

Ohio General Assembly
Hearing on textbook pricing at institutions of higher education

Remarks

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My name is Jeff Johnston. I live in Dublin and have so for 21 years. I am an Editorial Manager for Pearson's Teacher Education Imprint. I have been in Educational Publishing for 31 years.

In August I was interviewed by the Columbus Dispatch for a story chronicling the growth of Educational Publishing in Columbus. In our office in Worthington, we have almost 200 employees. Up the road a bit in the Polaris area, McGraw-Hill, a major competitor, has almost 1200 employees.

I have devoted my life to educational publishing because it is how I can make a contribution. Our goal is to contract with the best College Professors to author our textbooks. Scholarly authorship gives us textbooks, which reflect the best and most up to date theory, research and research-based practices. Editorially we work with our Authors to insure that their writing style, presentation style, and in-text pedagogy all contribute to a meaningful and successful learning experience for our student readers and customers. Our goal is to help our Teacher Education students succeed in the classroom and acquire valuable skills so that they can realize their full potential as Teachers.

As a father of three, I understand a College Education is expensive. I have paid almost 11 years worth of tuition bills. My two oldest children graduated from Ohio University, my daughter also has a Masters Degree in School Counseling from The Ohio State University, and my youngest son is a freshman at Muskingum College. The investment and sacrifice are worth it to my wife and me because a College Education is truly a door to a better life.

I have also paid for textbooks. I know they are not inexpensive and that brings us to why we are here today. We are listening to Professors' and students' concerns about textbook prices. And we are doing many things to provide Professors and students with product and price choices, while maintaining the educational quality of our products. For example:

1. At Pearson we have recently put over 1000 textbooks online, giving students the choice to purchase digital textbooks at 50% of the print textbook cost.

2. In my group, which I think is representative of the Industry, we offer textbooks with a wide range of price choices: The upper end being \$115 and the lower end being

\$20. Professors do consider price as part of their content selection process, having products at many price points is important.

3. What may be even more important, however, is giving Professors the option to select content that best meets their teaching needs. To that end, we have an extensive Custom Publishing Program that lets Professors select only the content they want at an appropriate price.

4. We have price transparency at Pearson. Our online catalogs all publish each textbook's list price. If you Google any of our textbooks (ISBN # or Author + Course Topic), you will find not only our List Price, but scores of other sources for the textbook at many different price points.

At Pearson, we offer Professors and students the option to purchase selected course content in "packages or bundles". This purchase option is often mischaracterized as forcing students to buy items they do not need. In fact, when we bundle items together students always save money over buying the items separately. However, we do recognize the students want choice, so we also make most of our items available for separate sale. Legislative measures that would prohibit packaging course materials means that students may end up spending more, not less, for their textbooks and other materials.

I would like to give you one example of the educational value and the price/value of one of our most popular packages or bundles. In my Teacher Education Program, we produce an online, media-based learning program that includes:

- 400 Classroom Videos, depicting how Teachers interact w/ Students
- 250 Student and Teacher Work Samples
- 500 Teacher-oriented Research Articles
- 500 Teaching Strategies
- 100 Case Studies
- Lesson Plan Building Tutorial
- Information on National and State Teaching Standards
- Information on Certification and Licensure
- Guidance on how to build a Professional Portfolio
- Test Preparation for the National Praxis Teacher Exam

This program is used in many Teacher Education Courses and is sold for \$30 as a stand-alone product. However, when we package this program with a print textbook, which typically is required in the course, the price is \$10. This is a savings of \$20 over buying the items separately and we are giving our customers a choice: Purchase a text with a bundled component, purchase a text only, or purchase a bundled component as a stand-alone item.

I do want to point out that sometimes there are contractual obligations and/or third party agreements that require teaching content to be sold as-is in integrated packages. Art and

music books, for example, often have these agreements. Keep in mind that as you consider packaging restrictions, you might inadvertently be taking high quality and necessary learning materials out of Ohio Colleges and Universities.

Finally, I would like to address concerns raised over revisions of textbooks. As someone, who is very concerned about the quality of education in our College classrooms, I feel strongly that we must keep our content up-to-date and relevant. Our Authors work continuously on their books and media to keep them current and to improve their pedagogy and student understanding of the material. Students in College today should be learning from the best, most up-to-date content we can give them.

The publishing folks at Pearson, and our colleagues at the many other Publishing Companies, are in Educational Publishing because we are passionate about education. We want to make a difference, to contribute. We want to provide Professors and their students with the tools they need to be successful both in school and in their careers. We take very seriously our responsibility to help educate the next generation of College students.

To be explicit: We understand that price is a meaningful part of product appropriateness both to Professors and to their students. We will continue to offer a wide range of price choices. At the same time, we know also that our educational content must help students succeed. The highest price of all is failure.

I recognize the issues that you are considering are complex. I will be pleased to answer any questions you might have.