Textbook Affordability Committee

**Friday, November 11, 2017**

Milner Library 614A

**Minutes**

**Members Attending:** Michaelene Cox, Beau Grzanich, Danielle Miller-Schuster, Heather Paterson, Jess Ray, Anne Shelley

**Absent:** Patrick Broderick

**Call to Order:** 1:30

**Approval of the Minutes:** After friendly amendments, minutes from 10/20/17 were approved.

1. **Discussion of Replacing Secretary**

In lieu of electing a new secretary, Michaelene suggested having the co-chairs alternate responsibilities each semester of taking minutes and coordinating communications/agendas. Further discussion will continue at the next meeting.

**2. Student Survey**

Clarity on the origins of a student survey revealed that the committee’s 2016-17 annual report mistakenly states that TAC administered the survey. The survey was in fact designed and administered by Student Government Association representatives. A correction to the annual report will be made and the revision submitted to the committee next meeting for approval.

SGA provided student survey responses and a summary report to the committee for information purposes this Fall semester. The paper survey was completed by 253 students who attended a couple different campus-wide events which SGA was a part of in 2015-16. After reviewing the report, committee members agreed that it should be regarded with caution since the number of responses was not statistically significant with the overall population of the student body. Nevertheless, responses appeared to support general understanding about textbook costs, usage and student perceptions.

Danielle said that she can share a survey that Barnes and Noble conducted with their customers. She specifically wants to discuss the percentage of students that do not have their textbooks on the first day of class and how that impacts students’ success.

Both Jess and Anne want to bring data to share with the committee about how the cost of textbooks correlates to students’ success. There was a question as to whether the committee should conduct another student survey at this time. It was decided that the data would not be much different than what has already been presented, so the committee should move more towards action items using the information already given.

**3. Survey Administered to Academic Units**

Committee notes from last year do not fully elaborate on administration of the survey to academic units, either. The assumption is that it was given to the Chair of Chairs last year to administer through SelectSurvey as planned. If so, then approximately 35 department heads should have received the survey. Nine responses were received. This low number of responses suggests that maybe the chairs did not administer the survey to their staff.

An intriguing response from the survey was about students knowing that they are responsible for having access to their textbooks. There was a discussion about what type of student this applies to. Committee inferred that it is maybe referring to first year students who are first generation. It may also apply to international students, as the culture of universities is different in the United States than their home nation.

Committee concluded that it is important for students to know and understand what to expect with acquiring textbooks for their courses. This can become an educational goal for the committee to work on. The committee can specifically target the information to groups of students that may not have the cultural background to understand how the intricacies of textbooks work at a university level, specifically the cost associated with textbooks.

It was suggested that some faculty may not be aware of the struggles some students face with being able to afford their textbooks. It was noted that the high cost of textbooks may have an effect on the retention rate. There was discussion about how there might be an emergency fund for students who financially struggle the cover the cost of textbooks.

Committee moved to a discussion about the question in the survey regarding ebooks. Anne wants to get more specifics on what each department/faculty member is referring to when they use ebooks, as there are many different resources that can fall into this category. The committee agreed that it is important to gather more information on ebooks, so the committee can better educate that faculty.

Anne explained that there is a program through the library for a faculty member that wants an ebook to be available to their students for free. The library will cover the $300 for the ebook, and then the students do not have to pay for the textbook. The committee wants to further explore this option.

Jess suggested that the committee add a representative from CTLT to join the committee, as they have experience with assisting the faculty in using ebooks. Michaelene suggested that the committee can also have guest speakers to come in and talk about ebooks and ebook options.

Michaelene said that she will draft a summary of the survey to put into the committee’s records.

**4. Website**

Jess has not had an opportunity to further progress on the website and work with IT people. Will check status of the website at the next meeting.

**5. Clarification on Next Meeting**

Anne will add the meeting dates to the Outlook calendar and send invites to committee members.

**6. Formulation of Strategic Plan**

Heather suggested that the committee look into investigating open educational resources (OERs). Anne offered to do a presentation on her knowledge with this topic.

Beau brought forth concern of using publisher’s resources for online quizzes, homework, and discussions rather than using Reggienet. Specifically, the College of Business uses a ‘packback book’. Students believe that they have to spend money on a resource that can be used for free on Reggienet. It was suggested that using a publisher’s resource is easier for faculty than Reggienet.

Jess suggested that the committee might investigate whether the publisher’s resource has a better cost-benefit than Reggienet. The quality of the resource would have to be evaluated.

Beau suggested that the committee could create a resource, such as a flowchart, to educate the faculty on why this is an issue for students, and how faculty should go about deciding on whether or not to use the resource. The committee could work together with CTLT on this project. Anne added that the faculty could work together with CTLT to come to a consensus of how they can use Reggienet to fulfill the needs they get from the publisher’s resource.

Heather brought forth custom textbooks as another item to add to the strategic plan. Custom books are an issue because they force students to purchase textbooks, eliminates the possibility of resale, and often times can only be used for a specific semester. The committee agreed that there should be an investigation into why custom books are necessary and if they provide a better learning experience for students or if they are only used as profit generator for faculty. This information should also be supplied to the students from the faculty member that uses the custom book. The committee also wants to educate the faculty on the cost of custom books.

Michaelene wants the committee to come back at a later point to add some more action items surrounding custom textbooks.

**7. Agenda for next meeting**

At the next meeting Anne will present on OERs. The committee will be meeting in Milner room 311 at noon on Friday, December 8th. The time is tentative as Associate Professor Do-Yong Park will be invited to join the committee, and the committee is currently unaware of his schedule.

At the next meeting, the committee will also discuss the schedule for next semester.

Danielle will also bring some information from the survey Barnes and Noble conducted to supplement Anne’s presentation.

**8. Announcements**

Faculty caucus elected Associate Professor Do-Yong Park from School of Teaching and Learning to join the committee. He will be made aware of our meeting for next month.

**Adjourned:** 3:15

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Paterson