

Seminole State College Bookstore - Textbook Rental Program

Seminole State College received a FIPSE (Funds for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education) grant from the Department of Education for \$300,000 for two years beginning October 1, 2009. We are one of only 30 colleges and universities in the entire country to win this highly competitive grant and one of only six that received the full amount possibly awarded.

In order for a textbook rental program to succeed, Seminole State College will include everyone, students, faculty, administrators and bookstore staff, to be a part of the process. Several managers of existing rental programs emphasize the importance of drawing out the support of upper level college administrators; because they often set the tone for how committed the larger campus community will be to the success of a rental program. Student support is also critical since students are the primary customer base for the rental program. Various approaches to generate support amongst the student body, faculty, and others involved and then managing the program to be self supported. The Seminole State College Bookstore - Textbook Rental Program is a very important student service, and we are absolutely committed to student success.

What FIPSE grants are all about:

The US Department of Education funds special focus competitive grants for innovative ideas to improve higher education. Accountability, transparency, accessibility, innovation, opportunity, sustainability, measurability, and dissemination are the key goals. The recent legislative activity has spotlighted rental programs because of their potential savings to students through the attention with the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act signed into law in August 2008. Even here in Oklahoma recent legislation was passed in 2007 that required higher education institutions to develop an instructional material policy, which Seminole State College complied with in October 2007. One innovative way highlighted by this legislation to lower students' college course material costs would be to allow students to rent, rather than purchase, their college course materials each semester. In addition, the course materials initiative is very high profile with Congress. FIPSE was required to make a special report to Congress in September 2010. Congress wants more books in the hands of students and expects results.

How the textbooks were selected for rent:

As you review textbooks now for the academic year, consider the criteria for selecting a successful book so that the rental program is sustainable beyond the grant period:

- The book must be a new edition at the beginning of its life cycle.
- The book must have a minimum faculty commitment of two years or possible three years.
- The book must not be bundled with a disposable component such as a one time only access code for a publisher website or go into it with that understanding. There are possible exceptions.
- The book must be used for a class offered every semester with high student enrollment. There are possible exceptions.
- The rental income is used for additional book purchases and operating expenses.

Background information:

We started the rental program in Spring 2010. We spent \$54,968 on rental books for Spring 2010 that will be rented for the entire academic year and longer if possible. We spent about \$70,368 in rental books for Fall 2010, for a total of \$125,335.50 so far with the rental program. To date we have saved our college students over \$100,000.00.

Measurement and evaluation:

We will survey students returning their rental books to ask:

- If you rented from the Seminole State College Text Book Rental Program this semester, for which course did you rent text books?
- My overall rental experience was positive.
5 = Almost Always Applies, 4 = Usually Applies, 3 = Sometimes Applies
 - **2 = Rarely Applies, 1 = Almost Never Applies**
- My over all savings with the text book rental program was significant.
5 = Almost Always Applies, 4 = Usually Applies, 3 = Sometimes Applies
 - **2 = Rarely Applies, 1 = Almost Never Applies**

Survey to faculty will also be made in asking:

- Did you have the ability to select appropriate college text books? **Yes or No**
- Will the book selected be retained for a period of four to six semesters? **Yes or No**
- Is the course a general education course? **Yes or No**
- Did the book selected have supplementary components? **Yes or No**
- Is the course taught every semester (both Fall & Spring)? **Yes or No**
- The Text Book Rental Program was a positive overall experience. (circle one)
5 = Almost always Applies, 4 = Usually Applies, 3 = Sometimes Applies
 - **2 = Rarely Applies, 1 = Almost Never Applies**
- In your opinion, did more students obtain text books with the rental program?
5 = Almost always Applies, 4 = Usually Applies, 3 = Sometimes Applies
 - **2 = Rarely Applies, 1 = Almost Never Applies**
- The faculty agreement form for the Text Book Rental Program was clearly stated?
5 = Almost always Applies, 4 = Usually Applies, 3 = Sometimes Applies
 - **2 = Rarely Applies, 1 = Almost Never Applies**

All results will be posted on our web site at www.sscok.edu.

What we learned from Spring & Fall 2010 book rental program:

1. The rental price overall is 30% of the new book price. We price them lower than new or used.
2. The program takes a significant amount of administrative and staff time. The grant does not compensate 100% of this time.
3. Students were not as well aware of the rental program opportunity during the first semester of renting books that were funded by FIPSE.
4. Students rented over 2,000 textbooks, which is 55% of the total textbooks purchased or rented.
5. Plan rental quantities conservatively, and add more books to the program if the demand is there so that you rent 100% of the books.

Issues we have yet to solve:

1. We are worried about getting the rental books back from students, as we have a 15% non-return rate at this time. If this continues these costs have to be built into the rental fees. We will place holds on student records the day after the due date.
3. There could be an impact on the bookstore revenues. The program must be sustainable, but the bookstore must also meet its financial obligations.
4. Future impact on the faculty may be a concern so we must continue to identify and encourage the interest in and barriers to participation of the textbook rental program.

NEWS RELEASE

December 7, 2009

SSC receives Grant for Book Rental Program

Seminole State College received a \$300,000 federal grant to implement a new textbook rental program that will kickoff in 2010. Out of the 30 grants funded nationwide, SSC was one of six who received the full amount and the only institution in the state of Oklahoma to receive the grant. SSC plans to use the FIPSE (Funding for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) grant to provide students with another option when it comes to textbook expenses. "Our goal is to make the book rental program a permanent part of the SSC Bookstore operations. We are thrilled that a portion of the money could be used to hire a coordinator to head the program," said Katherine Benton, Vice-President for Fiscal Affairs.

Angelina Wind has been hired as the SSC Textbook Rental Coordinator to lead the book rental program to success. Wind graduated with a degree in business administration from Seminole State College in 1999 and received a bachelor of science degree in marketing from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater in 2002.

She has extensive work experience in retail sales management. Since 2006, she has been employed as an advertising representative for The Seminole Producer. According to Benton, students will be able to rent textbooks cheaper than buying used books. This will help cut down expenses for students and give them an extra option when shopping for their books. Students can generally rent a textbook for approximately one-third the cost of a new textbook.

This program will be starting off slowly, as recommended, and will first incorporate the general education courses that all the students take," said Benton.