



## Did You Know?

### Facts about College Stores and Course Materials

#### **College stores help students make smart choices.**

Students need textbooks and course materials for academic success. But unlike paying for tuition and fees, students have many choices when it comes to acquiring textbooks. They can buy books in new or used condition; share, rent, or swap books; download books to e-readers; or decide not to buy books at all.

College stores help students choose wisely by providing full and transparent pricing information and detailed booklists, and by offering students many convenient ways to access course materials economically through the store.

#### **Students rely on college stores for most required course materials.**

College stores remain the primary retail source for course materials. In 2008, students purchased 70% of their total course materials at their college store or its web site<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Used books help students save money.**

Making used books available and providing a safe and sound environment to sell or donate unwanted used books is one of the most significant ways college stores are reducing the cost of course materials, and the savings can be substantial. Used textbooks are typically priced at 75% of the retail price of a new book. College stores report that, on average, used books make up 35% of their course materials inventory and the percentage is increasing annually<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Faculty plays a crucial role in controlling the cost of course materials.**

College stores order the course materials that faculty members specify. Timely selection of textbooks by faculty, and re-using textbooks in multiple academic periods, enables stores to procure a larger number of money-saving used copies and buy more books back from students. Faculty can help by making it clear which course materials are required and which are optional, and by working with stores to order only those materials essential for learning.

#### **College stores are driving innovation in digital delivery of course materials.**

College stores are at the forefront of efforts to deliver academic materials to students in digital formats. In partnership with publishers and technology companies, stores across the country are giving students new ways to buy, rent, and share academic materials and access digital content.

#### **College stores are major employers of students and contributors to state and local economies.**

College stores in the U.S. directly employ up to 150,000, of which approximately 30,000 are current students. In addition, more than 1,300 small to large U.S. businesses supply goods and services to the collegiate retail market<sup>1</sup>.  
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National Association  
of College Stores

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### **College stores: Accuracy guaranteed.**

College stores are the only source of course materials that guarantee students the correct textbook and accompanying supplemental material that a faculty member requires (new OR used). Unlike other textbook sellers, stores owned or affiliated with colleges and universities are established to provide students with ALL of their required course materials. To fulfill this mission, these stores must ensure that an adequate number of books are readily available for each student and must provide books for even the smallest and most obscure courses – something alternative sources don't have to do.

### **College stores make very little on sales of new textbooks.**

After expenses, the college store typically makes only 6.3¢ on each dollar spent on new textbooks. The remaining money goes toward the publisher, the author, and freight expense<sup>2</sup>.

### **Student spending on course materials is often exaggerated.**

According to NACS' *OnCampus Research 2010, Student Attitudes and Buying Habits Revealed*, college students estimate spending approximately \$667 a year on textbooks. This figure is less than 5% of total college costs, including tuition, student fees, and room and board.

### **Prices at college stores are comparable to those charged by online booksellers.**

A recent study by the Florida Office of Program Policy & Analysis and Government Accountability found that students purchasing new college textbooks online saved an average of only \$2.15 per item. In fact, online prices were HIGHER for 27% of the textbooks examined by the study.

In addition, often the lowest price found online is misleading (what about shipping costs?) and may point a student to the wrong book, wrong edition, or a book in poor condition or missing required supplemental materials.

<sup>1</sup>National Association of College Stores OnCampus Research

<sup>2</sup>National Association of College Stores and Association of American Publishers data