

**Textbook Survey Report Draft
Faculty Policies Committee
February 5, 2010**

Background

As a result of issues raised during 2008-2009 Faculty Senate meetings regarding textbook services at the Hornet Bookstore, the Faculty Senate charged the Faculty Policies Committee with examining this issue and providing recommendations to Faculty Senate.

As part of its charge, the Faculty Policies Committee (FPC) developed and administered a survey available to all faculty regarding potential issues with textbooks and the campus bookstore. In addition, the FPC met with Pam Parsons (Bookstore Director) and Shelly Olson (Senior Textbook Manager) during the Fall 2009 semester to discuss the results of the survey and to seek clarification and feedback from the Bookstore.

This report includes the results from this survey as well as FPC recommendations to the Executive Committee and Faculty Senate.

Summary of Textbook Survey Results

Table 1 summarizes the results from 176 faculty responses. As is evident from the table, for most questions the mean response is around 3 (of a 5-point scale, with 5 = excellent and 1 = poor) with standard deviations of around 1.2. It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from the data for many of the questions since the histograms are approximately bell-shaped curves centered at 3. There are, however, some exceptions to this general pattern.

Most notably, many respondents have concerns regarding the high prices of both new and used textbooks, with mean scores of 1.94 and 2.19, respectively. The high and rising costs of textbooks, which extend far beyond just Sacramento State, are discussed in more detail below.

Faculty would also like to see a greater availability of past editions (mean of 2.71 of 5), and there is at least some dissatisfaction with the ease of the faculty online system of ordering books (mean of 2.88).

For all of the other questions in the survey, the mean response is above 3.0 (of 5). The highest overall score is “the ease of correcting requisition errors, if needed” (mean of 3.64), although 45 percent of respondents said that this question was “not applicable” or had “no opinion.” Finally, the most general question, regarding the “overall satisfaction with textbook services,” received a mean score of 3.25.

While different people can read different things into these survey results, with the exception of faculty dissatisfaction regarding the prices of new and used textbooks, there does not seem to be widespread dissatisfaction with the textbook services at the Hornet bookstore, based on the

results of this survey. There is also not enthusiastic faculty support for textbook services either, since the mean responses were all below 4 of 5, and all but two of the questions had a mean response below 3.5 of 5. As we know from student evaluations of teaching, an overall satisfaction of 3.25 of 5 is not particularly good.

**Table 1
Quantitative Results**

Rate your experience with each of the following from 1 to 5 where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent.	Poor					Excellent					No Opinion or Not Applicable	Mean	Standard Deviation
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5			
Overall satisfaction with textbook services of the Hornet Bookstore on campus	9.1%	15.4%	29.7%	28.0%	14.9%						2.9%	3.25	1.18
Ease of requisitioning textbooks	8.7%	11.0%	20.2%	28.9%	24.9%						6.4%	3.54	1.26
Ease of online requisitioning of textbooks	20.3%	16.3%	15.1%	18.6%	14.0%						15.7%	2.88	1.43
Price of new textbooks	46.0%	20.7%	20.1%	5.7%	2.9%						4.6%	1.94	1.10
Price of used textbooks	35.3%	25.4%	15.6%	14.5%	2.9%						6.4%	2.19	1.19
Arrival of requisitioned textbook(s) prior to the time needed	17.3%	11.0%	20.8%	30.1%	17.9%						2.9%	3.21	1.36
Availability of past editions of textbooks	14.4%	13.2%	17.2%	10.3%	6.9%						37.9%	2.71	1.30
Availability of used books in the bookstore	9.8%	9.8%	32.4%	21.4%	8.1%						18.5%	3.10	1.12
Availability of sufficient copies of textbooks in the bookstore for your course(s)	23.8%	10.5%	18.6%	24.4%	19.2%						3.5%	3.05	1.47
Requisitioning additional copies of the textbook(s) if needed	9.9%	10.5%	19.8%	16.9%	11.6%						31.4%	3.14	1.28
Requisitioned textbook(s) available in bookstore for your course(s)	10.6%	13.5%	18.8%	23.5%	17.6%						15.9%	3.29	1.31
Ease of correcting requisition errors if needed	5.3%	2.9%	14.0%	17.0%	15.8%						45.0%	3.64	1.23
Other (if selected please describe below and rate)	17.3%	2.7%	1.3%	0.0%	6.7%						72.0%	2.14	1.71

Table 2 attempts to summarize the written comments provided by faculty members who completed the survey. As is evident from the table, there were very few written comments from the 176 respondents. In no category in Table 2, were there more than five written comments. There were five comments regarding the number of available copies in the bookstore and five comments regarding the price of textbooks. Four faculty respondents complained about books not arriving in time.

Table 2
Categories of Specific Issues Identified by Faculty from Survey

Comment Summary	Number of Written Comments by Faculty
Number of copies of textbook available in bookstore	5
Price of textbooks in bookstore	5
Book(s) not arriving on time	4
Effective staff	2
Online book ordering problem	2
Bookstore unable to get book or bookstore tries to affect choice of book	2
Bookstore not buying back books used	1
Library getting requests for books used in classes	1
Textbook requisition requests going through department secretary and not directly to faculty	1

As is well known, concerns regarding textbook costs extend far beyond Sacramento State. A recent study by the California State Auditor reviewed textbook costs associated with six majors and nine campuses in the UC, CSU, and community college systems.¹ During the 2007-2008 academic year, textbook costs for full-time students averaged \$905 in the UC system, \$812 in the CSU system, and \$692 in California community colleges.²

Although California State University, Sacramento is one of the nine campus bookstores included in the California State Auditor Report, it is the only one for which mark-ups over publishers' invoice prices are not reported. The California State Auditor Report explains why there was no information on bookstore mark-ups over invoice prices at Sacramento State:

The campus bookstores at California State University (CSU), Sacramento, and the University of California (UC), Berkeley, are each operated under a contract with the Follett Higher Education Group (Follett). The CSU Sacramento bookstore contract, however, was signed by an auxiliary organization of the university, and a court has decided that auxiliary organizations are not subject to the California Public Records Act (CPRA). The auxiliary organization referred to Follett our request to report information based on the contract. Follett denied our request. In contrast, the Regents of UC signed the contract with Follett for the UC Berkeley bookstore. Because public universities are subject to CPRA, we were able to report information based on that contract.³

For the other bookstores in the survey, mark-ups ranged from 25 to 28 percent at UC Davis to as high as 43 percent at UC Berkeley, Long Beach State, and Grossmont Community College. It is concerning that Follett refused to release this information for

¹ California State Auditor, *Affordability of College Textbooks: Textbook Prices have Risen Significantly in the Last Four Years, but Some Strategies May Help to Control These Costs for Students*, August 2008 Report 2007-116.

² *Ibid.*, Table 1, p. 22.

³ *Ibid.*, footnote to Table 2, p. 27.

the Hornet Bookstore. However, based on limited information, it doesn't look like students at Sacramento State pay any more than average for textbooks.⁴

Recommendations

Recommendations for Faculty

- Consider price in the textbook adoption process

Assembly Bill 2477, which took effect on January 1, 2005, requires CSU leaders to work with their academic senates to encourage faculty to consider the least costly practices in assigning textbooks. Assembly Bill 1548, effective January 1, 2008, encourages faculty to consider cost in the adoption of textbooks.

- Consider adopting textbooks that are not bundled with supplementary products, unless all the components of the bundle are required for the course.
- Consider allowing students to use older editions of the textbook(s), and provide multiple reading lists for each of several editions of a book.
- Whenever possible, submit your textbook adoption information to the Bookstore by the due dates.
- Encourage the use of open educational resources through Creative Commons, Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT), the CSU's Digital Marketplace, and other available online resources.
- Work with the bookstore to get more titles added to the textbook rental program.
- Contact the bookstore immediately whenever there are any actual or projected changes in enrollment that deviate from historical patterns for a particular class.

⁴ Table 3 (p. 29) of the California State Auditor Report shows a maximum textbook cost for biology majors of \$1,693 per year for majors at UC Davis, City College of San Francisco, and CSU Sacramento. The cost of \$1,533 at CSU Sacramento is the lowest figure in the Table for biology majors. For business majors, textbooks costs at CSU Sacramento are somewhat above the seven campus average of \$1,931 per year, with business students at Sacramento State paying \$2,012 per year during 2007-2008.

Recommendations for Students

- Encourage more students to take advantage of textbook buyback and rental programs.
- Encourage students to consider purchasing textbooks through third-party providers on Amazon.com and other online providers if they are not satisfied with the Hornet Bookstore.
- Encourage students to explore the possibility of creating Student Book Exchanges, like those that currently exist at UC Berkeley, UC Davis, and DeAnza College.

Recommendations for University Administration

- Encourage the Provost, Deans, and Department Chairs to make decisions regarding course offerings and staffing well before the start of the semester and as soon as possible.
- Continue to provide e-mail reminders to faculty regarding textbook costs and textbook ordering deadlines.

Recommendations for the Hornet Bookstore

- Consider providing incentives (gift certificates, etc.) to faculty who meet bookstore ordering deadlines.
- Request that the Hornet Bookstore publicly disclose, on an annual basis, their average mark-ups over publishers' invoice prices, as well as the range of mark-ups, as other university-run bookstores have been willing to do.
- Work more closely with the faculty liaisons on the Bookstore Advisory Group and with Department Chairs to better forecast actual course enrollments.
- Improve communication with faculty through the Bookstore Advisory Group. The faculty members of this group need to take a more active role in the future.