

MEMO TO: Deans, Directors, Department Heads

FROM: Larry A. Nielsen
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

SUBJECT: Textbook Adoption and Costs

DATE: March 20, 2009

It is time again to choose your textbooks for the fall semester, and, therefore, it is time again for me to encourage you to make your adoptions on time (**April 5th is our deadline**) and to be cost-conscious in your selections.

Textbook costs continue to rise at much higher rates than other educational costs. President Bowles has identified reducing textbook costs as a high priority for the UNC system; he ties 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 University Standing Committee on Bookstores are working along with you to reduce textbook costs, with some success:

- The NC State Bookstores' Guaranteed Buyback Program (GTB) 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 GTB title must be adopted for four or more 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. This program saved our students \$563,000 for 2007-2008.
- We have substantially increased on-time adoption rates. Fall 2008 on-time adoptions increased to 72% from 50% in Fall 2007. This 22% increase resulted in the bookstore paying out an additional \$213,000 to the students during the prior semester. Likewise, Spring 2009 on-time adoptions rose to 89% from 84% for Spring 2008.
- The result of increased buyback and used textbook availability has been a decline in the average textbook cost for the students. We experienced a 4.79% decline in average textbook costs from 06-07 to 07-08 despite the CPI subcomponent for educational books and supplies increasing by 6.2%.
- Your attention to "Best Practices" suggestions (attached and available on the bookstore website) continues to yield cost savings for our students.

Unfortunately, we are still shy of President Bowles's overall target of 85% on-time adoptions, so there is still some room for improvement.

Last year, we implemented a Textbook Adoption Incentive Program. Several deans indicated that they have great needs for faculty travel funds. So, again this year, I will provide a dedicated travel fund to each college based on the extent to which the college achieves high adoption rates. The program will deliver \$100 for each on-time adoption above the 50% adoption level for the college. I ask that you, as individual faculty and as departments, make adoptions for courses even before instructors are identified (a major reason why adoption rate is so low for the fall semester).

There are several ways to submit textbook requests to the NC State Bookstores. Please submit requests online on either of the bookstore faculty adoption sites shown below. Please know that the bookstore is working on a new faculty adoption site that will be located on the university portal and the bookstore will contact you when that location is available. For now, please use:

<http://ncsu.collegestoreonline.com/ePOS?store=432&form=faculty.html> (requires account login)

or

<http://www.fis.ncsu.edu/ncsubookstores/Departments/Textbooks/requests.html>

You may also email your textbook requests to Anthony Sanders Anthony_sanders@ncsu.edu or Isaac Pomper ilpomper@ncsu.edu if you prefer this methodology.

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).

Thank you for keeping our textbook costs as low as possible by ordering on time.

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>).