

MJC BOOKSTORE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, February 12, 2007
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
MJC West Campus, Mary Stuart Rogers Student Learning Center, Room 116

Present: Maricruz Abraham (ASMJC), Wendy Byrd, Rhonda Green, Susan Kerr, Curtis Martin, Maria Quijalvo (ASMJC), Teresa Scott (Chair), Arbella Solhkhah, Mike Torok, Gary Whitfield, Carrie Sampson (recorder)

Absent: Michael Adams, George Railey, Doug Smith

Following introductions, Teresa asked if there were any changes to the meeting summary of November 13, 2006. There were none. She then asked for any additional agenda items. Curtis asked that Commencement be added.

Commencement

Curtis said he was asked by a faculty person if it would be possible to turn in their rented regalia after the ceremony, rather than having to return to campus another day. Wendy said graduation will not end before 7:30 p.m. Rhonda said this is a long time to ask the Bookstore to remain open just to collect regalia. Curtis asked if a drop box would be a possibility. Arbella said the gowns would need to be placed in an office for security, plus the names of the faculty would need to be checked off. It was decided that if this issue is to be pursued, the division offices and/or the Academic Senate office should make arrangements to collect the gowns and check off the faculty names after graduation. Wendy asked if there would be any problem with allowing the class ring vendor to set-up a booth at graduation. A percentage of the profits goes to the Bookstore. There were no objections.

Online Requisition System Improvements Update

Arbella responded to recommendations from the last meeting for system improvements to the online software for textbook requisitions. She said Sequoia software is more than willing to make the revisions; however, it can be very expensive customizing the software. Arbella suggested that she take the recommendations to the next users group conference in March. Suggestions for improvement are always requested at these conferences, and these suggestions usually end up in the next upgrade of the software. Arbella further stated that they are working on an interactive tutorial on the Bookstore website. She said the Bookstore also plans on involving the division secretaries more in the process, so that they can help faculty with their requisitions. Anyone having problems with their passwords or emails should contact the Bookstore. Arbella told Susan she would look into her problem with updating her email address. The Bookstore will create a calendar of dates for faculty training on the online system. They will also ask to do demonstrations at the division meetings. Lastly, Arbella noted that there is an Instructor Hotline (ext. 6618) that allows instructors to speak directly with Bookstore staff regarding any problems/emergencies during the beginning of each semester.

Communication Update

Rhonda reported on her review of a stack of email complaints that Curtis gave her at the last meeting. The concerns centered on textbook availability. She pointed out that a couple of the emails praised the Bookstore. Rhonda said that in a few cases the books just weren't on the shelves yet (students could have asked staff to get them the book), books were put in the wrong place, or temporarily lost in the stockroom. These are common errors of any bookstore and can be solved by better communication. She said 91% of the titles were

available before start of semester. Rhonda said she discussed these incidents with her staff and identified processes to help prevent future problems. However, the major issue was cutting the orders placed by instructors. Rhonda said this has been standard practice when the Buyer feels an instructor is ordering too many books. However, in view of the extent of complaints, Buyers were instructed not to cut orders for the Spring semester. The result was \$1.4 million in overstocked inventory. There were tons of books left over that will need to be returned at the Bookstore's expense. Rhonda said the Bookstore cannot operate this way. They are willing to carry some inventory, but they cannot afford to carry this much. The Bookstore will receive a lower rating if they return too many books, and this will affect the cost of textbooks. Rhonda asked for direction from this committee regarding a procedure for cutting instructor book orders. After discussion, it was decided that small classes are not an issue, so their orders will not be cut. However, for large classes, if the Buyer wishes to cut the order by 20% or more, then the instructor should be contacted. Rhonda asked if the deans should also be contacted. Mike did not feel this would be necessary. He said a report to the deans with the history of the textbooks would be helpful. Arbella said they have a history of textbook orders going back six semesters, but the report is sorted by title, not division. She said she would add this request to her list for Sequoia users conference. This procedure should be shared with faculty at division meetings and at College Council.

With regards to the cost of textbooks, Rhonda stated that if instructors will commit to a specific textbook and edition for two years, then this would reduce the cost of the book. It will also help students receive more money for the buyback if the book is to be used next semester.

Faculty/Student Issues or Concerns

Curtis said he received no emails or complaints this semester regarding the Bookstore.

Maria said she had some issues she would like to discuss with the committee. One involved the use of clickers in the classroom. She has been asked by students if ASMJC could help provide clickers for classes. Curtis said clickers are mostly used in science classes as a quick way to survey the class. He said usually clickers are bundled with the course materials, and while there are generic clickers, there is no guarantee they will work properly with the course. His advice was not to invest in generic clickers for the students at this time.

Maria also wanted to discuss textbook costs and how they can be controlled. Rhonda said textbook costs are set by the publishers. The Bookstore's 25% mark-up barely covers operating costs. Maria asked if someone from the committee would be willing to attend an ASMJC meeting to discuss textbook costs. Rhonda said she would be happy to meet with them. Maria said some students order their textbooks from Barnes & Nobles or other internet sources in order to save money. Rhonda said some universities farm out textbook purchasing to Barnes & Nobles; however, college faculty usually don't like this because of the lack of freedom. Rhonda also said the high cost of textbooks is a statewide problem, and it is currently being addressed in the Legislature.

Other options include book loan programs, textbooks at the Reserve Desk, instructor created workbooks provided at duplicating cost, and materials provided via an online site. Some of these suggestions could involve copyright concerns. Gary noted that an upgrade of Web Advisor will require students to have a zero balance before they are allowed to purchase textbooks. It was also noted that students should take some responsibility for setting their own budget priorities. The cost of textbooks is after all an investment in their future. Maria said that Financial Aid has been holding trainings in budgeting for students.

Next Meeting/Future Agenda Items

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled in Fall semester for a Monday in October. Teresa encouraged members to submit any agenda items to Carrie Sampson.