

Harford Community College Tips to Help Curb the Cost of Student Textbooks

*Prepared by HCC Task Force on Textbook Affordability
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1. Accommodate students who await their financial aid package (which might include book vouchers), by making the first several text assignments available to them in an alternative format such as a photocopied handout or by giving a desk copy of the textbook to the Library to place on reserve.
2. Create academic course packs (within limits of allowable use if material is copyrighted). The HCC College Store and Copy Center can assist with preparing the packet for sale; however, instructors need to obtain copyright clearance. Note that there are also businesses that will secure the copyright clearance and prepare the course packs for a fee.
3. Collaborate with colleagues on the choice of textbooks for related courses (or different sections of the same course) so that students can re-sell them to students taking similar courses.
4. Consider the use of open source textbooks.
5. Create electronic syllabi with links to electronic reading materials (within limits of allowable use if material is copyrighted).
6. Express to publishers that you are concerned about rising costs for textbooks and other instructional materials and encourage them to refrain from publishing new editions until there are substantive changes that are needed to maintain current information. If possible, work with discipline affinity groups to get this message out to publishers.
7. Negotiate with publishers. As the persons who select textbooks, faculty have some economic leverage with regard to publishers. Here are some tips on ways to communicate with publishers to try to seek the best possible price:
 - a. When communicating with the publisher about a textbook choice, try to get the price in writing from the salesperson. Send that information to the College Store along with your Textbook Requisition.
 - b. Inform publishers that Maryland law requires that they offer unbundled versions of textbooks and get clear pricing for each component. Make sure that the prices for the components when purchased separately do not exceed the price for the bundled version. Get it in writing and send to the College Store.
 - c. The larger the order, the more economic leverage you have. This is another good reason to coordinate textbook selection with other faculty who are teaching the same course or a similar course.
 - d. Inform the sales representative of other less expensive and/or open source textbooks you are considering.
 - e. If customizing a book (that is, having a custom, partial edition made) be sure that the custom price is less than the entire textbook.