



**Bookstore Committee Minutes
November 13, 2009 10:00 am
Room SAC 225**

Present: Johanna Bowen, Flor Chacon, Glenn Dixon, Robin Ellis, Steve Miner, Georg Romero, Dan Rothwell

Absent: Pegi Ard, Paul Harvell

Robin called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

- I. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the April 4, 2009 were approved unanimously.

- II. Bookstore Update: Robin has been working on making the Bookstore a destination on campus. Fifteen faculty attended the Flex week event. It was a good interactive session. Dan suggested having an All College Day forum/panel in the theater to demonstrate alternatives and the complexities of a vastly changing textbook market.

There was discussion of leasing bookstores. Robin noted that it is generally a bad idea for students. Chabot has a new VP and discussed leasing the bookstore. During budget crises, leasing a bookstore appears to be an instant revenue stream for a college, but at the expense of students. The margin is part of the contract; leasing agents aren't able to obtain less expensive textbooks. They tend to close the doors and raise prices on everything. They also make the situation untenable so that staff leave.

Textbook affordability: Robin reviewed the report from the Chancellor's office regarding textbook affordability. The bookstore has worked on each recommendation in the report. Robin met with a representative from Flatworld, an online open educational resource. There are associated technology costs. Robin suggested the purchase of such printing equipment would cost \$70,000-\$140,000. Sesario suggested that if the investment is worth the savings to students, perhaps the Senate would be interested in investing in printing equipment so that students could "print-on-demand", but it was noted that not all students have a laptop to access the downloadable material.

The bottom line is that it is a big transitional period, staff is working on textbook affordability in every possible way, but there is less revenue and all expenses are going up. The more successful we are in affordability, the less revenue for the college. The student senate invested \$400,000 in the SAC project (internet café). The other side of the SAC affects the bookstore. If the space doesn't turn into an internet café, students will want the money back.

III. Rental program update: The program was expanded in the fall with a grant from the student senate; because of that initial grant, Robin applied for and was awarded \$264,342 from the U.S. Department of Education's "Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education's (FIPSE) FY 2009 Special Focus grant competition: College Course Materials Rental Initiative." Between \$8-9 million was distributed nationally. The FIPSE grant enables staff to expand the rental program from 160 copies to about 1800 copies of books. 1800 students per term will have textbook costs reduced by 60%. Dan gave Robin kudos for applying for the grant. Robin noted that student and faculty senate support positioned us well. According to the grant timeframe, 25% of funds should be spent by December 1.

One parameter for rental is total number used; the rental program only works well when multiple courses have same book. Common adoptions are a difficult thing to accomplish. Johanna noted that there is movement in this direction but it is a very emotional and political issue.

Robin noted that the Chancellor's office suggests textbook adoption guidelines be more effective and positive. Staff is applying for more available funds but there may be an upper limit of those interested in the rental program. The default rate is 3%; that is the best return rate Robin has seen. Staff does not want to over promise and not be able to deliver.

Sales for first four weeks of term were down 12% from last year; FTES is down by 1%. It was noted that other bookstore are changing refund periods to 2 days vs. the drop/add deadline. Customer service is important; not making a rule and then breaking it 100 times a day.

Survivability is at stake. Declining sales, rising expenses and digital delivery make this a tough business. Hopefully the bookstore can utilize reserves until the economy turns around. Staff is trying to increase sales in other departments. The Apple store is not doing well; students use the college apple link instead of the bookstore link. The rental program is designed to be sustainable.

IV. Textbook Buyer Presentation: All reductions in sales came in new books; used books did better. Students are sharing books or otherwise getting by without a book. We are training students about the alternatives, which is good but may not help sales.

VI. For the Good of the Order: Robin noted the American Opportunity Tax Act offers a \$2500 tax deduction for textbook expenses. Info is on the bookstore website. Robin will bring info to the senate.

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

VII. Next meeting date: spring.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.