

# HOW CAN FACULTY KEEP TEXTBOOK COSTS DOWN?

ACADEMIC SENATE ADOPTED GUIDELINES  
SPRING 2009

Faculty should consider all means to control and reduce textbook and course material costs that do not compromise academic freedom or educational quality.

*Faculty guidelines:*

- 1. Adopt or revise departmental purchasing guidelines.** Consider adopting or revising your departmental purchasing guidelines to incorporate the principles outlined below.
- 2. Disseminate information about how students can keep textbook costs down.** The ASCC flyer “How Can Students Keep Textbook Costs Down?” can be distributed in class or included in class syllabus or webpage.
- 3. Submit textbook orders early.** This lowers the cost by giving the bookstore time to purchase more used books from students and increases used book availability. It allows students to shop alternate sources for the best price.
- 4. Consider department-wide textbook adoptions.** Department-wide textbook adoptions allow the bookstore to purchase more used books. In addition, the same book can be used by students who retake a class.
- 5. Consider price before adopting a book.** Is there a lower cost book alternative? Consider the price of instructor based ancillary materials and if they are necessary. Using ancillary materials eliminates the used book buyback and used book option.
- 6. Order unbundled books when possible.** Extra CD-ROMs and workbooks may seem like a good deal, but in fact, it drives up the price by requiring a new purchase each time eliminating the used book and buy back cost savings for students. The bookstore can only buy back textbooks with all the bundled items intact and unused.
- 7. Create your own textbook study guides and support materials.** Requiring students to purchase bundled workbooks, study guides and CD-ROMS with textbooks drives costs up and prevents students from reselling their books. Creating your own study guides and support materials eliminates this additional cost. Explore resources such as grants and release time to create the materials.

8. **Stay with the same edition for as long as possible.** Adopting a new edition eliminates the used book availability and bookstore buybacks for a semester.
9. **Allow your students to use older editions.** If you must order the new edition, consider letting your students use older editions when available. Post the older edition information in the syllabus.
10. **Consider open learning content instead of a traditional textbook.** Consider the offerings at California Community Colleges Open Content [CCCOER](#), Rice University's [Connexions](#), California State University's [MERLO](#), and other repositories of extremely low cost and free content.
11. **Require a library copy from publisher representative.** Work with the library regarding maintaining reserve and reference copies of textbooks. Consider adopting books only if publisher will provide two or more desk copies.
12. **Designate as required only those textbooks and materials that will be used.** Designate others as optional. Consider that some student resources will not fund optional textbooks and materials, i.e., EOPS/CalWORKs. If more than one textbook or material is required, clearly outline in syllabus when each will be used.
13. **Check with the publisher or bookstore for a paperless e-text version.** E-text versions are often and initially cheaper. However, consider that E-text books eliminate the buy back and used book option for students.
14. **Provide textbook ISBN number.** Display textbook ISBN number on syllabus and/or course webpage. This allows the student to shop around for the best price.
15. **Consider providing information to students about campus sources for textbook assistance.** Provide contact information for financial aid, EOPS/CARE, and CalWORKs on your syllabus and/or course webpage.
16. **Recognize that selling instructor complimentary editions drives textbook costs up.** Faculty sales of review or complimentary instructor copies impact costs, since most publishers "give away" millions of dollars in books each year, a cost then passed on to students. Many feel it is unethical for individual faculty members to use these giveaways to increase personal income.

## HOW CAN STUDENTS KEEP TEXTBOOK COSTS DOWN?

Listed below are several alternative sources and means for keeping textbook costs down:

- Buy used books when available.
- If more than one book is required or recommended, check with the instructor to ask when the book will be needed.
- Consider if you are eligible for financial assistance for books from sources such as [Financial Aid](#), [EOPS](#), [New Horizons](#) or [CalWORKs](#).
- Check with the library and ask if your textbook is available for limited loan. If the library does not currently have the book, ask the instructor to request a desk copy for the library.
- Shop around. Compare prices from several book stores on and off campus. Ask instructor for the textbook ISBN number to facilitate this.
- Check with on-line stores that specialize in selling textbooks such as: [whywaitforbooks.com](http://whywaitforbooks.com). (This is the campus Barnes & Noble website. A percentage of all sales goes toward college and student government programs.); [amazon.com/textbooks](http://amazon.com/textbooks); [textbooks.com](http://textbooks.com); [cheapesttextbooks.com](http://cheapesttextbooks.com); [booksprice.com](http://booksprice.com); [campusbooks.com](http://campusbooks.com).
- See if the textbook is available to download free through an open source on the internet. Many such repositories exist. Examples include: [wikibooks.org](http://wikibooks.org); [wikieducator.org](http://wikieducator.org); [connexions \(cnx.org\)](http://connexions.cnx.org); [cccoer.wordpress.com](http://cccoer.wordpress.com); [oercommons.org](http://oercommons.org); [merlot.org](http://merlot.org).
- Check for on-line book exchanges between students from sources such as [Ebay.com](http://Ebay.com); [bookswap.com](http://bookswap.com); [campusbookswap.com](http://campusbookswap.com); [swapbooks.com](http://swapbooks.com); [swaptree.com](http://swaptree.com); [bookins.com](http://bookins.com).
- Check if the publisher offers an e-text version that is paperless and usually cheaper.