Proposed Changes to Textbook Rental Services

Task Force Charge

1. Establish an equitable and reasonable time frame for textbook renewals to support the mission of all colleges & programs given current revenues;
2. Address the evolving nature of textbooks and may permit the limited; but equitable, deployment of electronic supplements across all colleges & programs within the current environment of a textbook rental system;
3. Maintain EIU's overall affordability relative to Illinois peers; and
4. Create a framework for financial viability beyond 2025, while maintaining affordability of learning materials, ie, textbook, e-books, electronic supplements, open access resources, etc. for students.

Note: Unless otherwise noted, the TR fee is always represented as cost per credit hour, currently $9.75/credit hour ($1 of this fee is used to pay off bonds used to build the Textbook Rental Building)

Background Factors Affecting Recommendations

- Textbook publishers will not be printing textbooks in the future (it's already happening). EIU is already facing challenges of getting bound textbooks.
- Some publishers are moving to all-inclusive access of digital textbooks and supplemental materials for a single subscription fee.
- The average cost of digital textbooks has declined dramatically, with average costs under $40 per book (InsideHigherEd, 2018). Assuming each course uses one textbook, $40/course is not much higher than the current TR fee for a 3-credit course ($29.25; although some of this goes for other expenses besides purchasing textbooks). It is likely that lower prices could be negotiated with digital textbook providers.
- On average, Illinois public institutions without TR advertise the cost of textbooks and materials to be $1371 per year, which is equivalent to about $45/credit hour. Students at EIU who enroll in 15 credit hours for two semesters pay considerably less, $9.75/credit hour which is $292.50 per year. The only other public institution in IL that has a textbook rental system is SIUE, who charged $16.30/credit hour in 2015. The fee decreased by 4.1% in 2017 to ~$15.63.
- The building that houses TRS (Louis M. Grado Building) requires annual bond payments of $309,000 per year through October of 2033. $1 of the TR fee is used toward this payment. However, with current enrollment we are short $153,000 annually. The TR budget has to cover this deficit.
- Mailing textbooks to students who are taking online courses costs EIU about $30,000 per year and this cost is increasing as enrollment grows in online programs. Furthermore, students must bear the cost of mailing their textbooks back to EIU.
- Prior to 2007, the TR fee was $7.95. It went up to $8.95 in 2008, then $9.95 in 2009 where it stayed until 2013, at which time it went down to $9.75 where it has remained since.

Comparison of Print vs. Digital Textbooks

Print (current Textbook Rental Model)	Digital
Students can't highlight or take notes in books.	Students can search, highlight passages, and take notes
Instructors of introductory level and general education courses must use same textbook across all sections of the same course.	Faculty can select their own preferred textbook for the course
Faculty must use a textbook for the longer of two years or 3 semesters of scheduled use.	Eliminates the necessity of specifying a textbook rental cycle period. Faculty can select their preferred textbook every semester
Students must pick up textbooks at TR building or wait for them to be mailed (online students).	Students get electronic access to course materials on Day 1, even when adding late.
Disability services must request digital version of textbooks for students with reading problems.	Digital platforms for accessing digital textbooks maintain accessibility for students with disabilities.
Printed textbooks can be rented multiple semesters to recover costs.	Digital textbooks are priced for 1-semester use.

Proposed Recommendations

Most of these recommendations are independent of one another. Some are cost saving measures, while others are linked together and are dependent upon specified fee increases.

Cost Savings and Cost-Neutral Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Rename Textbook Rental Services to better capture the future scope of services provided. Some options might include "Instructional Resource Center (or Services)" or "Instructional Material Services"

Recommendation #2: Encourage faculty to consider using free digital open-source instructional materials, as well as digital and physical resources available at Booth Library to supplement instruction.

Recommendation #3: Update language in IGP 49 that refers to the old integrated "core" to "general education" and enforce the policy that all introductory level (1000 level) courses and all general education courses use the same textbook across all sections. In addition, the textbook request form should include a statement reaffirming enforcement of this policy.

- The enforcement of this policy would apply only to new purchases of printed textbooks so instructors could continue to use existing print copies if they desired. Not enforcing this policy in the past has resulted in purchases of additional textbooks for different sections of the same course, dramatically increasing textbook costs for some courses.

Recommendation #4: The current rental lifecycle for printed textbooks should remain as currently specified in IGP 49, which is the longer of two years or three semesters of scheduled use.

Recommendation #5: Allow faculty to continue to use printed textbooks under the following conditions:

1. The publisher continues to print the textbook.
2. TRS continues to store and rent printed textbooks. The interest for TRS to continue to do so is that, generally, renting textbooks across several semesters is more affordable than purchasing a single-use digital textbook.

Recommendation #6: Update TR's internal database of courses and textbooks. Some course prefixes have changed unbeknownst to staff at Textbook Rental and could lead to duplication of textbook orders. After CAA or CGS approval of a course prefix change, proper notification should be provided to TR as with other relevant offices.

Recommendations Associated with Increased Costs

Overall, we recommend increasing gradually the TR fee to generate the appropriate level of revenue to cover increasing costs of instructional materials. At the same time, the amount of the TR fee should be less than what it would cost for students on average to purchase instructional materials on their own. Furthermore, any instructional material costs to students should be billed directly to their account so it can be covered by financial aid.

Recommendation #7: Implement a pilot program of using digital textbooks in a small number of online courses. If the pilot is successful, stop mailing printed textbooks to students in online courses unless the required instructional materials are not available electronically.

- The cost of a small pilot group of 5 instructors with 30 students in each online class using a $35 digital textbook would be **$5,250** total one-time cost.

Recommendation #8: After successful implementation of recommendation #7, allow all instructors to select digital textbooks for courses. For a complete inventory conversion to digital textbooks, the following estimated fee increase assumes all courses at EIU are 3 credits and every course uses one digital textbook at an average cost of $35.
Estimated increase: **$4.43**

Recommendation #9: Increase the TR fee to fully cover the cost of the annual TR building payments. With lower enrollment, only about half of the cost for the Textbook Rental building is met by the fee revenue. The TR fee needs to increase to cover the cost of the building alone, without having to use TR funds to offset the loss.
Estimated increase: **$0.95**

Recommendation #10: Set aside a small portion of the TR annual budget (e.g., 10%) to purchase supplemental access codes that significantly benefit instruction and establish a committee to review faculty proposals for purchasing of access codes (if the codes are not already included in the price of the textbook). Designating a limited percentage of the TRS budget for purchasing access codes allows students access to valuable instructional materials, while at the same time encouraging instructors to be intentional about using the student codes. It also prevents situations where an instructor may request the access codes for students but provide no incentive for students to use it.
Estimated increase: **$1.18**

Recommendation #11: As the use of digital textbooks increases, revenue will be lost from textbook sales and late fees/fines. The following TR fee increase to recover lost revenue is based on a complete digital replacement over many years of textbook inventory.
Estimated increase: **$2.04**

Summary of Maximum Required Increases in TR Fees (per credit hour)
$4.43 to purchase digital textbooks for all courses
$0.95 to fully pay for TR building
$1.18 to allow purchasing of digital access codes

$2.03 to recover lost income from book sales and late fees/fines, assuming fully digital inventory
Maximum Total Increase: $8.59 + current $9.75 = $18.34/credit hour ($550/year for 30 hrs)

However, these figures can be adjusted assuming lower future costs of digital textbooks. Increased EIU enrollment will help primarily with the TR building payments.

Proposed Timeline

Year 1 (2020)
- Gauge interest of faculty desiring to switch to digital textbooks
- Pilot group (~5 faculty volunteers) to try out digital textbooks.
- Establish process for reviewing/approving supplemental access codes
- Update TR internal database of textbooks
- Update language in IGP 49 and reaffirm enforcement

Year 2 (2021)
- Raise TR fee from $9.75 to $11 ($292.50 to $330/year for 30 credit hrs)
- Restore purchasing of digital access codes, tied to certain budget, 10%
- All online courses required to use digital textbooks or other open source materials

Year 3 (2022)
- Raise TR fee from $11 to $12 ($330 to $360/year)
- Open digital textbook option to other interested parties outside of online courses.

Year 4 (2023)
- Raise TR fee from $12 to $13 ($360 to $390/year)
- Monitor growth of digital textbook use

Year 5 (2024)
- If needed, raise TR fee from $13 to $14 ($390 to $420/year)

Thereafter, continue to evaluate the need for an increase or decrease of the TR fee.

Year 14 (2033)
- Eliminate portion of TR fee used for bond payments for the building.

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