4 February 2020

**MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD**

SUBJECT: Textbook Guide for incoming cadets

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance to incoming cadets and their families on acquiring textbooks in the most efficient manner.

1. **How do I know if I should buy or rent the textbook?**

When purchasing textbooks, it is important to look at a few factors first.

* If it is a book for an in-major course, it may benefit the student to purchase the book for reference in later courses. Always attempt to purchase books used unless the most recent edition is required. Professors will specify if the most recent version is required. There are times when professors will approve the use of an older edition if there was minimal change to content.
* If using a book for an entire academic year, it is usually better to purchase used. Renting the same book for two semesters will usually cost more than purchasing the book once. Purchasing used also brings the option of reselling the textbook when the academic year ends.
* If the book is for an elective or non-major required course, it may be more beneficial to rent a book. Websites such as Chegg, Amazon, and Bookholders offer rental services. Renting a book is usually the most cost-effective option for single semester uses. Students simply pay a rental fee and return the book at the end of the semester.

1. **Where can I sell them?**

Books can either be sold privately or to a store.

* Bookholders is the easiest place in Blacksburg to sell textbooks. It is located withing walking distance of campus and students can walk in with books and leave with cash in hand.
* Students can also attempt to sell books privately. This can be through adds posted on local Facebook pages, Craigslist, or other online forums. Students can sometimes fetch better prices by selling directly to acquaintances since there is no store to work through.

1. **When should I buy my textbooks?**

The timeline for purchasing books is student dependent. Many students do not purchase books until the first day of class. This provides the chance to ask the professor what edition they recommend if it is not specified in the syllabus or if it is needed for the course. Many courses have a textbook listed as a source of extra help, but the professor may not rely on it for assignments. Some professors will list a textbook on the syllabus but also provide a digital copy through the Virginia Tech library. It is not recommended that a student waits later than the first two class meetings to purchase books. After this time period elapses it may become difficult to complete assignments if they are based on the book.

Acquiring textbooks for college courses can be a stressful and expensive experience for many. Just as with many other parts of being a student, it is best to look at all available options and think about the pros and cons of each route. This memorandum serves as a guide to students who are new to this process and are in search of some of the most efficient yet cost-effective ways to acquire textbooks.

Very Respectfully,

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