PCAS Course Materials Subcommittee
Cost Control Recommendations

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Committee Members and Charge

Committee charge

- ➢ Examine the cost of course materials (including textbooks) for UNM students to ensure student success
- ➢ Survey novel approaches that may help bring the cost down while being mindful of the impact of such approaches on the UNM bookstore revenues
- ➢ Propose initiatives and strategies (provide positive and negative aspects of each) that will help our students reduce their cost of attendance without sacrificing the quality of their education or ADA compliance
- ➢ Examples of such initiatives may include an educational campaign, e-books, open source material, renting, used books, or contracting with external book sellers

Membership

- ➢ Delia Brennan (ASUNM)
- ➢ Stephen Burd (ASM)
- ➢ Regina Carlow (Fine Arts)
- ➢ Moira Gerety (IT)
- ➢ Scott Hughes (Law)
- ➢ Diane Marshall (A&S)
- ➢ Sonia Rankin (University College)
- ➢ Melanie Sparks (Bookstore)
- ➢ Jonathan Wheeler (UNM Libraries)

Current State

- ➢ Current cost control methods:
  - ▪ Presentations at new student and new faculty orientation
  - ▪ Buybacks of used books when faculty reorders arrive early enough to enable them
  - ▪ Comparison shopping through the bookstore Web site
  - ▪ Assistance to faculty in selecting cost-effective alternatives
  - ▪ Used, rental, and electronic textbook options for students when approved by faculty
- ➢ Shortcomings of current methods:
  - ▪ Low faculty awareness/use of bookstore services
  - ▪ Order submission is often too late to enable used book buy-backs and other cost-saving measures
  - ▪ Students ignore/forget messages delivered during new student orientation
  - ▪ Common theme - poor visibility of information, resources, and services – not visible/accessible when and where needed (e.g., during course registration)

Recommendations Summary

- Pilot alternative purchasing options that provide materials to all enrolled students on or before the first day of class with automated billing to student bursar accounts

- Reengineer how instructors and departments select and order textbooks

- Engage students in multiple ways to improve their course material selection and purchasing habits

Pilot Alternative Purchasing Options

- ➤ Possible alternative purchasing options
  - ▪ 100% adoption contracts with publishers
    - ❑ Book in physical and/or electronic form is available on or before first class day
    - ❑ Charge is billed to all registered students after drop date
    - ❑ Cost savings and terms vary by publisher and are in flux
    - ❑ **Recommended for UNM**
  - ▪ Course material cost subsumed into tuition
    - ❑ Has been adopted by some high-cost smaller colleges but not by any large public universities
    - ❑ **Not recommended for UNM**
  - ▪ Partner with Amazon or a similar organization to create a UNM "storefront"
    - ❑ A few large universities have done this – e.g., Purdue
    - ❑ **Cost savings are very uncertain**
    - ❑ **Not recommended for UNM**

Pilot Implementation

➢ Small-scale pilots are already ongoing at UNM

➢ **Recommended next steps**:

- Evaluate results of summer and fall pilots
- Negotiate contract and cost issues with publishers
- Identify and target courses most likely to generate significant savings and/or improve learning outcomes
- Measure student cost savings
- Determine the revenue impact on the bookstore and operational impact UNM-wide
- Develop/streamline student billing procedures and determine when cost is exposed to students (e.g., at registration?)
- Evaluate integration issues with the learning management system

Process Reengineering

- ➤ The Amazon analogy
  - Type in search terms, view matches, refine search to narrow choices, select, order
  - High information visibility
    - ❑ Cost
    - ❑ Product description
    - ❑ Customer feedback
    - ❑ Availability
    - ❑ Alternative products (customers who viewed this product also viewed …)
  - One-stop and highly-efficient shopping experience

Impediments to Amazon-Like Course Materials Selection

- ➢ Lack of profit motive to create a "shopping site"
  - Faculty select but students buy later
  - "Free" materials never generate a "sale"
- ➢ Information hiding by publishers
  - Especially cost and alternatives
- ➢ Selection site for free materials does exist, but:
  - Search capabilities are limited
  - Site doesn't include materials that aren't free
- ➢ Problem summary:
  - **Faculty who select course materials aren't provided with easily accessible, complete, and accurate information matched to the selection task**

Reengineering Goals

➢ Simplify the process of finding all relevant course materials for a specific topic or course

➢ Provide clear, obvious, and unambiguous information about the cost, quality, availability, alternatives, …

➢ Enable faculty members to easily assemble collections of course materials from multiple sources

➢ Make the interface between the selection and downstream acquisition/distribution processes as seamless and efficient as possible

➢ Ensure that course materials selection occurs early enough to enable cost savings in downstream acquisition/distribution processes

Reengineering – How to Move Forward

- ➢ Initial decision is make or buy
  - ▪ Scan environment for "purchasable" alternatives
  - ▪ Do an RFP if sufficient alternatives exist
  - ▪ Otherwise, build it
- ➢ Building is a straightforward system development project that could follow well-established practices
- ➢ **Key issue is resources**
  - ▪ How much is UNM willing to invest?
  - ▪ Can an existing system be used as a starting point?
  - ▪ Can a consortium be formed to pool resources and talent?
- ➢ **Recommendations**
  - ▪ Provide initial resources and establish a timeline
  - ▪ Formally charter a working group
  - ▪ Designate project owner(s), champion(s), and deliverables
  - ▪ Provide lower, likely, and upper bounds for the resources that UNM is willing to devote in the long-term

Student Awareness and Education

➤ Common student purchase avoidance behaviors (based on national surveys):

- "Wait and see" if materials are really needed
- Buy and return physical book or rent
  - Long-term ownership of materials begins in the major, if at all
- Copy/borrow materials (e.g., from a sibling or friend)
  - Sometimes means old editions
- Take fewer classes, especially freshman
  - 60% of first year students said that if cost of required course materials was not a factor or issue – they would have taken one additional course
- Make schedule changes based on cost of materials
  - 40% report having done this
- Forego the materials entirely

Student Engagement Recommendations

- ➢ Stress the importance of having access to required material the first day of class and for the duration of the semester
  - Not just in new student orientation!
  - Make faculty aware of common student avoidance behaviors and encourage related dialog
- ➢ Provide information on how to get the best prices on required material in time for them to make the best decisions
  - Bookstore already does this to some extent
  - Make this more visible and tie it more directly to course registration
- ➢ Enable student engagement with faculty around cost and utility of materials
  - Encourage faculty to evaluate use or lack thereof
  - Encourage faculty to communicate expectations clearly and tie them specifically to learning achievement
- ➢ Enable student access to supplemental **and credible** "open source" course materials