

The Bookstore

Some guidelines for being a good citizen

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It is important that there be a bookstore on the Wheaton campus. We as a community should be eager to see Follett's prosper. There are a few things that we can do to support the bookstore, and I list them below. But first, keep these three things in mind: we are supporting our students when we support the bookstore; improved communication between faculty and the bookstore makes it easier for the bookstore to handle our requests; and nothing either in federal legislation or in bookstore practice is designed to keep you from ordering the books that you want in the editions that you require.

There are four things that students typically complain about when it comes to textbooks, all of which are addressed by making our book orders timely and complete.

1. Books are too expensive.

The provisions of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) require that publishers and bookstores work together to make public the various prices at which a given text can be acquired: new, used, hardcover, paperback, rented, bundled, unbundled, etc. Wheaton's on-line course catalogue publishes this information via a unique link for each course. This system only works if faculty submit their book orders to the bookstore well in advance. There will always be some things that will need to be ordered close to, or after, the start of classes, but, in order to comply with Federal Legislation, we need to make such things as rare as possible. A good faith effort not only helps the bookstore, it helps the students, and complies with the law.

2. Instructors do not actually use all of the books that are listed as required.

A syllabus is typically constructed in enough detail that it is rare for an instructor to plan to use a book and then run out of time. But it is important to label clearly books that are only *recommended*, and it is important to use that word correctly: students who do not buy or consult the *recommended* books are able to meet all of the goals of the course by purchasing only the *required* books. In other words, we shouldn't pad our book lists.

3. Books are not available because the order was not placed through the bookstore.

There are times when it is tempting to publish a book list and distribute it to your students so they can acquire books on their own (via Amazon, Abebooks, etc.). But remember that some students rely on using their bookstore account to purchase

books; some students receive a bookstore credit as one of the perks of being a campus scholar. The bookstore should be aware of all of the books that you order for a class, so that they can provide the mandated information about the various costs of various book formats.

4. Students do not get enough money back when they go to sell their books back to the bookstore.

It is true that the bookstore makes a profit from buying and selling used books. It is good that the bookstore has profitable activities; it is also good for the students that they can sell their books. If the bookstore knows what books will be used next semester, they are able to offer better prices for books that they know will be in demand. Again, it is incumbent upon us to make our book orders early, following the reminders that the bookstore sends out by e-mail. Of course, changes can happen; of course, some decisions will need to be made later. But we are doing our students a great service if we make the good faith effort to get our complete book orders in on time.