

Choosing Required Textbooks for College Students

Student Affordability Considerations for Faculty

Students and their families continue to look for ways to save money on college-related expenses given the high cost of tuition for higher education. As textbooks have become a significant investment each semester, the New York State Consumer Protection Board (CPB) is offering the following tips for faculty at colleges, universities and other schools of higher learning to consider when choosing textbooks for their classes.

Before Ordering

- Request that the publisher send you a free Instructor's Examination Copy of the textbook so you can review it thoroughly.
- Ask the Publisher for the price of the textbook(s) or supplemental learning material(s) you are considering for your class(es).
- Check with the campus bookstore as to what the final cost will be for the text(s) or learning material(s) for students.
- Inquire as to what the differences are between a new edition and a previous edition of the same text before deciding if you need the latest edition which is more costly for students.
- Ask whether the textbook(s) or supplemental learning material(s) are available in any other format and the price for the alternative(s).
- Check with your college/university about offering e-textbook subscriptions for those textbooks that are used in popular or required classes with large enrollment.
- Think twice before ordering bundled textbooks with enclosed materials that may not be utilized in class. Bundle packages are more costly than individual texts.
- Spread the word about the benefits of used textbooks to your colleagues.
- Encourage your colleagues to place their textbook orders early.

Upon Ordering

- Order early and place a list of your required texts online well before the semester begins so that students have the opportunity to utilize the used book market to save money.

After Ordering

- Place a copy of all required textbooks in the college/university library for students to read or photocopy. These texts should not be allowed to be checked out of the library to allow accessibility for all students.
- Consider using the same textbook for multiple semesters if it meets the needs of your class. This will allow for students to book swap and buy and sell used books to the campus bookstore thereby generating student savings.
- Offer students the ability to purchase an older edition of the required text if there are no significant changes. Make it a requirement that they keep up with any new material by either sharing with another student or using the text on-hold in the library.
- Encourage students to shop early for their books and access the used book market.

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