

Higher Learning Commission
Self-Study Questionnaire/Report for Non-Instructional Units

Non-Instructional Unit: University Bookstore/Textbook Rental Service

Individual(s) Completing the Questionnaire/Report: Terri Meinel, Director

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Describe in a paragraph or two what your unit does (i.e., the services it provides).
The University Bookstore provides required and recommended books and supplies, consistent with the mission of the University. In addition, items that supplement and enhance living and learning within the University community are available in the Bookstore.

Textbook Rental provides the basic textbooks, CD-ROMS and other materials for students enrolled in undergraduate courses.

Bookstore Services is also available as a resource to students in the pursuit of their educational goals

2. Who is/are the constituency/ies you serve, and approximately how many of each constituency do you serve annually? (e.g., students, academic departments, classified staff, etc.)

- Enrolled students: Undergraduate, graduate, non-traditional, on-line MBA.

Approximately 10,847

- Faculty: Teaching undergraduate, graduate and on-line MBA; all academic departments as well as many non-academic units. Approximately 357 faculty, 309 Academic Staff, and a majority of the 384 classified staff

- Alumni: In-store and on-line sales. Number unknown (not tracked)

- Public: Parents, grandparents and general public

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3. Overview and evaluate the adequacy of the human, physical, and fiscal resources your department deploys to serve students and meet other programmatic needs by answering the questions below:

Human Resources

Evaluate the general adequacy of the human resources (i.e., the # of employees (including student help) and their skills) relative to the unit's ability to serve the constituencies identified above and achieve other programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between "1" (**completely inadequate**) to "9" (**completely satisfies needs**).

7 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you've assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

Bookstore Services eliminated two full-time positions within the past few years. Realignment of duties has been completed. A number of initiatives recently have challenged staff including installation of a point-of-sale system, OPR process and Moraine Hall remodeling project. These initiatives are very important though very time-consuming. Also, the limited resources for student help, regular pay in particular, has further challenged staff time and resources.

Physical Resources

Evaluate the general adequacy of the physical resources (e.g., office and storage space, supporting technology, other equipment) allocated to the unit relative to the unit's ability to serve the constituencies identified above and achieve other programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between "1" (completely inadequate) to "9" (completely satisfies needs).

5 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you've assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

The Bookstore's main strength, and current challenge, is the new point-of-sale system and ecommerce site. The system and site are comprehensive, complex and sophisticated. The strength is that the system is based on leading edge technology designed to maximize productivity, efficiency and security. A major challenge currently is not only the learning curve, but also the obstacles encountered during the installation phase.

Another strength is the location and size of the building housing the Bookstore and Textbook Rental. The challenge, however, is that the space, although adequate in terms of square footage, is poorly configured. It is also very dated and in disrepair. The Moraine Remodeling Project is currently in the program statement phase.

The remodeling project will introduce unique challenges such as space for relocating during the remodeling project as well as the ability to sustain sales volume during this disruption.

Fiscal Resources

While recognizing that every unit would benefit from a larger budget, evaluate the general adequacy of fiscal resources allocated to the unit to serve its constituencies and achieve other programmatic goals by assigning a number between "1" (completely inadequate) to "9" (completely satisfies needs).

5 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you've assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

The University Bookstore does not receive funding from any sources other than sales and commissions from sales. Many challenges exist including the economy, prices of textbooks creating increased competition from on-line sources, and delivery of electronic data directly to the consumer. In addition, on-campus retail sales of merchandise that is carried by the Bookstore is a major concern. Specifically, art supplies and apparel, as well as a variety of merchandise such as posters sold by vendors sponsored by student groups.

A major setback was experienced in fiscal 2003-04 when over \$173,000, which was earmarked for the Moraine Hall Remodeling Project, was surrendered due to an auxiliary reserve reduction exercise.

The Textbook Rental is supported by student fees, which are adequate, although a reserve is necessary for the unpredictably fluctuating demands on the textbook replacement budget from year to year.

4. In a paragraph or two, overview significant changes made in your unit since 1996 (i.e., the last North Central Association Accreditation Visit). (e.g., re-organized, key staff changes, change in purposes, etc.)

Two full-time positions have been eliminated since 1996. The Assistant Director of Textbook Rental, an Academic Staff position, and a classified position, Financial Specialist, have been eliminated.

Another major change came as result of the growth of the Online MBA program and the development of the Bookstore’s ecommerce site. The Bookstore had primarily been a campus entity prior to the website. Books are now shipped to national and international locations.

The delivery of digital content and the proliferation of alternate sources for textbook purchases, such as amazon.com, eBay and direct sales by publishers, have greatly affected collegiate retailing. Prices of textbooks continue to be an issue, which affects sales/revenues, customer counts/loyalty and the ability to provide exemplary services with fewer resources. A number of faculty members encourage students to purchase books on-line assuming they can find them at a reduced price yet expect that the Bookstore will be able to sustain the same level of service with diminishing sales and revenues.

In another paragraph or two, describe why these changes occurred.

These changes have occurred as a natural response to globalization, a byproduct of the Internet age. Also, increasing costs of textbooks and tuition have caused a major shift in traditional purchasing habits of students.

MISSION & PLANNING

5. In a paragraph or two, describing any significant projects/initiatives that your unit is planning or currently has underway, but has not yet completed.
[Moraine Hall remodeling project.](#)
6. Below are five “core values” the University identifies as central to its purposes and operation. Please evaluate the importance of each core value in terms of how each aligns with the purposes of your unit (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the five values, with those values that align more closely to the purposes of your unit receiving more points).

Core Value	Importance (100 points)
Commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding	55
Development of the individual	25
Personal and professional integrity	5
Commitment to serve	10
Commitment to develop a sense of community, respect for diversity, and global perspectives	5
Total=	100 points

7. Each and every academic and non-academic unit engages in planning for the future. Review the list of variables below and evaluate the extent to which each of the following influences decision-making behind the planning process for your unit (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the planning variables listed below, with those variables playing the larger role in your unit’s planning efforts receiving more points)

Planning Variables	Importance (100 points)
The mission of the university or the unit	30
Academic assessment data/information relevant to student performance against learning outcomes	25
Other data/information gathered relevant to performance (e.g., Audit & Review feedback)	3
Societal/Cultural trends (e.g., changes in demographics, lifestyles, professions)	10
Campus trends (e.g., changes in university-initiated needs and demands)	3
Technology trends (e.g., technology developments that affect delivery of service)	2

Professional trends (e.g., changes evident at other universities/colleges)	2
Available human resources (e.g., # of employees, talents, etc.) within the unit	5
Available financial resources (e.g., budget, available and accessible \$)	15
Available physical resources (e.g., space, existing technology, etc.)	5
Other:	
Total=	100 points

8. Does your unit have a mission statement?

Yes No

If you answered "yes," please list the mission statement here. or, if your mission statement can be accessed on the web, please list the URL here.

- To provide required and recommended books and supplies in an effective, economical and efficient manner to the University community within the context of the educational environment.
- To make available items that supplement and enhance living and learning within the University community.
- To be available as a resource to students in the pursuit of their educational goals.

If you answered "yes," please describe how, if at all, this mission statement plays a role in your unit's planning and/or decision-making.

It is integral in all planning and decision-making.

OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE

9. What are the major or measurable objectives of the unit?

Measurable objectives include profitability, inventory levels consistent with needs and resources, quality of service to faculty, students, administration and general public.

10. What outcome measures (i.e., data, information) provide evidence that your unit's objectives are being met?

Monthly financial statements/analysis, annual inventory valuation, faculty and student surveys, and annual budget process and accountability.

11. Related to question #10, does the unit regularly collect data/information to evaluate how effectively it serves its constituency(ies)? (This might include surveys of constituencies.)

Yes No

If "yes," please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission's Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

- A suggestion box is available in the facility inviting comments from patrons
- Valuable and frequent feedback is received face-to-face due to the staff/customer contact on a daily basis
- Communication Audit was conducted in Fall 2004
- Formal surveys are conducted periodically

12. In a paragraph or two, describe specific changes to the unit's operation or planning, if any, have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in the preceding questions. Please be specific.

Bookstore Services is currently conducting an OPR and valuable information has recently been received from a student survey (1,048 responses collected) and a faculty survey (62 responses). In addition, a consultant group evaluated the Bookstore operation in 2004 with valuable operational recommendations that have been implemented. Examples include increase in availability of used textbooks thus saving students money and yielding favorable margins for the Bookstore, adopting industry standards on custom package pricing, and improving operating efficiencies.

13. Please provide a list of services, if any, that your unit provides for constituencies that are external to the university.
 - Gifts and apparel to alumni, parents and camp participants
 - Consignment sales of books by local authors
 - Donations of emblematic goods to area high schools to assist UW-Whitewater in its recruitment process

14. Please list any partnerships your unit has developed with the community (external to the campus, at the local, national, or global-level).
 - Textbooks discarded by the Textbook Rental that have no value to wholesalers or UW-W students are donated to area high schools
 - Hundreds of books have been collected and shipped to Jamaica
 - Partnered with Whitewater Chamber of Commerce to sell throws on consignment
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STUDENT LEARNING (COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOUR UNIT HAS AS PART OF ITS MISSION OR PURPOSES THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS)

15. If your unit serves students as its primary constituency, does the unit have learning or development-related objectives relevant to its work with students? That is, does your unit expect that students will acquire certain knowledge or skill sets as a direct result of working with your unit or its programming?

Yes X No

If "yes," please list these outcomes/objectives.

Student Manager program in the Bookstore has established the following learning outcomes:

- Understanding of basic retail operations
 - Decision-making and time-management
 - Leadership, conflict resolution, teamwork
 - Technical skills (complex point-of-sale system)
16. Does the unit use data/information to evaluate the extent to which these learning or development-related objectives are, or are not being met?
Yes X No

If "yes," please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission's Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

- Utilize the Learning Outcomes Self-Assessment instrument
- Communication Audit
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17. What specific changes to the unit's operation or planning, if any, have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in question #15? Please be specific.

Information gathered is used in training sessions and Student Manager meetings.

SELF-EVALUATION

Strengths

18. List and prioritize no more than three primary strengths that have emerged in your unit's efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these strengths, you may wish to consider: What does your unit do very well? What good things do people say about your unit? How has your unit aided the campus in meeting its mission? In what ways has your unit "gone beyond the call of duty?"

After identifying each strength, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to unit performance, trend data, information gathered from audits or external agencies visit, etc.

1. Specific Strength: Substantial savings to students/parents through the Textbook Rental program.
 - Supporting Evidence: Textbook pricing is a major issue nationally and many requests are received monthly for information on renting textbooks. Articles in the Wall Street Journal and College Store Executive on UW-Whitewater's rental program are just a couple examples of the importance of this issue.
2. Specific Strength: Dedication, resourcefulness and knowledge of staff in providing exemplary product and service delivery to faculty, students, campus, alumni and community.
 - Supporting Evidence: Textbooks and supplies are available to over 10,000 students within the first few days and weeks of each semester. Two buybacks are conducted each year in order to return dollars to students and provide savings by acquiring used books. Faculty authors are supported through promotion and sale of their works.
3. Specific Strength: Bookstore and Textbook Rental provide employment and leadership opportunities to students, as well as learning opportunities through class projects.
 - Supporting Evidence: Documented improvement in retention rates.

Concerns

19. List and prioritize no more than three primary concerns that have emerged in your unit's efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these concerns, you may wish to consider: What could be

improved? What is done poorly? What do we, as a unit, avoid doing, even though we know it's important?

After identifying each concern, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to unit performance, trend data, information gathered from audits or external agencies visit, etc.

Finally, identify one or more recommended actions to address the area of concern. This may include actions that your unit has already begun, actions being planned, or preliminary thinking about how to address the area of concern.

1. Specific Concern: Lost sales and diminished service to students due to faculty adoptions received late or not at all.
 - Supporting Evidence: Orders continue to be received a week prior to semester starting as well as two to three weeks into the semester.
 - Recommended Actions: Support from campus (department chairs, deans, administration) encouraging timeliness of orders. Increased effort on part of Bookstore personnel to educate faculty on the benefits of receiving timely adoption information (more money returned to students during buyback, savings to students through increased volume of used textbooks, savings in shipping costs, etc.).

2. Specific Concern: Campus support.
 - Supporting Evidence: Numerous retail sales throughout campus which directly compete with Bookstore; additional retail space planned in University Center renovation/addition; faculty encouraging students to shop on-line or off campus.
 - Recommended Actions: A well-articulated and enforced policy in support of a centralized retail operation on campus.

3. Specific Concern: Physical condition of Moraine Hall.
 - Supporting Evidence: The building housing Bookstore and Textbook Rental is an old dining hall that has been renovated piecemeal as money was available. A major remodeling project has been delayed for almost eight years resulting in deterioration of fixtures and infrastructure.
 - Recommended Actions: Proceed as quickly as possible with the Moraine Hall Remodeling Project.