

# Bookstore administration explains policies

By James E. Fitzroy

Questions raised at a recent Student Government Association meeting concerning complaints from students about the campus bookstore operation never reached Bookstore Committee Chairman Dr. Joseph Dreiss, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Dreiss said in a telephone interview.

The complaints were reported to be in regard to lack of availability of certain texts and confusion about various policies in effect at the bookstore.

During the Dreiss interview he indicated that a more thorough understanding by students of the whys and whats of the bookstore's existence might be accomplished by speaking with the persons responsible for its operation.

Robert Hamill of the Business Office oversees the management by William Kistler of the store. The many daily tasks are Kistler's responsibility. With the help of a small staff he maintains the varied inventory, checks the cash flow, balances the books in more than one sense, and, he adds not quite resigned to the fact, "takes the heat."

This heat he said stems from the general misunderstanding of basic policies that he must enforce, such as the simple return privilege which both he and Hamill consider a 'liberal one.'

"We gladly accept for full refund or credit any textbook purchased here," said Kistler. "Our only requirements are that they be returned in decent condition for resale and the original sales slip has to be presented. This is the same procedure followed by any retail store. Requiring a sales slip protects students more than it inconveniences them."

In response to a question regarding general merchandise supplies, Kistler responded that, "it's simply a matter of asking the clerk. If we are out of something, we'll

order it, let us know."

"In our present location we have limited storage space," Hamill said, "and it's a real juggling act to anticipate how much of what to keep on hand." According to Kistler a request will result in an immediate order though exact arrival time of the merchandise can't be predicted.

"We deal with a number of distributors who have their own ways of doing business," he said.

Hamill pointed out a gesture made by Kistler to illustrate Kistler's determination to keep his customers satisfied.

It happened when the contract covering the soda machines distributed throughout the campus was transferred to a different company. The new company replaced the Coke in the machines with Pepsi.

"I began to get complaints about it," Kistler explained, "but the only way for me to deal with it was to stock Coke myself in the store."

Paper, pens, refills, sweatshirts, and soda. What about the question of adequate supplies of required textbooks, you may be wondering.

"The biggest problem there," said Kistler, "is getting the titles and editions needed for the course from the professors. Most of the time, we have no hitches. Again, I'm dealing with book suppliers from all over the country, so the sooner I get the lists the sooner I can get started searching."

"Some courses aren't assigned an instructor until the last minute," Hamill added, "so there are sometimes unavoidable delays. Even in these cases, Bill hustles to get the books as quickly as possible. He runs a pretty good operation, a good-sized and complex operation, and he does it efficiently."

The January, 1983 issue of *Capitol Times* ran a story comparing our bookstore with those of several other colleges. Our

store did not come out well in the comparison. The glaring discrepancies at the time were a lack of a "buy back" policy at Capitol Campus and no system of selling these texts as used books at discount prices.

Hamill explained, "We had tried that in the past and it just didn't go. But during the spring, '83 term we surveyed the faculty and students for suggestions. Not surprisingly it was suggested that we try the used book and buy-back policy again."

Kistler said, "I was able to get a good supply of used texts and we hit it good in the fall and spring semesters. We were able to supply quite a few. One course, as a matter of fact, was supplied 100 percent with good, used text books."

The buy-back policy is generous, but strict. Books must be brought back to the store no later than one day following the end of the final exam period. This semester that makes the deadline Friday, May 12.

If the book is in reasonably good condition, and it is to be used in the following semester, Kistler said it is will be worth 50 percent of what you paid for it. The system is generous in the sense that the store will buy back books not in immediate demand, but these will be purchased at a lower rate determined by one of several used book catalogues Kistler refers to for a particular text's current value. This privilege extends to books that students may have brought with them from colleges attended prior to Capitol. The bookstores in the University system are referred to as auxiliary enterprises, according to Hamill. This translates into an operation that is affiliated with the system yet, by Kistler, is

thoroughly independent in its management.

Each of the system's bookstores must be self-supporting and produce a modest profit. This profit is channeled to a centrally pooled reserve fund at University Park. This fund is used exclusively for the system's bookstores. Capitol Campus' new bookstore building will be funded from that reserve.

Being self-supporting, according to Hamill, means paying the rent, heat, electric and salaries. An example of expenses incurred this year that must be absorbed before producing the required profit, said Kistler, "is a \$6,000 to \$7,000 postage bill. When we receive books, we pay shipping and handling. When we return things we also pay the shipping."

The new bookstore will be located north of the new technology building, between it and the Multi-Purpose Building.

It will provide 6500 square feet of space compared to the 3500 square feet available now. The bids are all in for the construction and Hamill expects the final recommendation to be made today or tomorrow.

"Construction could begin as early as April 1," he said, "and if we're lucky the building will be finished by mid-July. We need the extra room, and being separated, our utilities will be metered separately, too--to our advantage, I hope. The new area will give Bill the opportunity to get better organized and the room to perhaps try a new idea or two."

"I don't think that some of the faculty," Hamill added after Kistler left, "really appreciate all of the work Bill puts in on their behalf. He puts in a lot of extra time to keep things running."

General Repair Service  
on Domestic and Popular Foreign Cars

**Vastine's Auto Service**  
231 Oak Hill Drive (Off Vine St.)  
Middletown, PA

Hours: 8-6 Mon.-Fri.  
9-12 Saturday

Don Vastine

944-7154

## EASY MONEY!

**Who? Participants needed for perception study. If you're married or involved for over a year.**

**What? Short conversations and questionnaires.**

**Where? Olmsted Building.**

**When? Sunday, March 18 or 25. (Times to be scheduled.)**

**\$10.00 per person (approx. 1 hr.)**

**Contact:**

**Dr. John Teske**

**Office: 948-6037**

**Home: 533-4292**