

March 2012

To: WVU Faculty

From: Textbook Affordability Committee

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About: Textbook Selection Guidelines

The cost of textbooks and other instructional materials has increased in recent years to the point that they represent a significant part of students' educational expenses. Concern over the costs of course materials has led to both federal and state legislation and to Higher Education Policy Commission and WVU Board of Governors policies concerning textbook affordability. BOG Policy 48 mandates the establishment of a Textbook Affordability Committee and the creation of textbook selection guidelines that satisfy several specified requirements. All faculty are legally considered to be employees of the Board and are subject to Board policies and these guidelines.

The intent of the legislation and policies is to ensure that appropriate, high quality course materials are selected and that students are given timely access to the most affordable materials. Actions that support a market for used books increase affordability by enabling students to purchase used books and to sell back books that they do not wish to keep. Similarly, textbook rentals decrease costs. Public access to information about selected materials and the timely selection of course materials are important because they support used book and rental markets and allow students to find alternative, less costly sources for those materials. These considerations and state ethics code inform the provisions of the guidelines, below.

Textbook Selection Guidelines:

- 1) Textbooks should be utilized for a reasonable number of consecutive years before new editions or different titles are adopted. The selection of textbooks that have earlier editions are available and can be easily and appropriately utilized in the course is also encouraged.
- 2) Customized editions of textbooks should not be adopted unless the customization provides exceptional educational utility. Customized textbooks cannot be repurchased, and no used book or rental market exists for these volumes. In addition, customized texts are produced to order and often require substantially longer lead times for orders to be filled. Inclusion of any course- or university-specific material, omission of particular chapters, and bundling the standard edition of

the text with consumable supplies or an access code for online course materials are all considered customization.

3) Faculty should adhere to deadlines for textbooks and course materials to be selected prior to each semester. Deadlines fall on or around March 1 for summer semesters, March 15 for fall semester and October 15 for spring semester. If no course materials are to be adopted, faculty should inform the bookstore by the deadline. Textbooks cannot be repurchased or supplies of used copies be secured until the adoption information is received by the bookstore.

4) A procedure must be in place for the default selection of textbooks and course materials in the event that deadlines for selection are not met. The bookstore will inform department chairs of the status of selections for the departmental courses after the deadline. The procedure will be applied for courses where no selection has been made. Any such textbook default selection must be strictly enforced and the selection shall not be changed subsequently for the semester under consideration. Given that the types and usage of course materials vary greatly across the university, each department should establish its own procedure and forward that procedure in written form to the Textbook Affordability Committee, care of the Committee's chair. In the event that a department has not adopted a textbook default selection procedure, the university procedure will be applied. That is, the course materials that were used the last time that the course was offered will be adopted.

5) No employee of the Board shall require for any course a textbook that includes his or her own writing or work if the textbook incorporates either detachable worksheets or workbook-style pages intended to be written in and removed from the textbook. This does not prohibit an employee from requiring as a supplement to a textbook any workbook or similar materials which is published independently from the textbook. Workbooks, lab manuals, or similar material written jointly by the faculty of a course may be required.

6) No employee of the Board may receive any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit or money, service benefit or thing of value, present or promised, as an inducement for requiring students to purchase a specific textbook or supplemental course material. However, an employee may receive royalties or other compensation for such sales that include the employee's own writing or work. An employee may also receive free sample copies, instructor's copies and instructional materials but may not resell these items.

7) Textbook publishers soliciting any employee of the Board to select textbooks or supplemental course materials must provide that employee, in writing: (i) the price of the textbook and supplemental course materials; (ii) the copyright dates of the three previous editions, if any; (iii) a description of any substantial content revisions from the previous editions; (iv) whether the textbook is available in other lower cost formats and, if so, the price to the University and the general public; (v) the price of textbooks unbundled from supplemental course materials; and (vi) the same information, to the extent practicable, for custom textbooks. A textbook or supplemental course material shall not be selected or assigned if the publisher does not supply the above information.