Florida A&M University
Best Practices Regarding Textbook Adoption and Use

Florida A&M University (FAMU) is committed to minimizing the costs of textbooks for its students, which have increased substantially in recent years and have had a significant fiscal impact on students. To address the rising cost of textbooks in order to maintain access and affordability for students, Florida A&M University has developed the following “best practices” in compliance with the Section 1004.085, Florida Statutes, Textbook Affordability.

General Principles:

At FAMU, most textbooks are selected by individual faculty members. This practice is consistent with our policy of academic freedom and allows faculty to make individualized choices regarding pedagogy. Faculty, textbook coordinators, departments and/or schools are expected to provide timely textbook information to the FAMU Bookstore. Early adoption and notification to the bookstore are important steps in the cost reduction process. Once accurate textbook information is posted on the web, students are equipped to search various textbooks outlets to locate what they need for each course.

Guidelines:

1. Faculty should strive to minimize the costs of textbooks and other course materials for students while maintaining the quality of education and academic freedom. To the extent feasible, a majority of the content of required textbook(s) should be used in the course. The FAMU Bookstore can order and stock as “recommended” rather than “required” textbooks that have ancillary information faculty consider helpful or supplementary but not essential.

2. To ensure textbook adoptions are made with sufficient lead time to confirm availability and wherever possible, ensure maximum availability of used textbooks, faculty, textbook coordinators, departments and/or schools are expected to submit textbook and course material adoption information to the FAMU Bookstore no later than the following dates:

   - Summer session adoptions by March 1
   - Fall semester adoptions by April 1
   - Spring semester adoptions by October 1

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1 In some cases, a departmental committee or a committee composed of faculty teaching a course may select texts.
2 The Bookstore is obligated to post relevant textbook information within one week of receipt.
Given that national demand for used textbooks far exceeds supply, early acquisition is essential. Wherever possible, faculty members are strongly encouraged to submit their adoptions in advance of the FAMU established deadlines noted above. In addition to allowing the FAMU Bookstore to promptly obtain used textbooks, early textbook adoption also enables the FAMU Bookstore to pay students the most for their used books. Furthermore, timely adoption notice also allows students to actively search for the most reasonably priced textbooks.

3. Faculty members are expected to be aware of any variation in pricing when ordering a different book by a different publisher or a new edition of a previously used book.

4. Faculty members are encouraged to limit their use of new editions unless a new edition differs significantly in a substantive way. Obviously, selection of a new edition obviates a student’s ability to purchase a cheaper used edition of the prior edition.

5. Faculty is encouraged to notify the bookstore when prior editions of a textbook remain suitable for use. Older editions are more available in used form and may have a lower base price than their newer counterparts.

6. Faculty should be aware of the existence of course materials that are available in both “bundled” and “unbundled” form as prices between these two forms of packaging can vary.

7. Faculty is encouraged to consider using a standard book for all sections of introductory level courses so that used books will have more resale value and to explore ways that departmental coordination can reduce costs for students. Moreover, textbook adoptions, wherever feasible, should be used for multiple rather than single semesters or terms, thereby creating a demand and market for used texts that result in lower costs for students.

8. Faculty is encouraged to provide access to required textbooks and other educational materials, if applicable, through library checkout or similar arrangements; and allow for resale and reuse of textbooks and manuals. FAMU also encourages faculty to consider electronic books, book chapters, electronic journal articles, and other digital materials provided through the web for supplemental and core reading in support of classroom work.

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3 Under the new Florida law, Educ. Art. Sec. 15-112 (E)1.(III), publishers are required to inform faculty (or their designees) of substantial content revisions when a new edition is released. The FAMU Bookstore has contact information for all major publishers and can help you contact them if you wish to inquire about content revision. Publishers are also required to notify faculty as to which textbooks are integrated textbooks and thus not subject to the unbundling requirement.

4 FAMU’s Bookstore, as a matter of practice, unbundles all book sets in order to make purchase of the individual unit parts available to FAMU students.
9. Publishers are required to provide information on prices of textbooks and supplemental materials, both in bundled and unbundled form, and for both the current edition and previous editions. Publishers are required to include information on substantial content revisions between current and previous editions. Publishers are also required to provide information on paperback or other alternative forms for materials and lists of textbooks that are classified as integrated textbooks. This provides the opportunity for faculty to obtain information on a variety of textbook choices. The University Book Center will also provide price information to faculty. Faculty should take into account price considerations in making textbook decisions.