

## **College Course Materials Rental Initiative**

**(CFDA Number: 84.116Y)**

### **RENT COLLEGE COURSE MATERIALS: A CHOICE**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Since college tuition and course material costs are on the rise, colleges and universities need to explore ways to help maintain access to higher education by lowering students' costs. According to the College Board publication, *2008 Trends in College Pricing*, college prices have become a subject of attention with the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act signed into law in August 2008. These costs are rising more rapidly than the prices of other goods and services. The recent legislative activity has spotlighted textbook rental programs because of their potential savings to students. However, start-up costs for such programs are considerable.

Seminole State College is reflective of this national trend in that our students are greatly affected by the financial situation across the nation. The rental program would be new to Seminole State College, but according to the National Association of College Stores (NACS), *2008 Textbooks Rental Programs*, approximately 2.23% of NACS' member stores in the U.S. and Canada offered college course materials rental services. The primary goal of the program is to give the students attending Seminole State College the opportunity to spend less on college course materials.

The program team will consist of the Vice President for Fiscal Affairs and Director for Bookstore Operations. A new Rental Program Coordinator position would be created to assist with the program. This person would also be part of the team. The goals and objectives will be the creation of a Rental Advisory Committee to develop guidelines, disseminate information, and foster support among the student body, faculty, and other stakeholders. Additionally, the rental program will be designed to provide functionality that best meets the needs of all concerned. It also will potentially provide for the institutionalization of the program for long-term success.

The evaluation will involve documenting the outcomes by providing evidence of what did or did not work and possible enhancements for the future. Possible evaluation measurements to be used would be the overall usage or performance, surveys of faculty and students, and the cost-effectiveness data comparison from before and after. Desired outcomes of the rental program would be determine if it is financially self-sustaining, the students save money on college course materials, and faculty members are guaranteed the ability to select appropriate college course materials.

The colleges and universities that currently operate textbook rental services have successfully lowered student costs while maintaining modest store profits. At a time when state and federal budget cuts are forcing tuition to rise and financial aid to fall, colleges and universities should address the high cost of college course materials by reproducing programs that have successfully saved students money, as well as looking into new, untested solutions. By doing so, the educational community can ensure common access to college course materials in the future.