

Chabot College Bookstore - ASCC Book Rental Presentation

April 1, 2010

Chabot received a FIPSE (Funds for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education) grant from the Dept. of Education for \$299,075 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. You can view the 20-page essay and business plan I wrote along with Yvonne Wu-Craig and Heidi Finberg at www.chabotbookstore.com.

The textbook rental program as we envision it is a deep collaboration between the Chabot Bookstore, Chabot faculty, the ASCC representing student interests, Chabot Foundation, and administration. We need partnership and commitment to make this program successful in removing one of the barriers of student access to affordable education and by improving student learning outcomes for Chabot students.

The Chabot Bookstore is responsible for the implementation of the rental program, and I am the project director. We have all the structural support elements in place, including the software systems, storage, and an experienced and motivated bookstore staff ready for action. This is a very important student service offered at the Chabot College Bookstore, and we are absolutely committed to student success.

What FIPSE grants are 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. In addition, the course materials initiative is very high profile with Congress. FIPSE must make a special report to Congress in September 2010. Congress wants more books in the hands of students and expects results.

How you can select a textbook for rent:

As you review textbooks now for the 2010/2011 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. That means the book you select now must be used for 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 or longer if possible.
- The book must be substantially expensive and a barrier to student access and success.
- The book must not be bundled with a disposable component such as a one time only access code for a publisher website. There are possible exceptions.
- The book must be securely bound and able to withstand hard use for up to three years. Loose-leaf versions cannot be rented.
- The book must be used for a class offered every semester with high student enrollment.
- Students in certain disciplines wishing to purchase the book in at the end of the rental period may apply the rental fee to the payment.
- The rental income is used for additional book purchases. The grant is not a moneymaker for the bookstore as currently structured, but we will revise that business plan as we go along to cover our operating expenses.
- We want books for a wide range of classes encompassing basic skills, vocational, and transfer classes.
- If your book does not qualify for the rental program for fall 2010 because of the edition cycle, it may qualify for spring 2011.

- Summer book orders are due April 1. Fall book orders are due April 15. The book information must be posted to the on-line class schedule as students register as per provisions of the HEOA effective July 1, 2010.

Background information:

We started the rental program in partnership with the ASCC by offering 30 copies of the Health 1 textbook in Spring 2009. The Chabot Foundation purchased almost \$10,000 in textbooks for fall 2009. We spent about \$99,000 on rental books for spring 2010 that will be rented for the entire academic year of 2010/2011 and longer if possible. We expect to spend about \$150,000 in rental books for fall.

Measurement and evaluation:

Annual reports are due to FIPSE. Carolyn Arnold will compare the success rate of the renters with the success rate of the overall class for each book each semester. The bookstore will compare the number of books rented and sold now with what we used to sell without the rental program to determine if we are actually distributing more books. We also will survey students returning their rental books to ask: Would you have gone without a book if you were not able to rent it? Did you actually use the book? Have you rented books somewhere else? Would you rent a book again? All results will be posted on our web site at www.chabotbookstore.com.

What we learned from spring 2010 book rental program:

1. The rental price overall is 35% to 40% of the new book price. We price them lower than the three on-line book rental competitors, so each semester we have to research rental book market prices to make sure we are the best price.
2. The program takes a significant amount of my time and staff time. The grant does not compensate us for the time, but I am documenting the time spent so that other colleges will know how much work it takes.
3. Students were not all aware of the rental opportunity during this first semester of renting books funded by FIPSE. We need to develop a campus advertising campaign such as "I can afford college" to let the community know.
4. Students rented just a few of two titles possibly because students don't really need the book for class. I want to pick only winners for the program!
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. This strategy worked very well with math basic skills, and we increased the quantities until students stopped asking for it.

Issues we have yet to solve:

1. We want to give the financial aid students the first choice of rental books. However, the funding is not released until school starts, and we rent books before school starts.
2. We are worried about getting the rental books back from students. Canada College reports that the losses are 5-7% each semester. If so, these costs have to be built into the rental fees. We will place holds on records the day after the due date.
3. We have to implement the rental program for on-line orders because many of our rental books for summer are only offered on-line. We must determine how to get the books back.
4. Will there be a positive or negative impact on bookstore revenues? The program must be sustainable and the bookstore must meet its financial goals.
5. What is the impact on faculty? Identify the interest in and barriers to participation.

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