

## **Committee on Course Materials Affordability – Annual Report 2022-2023**

### **Committee Members:**

- Thomas PlaHovinsak (Chair)
- Chene Heady
- Ashley Leslie
- Kat McClesky
- Janet Smith
- Kevin Schattenkirk-Harbaugh
- Brian Adler (ex-officio)
- Brent Roberts (ex-officio)

### **Accomplishments:**

- Continued work on a Canvas site that will serve as a “one-stop shop” for information concerning open educational resources (OER) for faculty and students as detailed in the 2021-2022 report.
- Chene Heady met with bookstore manager Brian Adler on November 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the concerns expressed to Faculty Senate about the bookstore and reported back to the committee. Our report on this meeting and subsequent policy changes is detailed below:

The bookstore staff acknowledges that they experienced many problems with textbook orders in Fall 2022. Part of this issue involves the ways in which changes in publisher policy have affected book ordering. Some major publishers, like Wiley and Pearson, now require the bookstore to request permission from the publisher before attempting to return unsold books for a refund; this permission is not always granted, which means that unsold books represent a potential loss for the bookstore. This shift, combined with the tendency of many college students to order books from Amazon, has caused the bookstore to order a conservative number of textbooks, rather than a full class set. If a greater than estimated number of students choose to order from the bookstore, a second order then must be placed.

Additionally, when orders are placed, they often face delays from the publishers. Many publishers are placing popular books on backorder, due to an industry-wide paper shortage. Facing a post-COVID labor shortage, publisher customer service offices are short staffed and often give vague and conflicting replies as to when these backordered books will be available. The staff at the bookstore are working very hard and offer this information to enable faculty to see the difficulties they are attempting to navigate in procuring our textbooks.

The above problems are essentially out of the bookstore’s control. The bookstore grants, however, that it did a poor job in Fall 2022 keeping faculty apprised as to the present—and sometimes shifting—status of their book orders. Communication was not consistent and was not efficiently handled. Many wires got crossed, as oral messages from professors about textbooks were forgotten or not delivered to the proper recipient, and the

bookstore's lack of a centralized textbook e-mail address meant that many different e-mail accounts—some of which are not regularly checked—were receiving professors' textbook queries. The bookstore apologized for this logistical problem and the difficulties faculty dealt with because of it.

Going forward, the bookstore would like to try to address this problem by having all textbook inquiries from professors be sent by e-mail, so that there is a written record of the conversation to consult. They also ask that all messages be sent to a single, centralized e-mail address: [adlerbl@longwood.edu](mailto:adlerbl@longwood.edu).

**On-going Business:**

- Using the information we gathered, the committee intends to work with the registrar to make surveying faculty about their intended use of OER materials a core part of registration to help students identify low and no cost courses.
- Additional faculty outreach concerning adoption of OER materials and follow up concerning the new bookstore policy will be conducted in Fall 2023.