- Consider older editions
- Avoid extra add-ons
- Find free resources
- Copies for reserve (and DQ)
- Consider pros and cons of custom editions

Faculty:
- Work with publisher on price
- Consider common texts for sections
- Repository for info on affordable alternatives

Administration:
- Freeze schedule earlier
- Reduce profit margins

Student Association:
- Online student book exchange
- Used book fairs
- Don’t exceed list price

Bookstore:
- Avoid extra add-ons
- Find free resources
- Copies for reserve (and DQ)
- Consider pros and cons of custom editions

Dining Services:
- Consider common texts for sections
- Repository for info on affordable alternatives

Tuition:
- Work with publisher on price
- Consider common texts for sections
- Repository for info on affordable alternatives

Student Fees:
- Online student book exchange
- Used book fairs
- Don’t exceed list price
- Avoid extra add-ons
- Find free resources
- Copies for reserve (and DQ)
- Consider pros and cons of custom editions