

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE

403 West College

To: Members of the Faculty
From: Nancy Weiss Malkiel and Peter H. Quimby
Date: 15 May 2009
Subject: Cost of course reading materials

For the last several years, the rising cost of textbooks has been the subject of concern for students and universities alike. With the current economic downturn, this concern has only increased. For some months now, we have been working with the Undergraduate Student Government, the Princeton University Library, and Labyrinth Books to explore ways to help keep the costs of course readings more affordable for our students. Toward that end, this memo comes to provide you with information and resources that you may find helpful in compiling your fall term reading lists.

University Financial Aid:

The University includes an allowance of \$1,260 in the student budget used to calculate financial aid packages to cover the costs of textbooks and other course reading materials. At an average of four courses each semester, that means a book budget of \$157.50 per course. It would be helpful if you would keep this figure in mind as you assign required readings. Naturally, readings for some courses will cost more than this, and some less. Our experience over time suggests that this figure is, on average, adequate to cover students' expenses. The University will continue to monitor whether this budget is in line with actual costs. In the meantime, we thought that it would be helpful to share this information with you for use as a guideline.

Labyrinth:

As you are aware, Labyrinth Books is the University's textbook provider. Staff members at Labyrinth work closely with members of the faculty to locate the books they would most like their students to purchase. In many cases, the staff at Labyrinth can help faculty members contain textbook costs by providing information about the availability of high-quality used books or less expensive editions. You can submit your book orders online at the following URL:

http://www.labyrinthbooks.com/cb_build.aspx. If you have questions about coursebooks, you can e-mail the Labyrinth Coursebook Manager, Annie Farrell, at annie.farrell@labyrinthbooks.com.

Princeton University Library:

In many courses, the most costly reading materials are course reading packets compiled by faculty members and sold to students by local vendors. In most cases, the readings in these packets could also be provided free of charge to students through the University Library via E-Reserves. For more information about how to use Reserves and E-Reserves, you can visit the Princeton University Library website at: <http://library.princeton.edu/services/reserves.php>, or contact Trevor Dawes at tdawes@princeton.edu.

If you have other questions, you can e-mail Peter Quimby at pquimby@princeton.edu, and he will direct you to the best sources for the information you need.