

CCC Bookstore offers fair deal

By Happie Thacker
Staff Writer

Now that winter term has started it's time to buy all the required texts for classes at Clackamas Community College. With moans of pain students are digging deeper into their bank accounts and grumbling about the rising costs of these necessary books.

If it is any consolation the Clackamas Community College Bookstore gives students a very fair deal on new and used texts.

According to Doug Shannon, who has been bookstore manager for the last three years, college bookstores are a losing proposition and exist mainly as a convenience to students.

Required texts are determined by the various instructors and although some make

their decisions based on price, many just say, "That's the book I want, so you'll have to buy it."

Normally the bookstore tries to get used books from used book stores, but it is more difficult to get used books for winter term than it is for fall term.

"There are not as many used books for winter term because of the time element involved," said Shannon. "For fall term I have most of the summer to try to find used books, but there are only 19 working days in November and that is not enough time to contact all the used book outlets after I get the requests from the instructors."

This means that Shannon has to buy new books direct from the publishers. These books all have a list price set by the publisher and that is what they are sold for here and at other bookstores in the area. Generally this is 20 per cent above cost since bookstores get a 20 per cent discount from the publisher and mark books accordingly.

However, the bookstore is not getting rich on this mark up.

It costs more than 20 per cent to handle the books. Salaries, rent, utilities, advertising costs, unsold textbooks, office supplies and equipment rental and repair all have to come out of this mark-up. In addition freight cost for shipping the books comes off the top and is absorbed by the store.

"We absorbed \$19,000 dollars in freight costs that was not passed on to students," said Margaret Edwards, manager of the Portland Community College Bookstore.

Bookstores must carry extras -- supplies, cards and sundries -- to make up the difference, she said. PCC, like CCC, usually marks these items up 40 per cent over cost to help make up the difference between cost outlay and cash income.

"Taxpayers can't afford to subsidize bookstores," Edwards said. "My job as manager is to keep our heads above water."

This sentiment is echoed by Shannon. "I feel that the bookstore is a convenience to students but it has to be run with a semblance of business-like operation. It's a business and must be run as such and must meet overhead expenses."

Prices of books have gone up in recent years because of increasing paper and labor cost. Also, there is no way to buy books on a comparative basis. They can only be bought from one publisher who sets the price.

Even the Portland State University bookstore, which is a multi-million dollar independent operation, loses revenue from the sale of textbooks.

Although textbooks account for 50 per cent of their business, the PSU bookstore must make up the difference with customer service and a broad range of general merchandise.

Colleges have an investment in their stores but would like to get rid of them because they are a losing proposition, Peter Paskill, who has been manager of PSU bookstore for five years.

"The problem most students and I run into are problems with changes in text said Paskill. "If instructors change text requirements the bookstore can't buy back from students."

Both PSU and PCC buy books back 50 per cent of what students paid for. PSU buys books back all year long and pay wholesale price for texts that will be used again. The marketable life of a book is usually three years, but many books used for much longer than that and bought and sold at a price determined by the bookstore.

The CCC bookstore has a better deal for students. They'll pay 62.5 per cent at book time and will sell the book back at an added 25 per cent. The other bookstores charge 75 per cent of the initial retail price of the book.

The CCC bookstore has only shown a profit for the last three years. Part of the profit is being absorbed by the increasing rate of buy-back.

The rest of the profits are being used to repay a loan from the college's general fund that was used to buy the bookstore's original inventory.

As soon as the loan is repaid the profits will be returned to the students.

"Our idea is to make it (the bookstore) as nearly self-supporting as possible," Bill Ryan, CCC business manager, "we want to show a profit so we will increase buy-back rates and decrease the mark-up on new books."

Roberts lobbies for child care

Editor's note: January 10 marks the beginning of the state legislative session. This is the first in a series of articles that will present a glimpse of upcoming bills that have an impact on students.

Associated Student Government Senator Ken Roberts is conducting a survey this week to gather data for a legislative bill that would provide child care as part of the financial aid program.

The bill would enable an individual with a demonstrated need for child care service to receive a voucher that will be accepted by accredited child care centers throughout the community as payment.

Student parents, regardless of financial aid status, are encouraged to fill in a survey form. The forms can be picked up at the table in the Community Center Mall.

This information should be turned in to the student activities office by Friday, Jan. 7. This information will be compiled as supporting evidence demonstrating the need for legislation.

Class offered for single parents

Single parents having difficulties in coping with child raising may be interested in The Single Parent Experience, a new class offered by Clackamas Community College.

"Life for a single parent can often be a difficult experience, the class is designed to help people through a very trying time," explained class instructor, Tom Tison.

The class will be taught winter term on Tuesday from 7-10 p.m. in Barlow 253. Fee for the class is \$36.

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