

## ***REDUCING TEXTBOOK COSTS***

### ***BGSU Bookstores***

The BGSU Bookstores, like the vast majority of collegiate retailers nationally, is very concerned with the high cost of course materials for college students. While there are many factors that are beyond the control of a typical college bookseller (selection of textbooks, wholesale cost), BGSU has made a number of concerted efforts to limit the impact of high textbook prices upon college students, modeled after similar initiatives at other institutions.

#### ***Digital Media Distribution***

Digital media, also commonly known as “eBooks” is another way to reduce the cost of course materials because the digital media is generally discounted lower than the selling price of used books. At BGSU, eBooks have been sold when available for a print title ordered by the faculty since the fall semester, 2005. They are sold for 35% off the new, printed book selling price. A \$100 new book sells for \$65 as an eBook. An eBook card is selected and when scanned at point-of-sale, a pass code is printed on the sales receipt, allowing the student to download the digital media title to be their computer. Of the more than 2,400 titles requested for the spring, 2008 semester, eBook titles were available for 72 of the books.

#### ***Bookstore Scholarship Programs***

Three years ago, the BGSU Bookstores established a comprehensive scholarship and grant program for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty. While all of the programs are related in some way to community engagement, one program in particular helps to completely eliminate the cost of textbooks for up to 50 students. In partnership with the Office of Admissions, the Bookstore awards 50 Bookstore Book Loans to applicants for the local communities surrounding BGSU. The books are provided free of charge to these students by the Bookstore with the stipulation that they are returned at the end of the semester. The Bookstore then processes the books to maximize the redeemed value and thus minimizing the net cost of the program.

## ***Reducing Textbook Costs – BGSU Bookstores***

### ***Improved Faculty Communication***

The most traditional method for reducing the cost of textbooks is through a vibrant used book program which saves students at BGSU 25% off the price of a new textbook. A new textbook selling for \$100 sells for \$75 used at BGSU. While there are many internal factors that contribute to a successful used book program, an essential component to ANY effort is getting the book information from faculty as early as possible. This is because the wholesale used book market operates on a “first come, first served” basis. In addition, the student buyback process is directly affected by the faculty ordering process and requests processed before finals week, will significantly impact the money a student receives during the end-of-semester buyback process. For a student that purchased the \$75 used book above and who sells it back to the bookstore when a reorder is on file, can receive as much as \$50, reducing their NET cost on the book to just \$25. Improving communication with faculty members and academic administration is critical to facilitating the course material sourcing process. Many collegiate retailers have made significant strides in this area and improved their used book programs through consistent communication and partnership with academic programs, but there is still more opportunity in this area.

### ***Textbook Rental Program***

The most recent program launched by the Bookstore for the spring, 2008 semester that reduces the cost of textbooks is a textbook rental program that saves students 60% over the cost of purchasing a new textbook. The rental option is offered on select titles under agreement with the academic departments who request the textbooks and in addition to the option to purchase new, used and digital books, where available. The academic department must commit to using the book for four consecutive fall-spring semesters so that the purchase cost of the rental books can be recovered. For the spring semester pilot program, three titles were offered and over 150 books rented, saving students more than \$11,000 over the cost of new book purchases. The students sign a liability agreement committing to return the book in acceptable condition at the end of the semester. This program is currently being expanded as an option for any course book request that meets the selection criteria.

*For more information, contact the BGSU Bookstore at 419-372-2851.*