

Changing texts often reason for frustrating buy-back prices

By Tony Hazarian
Of the Emerald

Selling textbooks at the end of a term has been more disillusioning than profitable.

"Worth a dollar," the man behind the counter says, tossing the book into a box on the floor and placing a crisp \$1 bill in the student's open hand.

"But I paid \$11.50 for it," the student says in disbelief. "It was new."

This student's disbelief, though fictitious, is perhaps typical. But Otto Hendrickson, University bookstore textbook manager, explains why textbooks change.

Even though it's the middle of summer term, professors are ordering texts for the fall.

And, as usual, many professors are changing required textbooks, Hendrickson says.

The bookstore does not influence or control which textbooks are ordered, Hendrickson says. Textbooks are often changed because course material changes with time and needs revision, he adds.

"I can see where they want the latest edition and the newest books."

"Political science for instance," Hendrickson says. "They need to be updated day by day."

"If it's a year old, they don't use it" because it may have little relevance to the course, Hendrickson adds.

Political science professor Jerry Medler says he looks for a book "that will reflect an up-to-date approach" for the particular course he's teaching.

Medler says he has never found a book that would change the direction of the course by itself. For instance, he has used the same text for the past three years in Mass Media and American Politics, but will not use it again this year.

"Whenever a new book comes along that fits" the course better than the text used before, Medler will use it as required reading.

The textbook turnover in the sciences and social sciences is high, Hendrickson says. More books are written in these areas and provide a constant flow of updated information and revision, he adds.

On the other hand, some courses don't change text material very often, Hendrickson says. Accounting and other business courses tend to "be rather good at not changing" titles, he says.

English and literature courses also produce little change in textbook titles, Hendrickson says. Some of the same literature books have circulated around the University from class to class and instructor to instructor for seven years, he adds.

"A Shakespeare book is a Shakespeare book," he remarks.

If the textbook will be used the following term, the student will receive 50 percent of the purchase price when selling it back to the bookstore, Hendrickson says.

If the book will not be used in any class, the bookstore will buy the student's text but sell it to a firm that deals in used textbooks. The price the student receives is based on the demand for the particular textbook, he adds.

"If (the textbook firms') warehouses are full with a given title, they'll give less," Hendrickson says.

When a book goes out-of-print or a new edition replaces it, the book is "obsolete," Hendrickson says. The bookstore cannot resell the book for instruction purposes and will not buy back the book.

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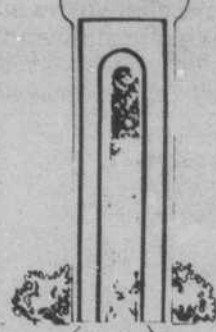
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