

University of Wisconsin - Green Bay

Student Government Association

TEXTBOOK REPORT

Office of the President

University Union, Room 112B
2420 Nicolet Drive
Green Bay, WI 54311
(920) 465-2287

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With the rising costs of textbooks, the UW System has been conducting an audit in regards to the textbook rental system. However, efforts can be made by students as recommended in the following report.

What Constitutes the Prices of Textbooks?

Within the educational system, the costs of textbooks are enormous. Frustrations occur with the high costs to purchase new and used textbooks, as well as the nominal amount given back during the time period known as "Textbook Buyback." Many factors determine the high prices, as well as the nominal amount received during Textbook Buyback at UW-Green Bay, as well as throughout the educational system:

1. Used Textbooks

The used textbook market has made it more difficult for the publishing companies to make as much profit as they would off a new textbook, if any profit is received. To keep profits, the prices of new textbooks rise.

2. Publishing Companies

Representatives are sent to campuses to urge professors to purchase new textbooks through the use of multiple ploys:

A. Textbook Packaging

Often, to convince a professor to trade their current textbook for a new textbook, "free" items are made available to students, such as study guides, etc. In

addition, they "free" student-enhanced items are required for the class or make it difficult for the bookstore to purchase textbook back and sell without the "package." Furthermore, occasions have risen with certain publishing company representatives approaching professors after every semester offering a free update in the student enhanced item that can be made available to students by simply giving the bookstore this new ISBN number.

B. Textbook Editions

To coincide with the used textbook market, this market can often be controlled by producing new editions of textbooks. These updates, however, may be made because of valuable information change, minor grammatical error fixes, or recent examples.

3. Professors

A. Bookstore

Lists are due into the bookstore to allow the bookstore to determine the quantity of textbooks to purchase back from students. If a textbook were to be used the following semester, students are able to receive up to 50% of the textbook value. However, if the bookstore is uncertain if a textbook will be used again, a nominal amount is given back to students and the textbooks are sold to the wholesaler. The problem

lies primarily in the lists the bookstore receives from faculty, due at a certain time. If a faculty member does not send in the list of materials required for the following semester, the bookstore is unable to give students a reasonable amount, if they are able to purchase the book back at all. By having a complete list of materials in from all professors on time, students may receive a larger sum when returning textbooks. It should be noted the number of lists not returned to the bookstore is greater in the spring to fall transition than the fall to spring transition, as faculty members rather use the time during summer break to carefully read over all possible textbooks.

Recommendations for Faculty

Upon investigation, the Office of the President suggests the following recommendations to faculty when considering textbooks to use in current and future courses:

1. Return list of materials required for following semester on timeline determined by the Phoenix Bookstore.
2. Question what the new textbook is being packaged with—is this an item faculty think students would read, or items students must read?
3. Communicate with the Phoenix Bookstore if an item is recommended or a required item for the class.

4. Explore whether or not e-book versions are available for the textbooks, as these are often significantly cheaper than purchasing paper textbooks.

5. Question if the new edition is necessary—would the student be able to read older editions of textbooks and still have the ability to connect the textbook content to current examples through classroom discussions?

Student Government Association Efforts

The UW–Green Bay Student Government Association (SGA) may also work to help students save money in regards to textbooks:

1. SGA will begin sending out reminders as students to all faculty to turn in materials list to bookstore in a timely fashion.
2. Provide feedback to professors if questions arise in regards to textbooks.
3. Communicate with Phoenix Bookstore and faculty members on textbook issues.
4. Provide the student body links to e-book versions of textbooks.