

MEMO TO: Deans, Directors, Department Heads

FROM: Larry A. Nielsen
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

SUBJECT: Textbook Adoption and Costs

DATE: October 7, 2008

It is time again to choose your textbooks for the spring semester, and, therefore, it is time again for me to encourage you to make your adoptions on time (**October 15th is our deadline**) and to be cost-conscious in your selections.

Textbook costs continue to rise at much higher rates than other costs, a national concern and a concern for the UNC system and NC State. President Bowles has identified reducing textbook costs as a central theme of his administration, and he is serious about making progress—so serious that he plans to tie his receptiveness to tuition/fee increases and faculty salary increases to how seriously we address textbook costs. Our bookstore folks, led by Richard Hayes and Anthony Sanders, and our standing committee on bookstores are working along with you to reduce textbook costs, with some success:

- The NC State Bookstores' Guaranteed Buyback Program (GBP), which was created in 2007, guarantees that all students who purchase a program title will be paid half of the current new textbook price when the book is sold back. To maximize the amount paid to the students at buyback a GBP title must be adopted for four to six consecutive semesters. During this period, the bookstore staff will automatically readopt these titles so faculty members do not need to turn in any additional textbook requests. The Guaranteed Buyback Program has already resulted in \$400,000 of savings to students for 2007-2008.
- Higher on-time adoption rates have allowed the bookstore to re-purchase books from students at higher prices because we know there will be a market for books in the upcoming semester.
- Your attention to our "Best Practices" suggestions (attached and available on the bookstore website) continues to yield cost savings for our students.

The recent emphasis on textbook costs across the UNC system has created a greater sense of urgency to submit timely textbook requests. The campus wide effort to improve adoption rates resulted in a 72% on time rate for the Fall 2008 term, which is up significantly from 52% for Fall 2006. Please know that President Bowles has targeted a figure of 85% on time adoptions for the UNC system this year, so there is still some room for improvement.

If you have questions or additional ideas for effective management of textbook costs, please contact me (provost@ncsu.edu), Anthony Sanders (Anthony_Sanders@ncsu.edu) or Richard Hayes (Richard_Hayes@ncsu.edu).

Attachment: Best practices in textbook management

cc: Chancellor Oblinger
Executive Officers

Best Management Practices for Textbook Adoption and Use

- ❑ Thank you for considering the costs of textbooks in your strategy for textbook adoption and use of other materials in your courses. YOUR STUDENTS APPRECIATE YOUR CARE!
- ❑ All teaching faculty are to submit their book lists to the NCSU Bookstores by its established deadlines (Fall = April 5; Spring = October 15; Summer = March 15). Departments are encouraged to set their own deadlines for submissions that precede the dates specified by the Bookstore.
- ❑ Review Academic Policies and Regulation #02.20.10 entitled “Listing of Required Course Materials with the NCSU Bookstores” (http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/pols_regs/REG205.00.18.php).
- ❑ At the same time faculty submit their book lists to the NCSU Bookstores, we encourage using the NCSU Libraries Book Reserves to make reserve copies available to students (<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/reserves/faculty>); 515-2597.
- ❑ Unless specifically requested to do otherwise, NCSU Bookstores will
 - order unbundled texts whenever such are available,
 - encourage faculty where applicable to use texts in the same edition used previously,
 - work with faculty to adopt the least expensive textbook that is pedagogically sound.
- ❑ Require a textbook only if it will be used in a substantial way in the course. Students’ end-of-semester course evaluations can inform instructors’ decisions regarding perceived value of selected course texts.
- ❑ Whenever practical, we encourage providing students with supplemental materials to update textbooks rather than requiring new editions.
- ❑ Faculty-authored texts, required for purchase by enrolled students, must be approved through the process defined in the author’s Conflict of Interest statement.
- ❑ We encourage faculty to work with textbook publishers to develop more economical materials that may include low-cost on-line alternatives to traditional textbooks.
- ❑ We encourage faculty to donate desk copies they receive from publishers to the NCSU Libraries as reserve copies of the textbooks for their course.
- ❑ We encourage faculty to consider potentially lower cost text options such as electronic reserves and/or digital access to materials that are appropriate to course objectives.
- ❑ Faculty and departmental textbook coordinators should regularly review the section of the NCSU Bookstores website titled “How to save your students money!” (<http://www.fis.ncsu.edu/ncsubookstores/faculty.html>) and other cost-related information (<http://www.fis.ncsu.edu/ncsubookstores/textbooks.html#pricing>).