



Bookstore Committee Minutes

April 3, 2009 10:00 am

Room 804A

Present: Johanna Bowen, Elowyn Corby, Glenn Dixon, Robin Ellis, Paul Harvell, Steve Miner, Dan Rothwell

Absent: Pegi Ard, Gabe Gutierrez

Robin called the meeting to order at 10:08 am.

- I. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the November 12, 2008 were approved unanimously.

- II. Bookstore Update: Spring rush went well. 100% of on time requisition books were on the shelves and available. Congratulations and thank you to Steve for his hard work on this challenging task. Students had an approximately ten minutes wait at checkout. Ideas for streamlining include using handheld computers for credit card sales. Robin noted that spring rush sales were down about 3%. Given the state of the economy, 3% is not bad; other stores are down 15%.

Johanna noted that demand for reserve texts is quite high; record numbers are using the library in general, and library resources such as laptops, etc. Johanna asked for assistance in getting books that are not on the usual lists. Library spent \$3,000 more than the \$15,000 student senate grant; mostly due to the Watsonville expansion. Robin noted that is a national trend as well.

Robin also noted that efforts are underway to make the bookstore more of a destination. New food items are also available, such as organic, fresh wraps made by a culinary graduate. Dan recommended marketing the bookstore to faculty and having special events, such as mid-week sale items. Johanna suggested putting a sandwich board at the library to advertise bookstore events. Paul suggested having a flex week event. Robin has a powerpoint presentation about how to lower textbook costs. There was some discussion of how to collaborate with the student senate to create a viable flex week activity.

Textbook affordability. Robin distributed information about the “broken” national and state textbook markets and suggestions of how to “fix” them. Cabrillo is already implementing most of the recommendations in these reports: Strengthen the used book market, use faculty adoption guidelines, provide info to students and parents, increase library resources.

There was discussion about making the library and bookstore website mobile-friendly.

Elowyn asked if the 2% discount for books over \$100 could support the textbook rental program. Robin noted that the 2% discount was easy to implement but has lowered the store's margin. Elowyn will ask for a formal resolution from the senate to discontinue the 2% discount but use the \$15,000 the bookstore annually budgets for the discount to expand the textbook rental program. Students love the rental program. Books were rented the third day of classes. The default rate, getting the books back, however, is still to be determined. Johanna suggested looking at the last date to withdraw to see if the student is still in the class. If books are not returned, student records and registration is held.

Legislation: Robin served on the Board of Directors of the California Association of College Stores when AB 2477 was proposed and worked with the board and legislature to make the bill more advantageous to students. She noted that a couple more pieces of legislation are in progress as well as a meeting with Joe Simitian to ensure he has a source of information outside of publishers. Elowyn suggested that Robin speak with Jeff, the student legislative representative. One idea being considered is no sales tax on textbooks. Tax is currently 9% in Santa Cruz and 9.25% in Watsonville.

Dan asked that the information Robin shared to be sent to faculty via email. Online fraud is prevalent and faculty could help to educate students about the pros of using our bookstore.

There has been discussion about leasing the bookstore; leasing agencies offer to share excess revenues with the District, but these agencies are gaining notoriety because students end up paying more to produce the excess revenues. Leasing agencies also support a large corporate structure.

- III. Rental program update: Staff would like to expand the rental program. Student senate provided \$20,000; \$15,000 was used in spring 2009. Average: \$93.27 per book. Given the unknowns, like the default rate, not all the funds were used this semester. Dan asked how many copies were available; 160 books, distributed across three titles proportionately to their anticipated sales. The early returned rentals were re-rented. Johanna asked if the rental program was supported solely by the student senate; Steve replied that there is a long list of criteria and expanding the rental titles requires student and faculty support. Staff didn't want to overmarket the program due to the current limited availability of only three titles. Steve shared a story about a student who was about to drop a psychology class but was able to remain in the class because of the textbook rental program.

Robin asked how to approach the textbook rental budget. Currently, the senate is considering \$10,000 for next year. It is surprising that \$15,000 only bought 160 books, but the more expensive, hard cover books were chosen for the pilot.

There was discussion about the bookstore budget, the escalating salary, benefit, occupancy and maintenance costs, as well as other unforeseen start up costs in the new facility. The Watsonville bookstore has been running at a loss. The philosophical question is whether the bookstore is to be a profit center or should it be subsidized. According to a National Association of College Stores (NACS) survey, 27% of college bookstores are subsidized and have no occupancy/maintenance costs. The bookstore is now operating with a projected a three-year deficit. If the goal is to keep textbook costs lower, then the escalating costs will

be covered from other sources. If the Watsonville bookstore was operating at a break-even point, would that help to offset costs? Cutting costs usually means cutting labor.

The committee requested that Robin bring budget figures to the next bookstore committee meeting. The issue of the District subsidizing the child care center costs has been an issue during the current budget crunch. Textbook costs are an access to higher education issue.

IV. Textbook Buyer Presentation: Steve distributed a report of on-time requisitions and the used book program savings. Laudably, the savings to students in 2007-08 was \$742,269. There was a slight drop in on-time requisitions from 72 to 78%, but is relatively insignificant. Faculty is getting requisitions in on time, Instructional Division Assistants (IDAs) are working hard to get them in on time, and there is not much room for improvement. Some factors make it impossible to get reqs in on time. If the statistics were 60-65%, perhaps more work could be done, but this appears to be about as good as it gets. Book reps often tell Steve that our faculty is exemplary at getting over 70% of requisitions in on time. It was also noted that increased contact between students and faculty helps. Further savings to students will likely be seen in the expansion of the rental program.

VI. For the Good of the order: It was noted that the possibility of a single text for English is under consideration. This is a big step. Pajaro Valley School District said they would consider adopting the same English writing primer as Cabrillo.

Dan suggested more ideas to promote the bookstore on the next agenda.

Robin will contact Francine about getting on the fall flex week calendar for a possible co-sponsored event with Johanna, Robin, Dan, and a student. Dan suggested asking that event be highlighted in the program.

Dan noted that Robin is doing a great job, and in particularly challenging times.

For many years, the bookstore contributed \$15,000 to the student senate; the senate now contributes \$15,000 to the reserve program at the library.

VII. Next meeting date: Fall.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 am.