

MJC BOOKSTORE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday, October 28, 2005

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

YCCD Conference Room B

Present: Michael Adams, Rhonda Green, Curtis Martin, Will McCombs, Laurie Prusso, Teresa Scott (Chair), Arbella Solhkhah, Mike Torok, Gary Whitfield, Carrie Sampson (recorder)

Absent: Wendy Byrd, Todd Guy, Susan Kerr, Doug Smith

Introductions/History

After introductions, Teresa gave a brief history of the MJC Bookstore Advisory Committee. She distributed the committee's mission statement and some correspondence regarding textbook pricing. Pamila Fisher, former YCCD Chancellor, created the Advisory Committee in 1997. The intention was to provide a forum in which deans, faculty, and students could discuss concerns and questions with Auxiliary Services management. In the past, most discussion topics have included the cost of books, long store lines, textbooks not on the shelves by the beginning of semester, and wrong editions. Since the Columbia College Bookstore is a much smaller operation, there has not been a need for an Advisory Committee. She also said that occasionally non-committee members have come to meetings with the intent to discuss personal issues with the Bookstore management. While it is not the purpose of this committee to address personal issues, Teresa left it to the members to decide whether or not other people could attend meetings. It was the consensus of the committee that meetings should be open.

Relationship Between District and the MJC Bookstore

Teresa said Auxiliary Services, which includes Food Services and the Bookstores, operate like businesses called special revenue funds. In general, special revenue funds encompass support services that are not directly related to the educational program. As such, the reporting lines go through Business Services and the Chief Operations Officers up to the District, where the Executive Vice Chancellor and the Controller can oversee their operations. This is simply good fiscal management.

Ways to Lower the Cost of Books to Students

There was much discussion concerning problems with the ordering/requisitioning of textbooks. One reason for the high cost of textbooks is the high mark-up placed on textbooks by publishers in order to allow them to discount the books on the international market. Because there is now talk of government controls over textbook prices, many publishers are starting to make the effort to keep prices more reasonable. Instructors who order textbooks late make it necessary to request expedited shipping, which is very expensive. Every time an instructor changes edition, it reduces the buy-back value of the book. Textbooks that are offered the following semester are bought back at half price; otherwise, they are bought back for \$10. If instructors would commit to keeping the same edition for two or more semesters, this would reduce the cost to students and increase the books' buy-back value. Also, if instructors requisition next semester's books on time, then the Bookstore will know how many books it should buy back at half price.

Mike Torok said it would be helpful if Deans could receive a list of instructors who have not ordered their books on time, so they could follow-up on getting these requisitions in. Rhonda said the Bookstore Buyer

does send instructors email reminders even after the due date. She said on-time requisitions have increased from 55% to 80% with the new online requisitioning system. However, it was noted that the Deans would have better control if the Division Secretaries were more involved in the process.

There was discussion of the Bookstore's mark-up. The mark-up is 25% on new books, 33% on used books. This mark-up covers all Bookstore expenses, including salaries and benefits. District covers energy costs for the Bookstore and does not charge rent on their facilities.

Custom publishing (also known as readers) was discussed. This is a practice where instructors have various excerpts from different books duplicated and then sold to students through the Bookstore. Rhonda said this has not been done at MJC Bookstore because it would require another full-time staff position in order to get all the copyright clearances.

Will said online ordering is very popular with the students. They like avoiding the long lines in the Bookstore. However, they do not understand the buy-back system. Why is a book that cost the student \$60, bought back for only \$10? Rhonda explained that if instructors do not get their requisitions in on time, then the Bookstore has no way of knowing whether or not a book will be used the next semester. The Bookstore buys back used textbooks at half price up to the number requisitioned by the instructor. After that, the book is bought back for \$10 and then sold to a used bookstore. When instructors submit their requisitions on time and do not change the edition, then more books will be bought back at half price. The earlier students purchase their books, the more likely they will be able to buy a used book. Also, the earlier students sell a book back at the end of semester, the more likely their book will have the higher value.

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Teresa distributed information on recently approved legislation on the conduct of public school bookstores. It was the consensus that MJC Pirates Bookstore was adhering to these requirements.

Next Meeting/Future Agenda Items

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Spring semester on Friday, February 24, 2006, 10 a.m. – Noon. Anyone having agenda items should contact Carrie Sampson.