



San José State
UNIVERSITY

A campus of The California State University

Office of the Academic Senate • One Washington Square • San Jose, California 95192-0024 • 408-924-2440 Fax: 408-924-2451

SS-S06-5

At its meeting of April 24, 2006, the Academic Senate passed the following Sense of the Senate Resolution presented by Senator Thames for the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee.

SENSE OF THE SENATE RESOLUTION

IMPROVING TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY AND AVAILABILITY

- Whereas:** Recent reports have found that the cost of textbooks is rising across the nation*; for example, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) reported that “textbook prices nearly tripled from December 1986 to December 2004”; and
- Whereas:** Many of our students do not buy textbooks at all or must wait until they have the financial resources which is often after classes have started; for example, the State of Virginia report* found that over 40% of students could not afford to purchase textbooks for one or more semesters; and
- Whereas:** Our students’ budgets are sensitive to even small increases in expenses; and
- Whereas:** These reports suggest that one of the major contributors to price increases in recent years is the increased costs associated with developing products that accompany textbooks (e.g. CDs) in “bundles” even though the accompanying materials bundled with textbooks are not often used in the classes; and
- Whereas:** The consensus of these reports is that two important keys to reducing the rising cost of textbooks and course materials are an abundant used book market and clear communication between bookstore managers and faculty members; and
- Whereas:** Early adoption of textbooks allows the bookstores to identify which books they buy back for resale and to more readily find used books from the used-book wholesalers; and
- Whereas:** Early adoption of textbooks allows the bookstores to pay students the highest possible buyback price; and
- Whereas:** Early adoption of textbooks allows the Disability Resource Center to produce alternative versions so students with disabilities have their course materials in time for classes as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and

Whereas: Addressing these issues through communication and cooperation between SJSU administrators, faculty, and Spartan Bookstore management is preferred over, for example, a system of requiring early adoptions by faculty which was instituted at one CSU campus in response to legal action; and

Whereas: Assembly bill 2477 which has been signed into law and is now Education Code section 66406 requires academic senates to work with bookstores and review issues relative to timelines and processes involved in ordering and stocking selected textbooks; and

Whereas: The California State Student Association, representing over 400,000 students of the CSU, has made textbook affordability a priority through actions such as co-authoring legislation and lobbying efforts; therefore be it

Resolved: That chairs, associate deans, deans, university administrators, Spartan Bookstore management, Spartan Shops, Inc., and its board of directors; distribute and emphasize the importance of these recommendations for the benefit of our students; and be it further

Resolved: That SJSU administrators, faculty, and Spartan Bookstore management work collaboratively and in an on-going manner to encourage early ordering of textbooks; and be it further

Resolved: That while the SJSU Academic Senate reaffirms the fundamental right and responsibility of the faculty to select course materials that are most appropriate for their curriculum, faculty members are encouraged to consider ordering textbooks from publishers who are willing to cooperate with keeping the costs to a minimum through such practices as unbundling, alternative binding, and less frequent production of new editions; and be it further

Resolved: That the Associated Students consider ways to communicate with all students about the attached recommendations; and be it further

Resolved: That SJSU statewide senators continue their work with the statewide CSU Academic Senate in support of the CSU system's exploration of ways to influence the publishing industry to minimize the financial costs of textbooks for our students; and be it further

Vote: 12-0-0

Present: Campsey, Thames, Fee, Leddy, Rudy, Willey, Hansen, McClory, Thompson, Balderas, Griffith, Dresher

Absent: Gutierrez, Evans, Kelley, Bridgeman, Sofish, Dresser

Key People to Implement the Sense of the Senate Resolution and to inform if it is passed: Spartan Bookstore management, Spartan Shops, Inc., and its board of directors,

University administrators, Provost, Deans, Chairs and Directors, Director of Library, faculty, staff, and students

***Reports reviewed for this resolution:**

- California Education Code Section 66406 established by AB2477
<http://www.aroundthecapitol.com/code/code.html?sec=edc&codesection=66400-66406>
- GAO report #05-806 at www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-806;
- State Council of Higher Education for Virginia at www.schev.edu/Reportstats/2006TextbookStudy.pdf?from=;
- Calpirg at <http://www.maketextbooksaffordable.com/newsroom.asp?id2=15618> and <http://www.maketextbooksaffordable.com/newsroom.asp?id2=11993>);

Instruction and Student Affairs Committee
April 17, 2006

**Recommendations to Help Make Textbooks and Course Materials
More Affordable and Available at SJSU**

Faculty:

- Adopt early
 - The bookstore cannot buy back books that they are not sure will be used the following semester.
 - If books have been adopted for the next semester by the time finals are beginning, the bookstore knows which books to buy back. Our bookstore reports that they usually have only half the orders by then.
- Send textbook requisitions electronically through the bookstore's website (www.spartanbookstore.com) in order to speed up the ordering process.
- Consider various least costly practices in assigning textbooks, for example:
 - Ask publisher to disclose to you exactly how a new edition is different from previous editions.
 - Consider using an older edition of a textbook (perhaps with a supplement) instead of adopting a new edition.
 - As reported by the Government Accounting Office (GAO), the current standard revision cycle for textbooks is every four years on average. Revision cycles vary across disciplines. Faculty members have noted instances where revisions to the text have been unnecessary because changes to the book have been minute, such as new pagination, charts, and graphs.
 - Ask publisher how long they intend to produce the current edition.
 - Protest when publishers produce unnecessary new editions.
 - Ask publishers' representatives about unbundled options – consider not using the books if they are unwilling to sell text alone.
- Carefully review bundles to be sure that all materials are necessary.
 - Faculty should ensure that most, if not all, supplemental materials within a bundle are necessary for the course that the materials are intended to support.
- Ask publisher about less expensive formats such as soft cover, black and white, spinal bound.
- Know the price to students of the books and materials adopted.
 - Ask the publishers' representatives to describe all of the different products they sell - including both bundled and unbundled options - and list how much each of those products costs.
 - Be sure to get the correct ISBN number for the option you choose.
 - If no text alone option is offered, ask if they can accommodate that request.
- Ask publishers to donate a reserve copy of the text to the library or place one there yourself.
- Consider on-line versions of books.
 - An alternative to printed textbooks is digital textbook subscriptions. Digital textbook subscriptions could save students up to 50% off the suggested list price of the

equivalent print edition, since much of the cost associated with a textbook is related to production.

- Consider custom publishing options that allow instructors to customize course materials by adding or deleting chapters from textbooks.
 - Students sometimes complain that only a few of the chapters in a required book are assigned for class.
 - However, bear in mind that custom textbooks may be harder to resell, and that this may increase costs for students.
- Think carefully before selecting the “free” teaching supplements offered with your text selections; costs of those supplements for instructors are passed on to students.
- Disclose to students the cost for textbooks selected for your course as well as how new editions differ from previous editions.
- Communicate with bookstore managers if you have any questions or problems or suggestions, especially about the appropriate number of books to order for classes.

Chairs of Departments:

- Communicate with faculty about impending dates for adopting books for the coming semester.
- For introductory or core courses, consider developing a method for pre-adopting textbooks for courses not assigned to faculty by a reasonable date, i.e. a date allowing for textbooks to be received and available for students the first day of class.

Bookstore:

- Make a strong commitment to a thriving used textbook market.
- Consider incentives for faculty member or departments who are early adopters.
- Increase communication between bookstore managers and faculty.
 - Bookstore managers should continuously encourage faculty throughout the year to order textbooks as early as possible, typically at least 10 to 12 weeks prior to the start of the semester.
 - Consider various ways to remind faculty of adoption due dates.
 - Bookstore managers should continuously remind faculty of the high costs to students of adopting a new textbook, especially when only insignificant changes to the text occur.
 - If bundled materials are requested, bookstore managers should caution the professor of the difficulties that students may face if they attempt to return or sell the textbook.
 - Communicate feedback to faculty about the number of books ordered for classes, e.g. how many were bought, and left on shelf to be returned to publisher.
 - Per AB2477, “disclose retail textbook costs on a per course basis, to faculty, and make this information otherwise publicly available.”

- Actively promote and publicize buy back programs to students.
- Investigate guaranteed buy back programs for students.
- Consider other ways to share list of adopted books to help increase affordability and availability of books for students.
- Create a Bookstore Advisory Committee with faculty and student representation or consider using the Spartan Shops Board of Directors to find ways to increase communication with campus.
- Create a payment plan option at bookstore.
 - Textbook financing programs allow students to receive their textbooks prior to the start of classes, and to pay for them over the course of a semester.
- Consider ways to reduce current gross margin of 25% increase over net cost of new books.
- Work with publishers to offer some books “unbundled” so students can only buy text if want.
- Request that publishers send text copies to libraries for reserve.
- Create a “Frequently Asked Questions” page on website to further understanding of issues, policies, and procedures.

University:

- Encourage faculty to adopt early;
 - e.g. university could have textbook scholarship (for students) to “best” departments in terms of getting all books adopted early.
- Maintain reserve copies in library, especially for basic courses.
 - As the costs of textbooks rise, college libraries have difficulty keeping textbooks on reserve because more students seek to utilize library reserves in lieu of purchasing their textbooks.
- Encourage and work with the bookstore management to increase the used book market for students.

Students:

- Sell back during finals week to increase used book availability.
- Consider setting up and using on-campus and online book swaps so that students can buy and sell used books and set their own prices. CALPIRG has set up a non-profit, student-run, online book swap, www.campusbookswap.com.