



ECU Dowdy Student Stores
Response to the Faculty Senate Regarding Textbooks
October 2008

The high cost of textbooks has been a concern and top priority for the UNC system and for East Carolina University. ECU Dowdy Stores has been proactive in their efforts to work with faculty and the administration to develop initiatives to keep textbooks as affordable as possible for our students. Our ECU faculty plays a crucial role in these efforts. By partnering with the bookstore, faculty can make a difference in the cost of their student's textbooks.

- UNCGA / PACE Initiatives Regarding Textbooks
 - UNC Report on Implementation of Recommendations from the Subcommittee Studying the Cost of Textbooks stipulates the following:
 - ☑ Each campus **textbook committee must continue**. (*We are in need of new members from the Faculty Senate for this year*).
 - ☑ Bookstore managers should **meet at least quarterly** to discuss the UNC buyback consortium, other best practices, and opportunities for improvements.
 - ☑ The PACE implementation effort should continue to consider the various options for **possible exemptions or changes to the sales taxes**. (State Bill 1392)
 - ☑ All Chancellors should support existing efforts and do what is necessary to ensure **100% on-time adoptions** of textbooks.
 - ☑ Campus requests for **increases in tuition or fees must be accompanied by a calculation of average textbook costs** for undergraduates on their campus.
 - ☑ By January 2008, all campuses must have a **guaranteed buyback or rental** of the required textbooks for **introductory courses**.
- Textbook Adoptions
 - A **new online adoption process** was implemented in Fall 2007 with over 700 adoptions submitted electronically for the semester. For Spring 2008, 1028 requisitions were submitted electronically and 1073 for the Fall 2008 term. By using this system, faculty can help streamline the textbook requisitioning process, and keep orders more organized.
 - As an incentive to **submit on-time textbook adoptions, three departments are selected each fall and spring term to receive a \$500 textbook scholarship to award to one of their students**, based on the highest percentage of on-time adoptions.
 - Problems we are aware of regarding early/timely adoptions include new faculty hired after the due date, and/or visiting/adjunct faculty not knowing which courses they will teach or not hired until closer to the beginning of the semester; hence, it's too late to buy books back from students, to find used books on the market, or possibly order the book(s) in time for tax-free weekend or

even the start of the semester.

- Some faculty request the Dowdy Student Stores order enough text for 100% of their enrollment. There are now three other bookstores in town catering to ECU students, as well as the online retailers. Because of this, no longer order 100 % of the enrollment for a course. We use prior semester/year figures to determine the number of textbooks to order, keep a careful watch on inventory, and have a re-ordering protocol to follow for prompt restocking.

- **Guaranteed Buyback**

- We **encourage departments to commit to a 2-year adoption of a textbook**, in order to allow their students to purchase textbooks included in the **Guaranteed Book Buyback program**. The book cannot be part of a bundle, with software or Internet key code to access materials online, as these are not able to be reused by another student. Participation in this program allows faculty to make a significant impact to lower the cost of textbooks. It basically cuts the textbook cost in half for the student, as he or she is given 50% of the purchase price back in cash at the end of the semester.

After the first semester with the program in place, ECU students were paid back almost \$50,000 more than the previous fall semester, demonstrating its success. Spring 2008 book buyback provided \$228,775 back to ECU students in cash.

- In a partnership with NC State and UNC-Chapel Hill, ECU Dowdy Student Stores also buy books that can be sold to those students; and they buy back books for ECU students as well. ECU bought \$3,908.50 in books to be sold at the UNC-Chapel Hill bookstore and \$2,651.50 for NC State. In turn, Chapel Hill bought \$6,077 in books to be sold at ECU, and NC State bought \$10,458 in used textbooks for us. Other colleges are interested in this collaboration. UNC-Asheville will be included this school year.

- **Prices / Profit Margins**

- On average, ECU students spend less for textbooks than many of the UNC-System schools. ECU has the 2nd lowest cost for new textbooks and is ranked 4th lowest for used books. If purchasing new texts, an ECU student spends approximately \$646 for books, or \$488 if buying used books through the university bookstore.

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What students pay at:	New	Used
UNC Pembroke	\$ 526	\$ 350
ECU	646	488
UNC Asheville	678	411
Fayetteville State	737	554
UNC Charlotte	764	576
NC Central	773	581
UNC Greensboro	780	585
NC State	794	599
UNC Wilmington	810	607
Winston-Salem State	810	611
UNC Chapel Hill	890	668
NCA&T	974	363

Source: UNC Board of Governors

- Dowdy Student Store utilizes a 22% mark-up on textbooks, which is slightly below the national average.

Products available in college stores are sold with a margin, as in any retail operation. Margin is the difference between cost and retail price, reflecting work/operating expenses required to bring products to market. According to the National Association of College Stores (NACS), the average gross margin for new textbooks is 22.7% and for used textbooks, 35.9%.

- Scholarship Contributions
While keeping prices down is a commitment, the Dowdy Student Stores also continues to be one of the largest contributors to East Carolina University Scholarships. These contributions come from the store's profit margin. Over \$3 million has been transferred to scholarship funds over the last decade. A minimum of \$365,000 a year has been donated since 2000. In addition to these contributions by the Dowdy Student Stores, it has donated an average of \$60,000 annually to various campus departments, and paid for all its operational expenditures since no state funds are provided for store operations.

- Back Order Process

- When Books are Delayed at Publisher / Out of Print
The Student Store will make every attempt to notify instructors if they are notified by the publisher of a delay in shipping beyond the first week or classes, or if a book has been discontinued.
- Out of Stock / Back Orders
After the initial shipment of a textbook, the book will be automatically re-ordered with 2nd day air shipment to replenish stock, and the approximate delivery date will be written on the shelf tag. If the first week of classes has passed, an out of stock book will be "special ordered" for students who request it, unless there is high demand – in which case, another shipment of books will be ordered.

In some cases, the Dowdy Student Store will call the instructor of a class to determine the number of students still needing the book(s); and staff may call UBE to check on their quantity left, directing students there if necessary.

If a book is used in two different courses, it may only be placed in one location on the shelves, with a small sign directing students to the shelf location where the book is stocked.

Where the New Textbook Dollar Goes* ...



*College store numbers are averages and reflect the most current data gathered by the National Association of College Stores. Publisher numbers are estimates based on data provided by the Association of American Publishers.

Program Essentially Creates Half-Priced Textbooks

Believe it or not, some East Carolina students will be lucky enough to get half-price textbooks for their courses! It's not a sweepstakes, contest, or gimmick – it's called the "Half-Back Guarantee," and students have been enjoying the benefits of this program for the past year.

Since 2006, ECU Dowdy Student Stores has been involved with a campus task force to find ways to make textbooks more affordable. Student Store managers and faculty representatives participated in statewide meetings and numerous conference calls with constituent university representatives and general administration leaders about the topic. Discussions included the implementation of programs for the timely submission of textbook adoptions and a mandate of either a guaranteed buyback or rental program for introductory courses. ECU bookstore staff and administrators found the buyback option to be more favorable with faculty and more cost-effective to implement. The program was put into place in Fall 2007.

The Half-Back Guarantee at ECU Dowdy Student Stores guarantees the student purchasing specially marked textbooks can sell them back at the end of the semester for 50 percent of the selling price. Not all textbooks are suitable for this program, such as bundled packages that include a textbook, workbook,

CD, and/or an Internet access code. However, the bookstore met with faculty members and identified certain textbooks that will be used again in the next term. These books are labeled and put on schedule to be bought back at the end of the term for HALF the price the student paid for it. This initiative, in essence, cuts the cost of certain textbooks by 50 percent!

With PACE studies a top priority for the administration, the buyback program stands out as one with immediate, significant savings for students, with the potential for students to save even more money as program participation grows and faculty participation increases. After the first semester with the program in place, ECU students were paid back almost \$50,000 more than the previous fall semester, demonstrating its success. East Carolina has been recognized for its quick start-up and ability to gain the support of faculty to implement the cost-saving measure for students.

Faculty interested in learning how their students can save money with this program should contact the Dowdy Student Stores, 328-6731.

