

Bookstore Advisory Council Meeting

October 10, 2008

2:00 p.m.

Student Affairs Conference Room

MINUTES

Members Present: Sally Weerts, Kattina Herx, Meghan Hull, Chris Arsenault

Members Absent: Robert Schupp (Chair), Patricia Geesey, Kathy Corbin Weglicki, Casey Hampton, Victoria Elian, Lauren McAllister

Others Present: Vince Smyth (Auxiliary Services), Steve Moreau (Bookstore), Lee Cobb (Bookstore), Dennis Nelson (Bookstore)

Due to the absence of the Chair, the meeting was called to order at 2:10 PM by Vince Smyth (Auxiliary Services).

1. Introductions.

2. Objective:

- The objective of the Bookstore Advisory Council is to advise the President on all matters impacting the Bookstore and its utilization by the University Community. Specifically:
 - Assist in planning for adequate services for the Campus.
 - Examine Bookstore related issues on Campus and make recommendations for resolutions.

3. Approved Minutes of the February 6th, 2008 meeting:

- The minutes of February 6th, 2008 meeting were unanimously approved as written.

4. Review of Bylaws:

- Vince Smyth suggested changes in the Bylaws under the "Members" section. He distributed the revision to the document to all of the Members of the Bookstore Advisory Council for review. He explained that he wants the wording to change slightly to eliminate unnecessary language misunderstandings and to ensure continuity of term of the Members.
- Sally Weerts added that it would be beneficial to use "the respective Association President" instead of "the Association Presidents".
- Chris Arsenault moved the change to the Bylaws as presented.
- The proposals were approved unanimously by all the present Council Members.

5. Vice Chair:

- Sally Weerts volunteered to serve as Vice Chair. This recommendation will be forwarded to the President as no other nominations were placed by the Members.

6. Report- Vince Smyth:

- Vince Smyth reviewed his role with the Bookstore as the University administrator managing the contract between Follett and the University.
- Construction Issues: The Bookstore will expand in the Student Union building almost doubling its size (from 11,500 sq. feet to 20,000 sq. feet). It is believed that the Bookstore will be moved before the Summer of 2009 and preferably before the end of the Spring semester (March and April).
- Sally Weerts asked if the change in location will affect in any way the number of Bookstore employees.
- Steve Moreau responded that most likely the number of staff members will increase as the Bookstore will now be located on two levels.
- Sally Weerts asked how the change in size will affect the volume and the kind of goods distribution available for sale at the Bookstore.
- Steve Moreau explained that the first floor is reserved for general merchandise products such as: clothing, gifts, food and the upper level is reserved for trade books, textbooks, and supplies.
- Vince Smyth added that the entrance to the Bookstore will be located on both floors- an entry to the second floor from the interior and the entry to the first floor from the exterior. Vince Smyth also mentioned that there will be a staircase connecting the two floors in the Bookstore.
- Contractual Issues: As part of the funding for the Student Union, Follett contributed \$1,500,000. An additional \$750,000 from Follett will go toward finishing projects that will include installing track lighting, fixtures, etc. In exchange, the University extended the contract with Follett for an additional five years, making it October of 2016 instead of 2011.
- Textbook Affordability: The State Legislature passed a Textbook Affordability Law. University of North Florida was 97-98% compliant while other Florida schools were lower (UF was approximately 50%). In addition, Vince Smyth presented the other part of the law which states that the Board of Governors will enact more policies and procedures by March 1st of 2009 that will help the Textbook Affordability Program. He explained that, essentially, there is an academic side and a business side in discussing and proposing changes needed for the Program.

7. Report- Steve Moreau, Bookstore Manager:

- Steve Moreau handed out the Campus Contact which informs of what the company's plans and goals for the future are, as well as about current performance. Steve Moreau also provided the Council with a copy of the

Spring survey results. Steve Moreau pointed out that the feedback is very good and that he is pleased with the results.

- Steve Moreau reported on the sales which factorize as follows compared to last year's results:
 - the overall sales during the first quarter (July- September) went down 13.9%
 - used textbooks sales are up 7.3%
 - new textbooks sales are down 20.8%
 - total text is down 14.7%
 - trade books sales are up 10.4%
 - supplies sales are down 13.1%
 - clothing sales is down 8.8%
 - gifts sales are up 3.7%
 - miscellaneous sales (graduation essentials- cap and gown, food, etc.) are down 22.9%
- Steve Moreau listed the reasons for decreasing sales at the Bookstore, these included the reduction of students by 1,100, tropical storm "Fay" (Thursday-Friday before classes started, two days that accounted for roughly \$450,000 sales in past years), and non-Follett on-line sales.
- Lee Cobb reported that his results compared to last year are as follows:
 - on-line e-Follett sales went up 14.4%
 - total on-line orders are up 21.78% (2,566 orders last year, 3,125 this year)
- Lee Cobb informed about the growth of the use of text excess, as the adoption percentage was higher by the April target date. Lee Cobb presented the Buyback results:
 - \$ 232,453 in the Spring of 2007
 - \$ 271,655 this year, which is a 16.9% or \$ 39,202 increase
- Steve Moreau added that because of the new Textbook Affordability law the orders have to be placed in by December 5th by Faculty for Spring term.
- Lee Cobb informed that there was an effort to increase the number of e-books (digital books) available at the Bookstore which totaled to fifty titles and will continue to grow. E-books (digital books) can create even up to 30-50% savings for students who do not necessarily need a hard copy of the book. Sales of e-books comprised less than 1% and totaled to \$1,543.00. Offering e-books will be a part of the adoption procedure in the Spring semester. The target date for the Spring adoption is October 15th. The total percentage up-to-date is approximately 13% of the total classes scheduled for the Spring.
- Lee Cobb mentioned that textbook buybacks starts December 1st and ends on December 12th and will be located in the Main Store, at the Crossings, and at the Greens.
- Sally Weerts stated that there are some movements to try to remove the laptops from classes in order to make the students more engaged with the faculty and each other which may have some impact on e-book use.

- Meghan Hull added that many of the faculty members in the Sociology and Anthropology department disallow the use of laptops in class because the students use the device for personal, not educational reasons.
- Sally Weerts voiced a concern that some of the parents or students might purchase an e-book and not be able to use it in class as the electronic devices would not be allowed.
- Meghan Hull proposed that the Bookstore could contact the professor and ask him or her which format of the book the professor prefers and if he or she would agree to the fact that students bring in their laptops to class to use an e-book.
- Steve Moreau reported that the Athletics sales venue is being taken back over. The Bookstore will be attending their events again and selling products at the basketball and baseball games, as well as other select events. The first one is "Midnight Madness". Steve Moreau also reported that the Bookstore hours were extended as of the beginning of the Fall semester, operating from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. to make it more convenient for evening students to purchase supplies when needed.
- Steve Moreau informed that Faculty/ Staff Appreciation will be held on November 20th- 21st (Thursday- Friday). During that time, a 30% discount will be offered to faculty and staff members.
- Dennis Nelson reported that he has a new Acer Laptop that can be purchased for \$750.00. In addition, the Bookstore offers some new items needed for the students in the Art Department- fifty pound bags of sand, hundred pound bags of plaster, and 4 ft by 8 ft sheets of additional art supplies.
- Dennis Nelson mentioned that there are new gifts available at the Bookstore that include game-day chairs and automobile flags.
- Dennis Nelson also informed that he has a sale: 2 sweaters for \$25.00 that will be available on-sale at the Bookstore starting on 10/15 until the end of December.
- Additionally, Dennis Nelson presented the Council with new items available at the Bookstore:
 - Women's polo
 - Men's vest
 - Registration plate with UNF logo
 - New sweater with a built-in iPod holder
 - UNF logo socks
 - Christmas UNF ornaments (snowman, penguin)

8. Issues and Concerns:

- Chris Aisenault asked how much space in the Student Union will be devoted toward retail items (non-textbook items).
- Steve Moreau responded that the whole first floor as well as a portion of the second floor space will be used for retail items.

- Vince Smyth added that the new square footage of the Bookstore includes storage space and offices, so it is not 20,000 sq ft of retail.
- Steve Moreau pointed out that there was a need to expand the Bookstore's textbook department and there will be room to carry 3,500 titles compared to 2,500 titles. There is a plan to convert some of that textbook space into general merchandising during the lower textbook sales periods.
- Sally Weerts asked how the on-line sales work at the University- is it mailed to the student or available for pick up only.
- Lee Cobb explained that the student has a choice of the shipping method.
- Sally Weerts wondered if everything listed on-line, is available at the store and Steve Moreau responded that everything found on the website is available at the store.
- Sally Weerts asked what the advantage of purchasing the goods on-line is.
- Steve Moreau said that by purchasing a textbook on-line the student can reserve a used copy of the book if available. Lee Cobb added that many times parents prefer to purchase the textbook on-line so they are in control of their students' spending.
- Sally Weerts wondered why students would prefer other websites to purchase their textbooks over the University's Bookstore Website.
- Chris Arsenault explained that the books available on-line are often cheaper than those at the Bookstore. Chris Arsenault added that there is usually a chance to find used book that can be bought for a significantly lower price than is offered at the Bookstore.
- Meghan Hull answered Sally Weerts' question regarding new textbook purchases by saying that the University's Bookstore is limited to the publishers who offer the books and the students who sell the books back while the internet is not limited at all.
- Chris Arsenault also added that the overhead is also much lower when the students purchase the book on the internet rather than when it is purchased from the Bookstore.
- Sally Weerts asked what she should tell her students when they ask her why they should pick the Bookstore over the internet.
- Meghan Hull and Chris Arsenault answered that Book Vouchers (financial aid) cannot be used while purchasing a textbook off the internet.
- Steve Moreau added that it is easier to get a refund from the Bookstore in case the teacher changes the textbook than it is to get a refund from the on-line sale.
- Sally Weerts suggested that there should be a website explaining why textbooks should be purchased at the University rather than off-campus and to make it clear to the students and their parents as they start attending UNF.
- Steve Moreau said it is being done during the Freshman Orientation Presentation, but Sally Weerts felt this it is too temporary and needs to be permanent for the customers.
- Steve Moreau added that there are brochures being given out and that the Bookstore staff informs the customers about the advantages of the Bookstore

over other places. Steve Moreau liked the idea of making the process more accessible for the students and their parents and agreed to get additional information on the website.

- Chris Arsenault also added that it is easier to purchase the books from the University's Bookstore as the My Wings feature allows you to buy a book for a given class when you register by clicking on one of the icons that takes you directly to the Bookstore's website.
- Sally Weerts stated that the My Wings portal is only accessible for current students and she wants the same information to be available for new students that are still trying to decide which school to go to.
- Chris Arsenault wondered if there is a way for professors to create a custom package (selected chapters, essays) needed for the class to lower the price of the material needed for a given subject.
- Lee Cobb explained that the custom bundles are being offered for the faculty members and that some of them already take advantage of it.
- Meghan Hull also said that there should be a better understanding between the Academic Professors so there is no need to buy different books for similar courses and so the students are assured that once they buy a book it can be used throughout those courses even when it is taken with different professors.
- Sally Weerts felt that the economy hurts the sales of the Bookstore but she was also interested in the overall performance and service of the Bookstore.
- Meghan Hull responded that one of the Faculty Members said that the Bookstore has a great selection of UNF branded merchandise and he wished he could purchase them more often as a gift for the people he meets. She also pointed out that the Bookstore cooperates very well with the Faculty Members and that there are no complaints about the service.

9. Other Business:

- Sally Weerts proposed that the University should have a subgroup that investigates a quality audit. Sally Weerts also recommended that a group would work with Steve trying to increase and modify surveys that the school already has to include problems that students experience nationally and locally (at UNF).
- Sally Weerts recalled an OFE survey for the faculty that was very successful just because there was a possibility of winning an iPod. Sally Weerts believed that by adding some incentives, the surveys might have a better response rate.
- Chris Arsenault stated that from the students' perspective some incentives would definitely increase the number of surveys being filled in.
- Sally Weerts expressed her disappointment when one of her students tried to replace the defective clicker with a new one and his request was denied.
- Steve Moreau responded that this was an isolated case and anytime the goods purchased are defective they are being replaced right away.
- Vince Smyth felt that the survey would be a good idea and that there should be a meeting to design some custom questions.

- In addition, Sally Weerts thought that to communicate the survey is crucial before it is actually done so the results truly reflect the situation and experiences on campus.
- The Council unanimously agreed to the idea of conducting a careful plan of the survey.
- It was agreed that Sally Weerts, Vince Smyth, Meghan Hull and Chris Arsenault would form a subgroup to create the survey.

10. Next meeting:

- Even though the Bookstore Council traditionally has met only twice a year it was decided to meet in late November to be able to see the results of the survey.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m. Recorded by Marta Morzynska.