

Minutes of the December 20, 2005 Meeting
of the Board of Governors'
Subcommittee Studying the Cost of Textbooks

The Subcommittee Studying the Cost of Textbooks met via teleconference on Tuesday, December 20, 2005, at 10:00 a.m.

Subcommittee members in attendance were Mr. Ray S. Farris, Mr. Peter D. Hans, and Mr. Benjamin S. Ruffin. Mr. Zachary Wynne, President of the Student Government Association, was also in attendance as well as staff from the Office of the President and members of the press.

Chair Hans convened the meeting and offered opening remarks. At its November 10 meeting, the subcommittee had invited Mr. John Jones, Director of Campus Merchandising at UNC Chapel Hill, back for further consultation and asked that he present recommendations in writing for consideration. Chair Hans called upon Vice President Davies to discuss Mr. Jones' recommendations. The following recommendations, which reflect the work of the subcommittee to date and the recommendations offered by Mr. Jones, were then discussed:

1. Campuses should endeavor to make extensive information available to students and faculty regarding the factors that affect textbook purchase/rental prices and the prices paid when students sell used books back to the store. This might incorporate efforts already underway at some campuses, including:
 - a. extensive campaigns to inform faculty of alternatives, such as digitized materials licensed for campus use or the potential for adoption of electronic textbooks;
 - b. providing incentives for faculty to turn in book orders on time and providing them with information that explains how late book orders increase the prices of textbooks to their students;
 - c. encouraging faculty to carefully consider the additional textbook costs associated with bundled materials or new editions with minimal new information (therefore perhaps continuing to use an older edition or an unbundled option so more used texts are available);
 - d. working with departmental assistants to facilitate timely orders of textbooks by faculty members and/or developing multiple strategies to promote timely textbook adoptions through such mechanisms as websites, email, phone, fax, and on-site orders; and
 - e. documenting and disseminating information regarding the successful financial outcomes for students based on the measures that have been implemented.
2. Campuses should also consider forming collaborative committees of bookstore staff, faculty and students to examine campus policies, create strategies for sharing of information related to textbook costs and promote best practices regarding textbook adoptions, orders, purchases and rentals.
3. Each campus should have a policy to address potential conflicts of interest in the use of faculty-authored books or sales of desk copies.

4. Financial aid offices on each campus should regularly review average textbooks costs on their campus in order to ensure that the budget included in financial aid packages for textbooks is realistic.
5. Faculty members should clearly communicate to their students regarding required versus “recommended” texts, and should endeavor to put texts on reserve in the campus library so as to increase options that are available to students. Campus libraries should provide faculty with timely and clear information regarding policies for putting materials on reserve so that they will be available to students when needed for coursework.
6. UNC campus bookstore representatives should meet to discuss the possibility of sharing booklists to find overlapping titles and allow the selling between UNC stores of used books, or developing a “UNC Buyback Consortium”. This would help students to receive the best possible prices for their used textbooks, by opening a larger possibility of users. Rather than relying on one campus to reuse textbooks, if any UNC campus were using the text, students would receive a much higher price for their used textbooks. It is recommended that Mr. John Jones, Director of UNC-Chapel Hill’s Student Stores, be asked to lead this initiative.
7. UNC campus books stores should explore the option of holding wholesale buyback inventories for three to nine months instead of immediately selling to wholesale companies. Based on experience at one institution, bookstores often find out late that a book will be reused and therefore higher prices can be given to students.
8. Campuses should examine providing students with the option of renting textbooks as a means of reducing the costs of education. The result of this examination and proposed campus actions should be presented to the President when submitting requests for campus-initiated tuition increases and fee increases for the 2007 academic year.
9. One year following the conclusion of the work of the Subcommittee, the Vice President for Finance will make a report to the Committee on Budget and Finance on the implementation of the Subcommittee recommendations and progress made system-wide to address keeping the costs of textbooks as low as possible for students.

Chair Hans asked Mr. Davies to discuss these recommendations with President-elect Bowles and to seek his guidance on renting textbooks to achieve cost savings.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Mr. Peter D. Hans
Chairman, Subcommittee Studying the Cost of Textbooks