

Bookstore Innovation Group (BIG) Annual Report for 2012 - 2013

Submitted April 16, 2013 by Susan Stinson and Jaime Hillman

1. The Longwood Bookstore Committee formally voted to change its name to the Bookstore Innovation Group (BIG), and the BIG subsequently revised its role and structure and submitted a proposal to Faculty Senate to be granted standing committee status. The proposal was heard in November and approved. Below is the approved wording regarding the committee's role and structure:

Bookstore Innovation Group (BIG)

1) Purposes and Duties: The committee members will serve as liaisons between faculty members and the bookstore manager(s) and staff concerning suggestions for, questions about, and / or problems with both textbook and trade book orders. The bookstore manager will communicate any pertinent changes or important information to the committee members (such as book order deadlines and book return dates and policy / procedural changes) and will utilize the members in an advisory capacity, as appropriate.

2) Membership: At least one member of the faculty of The College of Arts and Sciences, The College of Business and Economics, The College of Education and Human Services, and—as appropriate—staff and students.

3) Ex-Officio Members: None

4) Tenure Restrictions: None

5) Departmental Restrictions: None

6) College Restrictions: None

7) Other Restrictions: None

8) Term of Office: Staggered 2-year terms; members are eligible to serve additional terms.

9) Method of Selection: Faculty appointed by Executive Committee of Faculty Senate; staff will be appointed by the committee; students will be appointed by the SGA.

10) Chair: Appointed by Executive Committee.

11) Reporting Route: To the Faculty Senate.

2. The BIG began its work on a blog that is available (in Beta testing) via Longwood's website and will serve as an additional vehicle of communication between the management at B&N at Longwood and Longwood faculty:

<http://blogs.longwood.edu/longwoodbookstore/>

(BIG cont. 2)

This site contains additional bookstore information that may be of interest to or have relevance for faculty and staff at Longwood regarding book order deadlines and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs). We believe the FAQs, in particular, will be useful for new faculty and staff as well as those who have relatively simple questions regarding bookstore policies (such as why the return dates are scheduled the way they are, why the orders are due so early, what to do if students report no or low book availability in store, etc.).

The site will also contain the names of and contact information for all of the BIG members and for the bookstore staff—this most basic information has been, heretofore, unavailable and / or hard to find online.

The site is still under construction and will be functional for and announced to all faculty/staff in August 2013.

3. The BIG discussed textbook sell thru numbers and efficient communication between the bookstore and all faculty/staff. Textbook sell thru numbers can be an indicator of poor communication between faculty and the bookstore. Therefore, Kristin Leasure, textbook manager, reached out to individual faculty through email. Below, we are including a sample of the types of email sent:

Date XYZ

Dear Professor:

We are preparing to close the spring semester and evaluating the leftover inventory. Based on enrollment (Dept/Course/Section) has a considerable number of books left over. We want to make sure students are prepared for your class, and our low sell thru could indicate an issue. We have the (textbook name and ISBN) listed for (Dept/Course/Section). Are there any students who are waiting to purchase books? Our first concern is making sure your students have everything they need to be successful in your class. Your insight to this detail is greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Our responses varied, but overall they indicated that communication between bookstore staff and faculty was not a factor in the low sell thru numbers. We realize that students are savvy shoppers and will look in multiple places to acquire course materials required for class. Low sell thrus, however, mean tight margins for the bookstore. In order to arrive at the delicate balance between supply and demand, the bookstore will continue to monitor sell thru trends and adjust inventory levels to meet the needs of students and work to ensure best business practices are implemented at the store level.

(BIG cont. 3)

4. In an effort to cut down on the sheer volume of emails that faculty receive, usually around book order deadlines, regarding the bookstore, the BIG looked at how these emails are constructed and to whom they are sent and who is forwarding what. We noticed a couple of trends: 1) Ken Copeland's emails go to all faculty and staff, but 2) our initial heads-up emails to staff sometimes get forwarded and sometimes do not get forwarded. So, we are going to make a few minor adjustments to see if we can get rid of some of the overlap:

- 1) Initial emails will only be forwarded to administrative staff who request the heads-up.
- 2) Those heads-up messages will include a note indicating Ken Copeland will be sending the message wide to faculty and staff so there is no need for the administrative staff to forward as well.
- 3) Reminders will only be sent to faculty and staff (and administrative staff) by Ken Copeland.

These actions should help us reach our intended audiences but not serve as a distraction.

5. BIG plans for next semester include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) continuing to monitor and address textbook sell thru by title and course and professor;
- 2) inviting one (1) student (via SGA appointment) to participate on the BIG committee;
- and 3) communicating with the faculty about B&N's latest faculty tool, Faculty Enlight.