

The high price of college textbooks may leave your bank account low

By JUSTIN McGUIRE
Staff Writer

Lugging armloads of books from UNC's Student Stores is painful in more ways than one.

By the time most students leave the maze of textbooks and check-books, their wallets hurt more than their lower backs. As every student knows, college textbooks are expensive and the prices keep getting higher.

Rutledge Tufts Jr., general manager of student stores, said national textbook prices have risen 9 percent over the last year, according to research done by a Missouri book company.

Prices are high because textbooks are critical to the education process, Tufts said. And since students must have the books their professors choose, textbook sales are "not quite a free market."

"In 999 out of 1,000 cases, the professor is trying to get the best book for the class," Tufts said. "I think they feel if you're going to spend \$1,000 on college, what difference does five or ten dollars make."

Statistics have shown that only 3 percent of a student's overall college costs are for textbooks, Tufts said. "So in a sense it's not that expensive," he said. "I guess it seems expensive because it all comes at once."

Many students said they think the prices are too high.

Mark Mickle, a sophomore biology major from Morganton, said he was expecting to pay between \$250 and \$300 on books for this semester.

"Some of the books are too expensive," Mickle said. "There's an Organic Chemistry book for \$40, and they don't have it used."

In an effort to lessen the burden on students, the bookstore has a large used-book program, Tufts said. By buying books back for as much as half-price and selling them for less than the original price, the store saves students money, he said.

This brings up a typical complaint from students: selling used books back to the Student Stores often means accepting less than half-price for them.

Tufts said books that are still needed will be bought back for half-price if they are in reasonably good condition.

If a book is not on order, the store is left with three options. First, the store may simply refuse to buy back the book. Second, the book may be bought back for 10 to 30 percent of its original cost and sold wholesale to used-book dealers.

The store's third option is buying back the book at an estimated price. This process is not often used, Tufts said.

Often, books are not on order because new editions have been printed. New editions usually come

out every three or four years, he said.

"Although some books go out of date quickly, making new editions necessary, the reason (for publishers to come out with new editions) often is to stymie the used book market," Tufts said.

Since used-book dealerships are in direct competition with publishers, it is in a publisher's best interest to bring out new editions, he said. Also, students can buy books from places other than the bookstore.

One popular option is the Alpha Phi Omega (APO) book co-op. The co-op allows students to bring books in and fill out a form setting their own price on their books.

The books will be on sale in rooms 211 and 212 of the Student Union today, Friday and Monday.

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday students can bring in their claim checks and receive the money for the books that were sold.

The Undergraduate Library has put textbooks for 40 high-enrollment courses on reserve this year, according to Gillian Debrezen, circulation and reserve librarian.

Having the books on reserve is mostly to benefit students who can't afford to buy them, Gillian said, although it will also be convenient for students who get to the library and realize they've forgotten their books.

Residents seek new site for center

By KELLY JOHNSON
Staff Writer

The Orange County Women's Center still wants to relocate from West Franklin Street to a residential area on Henderson Street, although neighbors are looking for an alternative site.

Center officials and residents of Cobb Terrace and North Street met at a June 15 public hearing to debate whether the Chapel Hill Town Council should rezone the house at 210 Henderson St. from residential to office-and-institutional use.

The center is not a shelter, and no women will live in the house, said Ginger Travis, a member of the board of directors. She said the center reaches out to women who are newcomers to the community.

Town manager David Taylor endorsed the special zoning permit, and the Town Council will vote on the rezoning Sept. 14.

Assistant town manager Sonna Lowenthal said, "We think there are arguments to be made on both sides of the issue, but on balance, we think the request for rezoning would be consistent with the town's comprehensive (land-use) plan."

According to this plan, downtown neighborhoods must be protected, but social service agencies should also receive help finding office space.

The residents object to office-and-institutional use of a house in their neighborhood, which is part of Chapel Hill's historic district.

"Creeping office uses — that's what we're opposed to," Cobb Terrace resident Joe Herzenberg said.

He said the residents are trying to take a new positive position by

helping the center look for an alternative location.

"We are trying to alleviate those tensions (between the women's center and area residents)," Herzenberg said.

Center officials have been searching for a new location for about five years, said Ida Friday, chairman of the housing committee at the center.

The Henderson Street house is "an ideal place," Travis said. "We feel like we'd be very good neighbors."

The Alliance of Neighborhoods and the Chapel Hill Historic District Commission support the residents.

Herzenberg said the neighborhood is only about two blocks wide. If it were larger, the residents would probably not object as much to an office moving into the area, he said.

Jim Haar, president of the Alliance of Neighborhoods, also opposes rezoning, but not the women's center. "We are opposed to special-use zoning in residential areas. We think it's a bad precedent," he said.

Carol Burnett, the director of the women's center, said, "I don't think we'd set any precedent by being there."

If the center ever vacates the house, another organization wanting to move in would have to go through the same steps to get a special zoning permit, Burnett said.

She added that there are student rental houses on that block already. "They are not just single-family homes," she said.

Taylor prepared a report outlining the pros and cons of rezoning the property. He determined that the benefits outweighed the costs for many reasons, including: the property is unique in that it borders the town

center, it is close to property zoned for non-residential uses and it is across the street from the Phi Mu sorority house.

Women's center employees are working to teach people about the center before the Town Council vote, said Coolie Monroe, board of directors member and housing committee member. They have mailed letters and petitions, and have held an open house to teach people about the activities and goals of the center.

"Mainly what we do is provide workshops, counseling and referral services," Monroe said.

The women's center also serves some University students, Travis said. The number is low, five percent or fewer, because the University already offers many resources for the students, she said.

Some of the women's center programs for September include a stress management course, a resume writing workshop, a workshop on legal and financial issues of living together and a potluck dinner for women over 45.

Travis said the women's center has received a rapidly growing number of requests for help. The members range from unemployed women to community professional women, she said.

"We've got to have adequate space on the premises," she said.

Several of the 22 members of the board of directors had to sit in the hall due to lack of space at a recent meeting at the women's center.

"An organization needs a home spiritually as well," Travis said. "Not only do we need the site, but Chapel Hill needs us."



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