




TO: Julie K. Gordon, Director
Office of Operations Review and Audit
University of Wisconsin System

FROM: Aaron Brower
Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning 

DATE: August 18, 2008

RE: Update on UW-Madison's efforts to help students manage textbook costs

In the 9 months since we submitted our November, 2007, textbook cost report to you, several activities have occurred:

1. Libraries have updated the "Tips to Students" brochure and posted it on their website (<http://www.library.wisc.edu/reserves/textbooks.html>).
2. They continue to monitor and purchase texts for students to check out as an alternative to purchasing their own. Criteria for which texts to purchase are listed in our November, 2007, report.
3. ASM held a textbook swap for students in the Spring semester, 2007. About 800 students participated, more than enough to convince them of its value and the need to dedicate resources and staff to make this an ongoing activity. They have been in contact with the Provost office and the Libraries for assistance.
4. In August 2008 the Office of the Registrar, the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) and the University Bookstore launched a cooperative initiative to display textbook information to students in My UW-Madison. For the upcoming fall term, the University Bookstore provided a one-time only electronic upload of textbook information they had received from faculty. This textbook information now is available for faculty to update/add to and then approve for display to students. The information is also being made available to any other bookstore, upon request. For the spring term, faculty are being asked to enter textbook directly as we will forego any electronic upload from the University Bookstore.
5. The Office of the Registrar and DoIT continue work on the Course Guide project, which is currently in the design phase. As described in our November report, one

feature of this project will be to provide textbook information that students can access 2-3 weeks ahead of the semester's beginning. Phase 1 of the Course Guide project is anticipated to launch in the 2008-09 academic year.

6. The Vice Provost for Teaching & Learning created and sent an email to all faculty and instructors prior to the Spring and Fall 2008 semesters with tips and guidelines on their role to help students manage their textbook costs. This email will be sent prior to the start of each semester.
7. The Office of Student Financial Services continues to alert students about current costs of textbooks and include this information when communicating with students and parents about total costs to attend the university.
8. The Textbook report itself has been made publicly available at <http://www.provost.wisc.edu/content/memos/docs/TextbookCost.pdf>.

Finally, we have created an ad hoc committee of faculty, staff, and students who will meet at least once/year to advise on UW-Madison's activities related to helping students with this important issue.

Please contact me if I can answer any questions.