

# Textbook "sticker shock" puts college students in bind

by Susan Warmbrunn  
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COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Three days after fall semester classes began at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Joe Dilwood still hadn't bought his books. He wasn't procrastinating — he was saving up.

"I don't have the money yet," he said.

Each semester, the sociology major struggles to pay his textbook bill. He's taken out loans, shared books with friends, begged professors for a copy of the course materials. Dilwood, a junior, estimates he spends \$300 per semester on books.

Like many students going back to college this month, Dilwood will find himself standing at a bookstore cash register asking: "Are you sure that's right? Are you sure?"

And like many college students, he'll find himself basing some educational choices on whether he can afford the books. He's never actually been able to buy every book on his reading lists, "because they're that expensive," he said. Other students have had to postpone enrollment over the cost of books, and student advocacy groups are now taking up the cause nationally.

The National Association of College Stores frequently hears about student "sticker shock" over books, said spokeswoman Laura Nakoneczny. The average nationwide cost of a college textbook in 1998 was \$61.66, up about \$4 from 1997, the most recent figures available from the NACS.

Students recently surveyed by the NACS report putting out an average

of \$275 per term for books — \$168 for new texts and \$107 for used, the NACS says.

But everyone says what you spend depends on what you study.

Stefanie Ekerholm, a sophomore business marketing major at CU-Springs, went book buying last week and rang up a tally of \$163.71. A friend, who's studying engineering, won't likely get off for so little, she said.

"The more technical the course is, the bigger your book is going to be, the bigger your bill will be," Ekerholm said.

Aaron Huston, the executive director of the Colorado Student Association, said students look at those prices and believe "there's got to be somebody making a boatload of money somewhere."

But a breakdown of the average textbook dollar shows no one is pulling in huge profits. The majority of money spent — about 75 cents of that dollar — goes to the publisher, according to data compiled by the NACS and the Association of American Publishers, the national trade association. Of that, just over 7 cents is profit. About 11.5 cents goes to the author. The college bookstore makes a profit of about 4 cents on each dollar of a new textbook.

Bookstores usually buy used textbooks back from students at about 50 percent of the price of a new book but resell them at 75 percent of a new book's retail price, Nakoneczny said.

Book publishing profits generally "are not going to knock your socks off," said Judith Platt, a spokeswoman for the Association of American Publishers. She estimated that profits from books — trade or textbook — range between 4 and 9 cents

on the dollar.

So why does a 300-page paperback Spanish textbook cost \$75? Like everything else, textbooks follow market — and marketing — trends. Open up a 20-year-old textbook and you would see a lot of actual text — heavy on the gray matter, light on the pyrotechnics," Nakoneczny said. Today, readers and teachers expect pizzazz — four-color graphics, color photos, fun font sizes, she said. More *USA Today*, less *Wall Street Journal*.

Unlike the latest John Grisham bestseller, there's no mass production and no assumption of an eager market, Platt said.

Instead, there is a "captive audience," says Cory Barbour, the Washington D.C.-based legislative director of the U.S. Student Association. While Barbour acknowledges there are legitimate reasons why textbook costs are so high, "people have to have those textbooks so people take advantage," she said.

Also, in the textbook market, smaller general demand breeds a greater market choice. Grisham's fans are always going to look for Grisham's books, but a college language professor can have dozens of different Spanish textbooks competing to be his course material. Faculty members also expect supplementary materials with their textbooks such as teaching editions, videos, and computer software that are usually supplied to them free of charge, Platt said.

For a student like Marla Smith, who works full-time at an assembly plant and takes classes full-time at Pikes Peak Community College, the size of the book bill affected her educational options.

A couple of years ago, Smith

planned to go back to school. Her financial aid covered tuition but not books. "I had to postpone going to school because I couldn't come up with \$400 for my books," she said.

Smith's financial aid now pays for everything from tuition and fees to books, but stories like Smith's are one of the reasons some student advocacy groups now are taking on "the textbook issue."

Access to education decreases as educational expenses increase, Barbour said. The USSA has approached federal legislators to try to persuade them to consider exempting textbooks from sales tax.

"We don't place taxes on tuition, and books hold a similar position in higher education," Barbour said.

Campuses across the country have come up with ways to attack the problem. Some have textbook rentals, others student swap programs.

Technology has opened alternatives to traditional textbook buying. Some online textbook sellers advertise savings of up to 40 percent. The NACS sued one of those companies over such claims and settled out of court by agreeing on specific guidelines about advertising claims, said Nakoneczny of NACS.

So-called E-textbooks — books online or on CD — also are making a debut on the market. But that's for students of the future to think about.

For the here-and-now, this semester, Dilwood's waiting to figure out what books he really needs for his junior year at CU-Springs.

"I don't want to be spending the rest of my life paying back book loans," he said. "It's a good debt to get into because you're getting something back, but if you don't have to."

## UNC opens up male-only residence hall to women

by Sara Yawn  
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CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (TMS) — For nearly two centuries, men at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have coveted room assignments in Old East or Old West, the oldest dormitories at the nation's first public university.

Now, with women moving in this fall — the first time in the 207-year-old institution's history — the campus is conflicted by both its break with tradition and its eagerness to reflect a progressive environment that embraces men and women. The gender integration has also kicked up controversy about the merits of single-sex versus coeducational housing. It's a debate being watched carefully by officials on other campuses where same-sex housing is closely linked to tradition. How UNC handles the integration is likely to affect other colleges and universities interested in making similar changes.

The conflict started a couple of years ago when two students — David Jernigan, former president of the campus' residential housing association, and Emily Williamson, the campus' former student body vice president — floated a proposal to move women into Old East and Old West, which were opened in 1793 and 1822 respectively. The suggestion resulted in a flurry of both supportive and angry letters and e-mail from students and alumni to university administrators and student publications. In the end, school officials agreed to make the conversion.

"I believe that integrating women continues a more important tradition of progressive equality at Carolina,"

Williamson said. "The tradition of admitting only men to live in Old East and Old West was based on historic discrimination against women by the university."

But critics of the plan, such as David Sutton, a senior who served as president of Old West during the 1999-00 school year, said the university had little choice but to accept the plan or risk looking sexist. He maintains that there hasn't been much of a need to convert the housing from same-sex to coed and suggests some women took a relatively recent interest in living in the two historic dormitories because they wanted to make a very public point.

"I don't think single-sex [housing] is an evil," Sutton said. "I think that it's a very important alternative, and it can be very conducive to a healthy lifestyle for people who desire that type of dorm life."

"For any single-sex dorm, you can say, 'Oh, it's not fair that either women or men don't get to live there,'" he continued. "But by that logic, we should have no single-sex dorm anywhere in any college in the entire country. So I think the logic applied was pretty ridiculous."

School officials are gradually phasing women into the dormitories. Women will live in only a few portions of each building this academic year. More will be allowed to enter in time for the 2001-02 school year.

Sutton knows he'll be gone by then, but said he's trying to get used to the idea that women will be making their homes amid the pine floors and vaulted ceilings where only men have been allowed to tread once visiting hours are over.

"It's almost like a fraternity," he said. "But when you take into account the fact that some women truly do feel oppressed, I think that outweighs the brotherhood factor by a little bit."

## At William Woods U., it pays to play

by Claire Zulkey  
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Call it a bribe or encouragement, but William Woods University in Fulton, Mo., may have found a sure-fire way to get its students more involved in school activities. Freshmen and new transfer students this fall will receive a \$5,000 discount in tuition simply for signing a contract in which they agree to attend campus events or join clubs. Commuter students will each receive \$2,500.

"We had noticed a lack of student involvement," says Dr. Lance Kramer, the school's academic dean. "What would be a vital portion of undergraduate life was being missed. We wanted to emphasize the importance of student activity."

Under the L.E.A.D. (Leading, Educating, Achieving, Developing) Award program (which is optional), students will earn points by participating in any of a plethora of activities offered, from Black History Month Programming to the University Horse Show. They must earn 4 points a month, and 45 points for the academic year, to be eligible for another \$5,000 as students. That means that if students sign up only to slack off and not attend, they'll lose their entitlement.

So far, the program, which, as far as Dr. Kramer knows, is unique to WWU, has met with a very positive response. "At this point, about all of the incoming freshman class has opted for it," he says, thus lowering their tuition to \$8,200 per year.

# Trouble looms ahead filling the teaching pipeline

by Maura Kelly  
Chicago Tribune  
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When Amy Paul graduated from Indiana University last year, many of her friends joked that they would earn higher salaries in the business world than she would make as a teacher.

In fact, some of Paul's friends who work as computer consultants or accountants earned nearly double the \$30,201 salary she received this year as a teacher at Bloom High School in Chicago Heights. But Paul, 23, ignored the lure of better-paying jobs in other professions she had considered, such as politics and journalism.

"I felt like a better way for me to bring about social change was through the classroom," said Paul, who was one of 53 new teachers hired by Bloom Township High School District 206 last year.

Paul's dedication to teaching is what many schools across the country are banking on this year as they search for qualified teachers to head their classrooms. The nation's schools are facing a teacher shortage caused by surging enrollments, an aging teacher force and low salaries. In the next 10 years, the U.S. Department of Education estimates, schools across the country will need to hire 2.2 million teachers.

"The need to replace and attract and retain teachers will have to be addressed immediately, and the efforts need to be ongoing," said Celia Lose, spokeswoman for the American Federation of Teachers, the country's second-largest teachers union, with more than 1 million members.

Lavish salaries offered during booming economic times by businesses are drawing away some potential teachers, educators say. The AFT's annual teachers' salary sur-

vey for 1998-99 shows that the average beginning teacher's pay nationwide was \$26,639, and the average teacher's salary in the country was \$40,574.

In Illinois, which has the 10th-highest teacher salaries in the country, the average beginning teacher's pay was \$28,954, and the average teacher's salary was \$45,286, AFT statistics show.

Comparably, college graduates who enter engineering can earn an average of \$44,362 annually, those entering sales or marketing can bring home an average of \$36,278, and graduates going into the financial field can earn an average of \$38,234, AFT statistics show.

"People who hold the purse strings need to look at enhancing salaries and working conditions to attract and retain highly qualified teachers," Lose said.

The need for higher pay is highlighted in the Chicago area, where many school systems had a hard time finding qualified math and science teachers for the next academic year. Many new teachers are not trained in those subjects, and those who are can find better-paying jobs in engineering or computers, educators said.

"They're at a premium," said Gail Ward, principal of Payton Math/Science/World Language College Preparatory High School, Chicago's newest high school, set to open in August at 1034 N. Wells St.

Ward recruited about 30 teachers, but only after visiting national universities and placing advertisements in major newspapers and educational publications.

Some districts nationwide are devising even more creative ways of attracting teachers. Massachusetts, for example, offers \$20,000 signing bonuses to teachers hired for a public school in the state. Teachers get \$8,000 the first year and \$4,000 for

the next three years. The program is in its second year, and the state hired 115 teachers this year, up from 59 last year.

The signing bonuses come from a pot of \$60 million that the state legislature earmarked for teacher incentives and teacher quality-improvement programs. Massachusetts

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-Celia Lose, spokeswoman for the American Federation of Teachers

sets is trying to target math, science and foreign language teachers — as many other areas around Chicago are — but the bonus goes to any new teacher.

"It seems most times that the financial part is the part that holds people back," said Jonathan Palumbo, spokesman for the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Some schools in other states will pay for a teacher's moving costs.

"Everybody's using whatever tricks they can to get the teachers in," said Jerry Lauritsen, assistant superintendent of curriculum and personnel who hires teachers for Bloom Township High School District 206. "But the economy has been so good, there's just not enough people to go around for all the jobs."

The district, which includes Bloom High School and Bloom Trail High School, gave up looking

for a vocational education teacher after Lauritsen could not find qualified candidates. He also had problems finding special education teachers.

"The kids have to know that it's a good profession and they can make an honest living with it," Lauritsen said, adding that univer-

sities should guide potential teachers so they are trained in needed areas such as math and science. The Chicago public school system started to recruit teachers internationally in January, after realizing that colleges in the United States were not producing enough math and science teachers. By early June, the city had hired 46 teachers from places such as Africa, China, and Eastern Europe.

Hiring teachers from other countries helps Chicago solve an educator shortage — the city plans to hire 1,800 and 2,000 new teachers for the next academic year — while providing other benefits.

"Chicago is preparing itself for the borderless economy, and its teachers are going to reflect that," said Carlos Ponce, chief human resource officer for Chicago Public Schools, adding that the teacher candidates from abroad also reflect the city's immigrant population.

At Homewood-Flossmoor High School, where about 25 of the school's 175 teachers retired this year, officials anticipated the need for teachers last summer. They hired the school's spokesman, David Thieman, to also work as its recruitment director. Thieman spent most of his winter traveling to teacher recruitment fairs on the East Coast, posting ads for teacher openings on the Internet and placing ads in national and area publications.

The district also held its own recruitment fair, which attracted more than 325 candidates. The school's efforts were successful: nearly all its teacher openings were filled by early June.

A fast-track alternative certification program in Illinois and 39 other states also has helped add teachers to the work force. At Governors State University, an alternative certification program approved by the Illinois State Board of Education started this spring with 25 students who left other careers to become teachers.

Classes will be held on weekends from April through August, when the participants will be assigned for a year as student teachers in area schools. If they do well and pass program requirements, they will become certified teachers.

Many participants were involved parents at their children's schools or were teacher's aides, and some of them plan to return to those schools as teachers, a program official said.

"It's kind of an experiment for the schools as well as for us," said Diane Alexander, dean of the College of Education at Governors State. "They felt that, if they could almost grow their own with teacher's aides and dedicated parents, there would be a sense of loyalty and they would stay."