FACULTY SURVEY OF THE ASU TEXTBOOK RENTAL SYSTEM (TRS)
Faculty Senate
Academic Policy Committee
Survey Report
11/13/17

Committee Members:

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Beth Fiske created, distributed, and created the initial report files for this survey.

Introduction
At present, Appalachian State University uses a system of printed textbook rentals. All full-time students pay $144 per semester for access to their textbooks. Currently this fee does not cover students' costs associated with either e-books or workbooks that students get to keep. Some faculty have raised concerns that they cannot use the academic materials of their choice (i.e. e-books) for fear of negative student responses. There are also other concerns about the rental textbook system (see results below). In administering this survey, we are not considering abandoning a rental system, but instead asking ASU faculty feedback how to improve the current rental book policy and evaluating how e-books or other fee-based e-resources might be incorporated within the existing system.
Survey goals
   1) To learn about current faculty textbook usage;
   2) To determine if the current system supports or hinders instruction and academic freedom;
   3) To provide recommendations for future textbook policy.

Results:
Two hundred and eighty-eight people responded to one or more questions on this survey.
Q1: Respondents' distribution by college. (N=288)
More than fifty percent of respondents (50.69%; n=146) are currently employed in College of Arts and Sciences. Faculty members of Beaver College of Health Sciences and Walker College of Business each made up 12.85% (N=37) of the sample. Sample distribution of other respondents is the following: College of Fine and Applied Arts (10.07%; n=29), Reich College of Education (7.29%; N=21), Hayes School of Music (4.17%; n=12), the University Libraries (1.74%; n=5), and the University College (0.35%; n=1).

Q2: Current use of classroom instruction materials. (N=283)

Being asked "Which statement best describes your current use of classroom instruction materials?" most respondents (57.24%; N=162) indicated that they use a mix of rental and fee-based print and electronic materials. Those who used rental textbooks only represented the second largest group (31.10%; N=88). Fewer faculty members used fee-based materials outside the current rental system (7.42%; N=21). Those who don't use classroom instructional materials at all make up 4.24% (N=12) of the sample.

Q3: The textbook rental system and instructional pedagogy. (N=287)

The largest number of respondents (36.24%; n=104) indicated that current rental system supports their instructional pedagogy. A third of the respondents (33.45%; n=96) believes that it neither supports nor hinders their instruction. Less than quarter of respondents (23.34%; n=67) believes that it hinders their instructional efforts. Some faculty (6.97%; n=20) are unsure about that.

Q4: The textbook rental system and academic freedom. (N=288)

Most faculty who chose to answer the survey (53.13%; n=153) believe that textbook rental system is unrelated to academic freedom. Those who believe that it is related to academic freedom are split almost equally into those who think that it supports it (19.79%; n=57) and those who believe that it hinders it (20.39%; n=59). Some respondents (6.60%; n=19) are unsure in their opinion.

Q5: Comments, suggestions, concerns

Q6: Support of inclusion of e-resources in rental system. (N=278)

The majority of respondents (60.43%; n=168) were in favor of modifying the current rental system to include e-textbooks and e-resources. A significant percentage of respondents (21.6%; n-60) support keeping the current system as is, while 18% percent would like to eliminate the rental system and go to a purchase-only system.

Q7: Would you use electronic resources if you could? (N=287)

Question 7 asked respondents, "If electronic resources/ materials appropriate for you classroom instruction were available as part of the textbook rental system, would you use them?" The majority of respondents (61.32%; n=176) were in support of including electronic resources in the textbook rental system. Almost one-third (29.27%; n=84) are not sure whether electronic resources should be included, and 9.4% (n=27) oppose the inclusion of electronic resources within the rental textbook system.

Q8 - Please provide any additional comments, suggestions, or concerns you may have about the use of fee-based e-books, e-textbooks, or other e-resources.

Q12 - Open Educational Resources (OERs). (N=285)

Most respondents do not use OERs in their courses (46%; n=131); however, it should be noted that a large minority of respondents (27.72%; n=79) do not know what OERs are. Further, 19.3% of faculty (n=55) who responded to this survey do use OERs. This may indicate a need for further education on Open Educational Resources.

Faculty Senate Text Book Rental Survey- Questions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 12 Report
Shanan Fitts and Pavel Osinsky

Faculty Survey of the ASU
Textbook Rental System

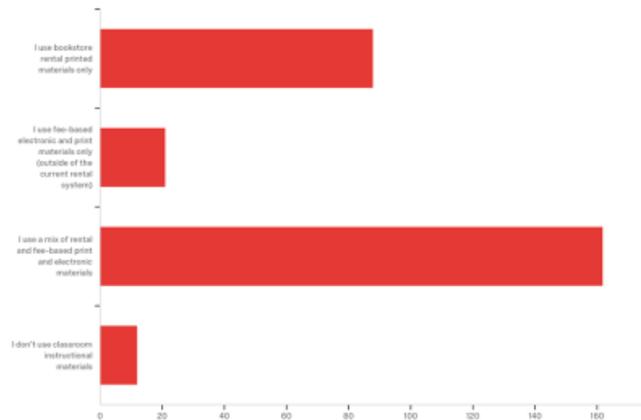Academic Policies Committee
November 13, 2017

Q1 - I am a faculty member in the _____.
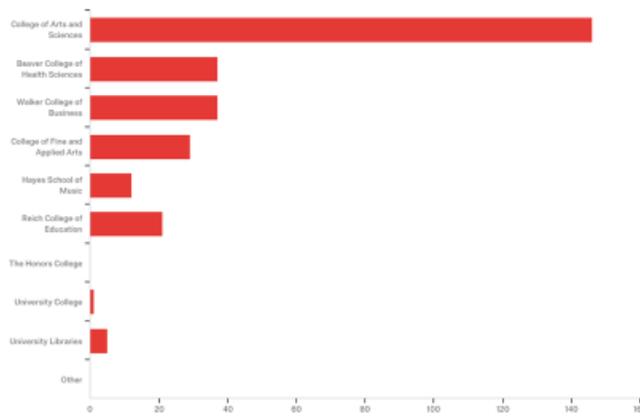
Q1 - I am a faculty member in the _____.

#	Answer	%	Count
1	College of Arts and Sciences	50.69%	146
2	Beaver College of Health Sciences	12.85%	37
3	Walker College of Business	12.85%	37
4	College of Fine and Applied Arts	10.07%	29
5	Hayes School of Music	4.17%	12
6	Reich College of Education	7.29%	21
7	The Honors College	0.00%	0
8	University College	0.35%	1
9	University Libraries	1.74%	5
10	Other	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	288

Q2 - Which statement best describes your current use of classroom instruction materials?

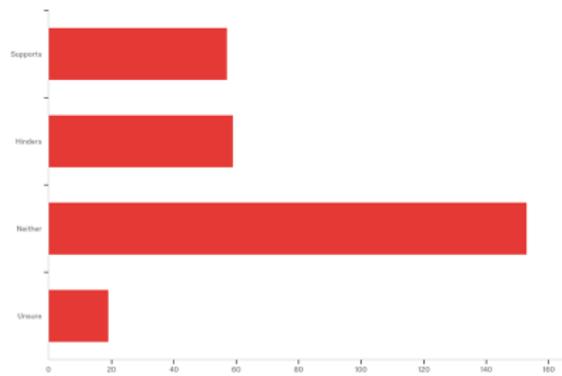| #	Answer	%	Count
1	I use bookstore rental printed materials only	31.10%	88
2	I use fee-based electronic and print materials only (outside of the current rental system)	7.42%	21
3	I use a mix of rental and fee-based print and electronic materials	57.24%	162
4	I don't use classroom instructional materials	4.24%	12
	Total	100%	283

Q3 - Does the current textbook rental system support or hinder your instructional pedagogy?
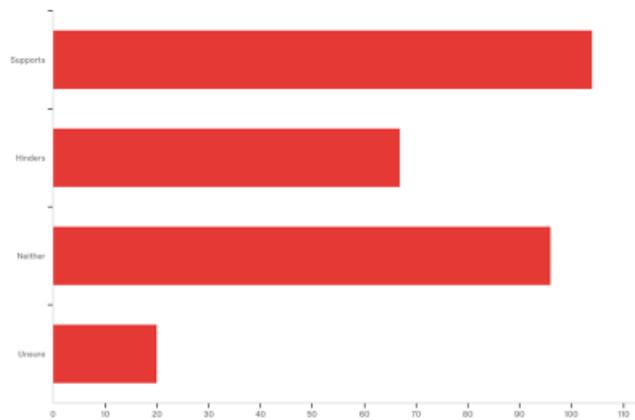
Q3 - Does the current textbook rental system support or hinder your instructional pedagogy?

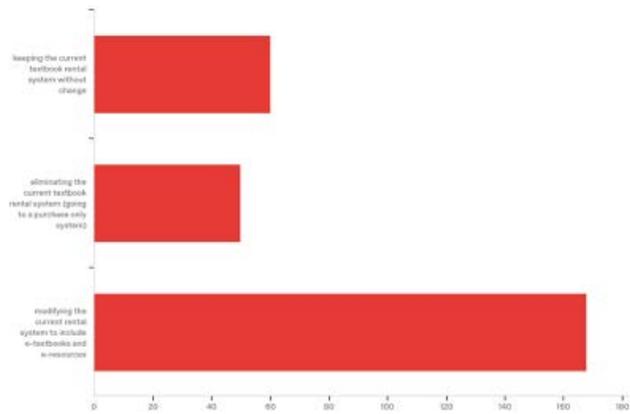| #	Answer	%	Count
1	Supports	36.24%	104
2	Hinders	23.34%	67
3	Neither	33.45%	96
4	Unsure	6.97%	20
	Total	100%	287

Q4 - Does the current textbook rental system support or hinder your academic freedom?

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#	Answer	%	Count
1	Supports	19.79%	57
2	Hinders	20.49%	59
3	Neither	53.13%	153
4	Unsure	6.60%	19
	Total	100%	288

Q6 - I am supportive of _____.

Q6 - I am supportive of _____.

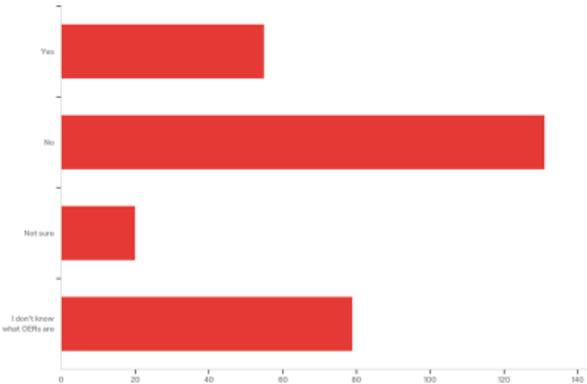| #	Answer	%	Count
1	keeping the current textbook rental system without change	21.58%	60
2	eliminating the current textbook rental system (going to a purchase only system)	17.99%	50
3	modifying the current rental system to include e-textbooks and e-resources	60.43%	168
	Total	100%	278

Q7 - If electronic resources/ materials appropriate for you classroom instruction were available as part of the textbook rental system, would you use them?
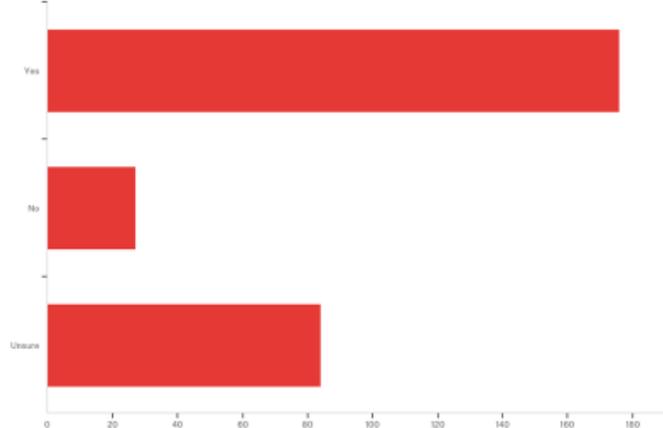
Q7 - If electronic resources/ materials appropriate for you classroom instruction were available as part of the textbook rental system, would you use them?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	61.32%	176
2	No	9.41%	27
3	Unsure	29.27%	84
	Total	100%	287

Q12 - Do you currently use Open Educational Resources (OERs) in your courses?

Q12 - Do you currently use Open Educational Resources (OERs) in your courses?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	19.30%	55
2	No	45.96%	131
3	Not sure	7.02%	20
4	I don't know what OERs are	27.72%	79
	Total	100%	285

Faculty Senate Text Book Rental Survey- Question #8 Report
Jennifer Dalton and Dale Wheeler

Question #5 - Q5 - Please provide any additional comments, suggestions or concerns you have about the current University printed textbook rental system.

The responses (129) were categorized as either keep the current TRS as is (23), modify the current TRS (60), eliminate the TRS (32), and no opinion (14).

The responses were then subcategorized in the following categories. In many cases, no clear responses category could be determined. And, in many cases, more than one category was included in a single response. Consequently, the number of responses in each category may not match the total number of responses.

Responses identified as modify the current TRS were subdivided into 1) reasons to modify and 2) suggestions for improvement.

Keep 23 (17.8%)
- Cost savings to students (12)
- Keep TRS for GenEd and Intro courses (2)
- More freedom now for multiple sections to have different choices (1)

Modify 60 (46.5%)
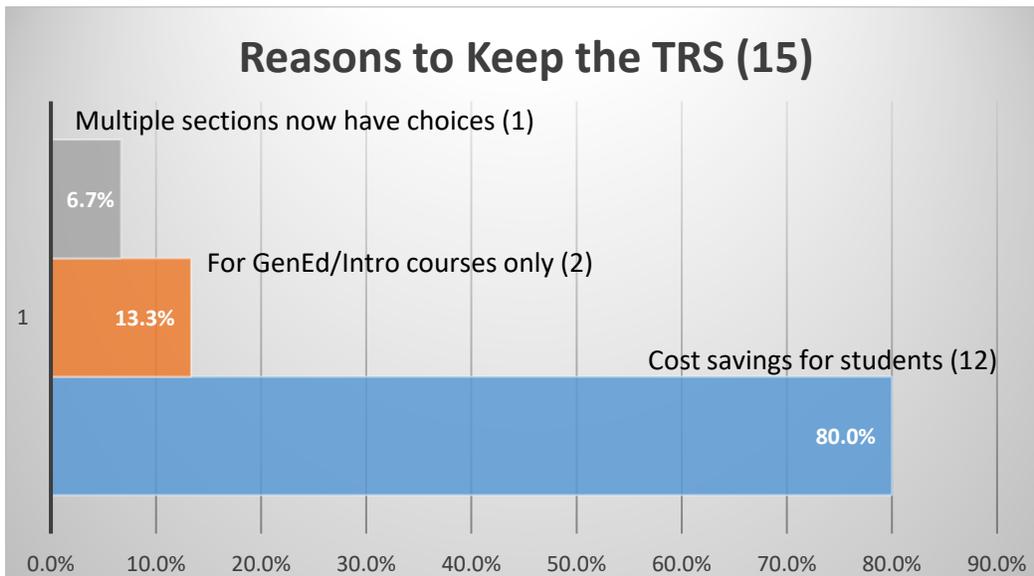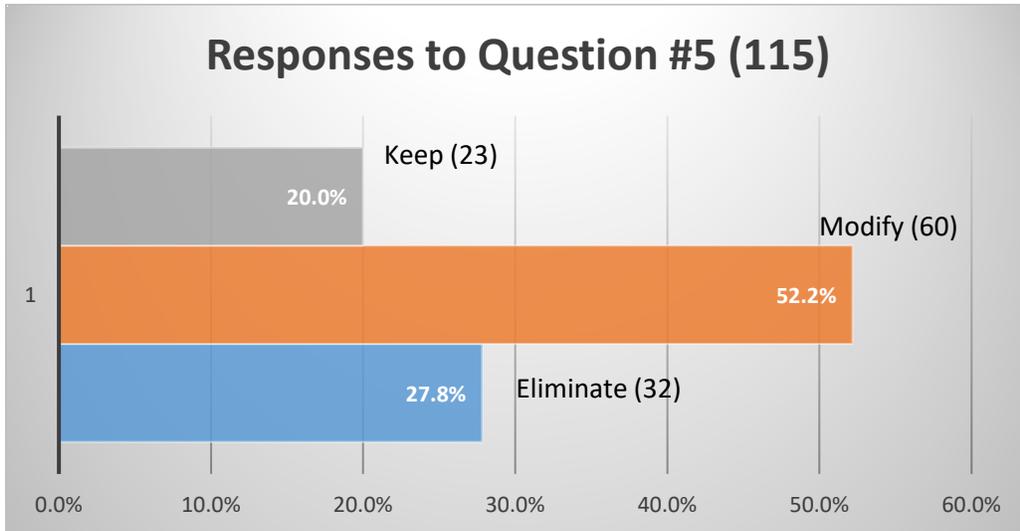 **Reasons to modify TRS** 42 (64.6%)
- Must keep text for 2 years (15)
- Only allowed one book (11)
- Students cannot keep books to build professional library (5)
- Not enough textbooks for students (4)
- Printed materials being phased out (3)
- Multiple sections of a course must use the same text (2)
- No option for students in programs of study to opt out of the TRS (1)
- Too much lead time to request textbooks (1)

  Suggestions for the TRS 23 (35.4%)
- Add e-resources to TRS (12)
- Keep TRS for GenEd and Intro courses only (6)
- Add elective/graduate/Distance Ed courses to the TRS (5)

Eliminate 32 (24.8%)
- Only use or will only use e-resources, OERs, (12)
- Must keep text for 2 years (8)
- Students cannot take notes in books (3)
- Course materials cheaper on Amazon, etc. (3)
- Students cannot keep books to build professional library (2)
- Too much lead time to request textbooks (2)
- Student perception that course is not important (2)

Responses to Question #5 (115)

- Keep (23): 20.0%
- Modify (60): 52.2%
- Eliminate (32): 27.8%

Reasons to Keep the TRS (15)

- Multiple sections now have choices (1): 6.7%
- For GenEd/Intro courses only (2): 13.3%
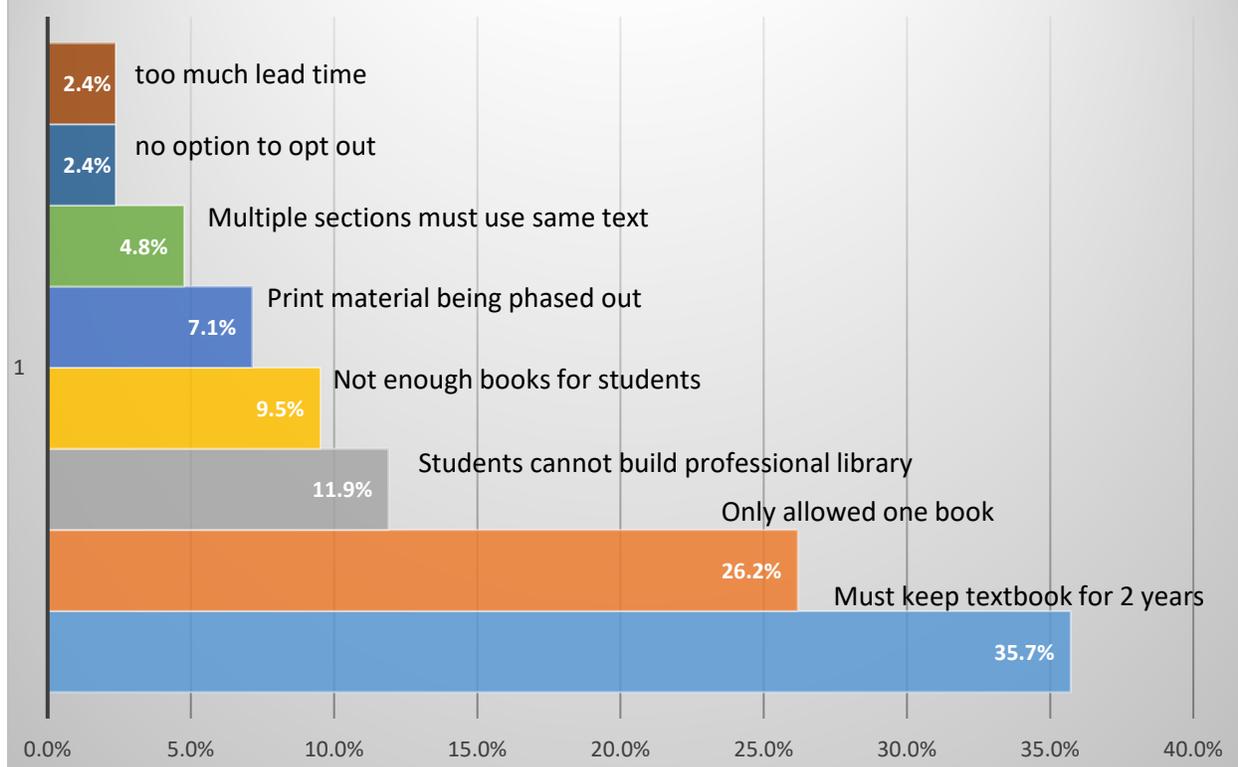- Cost savings for students (12): 80.0%

The system is much better than it was, now that we have more freedom for multiple sections to have different choices and that the cycle is only 3 years

We need to keep it...students need it for undergraduate, at least 1000-level, courses.

I support the current textbook rental system because it saves my General Education students a lot of money.

The rental system is fabulous because it removes price as a worry when choosing a textbook - I need only consider the quality of the text. In the past (I came from an institution without a rental system), there were times when I would choose a lower quality text simply because it was cheaper. That I'm locked in to a text for a few tears is easily worth the tradeoff.

Reasons to Modify the TRS (42)

Reason	Percentage
too much lead time	2.4%
no option to opt out	2.4%
Multiple sections must use same text	4.8%
Print material being phased out	7.1%
Not enough books for students	9.5%
Students cannot build professional library	11.9%
Only allowed one book	26.2%
Must keep textbook for 2 years	35.7%

The two year adoption rule makes it difficult to be nimble and to keep courses up to date. The one rental textbook rule negatively affects our ability to teach what is needed for our courses.

Committing to using the same edition of a textbook for 2 years is sometimes difficult. In certain disciplines, things change quickly, and in such cases, even a 2-year old book can be outdated. Additionally, the inability to include e-resources is troublesome. Some publishers have already announced that certain textbooks will no longer be available in print.
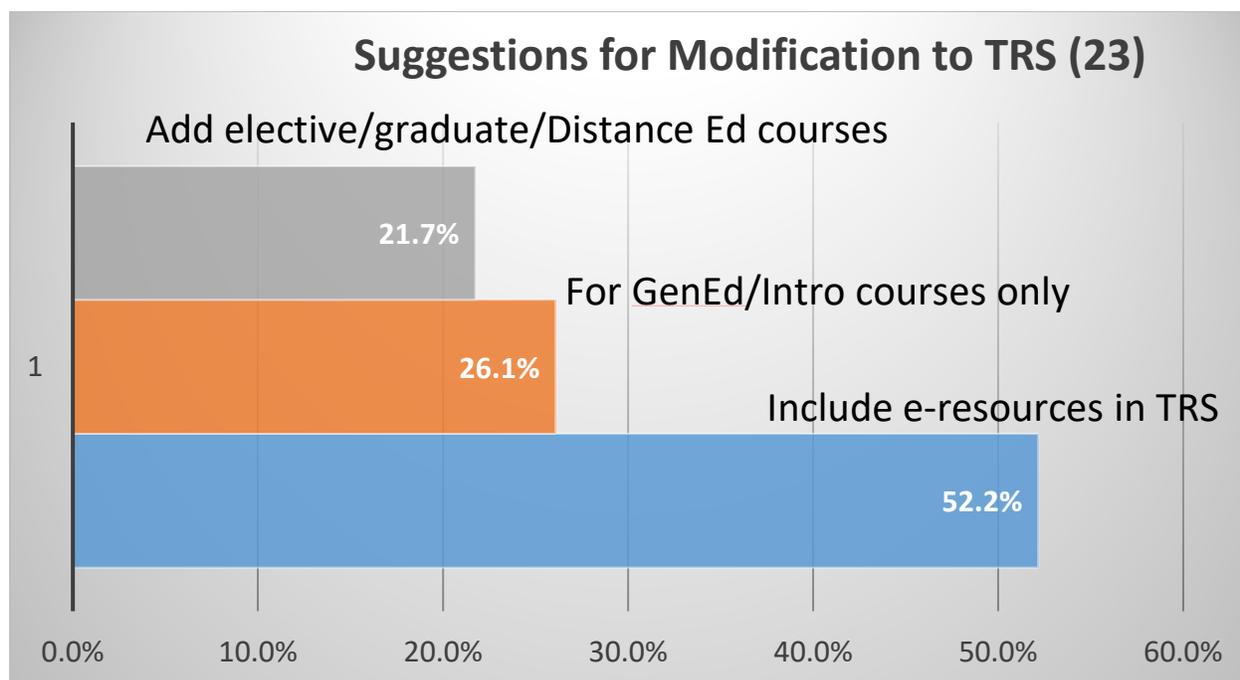
Since technology changes at such a rapid pace, keeping a textbook on technology for two years makes it extremely irrelevant to our current student base. I can understand keeping certain books for longer than two years, but not all disciplines fit this criteria.

I understand that the rental system saves the students considerable money, but sometimes it inconveniences which textbooks I can use. Also, since I can only put one book on the rental system per semester, I feel pressure to choose a textbook that will work with the rental system and not use other books.

I support the rental system if a change is made to allow faculty to assign more materials for purchase in addition to the rentals. Faculty should not be limited to one book a semester, which is extremely anti-intellectual.

Major problem is that students don't keep their books, which means they don't have these as long-term resources throughout the degree program (and beyond). This makes it very difficult for them to build on earlier knowledge and to return to earlier materials.

Useful for some classes; restrictive for others. I've had repeated problems ordering non-rental textbooks from the university bookstore, to the extent that I usually have students buy their books outside that system to avoid delays, missed orders, emailed requests to bookstore staff going nowhere, etc.

Suggestions for Modification to TRS (23)

Add elective/graduate/Distance Ed courses

21.7%

For GenEd/Intro courses only

26.1%

Include e-resources in TRS

52.2%

1

0.0%   10.0%   20.0%   30.0%   40.0%   50.0%   60.0%

For one class that I teach the best available materials are electronic and students must pay to access the materials and no rental materials are used. The students have to pay the full rental fee even when one of their classes does not use rental materials.

Currently using a platform that students have to pay for in addition to the book rental. This is challenging for those with socioeconomic issues however, the material is extremely beneficial to the classroom experience. Please figure out a way we can utilize the technology platforms provided for by book publishers to deliver a stronger course. This will continue to be a challenge, especially for those of us who use these platforms (such as MindTap) for online classes.

The recent policy not to include internet workbooks along with textbook rentals has been a huge setback for foreign language instruction at Appalachian. The online workbooks are crucial to language learning, but the cost is prohibitive now that these resources are no longer included in the rental. Faculty are having to plead with publishers for discounts, and the publishers are making us write reviews of textbooks to earn discounted access codes for our students.

I am a huge fan of the rental system, particularly for lower level courses. I would also like to see the return of the inclusion e-resources, as they have become quite prominent as our technologies evolve.

For GenEd and intro classes, text rentals are useful for students and I can teach as I like. However, for upper level students, they do not keep rental texts as reference material and rely on unsubstantiated websites for information instead of vetted material.
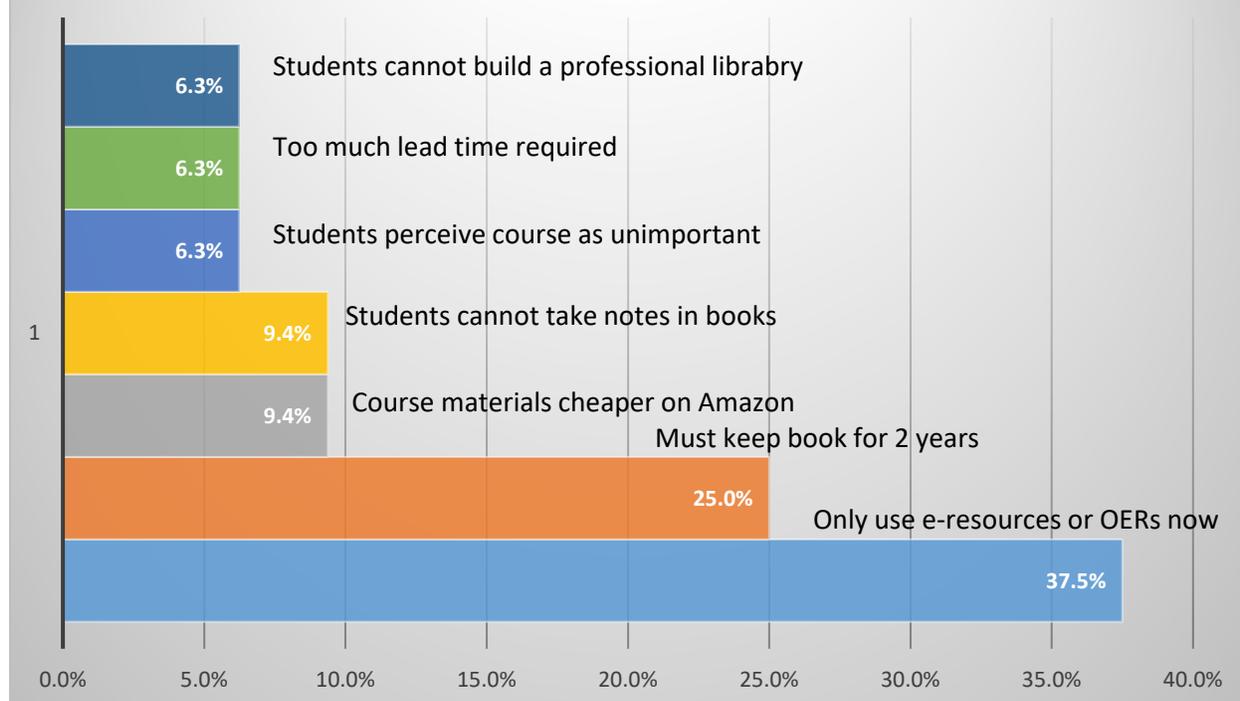
The rental system works well for a General Education course taught every semester. It works poorly for everything else I teach, so I don't use it.

The system does not help students build a library in their field. Students should rent textbooks for introductory courses and purchase textbooks for upper level courses.

I think grad students should be included in the rental system.

Distance Ed students can't use the rental system and if you teach an elective you can't use it either. It seems to privilege some courses and some students.

Reasons to Eliminate the TRS (32)

Bar chart showing:
- Students cannot build a professional librabry: 6.3%
- Too much lead time required: 6.3%
- Students perceive course as unimportant: 6.3%
- Students cannot take notes in books: 9.4%
- Course materials cheaper on Amazon: 9.4%
- Must keep book for 2 years: 25.0%
- Only use e-resources or OERs now: 37.5%

The rental system is a poor fit for my discipline (literature). I understand the value of the system for students who don't want to buy a $150 science textbook -- but it sets up the expectation that students shouldn't have to buy novels, either. Now that students have many options for purchasing used books or even renting texts online -- not to mention a buy-back system -- I wonder why it's necessary to continue the rental system. Or, if it is, why not limit it to texts costing more than $50. When a student resents having to buy a novel for a literature class -- even when inexpensive used copies are widely available -- it tells me that our system is sending the wrong message about the value of books.

There are many good on-line options for text books, I think our system is very outdated.

The most valuable learning aids are electronic, and students resent having to pay extra for them.

The mandate to adopt a text for a two year time period is challenging. If it keeps fees down for students, I support that. But as a professor there are moments where I adopt a text and am unsure how it will play until I try it out. This means that if a text is terrible, I am burdened/beholden to it for 2 years. This is combined with not a lot of time to think about texts (especially for new preps in the spring). My strategy is to avoid the textbook rentals altogether and figure it out on my own time.

I'd like to change the required textbook within the span of two years sometimes due to new versions of books being released or because a new textbook is better than the one currently used.

With the rental system, I can't try out a new textbook without committing to it for at least 4 semesters. Lat semester, I replaced the rental text with a different one and now I'm stuck using a bad book for at least 4 semesters. This is the first place I've taught that has a rental system and I do NOT like it. A further problem is that we have to submit textbook orders much too early.

All my students purchase or rent books through Amazon.com as they can get e-books or hard copies or audible versions.

Students need to be able to mark in books (or it needs to be clear that they can mark in them). An unmark-able book is useless to students. The rental system also encourages students to believe that the value of a book is limited to a particular course. Many key books, instead, should be kept as reference materials for their entire academic career. The rental systems is a gimmick without much additional value beyond fooling students into thinking that it makes their education more affordable. It doesn't. Books still have to be paid for. It just hides the costs from them. It also adds a layer of complexity to course preparation and planning that is not worth the limited advertising value it may offer to the admissions department.

Responses in Question #5 that mention academic freedom or pedagogy.

Locking in textbooks hinders my teaching and **academic freedom**.

I say hinder for **academic freedom**, because in theory it does. In practice, for me, my departments' choices for rental texts are fine by me.

The major problem with the system is when multiple instructors must agree on a common textbook. This interferes with **academic freedom**.

In the classroom, I typically make choices that favor **pedagogy** over **academic freedom**.

It limits new **pedagogical** approaches in favor of "establishment" texts that are often outdated. We spend all of this time and money hiring great faculty, and then we limit their ability to fully utilize their preferred **pedagogy** and penalize our students' learning outcomes in the process.

I indicated rental system hinders **pedagogy**, but this is only sometimes true. For some courses, rental system is fine; but, for others it hinders (paperbacks, grad course, frequently changing material).

The idea that rental texts hinder one's **academic freedom** is absurd.

I am sorry to point out the obvious: "**academic freedom**" has nothing whatsoever to do with whether textbooks are rentals or not. Somebody on the Faculty Senate should have educated the writers of this survey.

Faculty Senate Text Book Rental Survey- Question #8 Report
Ray Williams and Kelly Williams

Question #8- Please provide any additional comments, suggestions, or concerns you may have about the use of fee-based e-books, e-textbooks, or other e-resources.

The question asked about E-based resources and not about the rental system per se. Responses about the rental system alone, and not E-resources, were first included in all response and then scored separately. It is important to point out that there was no unifying definition of "E-resources" in the question, so it perhaps means different things to different people. Could be e-books, on-line materials in addition to books, etc.

After reading all responses we established categories for scoring. For E-resources there are four categories; support, support with change, no support and no opinion. For responses about the rental system, and not E-resources, we scored responses using two categories; change rental system and no change to rental system.

Percentages using all responses for each category:
Total Responses= 79

E-Resources:
Supportive Overall- 18 (22.7%)
Supportive but Change System- 22 (27.8%)
Do Not Support- 15 (18.9%)
No Opinion- 14 (17.7%)

Rental System:
Change Rental System- 9 (9.2%)
Keep Rental System- 4 (3.7%)

In order to more accurately reflect the data based on the question, the four categories pertaining to E-resources were recalculated using only those responses. Additionally, notes are added to each category based on information that stood out.

Total Responses= 66
Note: three responses were omitted here as they were too ambiguous or completely unrelated to the question (example- a rant on spamming surveys to faculty....) to fit into a category.

Supportive Overall- 18 (27.3%)
Notes:
Some faculty support the use of e-resources for reasons such as enhancing student learning and environmental sustainability. At least one person said e-resources are critical for distance education courses.

Supportive of E-Resources but Change System- 22 (33.3%)
Notes:
Many faculty comments show support of using e-resources, particularly if the bookstore policy could be adapted to include available E-textbooks and other e-resources at zero or minimal extra cost to students. Change could include E-resources only for general education and not upper level courses. For hard cover books, suggestions to include electronic resources in the rental cost (often is not apparently) were made. It was also suggested to evaluate the "fair use" rules to make some E-resources easier to get.

Do Not Support use of E-Resources- 15 (22.7%)
Note: Some faculty believe that e-textbooks and other e-learning resources detract from students' learning and retention of knowledge. Some noted a "digital divide" for students.

No Opinion on E-Resources- 11 (16.7%)
Example: "Instructional materials (in my area of teaching at least) are plentiful and mostly free". and.. "so far, I have not been pressured to use fee-based E-resources".

Synopsis:
The two categories that show support of E-resources are individually higher in percentage than the one demonstrating lack of support. Collectively they represented 60.6% of the responses. Though support was evident, respondents did lean more towards a change in the existing system. Comments are hard to summarize but include a more focused offering of E-resources and flexibility in how they are delivered. Interestingly, the percentage of responses showing a lack of support was close to that with no opinion. In balance, the responses to this question show more support than opposition to the use of E-resources, with 40% not supporting or with no opinion (collectively).

Rental System Comments:

No Opinion on E-Resources, Change Rental System
Note: Some faculty expressed specific dissatisfaction with the book rental system (e.g., limits instructors to one textbook).

No Opinion on E-Resources, Keep Rental System
Note: Some faculty expressed support for keeping the current textbook rental system to keep textbook costs low for students.

Conclusion:
        Of the faculty who responses to the survey, ~20% are in favor of keeping the TRS, ~45% are in favor of keeping the TRS with modifications, ~25% are in favor of eliminating the TRS, and ~10% have no opinion.

Recommendation:
        Given that ~70% of the respondents favor either modification or elimination, we recommend the Provost consider appointing a University-wide committee to review the current textbook rental system.