

Engaging with your Bookstore Community-led document

One of the most common questions asked about developing Open Education programs on campuses is ‘What about the bookstore?’ There is a perception that advancing the use of open textbooks creates direct competition for bookstores. Yet, when Steven Bell surveyed both libraries and bookstores in 2017 he found that both have a shared goal of supporting success and generally consider each other as partners.¹ Steven Bell’s article - [‘What about the bookstore?’](#) - is a great place to start for advice on how to build a relationship with your bookstore.

In this document we offer you a series of prompts and potential actions to take as you engage your bookstore. We also have compiled a list of recommendations reported by both [bookstores](#) and [libraries](#) who responded to Steven’s survey - this a community-led document so please do share comments, tips and experiences with our community by using the commenting feature.

First, consider your goals:

- Why is building a relationship with your bookstore valuable to your program?
- What do you hope your program will get out of it?
- Can you imagine what your bookstore will get out of a partnership around OER?

Then, consider ways to connect with your bookstore.

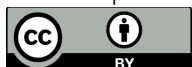
- What do you already know or assume about your bookstore?
- Is your bookstore already taking steps to address textbook affordability?
- What can you learn about textbooks, students, and faculty from your bookstore?
- In what ways could your bookstore help your initiative? In what ways could you help theirs?
- Are there others in your department that have worked with the bookstore? Do they have any advice or suggestions for reaching out?

Next, what steps will you take to engage your bookstore?

- Who will you reach out to? How will you do so?
- What are your goals in the meeting?
- Is there anything you can share with your bookstore? Data? Stories?

Finally, what’s your dream scenario for collaborating with your bookstore? What would a strong, productive relationship with the bookstore mean for you and for them?

¹ Many thanks to Steven Bell for sharing his slides and research with the OTN. A description of the survey and its findings can be found in his article: Bell, S. (2017). What about the bookstore?: Textbook affordability programs and the academic library-bookstore relationship. College & Research Libraries News, 78(7), 375. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.78.7.375>



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Here are suggestions reported by bookstores who responded to Steven Bell's survey.

- Involve the store in discussions about Textbook Affordability Program (TAP) early in the planning process
- Hold regular meetings between the store and library administration on TAP
- Librarians should meet with store administration to learn more about store operations, how students make purchases, etc.
- Store administrators should meet with librarians to learn more about e-books, reserve operations, and other textbook related services
- Practice proactive sharing of data to support TAP
- Libraries need to recognize stores are self supporting; they have no budget to support TAP

Here are suggestions reported by libraries who responded to Steven's survey.

- Look for other opportunities for collaboration beyond the TAP (e.g., orientation programs; student events; information fairs)
- Learn how the store operates. What are their goals, systems, etc.
- Provide campus recognition to the store when it supports TAP
- Send library/store staff to the Textbook Affordability Conference
- Avoid positioning the library as a competitor to the store
- Emphasize student success; focus all discussions on a joint commitment to success
- Work with administration to make TAP and OER adoption a top institutional priority