

Barnes & Noble announces textbook renting program

Jack Dodson
News Editor

Barnes & Noble announced the trial-run of a new textbook-renting program in college campus shops across the country. The program is in its early stages, there has been no decision on whether the program will come to Elon.

In addition to Elon, the UNC Greensboro and High Point University have Barnes & Noble Booksellers for college stores, but none of the stores use the renting program.

According to Corporate Communications Manager Karen DiScala, who spoke on behalf of Elon's campus store, the program is being tested at UNC Wilmington.

"We have 25 different schools operating our rental program right now all over the country, including UNC Wilmington," DiScala said. "We will be expanding our program to many more

schools in 2010, but the list of schools has not yet been determined."

Numerous Web sites have made renting textbooks online available for the past few years, including Chegg.com and CampusBookRentals.com. Barnes & Noble will not only offer textbook-renting in store, but also through its Web site at participating college locations.

"I do not have any information particular to Elon but our rental program does allow students to rent their books online and pick them up at the bookstore," DiScala said. "We are the only national booksellers to offer both options."

Sophomore Aly Hignight said she usually buys her textbooks from online sellers because of the better pricing options. "I usually don't go to the bookstore," she said, "I usually go to Amazon.com and (alternative methods) like that."

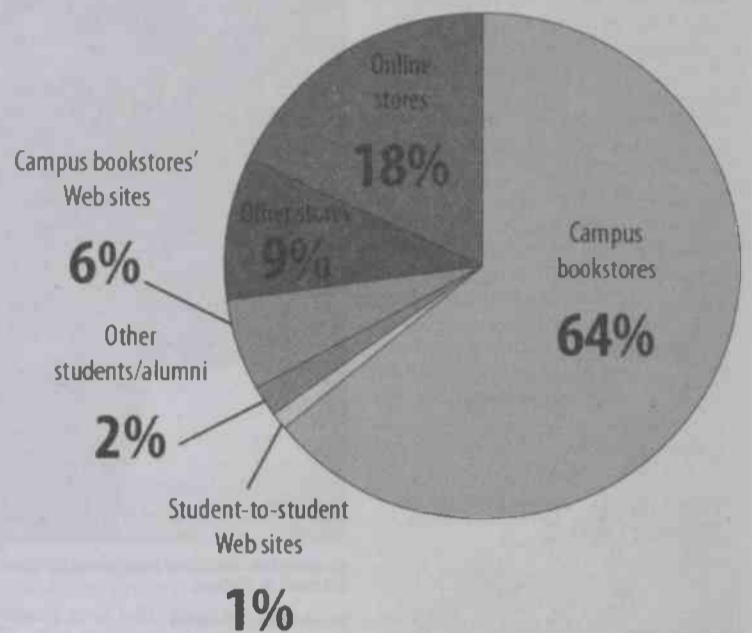
She said she knows people at Elon who use Chegg.com. "One of my friends mentioned it when we were talking about getting textbooks and how expensive they are," she said.

According to DiScala, the savings from Barnes & Noble's program is upwards of 50 percent compared to buying textbooks new.

"Textbooks rent for 42.5 percent (of the full list price)," DiScala said. "For example, a 100 dollar book could be rented for 42.50 dollars. Students can pay for their rental using any form of tender, including student financial aid."

DiScala said the program has been well-received so far. "I can't speak to Elon students in particular but we are finding that many students are embracing this program as it provides them with another cost saving option."

Student Spending on Course Materials



SARAH COSTELLO | Graphics Editor

Changing economy spurs changes in liberal arts

Alexa Sykes
Reporter

In the current economic situation, many liberal arts schools are looking to make their students' educations more relevant in the work place.

Dr. Mary Wise, assistant vice-president of academic affairs at Elon, said the primary purpose of a liberal arts education is not to assist in the job search, but to help young adults become better thinkers and writers and to understand a variety of perspectives.

"We are not a technical school, and we are not a community college," Wise said. "Those are places that would be most focused on helping students get right into jobs."

Wise noticed stark changes in some liberal arts schools in the state of North Carolina, which are now aiming to produce students who can immediately enter the workforce. At Elon there are 58 required hours of general studies curriculum. Liberal arts are part of every students' curriculum.

"Students should never regard their liberal education courses as less important than the courses in their major," Nancy Midgette, associate provost, said. "The two areas work together to provide all Elon graduates with a strong skills base and strong content knowledge."

Midgette agreed with Wise that a liberal arts education prepares students to analyze information and situations, communicate clearly and be creative individuals.

"Employers who visit campus frequently tell

me that these skills are the most important ones they look for," Midgette said. "A student's choice of major does not need to dictate employment."

Elon is still conscious of the marketplace, but they have not made any substantial changes in the curriculum as a result of the declining economy, as some other liberal arts colleges have.

Wise said liberal arts colleges are not necessarily concerned with responding to the whims of the marketplace. "There are some truly liberal arts schools that don't even want to think about 'will you get a job at the end of this,' or 'how we are preparing you for jobs' - I don't think many people understand this," she said.

This is not to say Elon does not have plans to change or alter their curriculum in the future. "This is a direction Elon has been moving toward in the past decade," Wise said. If anything were to be modified, it would be the general studies 58 credit hours curriculum, Wise said. The general studies 58 credit hours curriculum would be modified the most, but no specific changes have been established yet.

Elon currently has no plans to make their curricula more career-oriented.

According to Wise, 20 percent of Elon students major in communications, "These are people who see themselves going into jobs, getting the training here that will help them prepare for these jobs," Wise continued.

She said obtaining a degree in liberal arts alone is not going to guarantee a job. "You've got to set yourself off as a commodity," Wise said. "This is

what I can do for you, because I have already done it in some other place. Some of the graduates of other schools may not be able to (say) this."

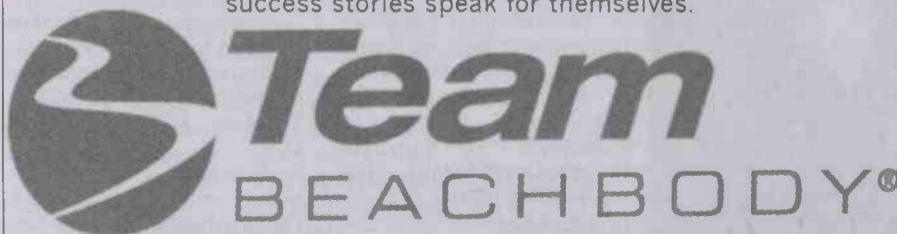
Midgette added that Elon's curriculum is very dynamic and is constantly evolving. "Elon is certainly attuned to the employment opportunities for students," she said. The university conducts surveys of graduates nine months after graduation, and again five years later. "We want to know what field they are working in, and how their Elon education helped them," Midgette said. "I would suggest that all of Elon's majors are career-oriented in that we want our students to feel prepared once they graduate," Midgette continued.

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- Nancy Midgette
ASSOCIATE PROVOST

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