TEXTBOOK AFFORDABILITY COMMITTEE

**2016-17**

Milner Library 311

**AGENDA AND MINUTES** (Batch Draft)

*Note: The Committee did not elect a secretary/note taker for 2016-17. The following record of communications was reconstructed in October 2017 from emails and personal notes written last year by Eric Willey (EW), Milner Library Dean’s Designee, and from Dane Ward (DW), Milner Library Dean. Yellow highlighted dates mark meetings held. Meeting notes were approved by the Committee as a batch on\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

**03.02.16** (Source: DW)

Tomorrow the Textbook Affordability Committee is meeting from 12:30 to 2:00 in Milner Library, Room 311.

As a first meeting, we thought it would be useful to provide some background to the issue; begin discussing opportunities and obstacles to reducing textbook costs; and consider short and long range strategies. At the end of the meeting, we will want to select a committee chair.

Agenda:

I. Introductions

II. Overview of the Textbook Cost Issue

III. Review Committee Description and Functions

IV. Mapping the Territory

a. What are the opportunities for reducing textbook costs?

b. What are the obstacles to reducing textbook costs?

V. Strategies for Approaching Our Work

a. What can we do relatively quickly to help reduce textbook costs

b. What are the longer term tasks and strategies that we might pursue?

VI. Selecting a Chair

VII. Next Steps

**03.03.16** (Source: DW)

In attendance: Ryan Powers, Kyle Walsh, Michaelene Cox, Roger Day, Stef Gardiner-Walsh, Dane Ward

The meeting began with introductions, a review of the committee charge and discussion about the issue

of textbook affordability. The group agreed to use the time we have available this semester to achieve some useful results. Two topics surfaced as important in the short-term:

• Providing easily accessible information to faculty about options for making textbooks more affordable and to students about options for making more cost effective choices.

o Ward distributed sample content for a web page which could be easily created.

o Discussed also the possibility of staffing a table at Preview, and working with academic advisors to guide students.

• Gathering information about existing practices that may be found within academic departments either by individuals or by coordinated action.

o Gardiner-Walsh volunteered to create a short survey instrument.

o Discussion ensued regarding strategies for disseminating the survey. I believe we agreed to send it to the department chairs, with Ward giving a heads-up to the deans

Other points and questions:

• The critical conversations about textbook affordability would/should take place at the level of

each academic department

• How to create open textbooks? Mentioning of OpenStax

• Professional development for the committee might occur through attendance at the National Textbook Affordability Conference

• There was interest expressed in assessing the actual need on campus for textbook affordability

initiatives in terms, for instance, of costs/student

• Discussed expanding the definition of “textbooks” to include all course-related materials, but at this early point, agreed to focus on texts

• For next meeting, we would seek if any trends in student textbook costs are available from the Registrar’s Office.

Next Meeting: End of March or early April

At our next meeting, we will want to continue our discussion on:

* Our survey to academic department heads
* Trends in textbook costs for students at ISU (if that is available-we wondered whether this information might be available through the Registrar's Office)
* Creating a web page providing students and faculty with information about their options

**04.29.17** (DW)

We affirmed our pursuit of 1) a survey of department chairs concerning best practices for containing textbook costs, and 2) providing students and faculty with information about their options. We will pursue these tasks in the fall. Early in the fall, I will convene the group.

Just following up on a request from the chair of the Academic Senate to confirm membership on the Senate's external committees. Here are appointments to the Textbook Affordability Committee as listed by the Academic Senate:

Roger Day, Spring 2016-2018  
Stephanie Gardiner-Walsh, Spring 2016-2019  
Michaelene Cox, Spring 2016-2019

**09.14.16** (Source: DW)

Dane Ward introduced Eric Willey, Special Collections and Formats Cataloger, as the Library Dean’s

designee to the Textbook Affordability Committee.

A meeting time was established for the Fall semester: October 21, November 18 and December 9 at 1

p.m. in Milner Library Room 311. Eric has reserved the room.

The group agreed to continue working on the two projects begun in the Spring:

* Kyle Walsh’s “advice to students” document which was discussed through email over Summer
* The survey to department chairs concerning practices in their departments. Stef Gardiner-Walsh

has created a draft survey to be reviewed and finalized. It was suggested that the survey be sent to Jeff Clark, the chair of the Chair’s Council, who may distribute it (or ask someone to attend the Chair’s Council meeting to explain what we are trying to do).

Other topics included:

* Discussion of a bathroom newsletter that could be posted around campus. The primary newsletter

comes from Health and Wellness. Nikki Brauer would be the primary contact.

* Jess Ray highlighted the importance of attention to compliance issues for any projects the committee

considered implementing.

* Dane suggested that the committee identify and investigate specific aspects of textbook affordability

each year.

* At the end of the year, the Committee could report back to the Academic Affairs Committee

of the Senate, summarizing their investigation and providing recommendations for implementation.

**09.15.16** (Source: EW)

Dane Ward stepped down and appointed me (Eric Willey, Milner Library Special Collections and Formats Cataloger) as his designee to the committee.

The committee decided to meet once per month, at 1:00 PM on 21 October 2016, 18 November 2016, and 9 December 2016. As schedules will change in the spring we did not decide on meeting times past December. We will meet in Room 311g, Milner Library (I have reserved the room).

We decided that at the next meeting (21 October) we would look over the survey and flyer and either approve or determine revisions for both.

While the committee did not discuss or decide on this, I would also like to also suggest that we elect a chair at our next meeting.

**10.21.16** (See notes from EW below about the 10.2.16 meeting)

**11.14.16**(Source: EW)

This is just a friendly reminder that the next meeting of the Textbook Affordability Committee will occur this Friday, 18 November 2016, in Milner 311 from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM.

At our last meeting [reference here to meeting of 10.21.16] the committee appointed co-chairs (Assistant Professor Stephanie Gardiner-Walsh and Assistant Professor Eric Willey), and further revised the survey questions. University Registrar Jess Ray also answered questions regarding how students were provided with information on assigned textbooks.

Tentative agenda items:

1. Review survey questions from last meeting, survey discussion, next steps?

2. Helpful information for students (pamphlet/handout). Current states, next steps?

3. Other business.

Also, I used one of Dane’s old emails to get everyone’s email address. If someone isn’t included in this email that should be, please let me know. I checked the list of committee members here <http://academicsenate.illinoisstate.edu/committee-sites/external/members.shtml#TextbookCommittee> and it shows Connor Joyce (not in Dane’s last email) and Dane’s last email includes John Geary, who is not on the list in the link. I suspect that it’s as simple as Connor stepped off and Joyce stepped on at some point, but I definitely don’t want to omit anyone.

**11.18.16** (Source: EW)

Important: The December 9 meeting has been cancelled for lack of agenda items.

The committee met this afternoon, these are the results of that meeting.

Agenda item 1: Review survey questions  
The survey was reviewed and finalized as follows:  
  
Scale questions:  
1. How often do courses within your department/school share the same text across different sections of the same course per semester?  
2. How long on average do faculty in your department/school re-use the same texts?  
3. How much does the cost of a textbook impact the selection for use?  
4. How many of your courses require open source readings?  
  
Open ended:  
1. On average, how much do you believe a student spends per class (within your department/school) on textbooks?  
2. What is the process for selecting textbooks for your department/school courses? For example, who selects textbooks, what are the selection criteria, and what other considerations are made?  
3. What ideas has your department/school had for reducing the cost of textbooks for students? Why were those ideas implemented or not implemented?  
4. What issues with textbooks do you feel your students are concerned about?  
5. Do you have any questions, concerns, or recommendations regarding textbook affordability?  
  
The consensus was that we will use this as an initial survey, then follow-up with specific individuals for more information on as needed basis. It was decided that our next steps are to prepare the electronic version of this survey over break, and send it out in early January.  
  
Agenda item 2: Pamphlet/handout  
Student members of the committee prepared a handout to be distributed to all dorm mailboxes based on prior feedback. Some grammatical edits were suggested, but overall the committee felt the handout fairly represented best practices and the authors should proceed with printing and distribution.  
  
Agenda item 3: Other business  
The future of the committee after the survey results were received was discussed, and it was suggested that we review our charge at a future meeting to make sure we are covering everything.  
  
With the survey and handout finalized, it was decided that the December 9 meeting could be cancelled for lack of agenda items. A meeting time after winter break will be decided upon via email.

**02.02.17** (Source: EW)

Having looked at the doodle poll and realized how full some of our schedules are, Stef and I think that given the relatively light agenda for our first meeting it would be beneficial to conduct the small amount of business we have online and plan a meeting in March.

In that vein, I would like to propose that we:  
Schedule our next meeting for March 24 (the Friday after Spring Break) at 1:00 PM so as to avoid meeting during break and mid-term exams. At this meeting we will discuss the initial survey results, scheduling our next meetings, and any other agenda items members have.

**03.20.17** (Source: EW)

Just a reminder that we have a Textbook Affordability Committee Meeting this Thursday, 3/23/2017 at 11:00 A.M. in Milner 311. Stef will be chairing (I will be out of town), but I have offered some possible tentative agenda items below. Does anyone have anything else?   
  
Tentative Agenda items:  
Discuss Survey Results  
Next Steps?  
Schedule Next Meeting

**03.23.17** (No meeting notes available)

**04.19.17** (Source: EW)

This is just a reminder that we have a textbook affordability committee meeting this Friday (21 April 2017) at 2:30 in Milner 311G. I only know of two agenda items so far:

2:30-3:00 Presentation by Larry from the Alamo II

3:00-3:30 Presentation by Anne from Barnes and Noble

**04.21.17** (Source: EW)

Present: Eric Willey, Stef Gardiner-Walsh, Michaelene Cox, Danielle Miller-Schuster, Roger Day, Jess Ray, John Geary, Beau Grzanich (incoming SGA President)

Guest speakers: Larry Ernst (Store Manager The Alamo II) and Anne Harner (Store Manager Barnes and Noble)

Ernst spoke first:

-Goal is to make books as affordable as possible because students do better with paper books

-Since 2013 rentals are 37%, 22%, 28%, 26% of textbook sales

-Less availability of rentals may be one cause for these numbers (workbooks which cannot be rented, new versions, books only used one semester, unbound packets)

-60% to 80% of titles are available to rent

-Publishers, stores, professors, students are all factors in prices

-One thing that could help is professors turning in the books they need on time or early (this may be difficult when a class hasn’t been assigned a professor yet) so the store can stock used books

-Moving up the deadline has been met with pushback in the past

-Some late adoptions come in after classes have started

-Shopping patterns also effect book prices (if students don’t buy books they can’t rent them or sell them used next semester, some publishers are going to unbound copies which are discounted but not as much as rentals)

-Some books come with accessories (clickers, or online versions) which may not affect the book price but students have no way to tell. They think they’re paying for something they don’t need or want or use)

-The bookstores don’t determine what they sell, if a professor requests a book with a paper and online edition that’s what the bookstore sells.

-Bookstore does not have bandwidth to follow up with each professor, professors’ responsibility to look for cheaper version from publisher.

-ISBNs can sometimes be misleading or problematic (used for multiple editions, versions, etc.)

-More used books help up the number of rentals, professors could encourage students to return books, bring them back early, etc.

-For some programs encouraging students to buy may be cheaper than renting (for textbooks used in multiple classes) but professors can’t urge students to buy until classes start.

-Bookstore only gets ISBN, no notes.

-Improved form design to allow better communication between faculty and the bookstore may be desirable. In the meantime faculty can contact the bookstore and ask that books be purchase only, etc.

Harner then spoke:

-Textbook affordability is a major issue for Barnes and Noble (nationally)

-FacultyEnlight web site ([www.facultyenlight.com](http://www.facultyenlight.com)) allows faculty to search for books by ISBN or subject, see what others are using, compare prices by format

-Can search by format (rental only, etc.)

-For ISU professors cannot select books directly, they go to department administrative assistants, who then fill out form

-OERs, faculty want to use more, only 5% of faculty currently using OERs

-Challenge is getting information out there

-Barnes and Noble partnered with Xanadu to create custom OER resources

-Similar to a course packet

-Based on Rice University OpenStax resources

-B&N version includes links out to videos, allows customization, analytics

-Student cost $50 (electronic), $15 (print, print books are not customized)

-Can do a demo or open the sandbox (full book) up to professors who want to preview textbooks/resources

-Coursefinder can be used by faculty and students to find prices

-Prices are fluid, go up the closer you get to class start

-66% of ISU students (57% nationally) did not have books the first day of class

-One of the top five reasons was professors didn’t use book 23% of ISU respondents, this reason did not make top 5 nationally

-Encourage students to buy books early, rentals are returnable (digital only returnable if not downloaded)

-Number of used copies depends on what’s coming back in rentals, other Barnes and Noble stores, how many they think they’ll sell, how many sold last year, how many they sold none of. Determined title by title.

-Buying online (not local) throws off both bookstores, because they don’t know how many copies are out there.

-Faculty can influence where students buy books, Barnes and Noble wants to communicate with faculty

-Fall 2016 83% of titles were available to rent (not in rent were workbooks, 1-time access codes, etc.)

-Barnes and Noble is seeing more retention of customers, partially due to student friendly return policy

-It is difficult to determine when is best to return a book used every other semester, lots of variables.

-Price match program for local stores and online retailers (Amazon, etc.) instituted

-Fall 2016 students saved $525,000 on new versus used books

-The committee suggested that Barnes and Noble contact CTLT for seminars rather than trying to go through individual departments

After the speakers:

-Committee expressed interest in OERs and investigating OpenStax and other resources more thoroughly

-A meeting request for third Fridays for the fall 2017 semester will be sent out soon to reserve that time as early as possible and (hopefully) minimize schedule conflicts

-Fall meetings will likely initially focus on determining how the committee will move forward

*Close of 2016-17. No further Committee communications available.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Michaelene Cox*