



Are You Tired of Paying Outrageous Textbook Prices?
Join Our Fight! Lend Your Voice!

Date

Name

College

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Student Leader:

The media has been covering textbook pricing policies among the major publishing companies. At long last, the nation is becoming more aware of the extreme pricing problems students face within the publishing industry. Rising prices have become an overwhelmingly alarming issue. Articles in The New York Times have reported several trends. "The price of educational books and supplies has risen 238 percent, while the price of consumer goods over all has increased only 51 percent, according to the Consumer Price Index." Last year, students at four-year private colleges spent an average of \$807 for books. Science and math majors could spend more. The shrink-wrapped bundles are another issue. These bundles actually cost the students more because they cannot buy the materials separately. Most often than not, students end up not using all of the materials in the bundles. Now, 20 percent of students do not purchase all of their required textbooks. This is up from 5 percent from five years ago. The numbers rise steadily 1 percent per year.

Kickbacks and payoffs permeate the industry. Professors are paid for "reviewing" texts and for assigning the texts. A recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education reports that some college professors were/are paid \$4,000 for reviewing and adopting a textbook. Virginia Tech needed a textbook for its first-year composition class, and some funding as well. A rumor went out the text would be assigned to the highest bidder. The book was eventually chosen and help for their program in the way of a 15 percent royalty was awarded. In 2001, Penn State received a \$30,000 check from one publishing company.

In another New York Times article, Tamar Lewin reports that "...the very same college textbooks used in the United States sells for half price-or less-in England." The publishing companies say the prices of foreign books have to be lower because the students there cannot afford to pay anything higher. Why should it be assumed American students can afford to pay double or more?

Our questions to the United States Government:

1. Why has the textbook pricing increased so dramatically in comparison with the overall consumer goods index?
2. How can the same textbooks be available at half price or less overseas? Is this an antitrust violation?

What can you do? Join us. Take the enclosed petition we have prepared. Copy both sides and begin distributing it to your students/citizens. Copy this cover sheet. Use it as you need to. Please do not alter the petition in any way. We want to encourage you to share this with as many student leaders as absolutely possible. Encourage them to do the same. We would hope that 250,000 signatures or more arrive at our representatives doorsteps. We plan to take the thousands of anticipated signatures that we receive here at Cuyahoga Community College, to our representatives when we attend the ASACC Conference in Washington, March 20 – 23. Please complete and have your petitions in the mail to your representatives by **Sunday, March 7th, 2004**. If you need additional information or assistance in locating your representatives or their addresses, we welcome your call or email to the information below. We can no longer afford to be complacent and accept these unfair pricing practices. In numbers we can make a difference!

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