

Bookstores getting ready

Hectic weeks approaching

By Kathy Stokebrand

What does every college student need each year upon returning to school beside a place to sleep and a new pair of jeans? Books.

But students buying books aren't the only ones hassled by book-buying the first few weeks of school. Larry Behrends, University Bookstore manager, said he and his staff must handle three summer-school rushes while compiling their fall orders

even before the fall semester rush begins.

Leona Mook, a 14-year bookstore employee, said the first two weeks of the semester are "really rushed." She called the second week of classes the "Grand Return Week" because students dropping and changing classes return books then.

Gene Meerkatz, who manages vending operations on campus, said he helps during the bookstore's hectic weeks. "It's busy," he said. "It's a big job. You can't imagine what it takes to get ready for a semester."

The bookstore employs about 20 part- and full-time employees. That number triples to 60 during the 6-8 week fall rush. Employees often work from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. during the busiest two weeks.

Ordering books for the fall semester begins in April, Behrends said. The bookstore sends textbook information forms to all departments which are returned to the UNL Office of Textbook Information. A copy is given to the Nebraska Bookstore.

The University Bookstore and Nebraska Bookstore determine independently the number of books they will order. Principle text sources are publishers, book wholesalers, students, and other bookstores. The nearest book wholesaler is in Chicago.

Aside from ordering books, additional cash registers must be set up. The stores' layouts need to be changed from one semester to another because titles of departments change. Behrends said the worst problem was getting things where they belong.

Subject material of a book determines whether it stays on East Campus or goes to city campus. Another chore is hiring and training the extra help. However, Behrends said, "We feel that we are probably better prepared at the beginning of this fall semester than we ever have been."

The most effective method for cutting cost on ordering books at the bookstore is to turn in orders by the due date, according to Behrends. That way as many books as possible can be purchased from students and wholesalers to save money. The profit margin is 20 percent on a new book and 33 percent on a used book.

Bookstore expansion

The University Bookstore has initiated a plan for expansion on City Campus.

Frank Kuhn, assistant director of operations at the Nebraska Union, said the bookstore came before the Union Board wishing to enlarge the store by about 300 sq. ft., extending into most of the vending machine area on the north side of the Union basement.

This will be mostly to increase the bookstore visibility. It will let more students know where it is and what it has to offer, Kuhn said.

Union Board President John Kreuscher said expansion should make the area more appealing and useful. A space in the union will be developed at no cost, because the bookstore will pay for the remodeling.

University Bookstore manager Larry Behrends estimated the cost of the project to be \$7,500. Work is to begin in mid-September with rough construction ending in 3-4 weeks. Remodeling could be finished around the end of November.

There will be a glass front with a wood bottom to match the wall in front of the game room. Although some were eliminated, most of the vending machines, three tables and some chairs will remain in the basement.

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