

Bargain Books**Textbook Price Wars Go Online**

Amanda Ponzar
Lion's Eye Co-Editor

New spring classes mean it's time to buy textbooks—again. Time to empty the wallet, drain the bank account, and break the piggy for a pile of paperbacks on subjects you could care less about. After you finagle enough financial aid to pay for this semester, somehow you still need to find another three hundred dollars for books!

If you have money to burn, buying from the bookstore is your best-bet overall—it's convenient, one stop shopping with a great return policy. Plus, at the end of the year you can usually sell some of your books back to make a few extra dollars—literally. So out of the three hundred you spent, you might make back \$30 if you're lucky.

The Internet is another helpful tool, claiming to save students up to 40% on textbooks. Check it out for yourself and compare prices. Some sites to try are bigwords.com, efollett.com, ecampus.com, and varsitybooks.com. Still, buyer beware! Although a title may seem the same, a book can have many editions so you might end up with the wrong one. Be sure you know what edition you need and match the title and ISBN number exactly. For example, *Seventeen Syllables* is not the same as *Seventeen Syllables and Other Stories*. Just ask English professor, Dr. Carol Kessler.

Most online book companies have a good return policy. Varsitybooks.com, for example, will refund the full cost of your purchase within 30 days after you receive your order. Shipping costs, which are usually cheap or free, are refunded only if your return is a result of the company's error. Check each website for specifics. If you're in a rush, Bigwords.com offers overnight delivery for \$11.90.

New books are best bought online, while used books are usually the same price online and in the bookstore. If you buy used, you can pretty much be assured that you're paying the absolute lowest price available for the book anywhere, unless you get it for free.

Most books even textbooks—can be found in local libraries, or if not there, in school libraries like University Park. Unless you just can't handle the hassle of due dates, overdue fines, and not being able to highlight all the pages, it is almost always better to borrow than to shell out ten bucks for a book you didn't want. When you borrow from the library, which is your right as a taxpayer, the books are free! (Or at least, the books are paid with part of the 20% tax that is taken out of every one of your paychecks.)

Another alternative is to buy or borrow books from friends. If your friend sells her book back to the bookstore, she won't get anywhere near what it's worth. If your friend sells to you however, she can recuperate much more of her losses and you can get the book for less than the bookstore will offer it. If you want to sell your books to other students, get a stamp of approval from Student Life and post fliers around campus.

For bargain hunters with lots of time on their hands, many used bookstores, like The Paperback Trader in Broomall, offer paperbacks for 50 cents to a couple of dollars. Still, you can't be sure used shops will have your book in stock, so you might need to start looking far in advance to make sure you get everything you need. Check your local phone book for area listings.

Lastly, complete copies of some books are now available online. Although it will take quite a bit of time (and paper) to print an entire book, it definitely saves money.

Unless you plan to be a lawyer or

doctor and want to save your books to start your own library, (or your parents are footing the bill and don't care how much you spend as long as you get your degree), most new textbooks are a waste of money and will be obsolete in a few years.

Tech Learning

By Ed Blackburn
Lion's Eye Staff Writer

The Learning Center has been improving its technology to make things easier for students.

The Kurzweil Machine, built for vision-impaired and dyslexic students, as well as students for whom English is a second language, is now accessible there. It uses a scanner to translate written words into voice.

Inspiration, another new software program, is designed to help students who are writing papers by taking information the student inputs and visually outlining it. "It appeals to the right side of the brain, which thinks visually," said Norma Notzold of the Learning Center.

Computerized grammar support for students with grammatical troubles will be available, Notzold said. If a student has persistent troubles with commas, for instance, he or she can find aid.

The Learning Center will be sponsoring a program called 'Focus on Finals' with professional and peer tutors on hand to help students. Students are encouraged to come in, organize or join study groups, and enjoy the music and the food. There will also be prizes, such as gift certificates.

The Learning Center is looking to recruit students with an A in general education courses, especially in math and science, to lead study groups, or tutor fellow students for the spring semester.

Report On Advising Due In '00

By Alyce Wolff
Lion's Eye Staff Writer

You get one of those surveys that request that you express your opinion on academic advising. You randomly fill-in any answers. You think no one cares what you think and that nothing will be done to improve the concerns that you have.

At Delco, your concerns are not only being heard, but steps are being taken to resolve or alleviate problems with academic advising.

After a recent release of a survey that expressed students' concerns with academic advising, the campus formed a study group. The study group consists of professors, deans, and directors from Penn State. They are currently collecting information from students, staff, faculty, people in the Learning Center, and the staff from the Division of Undergraduate Studies. This group plans to recommend steps to improve academic advising at Delco by the New Year.

The group hopes to make the year 2000 a year of improvement for academic advising on campus. Al, a sophomore English major, said, "Academic advising on campus is inconvenient and a hassle. With any luck the study group can improve the advising procedure."

Better academic advising is crucial for the success of Delco graduates. Students want to graduate on time and want to be successful in the future. The study group's goal is to pave the way for future graduates. Dr. Ed Tomezsko, Campus Executive Officer, believes, "Any and all processes can be improved." This group and their studies are a way the Commonwealth College plans to improve as it matures.

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