

## WOU Textbook and Course Materials Rental Program

### Minutes from December 6, 2010 Meeting

#### Attendees:

Sarah Boomer (LAS), Edwin Cancel (COE), Marshal Guthrie (SEP), Yasmin Ibarra (ASWOU), Mark Lane—Project Director (Bookstore Manager), Malissa Larson (ODS), David McDonald—Principle Investigator (Associate Provost), Christine Reagle—Internal Evaluator (TRI), and Darin Silbernagel (Business Office).

McDonald welcomed all attendees to the first meeting of the WOU Textbook Advisory Committee. After each member introduced themselves McDonald explained that the purpose of the grant from the US Department of Education was to create a sustainable textbook rental program that resulted in significant cost savings to students. McDonald explained that the average WOU undergraduate student spent approximately \$1,200 per year on text books and that this was one of many barriers to student access and completion.

The **role of the advisory committee** was to create policies and guidance that resulted in the successful implementation and then sustained presence of the rental program. The committee represented a broad range of campus including faculty, students and staff.

The **mission statement** was discussed. McDonald will craft a draft statement that reflects the committee's priorities:

- Access and benefits to all WOU students of all physical abilities
- Affordability
- Supporting of multi-media materials within the framework of full access
- Sustainable
- Simple to explain and use for students and faculty
- Competitive in pricing with on-line vendors
- Maintain the faculty right to select materials used in their courses

Mark Lane, Manager of the Bookstore, explained current WOU pricing practices and sources of textbooks sold at the WOU Bookstore. The three sources of books sold are:

- Direct purchase of new text books from the publishers
- Purchased used books from re-sellers

- Books purchased from WOU students for re-sale to WOU students in future terms

Different pricing models were discussed (see handout) that served as the initial framework to discuss pricing options and models. Across WOU there is a significant variance in the price of required textbooks. Complicating the review of prices is the fact that some expensive text books such as Biology may be used across multiple courses in a sequence and some inexpensive books may be one of a set of many books required for the same courses. The committee agreed that it was beneficial to post on the web page as much factual information as possible.

The keys to the eventual **pricing policy** must include the following principles”:

- Prices must support project sustainability beyond the two-year grant cycle
- Prices must result in significant cost savings for students
- Prices must be competitive with the on-line vendors
- Prices for purchase/rental and competition should be posted with each book in the bookstore
- Students must always have the option of renting or purchasing a text

Additional considerations for future discussion regarding pricing include:

- Accessibility and the ability to support the efforts of the Office of Disability Services to provide materials in formats in a timely manner that support student needs.
- Support the purchase a textbook for placement in the library collections for students who cannot afford to purchase or rent a textbook
- Pricing that supports the expansion of the program to other courses beyond the initial grant funding period

Questions asked of Lane included:

Current practices regarding bundled course materials such as CD's and workbooks. Lane responded that federal legislation ended the practice of mandatory bundles, but that the purchase of items was occasionally less expensive to students than purchasing each item separately. Lane indicated that this was an area that the rental program would need to look into as it might be an example of where renting would not be the least expensive option for students.

E-books are currently offered with about 10% of texts available in this format. Lane indicated that including E-books in the rental program was not advisable because of the expiration dates of the materials and other complications including access for all students.

Boomer asked if custom text books could be included. Lane responded yes. It was noted that this might be an area of great benefit to students since the faculty used this option to keep prices down and the

faculty had control over when new editions were printed thus a stable rental period could be established.

Other related topics included rules for students including prices for lost or non-returned books (to be determined). Also identified as needing further development would be limits on the amount of notes and highlights in the books allowed and pricing for students who wanted to convert a rental into a purchase.

One of the key benefits to students identified was the price certainty. Students have the opportunity to sell-back many of their text books. However there is no guarantee if a book will be bought-back depending upon if that book will be used again in the next academic term or if a new edition has been published. Further the buyback price is uncertain and can range from 10% to 50% of original purchase price.

Another student benefit is that the price is paid at the beginning of the term and as a result the savings is also realized at the beginning of the term. The final advantages were the convenience of purchase and receipt of the book immediately (no waiting for the delivery of an on-line purchase) and value of buying local.

Lane updated the committee on some of the logistical **elements of the program**

- Software is installed and being tested
- Bookstore webpage will migrate to WOU from its current 3<sup>rd</sup> party host, saving the bookstore and students money
- Hardware for the rental program is installed and operational
- Storage space is being cleared to support the extra inventory needs
- Winter term 2011 one course will be supported (Psychology 301). One more course is optimal to allow for a meaning testing of the software and to provide initial information to support the development of additional policies. McDonald will contact instructors for CS 121 and attempt to have the materials from that class added to Winter 2011 list of rental materials. Plan is to build to have extensive offering of LACC courses and some COE courses by fall 2011.

**Promotional materials** will be developed. The web will be a central element of the program with plans to include a listing of all courses with rental options and prices for rental and purchase. WOU Office of Public Relations has started very preliminary work on development of print and digital materials to inform students and faculty of the program

Christina Reagle, Internal evaluator, discussed **evaluation** and assessment (see Evaluation handout) She informed the committee of the model being used and how it addresses the GPRA requirements of the US Department of Education. She informed the committee that as required by the grant an external evaluator has been hired. Reagle indicated that as part of her charge that she would likely meet with various campus groups and conduct focus group interviews.

McDonald and Reagle will attend the Project **Directors meeting** in Washington DC next week. Will report back upon their return.

**Next meeting** will be finals week Winter term. Exam schedules of Boomer, Cancel and Ibarra were requested to coordinate the meeting date and time. It was agreed that since this committee had already started the pricing conversation that the creation of the Fiscal Review Committee was not necessary and the Advisory Committee would assume those duties.

Web site for the grant: <http://www.wou.edu/admin/bookstore/RentalProgram.php>

Meeting adjourned : 2:45 PM