Abstract

In our ACE 398 Research Methods class, our group decided to study textbook consumption and behavior patterns. We chose this topic for a variety of reasons. As students at the University of Illinois ourselves, we have noticed that as individuals near graduation they become more familiar with substitutes for the traditional textbook. We felt it would be interesting and even more informative for the research community to examine hundreds of individuals’ demographic data on campus to inference any correlations or patterns that might exist regarding textbook consumption. We met with several focus groups to collect qualitative data and to better structure our methodology. We then came up with questions pertaining to demographic factors and individual spending habits for an online survey. The online survey was then analyzed to measure any characteristics or patterns found. Our group hypothesizes that as students become older, they spent less on textbooks each semester due to resource awareness and also that the average amount spent on textbooks varies between majors.
Acknowledgements

Our group would like to thank Professor Arends-Kuenning for guiding us through the semester. She was our interim coach and we would have been lost without her. Also thank you to Dan Mann, Director of the Office of Student Financial Aid, Carol Livingstone, Director of the Division of Management Information, our focus group participants, our online survey participants, the Ethnography Department of the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, and to everyone else who aided in our project: this project would not have been possible without the financial support and information provided.
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Literature Review

Research about college textbooks was difficult to find, but provided us with a great starting point to conduct our research. It showed us some of the options that students take when purchasing textbooks, for example, online stores. It also gave us an idea of what our own university had done to investigate student spending. All of this hard work up front really paid off because we already knew what questions to ask of our data once we received it.

Much reliable research has been published in the field of textbook spending; it is important to review the work already done by researchers. The most closely related material to our work is the University of Illinois’s estimate for textbook spending of their students. The University estimates students spend $1200 a year on textbooks and other school supplies. This figure calculated by the University study will be higher than our estimate because of big ticket items included in this survey such as laptop computers and printers. The research done by the university was in three parts. The first was a survey asked of a sample of students here at the university. All classes including graduate students were surveyed, although we are not sure about the exact number of people the survey was sent out to, we do know that they received over 5,000 responses. The Survey had two questions pertaining to textbooks specifically:

1. How much do you spend on text books per semester?
2. How much do you spend on school and computer supplies per semester? NOTE: computer supplies include software, CDs, printer ink, printer paper, etc.

Based on the responses to this question, they went on to the second part of their research, which was to talk directly with student bookstores on Campus. They asked for the most recent prices of
textbooks, how that price is different from what it was a year before, and finally, they asked them to give an estimate of how much students pay in total for books at their store. They then confirmed that these prices were legitimate by looking them up themselves, or asking student employees to verify the information was correct. The final step taken by the University was to compare textbook prices at the University of Illinois with other Big Ten Schools. Our research team was not granted access to their comparisons.

Looking at this estimate it gives us an idea of what college students are spending on average; however, our research will focus more on the differences in college student textbook spending. For example, what is standard deviation from $600 a semester, and can those deviations be explained by age, class, or major? This research doesn’t confirm or reject our original hypothesis that those in technical major spend more; it also cannot support or reject the belief that freshmen will spend more than any other class. Perhaps if we had access to the actually responses by students, we could better analyze this piece of research. However, the survey we sent out actually has much more detailed questions and should address more specific spending habits. (Mann, 1-2) We believe that our research is an improvement because we are not just curious about how much is spent, but how that number came to be. For example, what are the differences between students using different financing? Do those students whose parents are paying for their books spend more than those who pay themselves? Our research is investigating more about why students spend what they do, which will make us better able to make conclusions recommendations to students about how to reduce spending.

One of the most related articles for our research was published in 1998 by a Journal entitled Economics of Education, which reviewed the economics behind textbook prices, focusing in primarily on campus bookstores. One of the most significant findings of this research is that the
more books stores there are in the market, the less profitable they will be, usually signaling lower prices. Many major Universities only have one campus bookstores, leaving students few options for their purchasing decisions. It is important to keep in mind that the University of Illinois has three bookstores on campus, all which carry the same books. There have been many previous efforts to detect the critical number of sellers that facilitates the exploitation of market power. Kwoka (1979), for example, found that price-cost margins in the cross industry analysis were positively related to the market shares of the industry leader and the second largest firm, negatively related to the market share of the third largest firm, and unrelated to market share of the fourth largest firm and smaller firms.

“We find no evidence to support the proposition that retail college textbook prices are higher in markets where costs are higher or where the on-campus bookstore faces fewer existing or potential competitors. This finding suggests that either oligopolistic competition is inefficient to affect price levels, or the profit maximizing model is not apt for describing pricing behavior in the retail college textbook market.” (111)

He concluded that three seems to be the critical number of sellers necessary to undermine industry pricing discipline (12). This means that with at least three sources of books, there is a competitive market. As long as one of the bookstores doesn’t have complete market share, then there is no reason to believe prices are elevated beyond their competitive levels.

There was also an interesting piece in this research that can be analyzed and stretched in order to be compared with our research. Of the findings, they concluded that off-campus textbook stores didn’t have to price their books lower than on-campus bookstores, despite the obvious convenience charge. We would assume that the campus bookstores would charge students more
money per textbook because students don’t have to travel far to purchase their books. However, since we find that students do not care about traveling to save money it might explain why so many students use the book available on reserve. Even though it is inconvenient to go to the library every time students want to do homework, this shouldn’t have any effect on college students’ spending.

This paper did account for student perceptions as it included a survey of students in over 90 different colleges and examined the prices of survey 16 of the most popular books bought by all students. They also controlled for the fact that some campus bookstores are owned by the Universities themselves, which subsidize the price of their textbooks to students. After looking at textbook prices, they found that the average standard deviation for used textbooks was $2.33 compared to $3.10 for new books. With this being said, the researchers found there was no reason to believe that campuses with 3 bookstores or more were operating as monopolies.

All of this research is important to our project for many reasons. First, it eliminates the concern that bookstores have significant differences in their pricing. This means we do not need to account for books purchased at different locations. Secondly, it indicates that the cost of textbooks in 1991 is rather outdated to be compared with our data. It is only relevant for comparing the differences between used and new prices.

We have collected our own data on the price differences between new and used textbook prices. Prices can vary greatly between various books and different stores. We have chosen eight courses at the University of Illinois, which have the highest enrollment, based on information from UI-Integrate. They are ADV 300, BTW 250, CHEM102, ECON 102, ECON 103, PSYC 100, SOC 100, and STAT 100. First, we identified the required texts through the online campus bookstore websites. Then, we researched and compared their prices among three main sources. The first
source looked at were campus bookstores including T.I.S., I.U.B. (Illini Union Bookstore), and Follett’s Bookstores. They are the main ways that students acquire their textbooks as we will see later on in the graphs sections. This is probably because of their convenient location and collections of textbooks. Next, we researched popular online bookstores such as Amazon.com and Half.com. These sites provide both auction-purchase and buy-it-now options. For the purposes of finding stable prices on auction sites, the buy-now prices were recorded since prices will vary. Finally, we also looked at University resources such as course reserves, E-reserves, and I-Share.

Course reserves are hard copies of textbooks that typically are available in two-hour periods at the university libraries. The Undergraduate Library contains textbooks for a majority of undergraduate courses. Specialty libraries such as the Biology Library or the Mathematics Library tend to have textbook reserves for specific majors or higher level courses in a certain field. E-Reserves are soft copies online on the University library website. Instructors make articles, charts, diagrams, and even whole books (photocopied) available on E-Reserves in PDF file formats. They are listed by course heading and corresponding instructor.

I-Share is a consortium of 71 university and college libraries across the Midwest. All of the schools have agreements with each other to borrow each other’s books. Most circulating volumes at these schools are listed online and available to checkout. I-Share is also on the University of Illinois’ library website. Patrons can login and request textbooks from any of the campuses in the consortium. It typically takes three to four business days for the books to arrive at the pickup library designated by the student. University of Illinois undergraduate students can usually checkout each book in a four-week increment with the option to renew up to ten times if the book has not been requested by another patron or had a recall placed on it by a librarian. College library

1 http://www.library.uiuc.edu/ereserves/querycourse.asp
2 https://i-share.carli.illinois.edu/uc/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First
systems, or clusters, may have different rules and regulations regarding loan periods. This means an undergraduate student at the University of Illinois could potentially possess a book for 44 weeks granted that no other patron has requested it and placed a recall. This potential period is longer than a semester and gives many students the opportunity to save money by using the library system instead of purchasing textbooks.

Below is the aforementioned textbook price table for the most popular classes on campus. Prices were taken off of campus bookstores and textbook purchase websites in late October of 2008. The **bold** prices reflect “new” prices and *italics* prices reflect “used” prices.

### Comparison and analysis of Textbooks’ Fall 2008 Prices

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<tr>
<td>ADV 300</td>
<td>$184.80 $138.60</td>
<td>$192.32 $144.25</td>
<td>$192.30 n/a</td>
<td>$162.36 $125.00</td>
<td>$135.90</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTW 250</td>
<td>$86.80 $65.10</td>
<td>$88.32 $66.25</td>
<td>n/a $66.25</td>
<td>$86.25 $80.00</td>
<td>$45.60</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHEM 102</td>
<td>$180.80 $135.60</td>
<td>$157.02 $117.75</td>
<td>$191.70 $144.00</td>
<td>$197.21 $54.23</td>
<td>$54.23</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECON 102</td>
<td>$149.80 $112.35</td>
<td>$152.64 $114.50</td>
<td>$152.60 n/a</td>
<td>$129.95 $43.00</td>
<td>$43.33</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECON 103</td>
<td>$163.28 $122.46</td>
<td>$167.36 $125.50</td>
<td>$152.60 $114.50</td>
<td>$129.95 $62.25</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSYC 100</td>
<td>$170.36 $127.77</td>
<td>$176.96 $132.70</td>
<td>$202.60 $152.25</td>
<td>$147.22 $17.97</td>
<td>$45.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 100</td>
<td>$131.60 $98.70</td>
<td>$137.09 $102.80</td>
<td>$136.70 $107.05</td>
<td>$102.20 $59.98</td>
<td>$42.19</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT 100 (course)</td>
<td>$19.80 $14.85</td>
<td>$19.01 $14.25</td>
<td>$19.80 n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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This research also found that science and mathematics associated texts were on average 18% higher in price than any other textbook category. Since we are able to assume that students majoring in these fields found in the College of Business, College of Engineering, or College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are spending more money on textbooks than the average student at the University of Illinois according to the graph on page 20, we can assume that this is due to differences in pricing rather than the individual’s spending habits.
Methodology

Since our topic was sensitive to individuals’ feelings and habits, we decided to collect data two different ways. Over time survey questions were written and improved upon. This information was later sent out to students via email to help us collect quantitative data. In order to capture the differences between individuals, we chose to meet in focus groups. These small groups of students enabled all to express their concerns and recommendations. Both means of data collection assisted in making a well-rounded, more sound argument for the differences in textbook expenditures.

In order to collect data from students at The University of Illinois, an online survey was conducted. All ACE 398 students pooled their questions together and eliminated duplicate or similar subjects. Once the list of questions was refined, Professor Arends-Kuenning painstakingly worked with the Division of Management Information to select a representative sample of students. The sample consisted of all international students at the University and 10% or 2,854 of the domestic student population. These selected students were invited via email to take the online survey. The survey was sent out to 4,753 individuals. Although not all students responded to our invitation, we received 409 surveys which results a participation rate of about 8.6%. Using this collected data, we can approximate the responses for the whole student body at The University of Illinois.

When students read the email, there was a link that took them to the site of the survey. Before participating, they read a consent form. The information included was a brief description of the research projects, statements regarding voluntary participation, confidentiality, risks and benefits, and also a list of contacts to assist with any questions or concerns. In order to continue on to the survey, students had to agree to reading and understanding the above information.

A complete copy of the online survey can be found at the conclusion of this report (See
Appendix). The topics relevant to textbook expenditure included both general demographic questions and specific spending habit inquiries. By understanding the individuals and their unique traits, we would be able to increase the accuracy of our predictor model. The main idea of the survey was to collect general information such as living arrangements, year in school, major and many other similar topics. The survey was also intended to collect data on specific matters relating to our topic, as well as other students’ topics the in ACE 398 class, for example the number of bookstores used each semester, overall textbook expenditure, the number of hours spent studying and other relevant ideas. After several weeks, data was collected and able to be analyzed from Microsoft Excel or Stata 10.0. The quantitative section was not difficult for collecting data. The only difficult part was determining what to analyze after it had been collected and not having enough time to do so.

Besides collecting quantitative data on the student body at The University of Illinois, we also conducted focus groups in order to hear about students’ concerns. Each focus group consisted of a pre-selected group of students and an ACE 398 group member. We used a detailed recruitment plan in order to select students to participate. The focus group recruitment method included the distribution of a recruitment survey and information form during a large lecture-form general education class, to friends of research participants, classmates, as well as fellow fraternity members. The data collected from the recruitment survey was then used to determine if they would be invited to participate in the focus group or not. Each survey gave the student the option to say yes, maybe, or no when asked if they participate in a focus group. Finding participants for focus groups proved to be harder than originally thought. 231 surveys were distributed, 30 volunteered to participate, and all volunteers were invited via email to come to the various focus group meetings. From the 28 “yes” and “maybe” answers came only one yes response to a follow up email stating
when and where the focus group would take place.

Our original goal for the focus groups was to conduct four meetings, one for each year of students. As we started receiving completed recruitment surveys, we decided that it would be more ideal to conduct just three focus groups. The reasoning behind this was students not at the extremes of the college-age spectrum would have similar behaviors. Freshmen and seniors were still kept separate because it was hypothesized that these two groups would have the most different behaviors. While this did not directly give us the participants we needed, it did make the task of finding willing participants somewhat easier. The distribution of the groups was as follows: freshman with 2 participants, sophomores and juniors containing 1 from each class for a total of 2 attendees, and seniors with 4 students. Lauren led a freshmen focus group, Dillon led the sophomore and junior focus group, and Julie was in charge of the senior focus group.

A list of focus group questions was prepared by group members before conducting each meeting. The questions were as follows:

How do you feel about the amount you spend on textbooks each semester?
What do you do to save money while purchasing textbooks?
How do you purchase or otherwise obtain your textbooks?
What influences how much you spend on textbooks each semester?
How lenient are your professors with requiring textbooks?
What else could professors do to help cut down on textbook costs?

Each focus group began with the signing of consent forms, an introduction to the topic, and then the questions commenced.

Although we received a lot of valuable information from the focus group meetings,
there were both strengths and weaknesses. The first problem that occurred was the small number of willing individuals who attended. With such a low number of confirmations received from the invitation emails, this was partially expected. We did not originally intend to have such a low number of committed individuals actually show up at the arranged meeting time and place. Because of this, we were forced to recruit our own friends and acquaintances. Doing so limited variation on several levels, such as majors. One positive aspect of knowing the other group members made the situation overall more comfortable which enabled the discussion to flow more easily and members were therefore not embarrassed to speak out.

Another negative aspect to the focus groups was that they were very hard to organize. Not only was it difficult to have people volunteer, but it was complicated to find a time and place that was convenient for everyone. This portion of the research was conducted towards the end of the fall semester, which was a very busy time for students due to exam preparation. Although we had a few setbacks during the focus group process, we still have many beneficial aspects from conducting them.

The greatest strength from the focus groups was that we received very detailed explanations for why students felt the ways that they did. It also was very beneficial to hear individual’s thought processes during textbook shopping. Some of this information made us open our eyes to greater possible scenarios that were not considered initially. Another advantage was that we were able to listen to very specific examples from a variety of majors. Since all authors of this research project have the same major, we were not familiar with all classes and material covered within the University. In summation,
the focus groups assisted in expanding our thoughts, expectations, and qualitative findings.
Details

The quantitative data provided us with a lot of research and numbers that could be easily identified and explained using Stata. With this being said, our focus groups clued us in to what students are really thinking when purchasing textbooks and numbers cannot not identify how students feel about their overall spending or how those attitudes have changed. Looking at our transcripts it is easy to identify that the attitudes of people about textbooks change over time. Optimally this research should have been conducted as a cohort, following the same group of people over time to see what changed. We weren’t able to do this because of our limited time, but we would recommend to the University that the follow a similar study. If the university could conduct focus groups with people twice a year, once at the end of each semester, over the course of four years, they could have more concrete data on changing attitudes.

Some variables needed to be taken out in order to remain consistent. Some data samples were removed due to unexplainable answers. For example, observations with people who have claimed to spend more $5000 a semester were taken out. Also, one mistake we made in compiling in our survey is we didn’t take into account that freshman do not yet have GPA’s. We should have included something for freshman to put an estimate on what their GPA will be at the end of the semester. Since GPA was a main factor in determining textbook spending in our model, this is a mistake we regret.

Our sample size was limited to around 4,000 people. This has some serious limitations to our data because it doesn’t include the entire population. We believe hat with a larger sample size we would have been able to make better or stronger predictions about our data. Many of variables
came back with discrepancies, but we could not call them statically significant because our sample size was too small.
The Sample

With all of the quantitative data that was collected, we were able to analyze it with Excel and Stata (data analysis and statistical software). Using Excel we prepared many graphs that looked at different variables. The most important variable that we compared others to was the average prices paid for textbooks. Comparing the amount spent to each determining factor allowed us to see patterns and correlations in students’ textbook expenditures. The following pages show graphs made in Excel along with an explanation of how the graphs were created. A short explanation of the implications and meanings follow. After the Excel graphs and explanations, data analysis is explained using Stata techniques and results. Like with the Excel graphs, the findings from Stata are inference about student behavior and trends for students at the University of Illinois. While the sample size of the survey may not have been large enough to accurately break down the behavior of every student on campus by every demographic using statistical technique like we had originally intended, we tried to explain the most glaring patterns given our relatively small sample.

Before we considered the pricing differences, we wanted to get a better grasp on how students acquired their textbooks. Since individuals are expected to spend less money when they chose not to buy through the traditional bookstore, we calculated the relative frequency for every means of attaining textbooks. This data came straight from the online survey results.
The graph shows that the majority of the students acquire their textbooks through bookstores. As previously mentioned through the pricing matrix, this is often the most expensive option. The sum of the blue relative frequencies is large than 1 because some people may acquire their textbooks via multiple sources. This graph shows that the cheaper alternatives to buying textbooks at campus bookstores are not well used and thus; University of Illinois students may be paying much more than they need to. Acquiring textbooks through library reserves or I-Share is free of charge; however, only 6% of students surveyed have used them as an alternative to campus bookstores.

Next, we asked survey participants how they finance their textbooks. Going along with our hypothesis and our own past experience, when one is not paying with their own money they tend to spend more. We wanted to know if the means of financing differed greatly across the student body.
Breaking down the categories and finding the relative frequencies is displayed above. Once again, the blue relative frequencies add up to a number greater than one. This means that some people pay for their textbooks by more than one source. This graph shows that since 60% of students surveyed finance their textbooks by their family, money is not an issue and perhaps these students are spending more on textbooks than everyone else. Conversely, those paying for textbooks with personal savings and credit cards might be reluctant to high prices and may make better-informed consumer decisions when acquiring textbooks. From what we suspected before the survey went out, our assumptions were correct.

After determining how students finance their textbooks, we decided to start applying dollar amounts. First we compared the amount of money spent on textbooks and other supplies. These average amounts spent each semester were separated by year in school.
Our paper mainly dealt with textbooks. With that being the foundation for our research, one of the main hypotheses of our group was that as a student at the University of Illinois becomes older, he or she will spend less on textbooks each semester. We attributed this behavior to freshmen having the tendency to go into bookstores and buy the required materials for classes. Seniors have a tendency to go to class first and judge if the textbook(s) is/are worth buying. To create this graph, we copied and pasted the variables yearsch, amttextbook, and amtssupplies. Then, the data was organized according to year in school starting with freshmen at the top. Then the average amounts spent on textbooks and supplies by class was gathered using the AVERAGE function. These amounts were put into a small table. The graph was then inserted using the respective data from the table. Focusing on textbook expenditures, the graph shows that as college class progresses from freshman to senior, the amount spent on textbooks each semester decreases. While the graph paints a picture that agrees with our hypothesis, the behavior of the supplies relation remains a mystery. The three subsequent years after the first year of college showed a drastic drop in supply spending. Seniors spent on average slightly more than juniors.
Once the monetary differences between classes were determined, we decided to further break it down between colleges.

![Average Amount Spent On Textbooks by College](image)

The majority of differences in this graph probably come from requirements for majors. The School of Business has the highest average amount per semester spent on textbooks. Perhaps books bought for Business classes are used more often, or may be important to have for reference for later classes. Further analysis to explain differences across colleges would take significantly more explicit data and is outside the scope of our research. The graph was created with a separate tab which contained `amttextbook` and `college`. The data was again organized by college according to the codebook with 1 at the top and so on. Then the average amounts for each college were found using the AVERAGE function. Another small table was created to provide the input for the graph’s output.

To further examine the differences between amounts spent amongst different colleges, we separated the classes.
This graph is the same as the previous one except broken down into grade levels. This graph shows more differentiation among colleges and year in school. Notice the junior year for students in the College of Education; for whatever reason, these students paid on average more than $650 for their textbooks. This may largely reflect curriculum.

From previously determining the differences in money spent between majors and classes, we chose to look more closely at the students’ financial background. Since it was previously mentioned that students’ are more likely than not finance their textbooks through family, we looked at the amount spent on textbooks relative to the income level of parent(s).
As the blue bars show, the trend starts off near $500 and then dips down to under $300 in the middle and ends back up by $400 at the left side of the graph. We believe that perhaps students on the right side of the graph may receive more financial aid than those in the middle and left side. Financial aid may cover many expenses such as textbooks. Students with financial aid may use these funds to purchase textbooks. Students in the middle of the graph may not receive financial aid (or as much) and might be more inclined to curb textbook expenditures. Students in the middle might only buy books they deem vital for classes. On the left side of the graph, parent’s income is the highest. These students may have access to more funds and thus, be able to purchase their textbooks without having to stick to a budget. This graph was created by using amtextbooks and
annincparents as the inputs. The thirteen income levels come directly off of the online survey question.

Along with differences in parental income levels, we wanted to know if any trends existed between the student’s individual income and the amount they spend on books.

![Average Expenditure Per Semester by Personal Income](chart.png)

While it may be hard to deduce textbook expenditure by varying personal income levels, it should be noted that students surveyed with a reported personal annual income of $0 spent the most on textbooks. Perhaps these students devoted more study time than other students by deciding not to work while enrolled. This extra devotion could equate to more money spent on textbooks. The data from the online survey for the totinc variable was ordered into ranges and then plotted against amtt textbooks on the y-axis. The next graph goes hand-in-hand with this one to make the correlation between no personal income and long study hours to mean more spent on textbooks.

Continuing to examine the quantitative data collected by the online survey, we were interested see if hometown location affected spending habits.
This graph was created by viewing the interstudent and domesticarea variables and placing them separately and viewing the level of textbook expenditure given by the amttextbook question in the survey. It should be noted that the two poorest areas, St. Louis area and Champaign County, spent the least on textbooks. Another reason for lower spending in Champaign County could be due to familiarity of the school via parents that teach at the University. Instructors may give financial advice on textbook consumerism to their children.

Also, it should be assumed that the more time one studies, perhaps the more books they own. The next set of data examines the number of hours spent studying and the average amount of money spent on textbooks.
As aforementioned, students that study the most, spent the most on textbooks. Perhaps students at the other end of the spectrum spend the least as they plan to have less grueling study habits throughout the semester. These study figure that they should not spend as much on textbooks since they will not be used as often compared to those that study more.

Lastly, we examined the change in average expenditures across different mediums. This was some of the most important information that we collected. Since the goal of this research project was to explore alternatives that will help students save money on textbooks, we collected data on how alternatives are already being utilized. The graph below dictates the average amount spent when students either do or do not utilize textbook alternatives. The alternatives that we selected for this section are I-Share, (Students who use it, do not use it, or are not familiar with) University Reserves (If students use them or does not), and if shopping takes place at more than one bookstore.
Our group correctly hypothesized these findings when dealing with I-Share books and course reserves. It makes sense that students who use I-Share would spend less than those who do not, and even less than those who do not know what I-Share is (Not Applicable for I-Share survey question equates to “Not familiar with I-Share”). Course reserves showed more of the same. Students who use course reserves spend less money on average than students that do not use them. The last section of the graph shows a reverse trend. Yes implies shopping around for textbook which sounds like finding lower prices and thus, spending less money. However, if a student does not use more than one bookstore because they do not use bookstores, the data will be skewed. Student could perhaps only use course reserves, and could spend less than students that shop around for the best deal. On the opposite end of the spectrum, a student using only one campus bookstore would also say no and buy everything at one store for convenience’s sake. This could lead to higher levels of spending. Finally, the third option of “Not Applicable” meant that
bookstores are not involved in textbook acquisition for that student. This could explain the low levels of spending, about $200 cheaper on average than students that shop at bookstores. These students are also more likely to use alternative ways of acquiring textbooks such as I-Share, E-Reserves, course reserves, etc. since they are not using campus bookstores.

Analysis was also performed using the statistical software Stata. Differences in textbook expenditures were measured by year in school in conjunction with use of I-Share. The original question on the survey had asked respondents to answer 1 if he or she used I-Share, 2 if not, or 3 if unfamiliar with I-Share. Out of the 404 responses, only 72 or 18% used I-Share. In order to use probit analysis, the question would have to be made into a binary question. A new variable was created to tab I-Share users against everyone else. This combined the people who had answered the question by circling 2 or 3 into one group. A probit regression comparing the new I-Share variable with yearsch showed using the marginal effects that juniors are 20% more likely to use I-Share than freshmen with a p-value of .004. Seniors were 22% more likely than freshmen to use I-Share with a p-value of .002. The two p-values obtained meant that the data was significant. The Excel graphs from earlier showed that students that use I-Share spend less on textbooks. With the Stata findings, this was found to be consistent and also show that older students are more likely to use I-Share. This finding coincides with textbook expenditure decreasing while a student at the University becomes older. This relation can be shown by a simple categorical syllogism. Older students use I-Share more. I-Share users spend less money. Older students spend less money.

On the survey, it had asked for an explicit amount of hours studied per week. To break this data up and explore the hypothesis that students that study more spend more on textbooks, ranges using new variables were created. New ranges included 0-5 hours, >5-10 hours, >10-15 hours, >15-20 hours, >20-25 hours, >25-30 hours, and >30 hours all of which were per week. These new
ranges were then examined using a regression with the different categories of hours studied per week with \textit{amttextbook}. The only range that seemed to statistically show that studying time had a positive correlation with amount spent on textbooks was for students that spent more than 30 hours per week studying. This may make the statement from earlier regarding studious students spending more money on textbooks than those less inclined to spent tremendous amounts of time studying stronger.

Further research was examined by looking at how much international and domestic students study. Eliminating the outliers such as the student that stated he studied 168 hours per week (24 hours*7 days=168) showed that the average international student surveyed (n=136) studied more than 24 hours per week while non-international students (n=269) studied 16 hours per week. Our sample size may have been small but a 50\% difference from domestic to international weekly study hours is a large difference. Perhaps international students that are willing to move far away from home are more willing to devote time to study than the 43\% of students surveyed whose homes are located in the Chicago metropolitan area or all domestic students in general.

Lastly, our group was looking for more explanation about the spending habits by college shown in the graphs on page 20 and 21. We wanted to see if textbooks in the math and technical areas were more expensive than other textbooks. A new variable was created in Stata called \textit{avgcosttext} which was simply \textit{amttextbook} divided by \textit{numtextbooks}. This variable gave the average cost of a textbook by each student surveyed. The mean across the 392 observations was $67.01. We then sorted this new variable by college. This gave the average cost of a textbook for a student in a particular college. This would give us a better idea if the reason for technical majors spending more money on textbooks on average was due to cost of each book or number of books required for their college. We would have liked to break this down even further to examine on a
major by major basis. There was simply not enough data for this. Many majors listed in the
survey in response to the major question were found only once or twice. This would skew the data
and may have shown drastic inconsistencies resulting from the consumer habits of an individual
student rather than the requisite expenditure of a certain major. The following table shows each
college with the number of participants and a corresponding average textbook price.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Major</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Average Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>$65.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Health Sciences (n=11)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aviation (n=3)</td>
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<td>Education (n=13)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering (n=95)</td>
<td>$73.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine &amp; Applied Arts (n=18)</td>
<td>$58.56</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LAS (n=152)</td>
<td>$63.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing (n=1)</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The graph on the average amount spent on textbooks by college had shown the Business College
and General Studies College to have the highest average overall textbook expenditure. This table
shows that these two colleges also have average textbook prices of over $70. It may be noted that
the third highest level of expenditure among college was the College of Education. However,
these students spent the least per textbook besides the lone student in the College of Nursing. The
above colleges with average textbook costs over $70 can be considered technical to a degree.
Ceteris paribus, students with technical degrees spend more on textbooks and more per textbook
than other students. So, a main reason students in the technical fields spend more each semester on
books is because their textbooks cost more.
Using Excel spreadsheets and Stata data analysis software, our group was able to formulate possible reasons for certain trends and behaviors across various demographics. While we were limited by the sample size for many detailed calculations, we were able to see several important trends. We felt that various methods of acquisition, textbook expenditure by year, textbook expenditure by parents’ income level, I-Share usage, number of hours spent studying per week, and the average cost per textbook gave insightful information about students at the University of Illinois.
Focus Group Analysis

The focus group approach helped to collect our qualitative data and gave us greater insight into what students’ thoughts and feelings were on their textbook expenditures. As previously mentioned, three focus groups were conducted. The first being with two freshmen, the next with one sophomore and one junior, and the concluding meeting contained four seniors. Each group gave us very unique responses which has helped us to compare opinions across the four different years here at the University of Illinois.

The first focus group conducted on freshmen was both interesting and informative. Of the two freshmen who showed up, both had similar views on textbooks. They said this semester they bought all the textbooks they were required to buy. Later these students found that the professor would not use it, or never refer to the material. They also both said that in future semesters they will wait until it is more apparent whether they need a book or not. Their largest complaint was about professors who claim the book is mandatory. Then, once students purchase the pricey material the professor never assigns homework from it nor requires any readings for exams.

The most surprising thing about the freshman focus group was that although they were not aware of saving tips, they were more familiar with the resources available on campus. For example, both of them knew about I-share, and one of them has used it several times. The freshmen were also familiar with the electronic reserve system, but admitted they do not like using it. Many of their professors put such large documents on E-reserves that it becomes difficult to read on a computer screen. One participant said that she gets headaches from staring and reading off of her computer screen for hours. In order to avoid the headache she has to print out the documents, which is costly in itself. She commented that many freshman do not have access to printers of their own so they pay anywhere from $0.05-$0.10 per page.
The most important thing learned from this focus group is that freshman were more informed about the resources available to them, perhaps suggesting that the University of Illinois is making this education mandatory upon arrival. Both of them admitted that during their freshman orientation they were taught about the library reserve systems and other options. This was not true for the class of 2009 I know that when I came to the University there was nothing in orientation about resources on campus. Everything seniors learned about textbooks, reserves, and the libraries, we all learned on our own. However, our hypothesis was strengthened from the freshmen admitting that they were not aware of any other money saving tools that our older participants used.

Another focus group including a sophomore and a junior was examined. For this group we combined the two grade levels with the thinking that there is not much difference in spending behavior between the middle undergraduate levels. Separate focus groups were used for freshmen and seniors because they lie at opposite ends of the spectrum.

The two participants felt strongly about their textbook consumption habits. Both were unhappy with the money spent and the limited use that “required books” mandated. The two participants stated that they typically purchase any books that are said to be required for a class. It was apparent from the interview that this could be very frustrating when a required book is purchased and then not used very much throughout the semester. Both called for a better system of courses reserves: both electronic copies on E-Reserves and hard copies found in libraries. Along with that, the students wished that professors would let the students know the availability of these reserves. Also infuriating for the interviewees was that expensive new editions are required when older and cheaper texts would most often suffice. They mentioned that while they are not too familiar with reserves, both planned to research online alternatives in the upcoming semesters.
One interesting fact was that laziness was also cited as a reason for purchasing textbooks. It was found to be convenient to do a one-stop shop, pick up all the required textbooks, and call it a day. While this was perhaps not the most frugal, it was noted that reliance on reserves to be available or online was not an issue.

This group of students was probably the worst off. They were unaware or did not use the money-saving habits of upperclassmen and did not receive a crash course in textbook education and alternatives during orientation. However, the information received added new insight. Our original hypothesis had been that textbook spending goes down as you get older. While that may still be true to a degree, it may have a negative parabolic behavior. This means that freshmen, with new information on resources, may spend less money than current sophomores and juniors. Then, the curve dictating the amount spent would recede to the right-hand side local minima found under the senior classification.

Lastly, the focus group consisting of four seniors was conducted. Each participant agreed that they have indeed cut costs drastically since their freshman year, but all were still furious with the high costs. Each member had a different major, so the variation between fields of study and the necessity of textbooks was very apparent. The majors represented in this sample were Aerospace Engineering, Molecular and Cellular Biology, Religious Studies and Psychology.

One similarity noticed was that engineering and biology students both liked to keep their books after their classes ended so they could use them for future reference. There was one problem that was noticed as the focus group went on. Originally, group members only agreed with each other and gave similar input on each topic. As the meeting went on, they started to disagree and have very different opinions. Once this happened it rose concern that all the participants were not giving their full and honest opinion to the beginning questions.
While further examining the focus group results, it is obvious that seniors have become more resourceful and find more alternatives when it comes to purchasing textbooks. It was a perfect agreement that everyone bought every textbook required when they were freshmen. One participant admitted that he goes to the bookstore and just browses through the material in textbooks to see if he will actually need it. Three participants said that they only buy books online and no longer use the campus bookstores unless they cannot find another place to purchase it. After having many semesters worth of experience of end-of-the-semester book buyback, the seniors agreed that they lose so much money that they really think twice before purchasing anything.

Alternatives were mentioned throughout the focus group as well. All interviewees admitted to borrowing or sharing books for classes that they have with roommates or close friends. One participant brought up her experience with the Illini Book Exchange, which is an online market created for students by students. IBX, as it is commonly known as, allows students to list their textbooks that can no longer be sold at bookstores and sell them to other students. The focus group member said that she had a really bad experience and ended up with the wrong edition of the book since she was not able to see it before purchasing. Even though that specific example was not ideal, many students buy and sell their books through this online source and older editions are acceptable for many classes.

Other findings included unique preferences to both textbooks and the overall format of classes. It was established that the more difficult and technical a subject is, the more likely students are to purchase the book. Since topics all build upon each other, once you’re a senior and you need to know all of the basics, it is helpful to keep books from previous classes so that you have reference tools. When asked about professors and how they required the texts, a lot of different
views were expressed. One student in particular thought that it is selfish for professors to require a book, which is written by them, and then students never use it during class. The interviewee’s suggestion was that teachers should only call the book “required” if it is indeed required for the class. Another recommendation for teachers would be to supply a course packet instead of making students purchase many books. If the books are only going to be used for one or two chapters, the teachers should be able to compile all of the necessary information into a course packet. The focus group members even said that they would much rather pay an up-front, non-refundable payment to cover all copyright fees.

Overall, the information that was received from the senior focus group helped to support our hypothesis. As students age, they tend to spend less money on textbooks and buy a lower number than they did before. Also as we expected, seniors are more likely to use alternate methods of acquiring textbooks than simply going to the campus bookstores and purchasing them. This group had the best spending behavior, and subsequently more often were required to spend their own money out of pocket on their books. Even though there was no formal introduction to the systems set up by the University, many admitted to using them or hearing about them from other students. This proves that the University is taking the initiative to educate incoming students about sources that are available to them.

This research has brought us a lot of information. First of all, we saw that University of Illinois initiatives to increase student awareness about on campus resources was successful. We also felt it was successful at teaching us the importance of focus groups. In the beginning of this project we thought all we really needed to do our project was survey data, but after going through it, we all learned a lot about our topic from the focus groups.
Conclusion

During the term of this research project, the fall 2008 semester, we encountered many ups and downs. From formulating the topic and questions, recruiting, collecting and analyzing data, things did not always go as planned. This however ended up being very beneficial in numerous aspects. We were always adjusting our plan of action and being introduced to causation effects that we previously were unaware of. The results that we have explained prior were both expected and unexpected. Everything put together can help ourselves, other students, and hopefully even University administration.

In terms of our results, all three group members have reacted differently since we each worked in different divisions of the project. There were some expected results that we all agreed upon. First, we were able to show that student’s expenditure on textbooks decreased as they got older. We were able to prove the beneficial affects of having alternative programs arranged on campus, only more individuals need to become accustomed to using them. Along the same line, we found that a lot of people do not know about I-Share. Since this program is cost-free, many students would use it if only they knew about it. Before starting this project only one of the three authors of this paper even knew what it was. Next, we were able to confirm that different majors on average spend differing amounts on textbooks. The more relevant the topic is to math and science, the higher the expected price is going to be on the required materials.

Additionally, there were some results that we did not originally expect. This, in whole, shows that we were able to learn a lot about the student body through the data collection process. One of the least expected results was that business students spend the most amount of money on
textbooks. We had originally hypothesized that engineering or math students would spend considerably higher amounts on their books. Another surprising result was that students from the city of Chicago spent the most on textbooks when examining location. We originally assumed that location did not play as big of a role in expenditure differences. Looking at different information than only the amount of money spent on textbooks, it was also unexpected to see that international students study the most. As a group we never had a precondition on this matter.

There are many implications from this research project. Since textbooks are a major part of the total college cost, changing it can affect budgeting in many different ways. We have found that changing expenditures can affect student loans, budgeting constraints and also University policy. Still, the affects that they have on each financial determinant can both help and hurt students and their families.

First of all, one might ask how this all can change students loans. If students were to adapt to alternatives, then they obviously would cut their spending. As previously discussed, the University makes a higher estimate on costs than what we actually discovered. This could work in the student’s favor. Having extra money after borrowing, buying used, using course reserves and not buying a new textbook is money in the pocket of students that can be spent on wherever it is needed. Another trend that we saw through the analysis was that middle income families do not have as much available money to spend on books as other students. This is because low income families receive more financial aid, which allows those individuals to use that money on their textbooks. Higher income families have a larger budget to begin with, so they may not think twice about buying a textbook or not. Overall, with the changes in textbook expenditures, student loan amounts if remaining the same, will in the long run benefit students because extra funds will be leftover after all expenses are paid.
Not only are student loans affected by changes in textbook expenditures, but budget constraints are as well. Budgeting constraints can become more flexible if the individual chooses to utilize the low-to-no cost methods that we mentioned. Above that, it is up to the student themselves to make the decision between textbooks, the quality of their educational materials, living expenses and other financial factors and how to most effectively use their money. Budget constraints also can be hurt when applying the solutions found in this research. If a student were to only plan on spending as much as we found to be the “average” expenditure, then they may be stuck with additional costs than what is affordable. The average expenditures found do not reflect students with minors, or adjustments in the general education classes that are chosen. There are a few gray areas in our research that can ultimately have a large effect on the amount of money that is spent.

As active seniors at the University of Illinois, we have seen changes in policies and standards that are achieved when it comes to textbook purchasing and other alternative programs. We feel that there are still changes that need to be made. First of all, there should be a better implemented orientation for incoming students. The administration should make it their responsibility to raise awareness of the programs that are set up by the University. Also, to complement this program there should be an area on the University Library website that explains each option that individuals can exploit when looking for class materials. The University has already spent the necessary funding to start these programs so they should introduce them to students. This in fact seems like a required step that needs to be taken since it was our tuition money that has been applied to arrange programs like I-Share and also E-reserves.

Continuing on towards faculty and administration, professors should look back and try to ease the financial burden that is being placed on students. Individuals coming to the University do
what is required so that they can receive excellent grades and graduate. If a book is absolutely required for the class, then it is acceptable to label it “required”. However, if the text is mentioned on the first day of class as required and not actually needed to excel in the class, then do not force students to purchase it. Professors need to stop requiring new additions, and should take the extra time in their class orientations to explain the actual purpose of each text. The purchasing decision should ultimately lay in the hands of the students because it is their financial well being that is affected by high textbook costs.
Limitations

This research was conducted by students and is intended for students at the University of Illinois. Although there were several constraints during the course of the project, we feel that we have done all that we can to instill possible solutions to the expenditure problems that students are facing. As students of Consumer Economics and Finance, we have seen that the individual spending habits have a large effect on overall consumption. This can be applied to levels much higher than our University. The comprehensive project including individual research and authoring an all-inclusive paper was subject to many limitations.

Some specific restrictions that we encountered had to do with the process of our data collection. Our samples were a lot smaller than we were hoping, so we may have made some assumptions that are not completely accurate. Also, the lack of people surveyed could have been because of the time constraints that we were facing. When the data collection and recruiting was going on, students were away from the University on holiday breaks, or preparing for exams. If we were to conduct the same research during a time of the semester that is not so hectic for students, our response levels would expected to be higher. Another constraint that was faced involved budgeting. With a low amount of available money, it was rather difficult to persuade students to meet with us for focus groups or participate in our online survey. If more compensation was available for us we would have been able to pass it along to participants as rewards for assisting with the research.

All in all, limitations and other affecting factors would not have given us the same results. We feel that our research is complete and we have met all required goals. What started out as a set
of assignments for a course has turned into a life affecting experience. We hope that audiences will benefit from the time and effort executed to make everything possible.

Works Cited

Mann, Dan. "University of Illinois Student Services Survey." Email to Dillon Simon. 15 Sept. 2008.

Appendix

Letter from the Office of Student Financial Aid

There were three different actions that our office took this year in determining the $1,200 books and supplies allowance that was included in our undergraduate student expense budgets.

First, in January 2008, the Office of Student Financial Aid conducted a student survey that collected student expense information that was used in the development of our student expense budgets. There were two questions on the survey that addressed the issue of books and supplies:

18. How much do you spend on text books per semester?
   o $0
   o $1-99
   o $100-199
   o $200-299
   o $300-399
   o $400-499
   o $500-599
   o $600-699
   o $700-799
   o $800-899
   o $900-999
   o $1000 or more
19. How much do you spend on school and computer supplies per semester? NOTE: computer supplies include software, CDs, printer ink, printer paper, etc.

- don't own a computer
- $0
- $1-49
- $50-99
- $100-149
- $150-199
- $200-249
- $250-299
- $300-349
- $350-399
- $400-449
- $450-499
- $500 or more

Second, and this is something we do each year, we contacted the local bookstores to get information on textbook costs and trends in textbook pricing. We also talked with our student employees to see if what we are being told matches what they are experiencing.

Third, and also something we do each year, we compared our student expense budgets with other Big Ten universities and peer institutions.

So, there is some substantive effort that goes into our process of determining the amounts in our student expense budgets. I hope this information is useful to you for your research project.
Hi. Our names are Julie Smetana, Dillon Simon, and Lauren LoMonaco, and we are students in ACE 398, a research methods class that is part of the Ethnography of the University initiative here at the University of Illinois. ACE 398 is taught by Professor Mary Arends-Kuenning. We are conducting a research project that examines student textbook expenditures of college students.

We are distributing a contact information form to find participants in focus group discussions about tuition loans and spending habits. If you are interested in participating, please fill it out and return it to us. The focus group discussions will take about 1 hour of your time. The information you provide will be kept confidential.

If you do participate, you will be provided with refreshments.

If we choose you for a focus group, we will contact you and send you a survey and a consent form. Please bring the survey and consent form to the focus group discussion location. If you do not participate in a focus group, we will destroy your contact information form.

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. Your participation in the study will not affect your grades or academic standing in your program in any way. You will not be penalized in any way if you do not participate. There are no known risks in this study beyond those of everyday life. However, it is possible that we might sometimes talk about personal matters related to your spending habits or time use, and you might therefore feel uncomfortable having the discussion taped. You don’t have to answer any questions you don’t want to and you can stop the discussion to ask questions at any time. Also, we can stop the tape at any time if there are portions of the discussion you prefer not to be recorded.

We ask that all participants in the focus group respect the privacy of the session and do not repeat what other participants say when outside the focus group. However, we cannot guarantee that all participants will respect other participants’ privacy and confidentiality.

If you have any additional questions, Professor Arends-Kuenning would be happy to answer them. She can be reached by phone at 217-333-0753 or e-mail at marends@uiuc.edu. Should you have any questions concerning research subject's rights, you can contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board Office, 1-01-(217) 333-2670; e-mail irb@uiuc.edu. The Institutional Review Board is the office at the University of Illinois responsible for protecting the rights of human subjects involved in studies conducted by University of Illinois researchers. You are welcome to call collect if you identify yourself as a research participant. We hope that you will volunteer to participate in our research project.
Recruitment Survey

The following survey is designed for specific use on a research project for ACE398 designed to help students save money on textbooks. This survey complies with Ethnography of the University Initiative guidelines.

Name: __________________________________
Email Address: ______________________@illinois.edu
Cell Phone Number: (_____)___________________

What year are you? (circle)
Freshman    Sophomore    Junior    Senior

What is your college? (circle)
ACES    AHS    Aviation    Business
COM    DGS    Education    Engineering
FAA    LAS    Nursing    Other- Graduate

How do you acquire your textbooks? (circle)
Campus Bookstore    Internet    Friends    Libraries
Other (please specify): ______________________________

How do you finance your textbooks? (circle)
Loans    Family    Credit Card    Savings from work
Other (please specify): ______________________________

If chosen would you be willing to participate in a focus group that will meet one time for approximately an hour? Students will be compensated for their time. Details to follow later.

Yes    No

When is the best time for you to meet? (Check all that apply)

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Hi. Our names are Lauren LoMonaco, Dillon Simon and Julie Smetana and we are students in ACE 398, a research methods class that is part of the Ethnography of the University initiative here at the University of Illinois. ACE 398 is taught by Professor Mary Arends-Kuenning. We are conducting a research project that examines college students’ textbook expenditures.

As part of this project, we have asked you to participate in a practice focus group. Before we begin there are a few forms that we ask you to fill out. Please fill them out as accurately as you can, but if you are uncomfortable revealing information on the forms, you are not required to answer all given questions. The forms should take you approximately 15 to 30 minutes to complete.

This written consent form outlines the research process and confidentiality matters that you will encounter today. Please carefully read all information and do not hesitate to ask questions if anything is unclear or you decide not to participate. The recruitment survey and student information survey are prototypes that you will be filling out. The personal information and data will not be included in the research data that is collected. These are forms that will be given to other students, and your participation today will help us to perfect our data collection skills for the future. Again, please take the time to fill these out as accurately as possible, skip any questions that you are unsure or uncomfortable with, and ask questions if they arise at any time.

**TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FOCUS GROUP, YOU MUST BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE.**

We are conducting focus group discussions with University of Illinois students to study spending, saving, and time allocation decisions. To insure that your responses are accurately recorded, we would like to audiotape our discussion. The discussion will last approximately 1 hour. During this time, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions related to your spending on textbooks here at The University of Illinois. Your input will help us to better understand the consumption decisions of University of Illinois students.

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. Your participation in the study will not affect your grades or academic standing in your program in any way. You will not be penalized in any way if you do not participate. There are no known risks in this study beyond those of everyday life. However, it is possible that we may talk about personal matters related to your spending habits or time use, and you might therefore feel uncomfortable having the discussion taped. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to and you can stop the discussion to ask questions at any time. Also, we can stop the tape at any time if there are portions of the discussion you prefer not to be recorded.

We ask that all participants in the focus group respect the privacy of the session and do not repeat what other participants say when outside the focus group. However, we cannot guarantee that all participants will respect other participants’ privacy and confidentiality.
Only Professor Arends-Kuenning and students in ACE 398 will have access to the forms and the tapes associated with your identity. The audiotapes will not be made public and will be erased after we have transcribed the discussion. Your name or other identifying information will not be used in any written report or research paper. Professor Arends-Kuenning is responsible for keeping the tapes secure under lock and key.

If you have any additional questions, Professor Arends-Kuenning would be happy to answer them. She can be reached by phone at 217-333-0753 or e-mail at marends@uiuc.edu. Should you have any questions concerning research subject's rights, you can contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board Office, 1-01-(217) 333-2670; e-mail irb@uiuc.edu. The Institutional Review Board is the office at the University of Illinois responsible for protecting the rights of human subjects involved in studies conducted by University of Illinois researchers. You are welcome to call collect if you identify yourself as a research participant.

CONSENT

I have read and understood the above. I, ________________________, agree to take part in this research. I understand that I am free to refuse to answer questions or to leave the focus group at any time. I also understand that whether I participate or not in the focus group will not affect my grades or academic standing in any way. I can keep a copy of this form if wanted.

CHECK ONE:

I agree to allow my participation in this focus group discussion to be audiotaped.

Yes __________ No __________

CHECK ONE:

I am at least 18 years of age __________ I am under 18 years of age __________

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE ______________________ DATE __________
Survey Questions

1. What is your current living arrangement?
   a. Apartment
   b. Residence Hall
   c. Fraternity or Sorority House
   d. House
   e. University-Certified Private Housing
   f. With my family or other relatives
   g. Other

2. How many hours a week do you study?

3. Do you currently have a job?
   a. Yes, part-time on campus
   b. Yes, full-time on campus
   c. Yes, part-time off campus
   d. Yes, full-time off campus
   e. No

4. What are you average weekly earnings from you job during the school year?

5. Which of the following sources of income do you have currently? Check all that apply.
   a. Current job
   b. Past summer job/internship
   c. Allowance/family help
   d. Student loans
   e. Student scholarships
   f. Link card
   g. Other

6. Approximately how much is the annual income of your parent(s)? Give your best guess.
   a. <$10,000
b. $10,000-$14,999
c. $15,000-$19,999
d. $20,000-$24,999
e. $25,000-$29,999
f. $30,000-$39,999
g. $40,000-$49,999
h. $50,000-$59,999
i. $60,000-$74,999
j. $75,000-$99,999
k. $100,000-$149,999
l. $150,000-$199,999
m. $200,000 +

7. Do you have a student loan?
   a. Yes
   b. No

8. How do you acquire your textbooks?
   a. Campus bookstore
   b. Internet
   c. Friends
   d. Libraries
   e. Other

9. How do you finance your textbooks?
   a. Loans
   b. Family
   c. Credit cards
   d. Savings from work
   e. Other

How many textbooks did you purchase this semester? (Please include course packets, reference books, online applications)

If you purchase textbooks from a campus bookstore, do you use more than one store?
Yes
How much money did you spend on textbooks this semester?

How much did you spend on school supplies excluding textbooks this semester? (Exclude computer/laptop/printer)

Do you use the library reserve systems? (Includes E-Reserves)
   Yes
   No

If yes, how many days per week?

Do you use I-Share of the Interlibrary Loan System?
   Yes
   No
   Not familiar with either

What is your gender?
   Male
   Female

What year are you in school?
   Freshman
   Sophomore
   Junior
   Senior

What College are you currently enrolled in?
   Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences
   Applied Health Studies
   Aviation
Business
Media
Division of General Studies
Education
Engineering
Fine and Applied Arts
Liberal Arts and Sciences
Nursing
Other

What is your major? (Please avoid using abbreviations)

What is your age?

Are you an international student?
Yes
No

If no, where is your permanent address?
Suburb of Chicago
City of Chicago
Champaign County
St. Louis area in Illinois
Other location in the state of Illinois
Other U.S. state or territory

How large is the population in the city or town in which you grew up?
<10,000
10,000-19,999
20,000-99,999
100,000+
Don’t know

What is the highest level of education completed by your mother?
Less than high school
High school graduate
Some college
Vocational school
Bachelor’s degree (B.A. or B.S.)
Some graduate school
Advanced degree (M.A., Ph.D., J.D., M.B.A., M.S., M.D.)
Don’t know

What is the highest level of education completed by your father?
Less than high school
High school graduate
Some college
Vocational school
Bachelor’s degree (B.A. or B.S.)
Some graduate school
Advanced degree (M.A., Ph.D., J.D., M.B.A., M.S., M.D.)
Don’t know

What is your grade point average (G.P.A.)? (Please write to 2 decimal places.)

What is your race/ethnicity?
African American
Asian American
White
Latino
Native American
Other