

The Great Textbook Rip-Off?

By Angela Deal

\$FACT: Most students are not aware of the costs and processes in producing a college textbook. Talking with Jim Edmunds, Penn State Delco Book Store Manager, and watching a video entitled, *The Great Textbook Rip-Off...Fact or Fiction?* (The College Stores Research and Educational Foundation), reveal several reasons as to why the cost of texts is so high.

In the publishing industry there are two basic structures. The first concerns general books, like paperbacks, which are published millions at a time. With some confidence a publisher can be sure that each book will eventually sell. Contrasting with this are textbooks. In this structure, only a limited number of copies are published, with no certainty as to how many will sell before they are outdated.

It is not until after a textbook is published that the faculty members of a university decide if they will use the text or not. One publisher says, "If it doesn't sell it becomes an instant dinosaur."

Besides being absolutely unpredictable, the process involved in making a textbook is costly and time consuming. The first step requires soliciting an author, which can be a very difficult and timely process itself. A good author with knowledge and skills is sought for the job and, upon agreement to write the textbook, sets out to do research. With the help of an editor, the author works long and hard. The manuscript is then sent to be reviewed. In addition, illustrations are made, usually consisting of sophisticated graphic pictures, containing multiple colors.

Also included are the costs for royalties, paper, and a number of overhead costs, including maintenance, employee wages, rent, and freight charges, all of which may be incrementally affected by inflation.

While the publishers make most of the profit on the books students buy, they use it in the following ways: 10% of the textbook selling dollars go to royalties, while another 8-10% go to editing. For each publishing dollar 20 cents goes to writing and editing, 15 cents goes to illustrations, while another 15 cents goes to manuscripts, 12 cents to sales marketing and 12 cents to administrative costs.

As for the campus bookstore, it receives 25 cents of each text sale dollar, which will ultimately cover overhead costs. The school bookstore is a non-profit organization and uses the money

King's Dream?

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I am neither pro-white nor pro-black, but when I see or hear anything of this nature going on at Penn State, or anywhere for that matter, I like for it to be known by my fellow students.

Last semester, the BSL said that they needed their group to gain support for when they go up to University Park. I agree and support the idea 100%, but let's just imagine that my preproposed idea of a SAD group (Students Against Discrimination) went into effect at the Delco campus. There would be support from many other people on campus, not just one type of people. That would only reduce the bad feelings that many "minority" students have upon entering University Park because there would be that many less people to be unfamiliar with.

And if "black education" is mostly what the BSL is about, then school the rest of us. God knows we could use it. United we stand, divided we fall. As-Salaam Alaikum.

Don Forcey

to maintain the store.

Although these facts do not soften the financial burden of buying books, their importance puts the whole issue into perspective, allowing students to at least recognize why textbooks are so expensive.

To aid those who cannot afford these prices, some universities provide course textbooks, on reserve, in their campus libraries. Delco's campus library does not have such a system because it would

be very costly and deplete a substantial portion of the library's budget, according to Head Librarian Sara Whildin.

It would require that the library buy a text for every course, which may be good for only one semester. Another major concern was the monopolizing of textbooks by students. The idea has been discussed with the library faculty, but did not prove to be cost effective, therefore, has yet to be implemented.

Earth to Delco: WAKE UP!

by Rich Schaffer

Dear PSU Delco Student,

This article has been edited to protect the guilty because I am striving to be a conscientious student, and I am not allowed to hurt your feelings. Whenever possible names have been conveniently forgotten and strong language altered.

I would like to dedicate this article to Dr. T, Speedy Coleman (yes, the basketball legend), Tammy Z., Wanjiru Kamau, the exceptional faculty and staff at Delco, our SGA and SAC, a guy named John who came to an event and had the guts to stay and get involved despite the fact that he didn't know anyone, and anyone else who constantly strives to make Delco a better campus.

These people would bend over backwards to aid a student or create a better learning environment on campus and they deserve much thanks. Keep plugging away because your efforts do not go unnoticed and I love you all! Students, please read this article and take my words to heart.

Today America can be ranked as one of the greatest countries in the world. But what makes the U.S. the strongest nation that it is? Is it our military might?

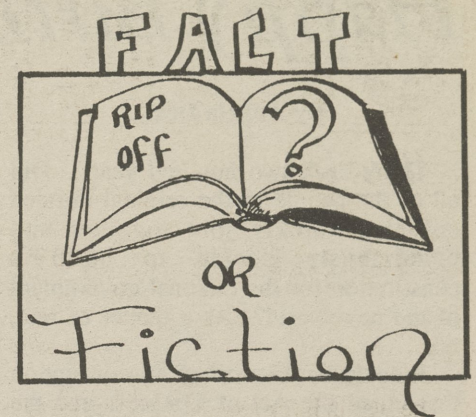
Our economic power? No, I say. Our power must lie in our vibrant, full of life, rough and ready college students. (This probably would have been your next guess right?)

It is true that the U.S. has always prided itself on the "future generation," but if my fellow PSU students plan to take over control of this great nation then perhaps I should look into defection. Why? Why should I go to such an extreme?!

Look around you. Maybe you see nothing. Perhaps you wear the infamous "blinders" and see only what is right in front of you, and your path leads you only to school, a job, and then home.

Well, I can tell you what I see. I see a cross section of America here at Delco. But then that is ideally what a college is supposed to be. And this cross section scares me! I see opportunity that constantly spreads her (or his, wouldn't want to be non-diversified) arms out to our students. She beckons to you. Our school offers a chance for you to get involved!

This country is founded on the ideal that you as a person have a right to your



opinions, values, beliefs, freedom of expression, to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the right to aid in the decision making process, the right to dress up like an idiot on October 31st and not get arrested, the right to be involved. (Impressive country, huh?)

Joe Shmuck from his respective world down under, in the swamp or desert of some backward third world country would gladly give his right kidney and his young sons and daughters, and does every day, to enjoy, to just taste, for one fleeting second half of the freedoms that we as Americans take for granted. Peoples of many nations now trade their blood and lives for what we already enjoy on a daily basis.

Here at Delco there are so many clubs, activities, and events going on that it is pitiful when less than twenty people show up for a club meeting, a SAC or SGA sponsored activity, or a campus event such as a choir or guest speaker.

Okay, now maybe you can see the problem, the very point of my writing. I have two working theories as to what has happened at Delco. (Read along, help me out, pick a good working theory, or make up your own.)

Number one, aliens have invaded your bodies, sucked out what little minds some of you had, and turned you into unfeeling machines that eat, sleep, go to school, work, and go to the potty during times when you have nothing else to do. That is theory number one.

Number two is that you all have a bad apathy problem. Did you know that comedians Bobby Hunt, Barbar and Seville, Elon Gold, and others were here at Delco to entertain you? Did you know that the Morgan State Choir and Reverend Paul Washington came to Delco for your listening and intellectual enjoyment? Did you know that SADD sponsored a Beef and Beverage on the 15th of February? Did you know that there is a building called the Lion's Den refitted by students for you, the masses, to come study, sit, watch TV, or just crash out between classes? Did you know that Santa Claus had nine reindeer including Rudolph? Or how about the candlelight vigil we held for the troops in Saudi Arabia? Or the float we entered into the Hero Day Parade to again honor our troops in the Middle East? Or the championship victory by our men's basketball team?

I could go on for days throwing insults at you but I would probably get writer's cramp.

By now I hope that my patriotic appeals and hard-hitting sarcasm have inspired some of you, but I know that doubters still exist. For you slow kids I can appeal to one more area—your pocketbooks.

Most of you work and pay state taxes. We all pay tuition. Where do you think this money goes? (Let me help you.) Your money finances this institution! So why should you be concerned about whether or not you are involved? Because (this is the funny part) we are spending *your* money, *our* money, to promote better student life for you! Why should all of this money be spent on student programming and events for you if you are not going to come?

Letter to the Editor

This is a letter of concern directed to the campus administration. As you know, last month was "Black History Month", a very important month set aside to recognize and celebrate the struggles and contributions of African-Americans to this great nation. Those who set up the campus Black History Month activities worked long and hard on them.

However, many of you did not attend any of the programs, just a few of you only attended one. You talk about the students supporting diversity, and then you yourselves cannot come and support programs that are geared toward diversity on this campus.

Now tell me, were you too busy? Every event was held during the common hour, and I saw several of you coming from the gym at that hour. You did not know of the dates? Posters were put around the entire campus well in advance.

Let me say now that I am hurt over your lack of support. You tell us how we are supposed to bind together, and you hold a lot of meetings. I presume you talk about how this bonding will be accomplished. But, when the students of all races looked around that main lounge and did not see any of the top administrators supporting the activities that I know are programs you have or should have discussed at your meetings, they begin to think, "Why should we attend?"

You tell us about diversity, but actions speak louder than words, and your actions are telling the students that you do not care about diversity on this campus. If you do not care, neither will the students. You must think as long as the students see or read something about diversity, they won't care what happens, or who shows up at events. Wrong! I care about what happens on this campus and who shows us support by attending programs that deal with African-Americans.

Do you really think we would come to a place where we felt people did not appreciate our culture or, on a stronger note, us, the students of the African-American race? Believe me, I speak for more than myself when I say that we are beginning to feel as though we do not matter to you!

Let me also ask this, if you did it to the African-American students, will you do the same thing to the Hispanic, Asian, and Native American Students? I hope a pattern is not developing.

This is a problem that needs to be addressed and corrected today, not next semester, or at next year's Black History Month programs. Let's talk about moving forward today.

Here are some ideas on a way to stop moving backwards. Try your best to at least make some of the events that are scheduled, regardless of who is sponsoring the program. All students value your support. Also, it is time to value their support and put some students on the committee to get the process of moving forward moving forward, and to keep it that way.

In closing, if I have offended anyone, forgive me, but you also offended me in your very poor showing of support of the programs about African-Americans. Also, I am not the only one who feels like this, for there are a lot of other students who were very appalled at your absence.

If you would like to discuss this further, you can contact me through the *Lion's Eye* office, and I would be more than happy to sit down with any administrator and discuss this problem. Peace.

David Clements, Jr.

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