



PHOTO BY LESLIE LITCHFIELD

Leia Fleischman stands beside the entries for the scariest pumpkin in the pumpkin carving contest held Wednesday in the Alumni Amphitheatre. The Freddy Kruger pumpkin submitted by the Student Alumni Association won in this category.

Books, Do They Have to be So Expensive?

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So, classes have begun. Your schedule is set. Everything is moving forward.

Time to catch up on a few things. Things like the condition of your budget. What condition? What budget, you ask?

If you are like most students at UNLV this semester, you are very close to being broke and it's the end of October. Where did all the money you worked for last summer go? You anticipated the tuition bill. You knew what room and board would be in advance. So what left the big, gaping hole in your budget? Books did, pure and simple.

In a written poll taken from students lunching at MSU earlier this month, it was determined that most students paid between \$200-\$300 for books the fall semester.

So how are books selected for a class? Who determines the price

of books? Are there any ways around paying top dollar for books? Let's see.

The selection of books for a particular class takes place weeks before the book appears on a store shelf. First the book publishers and distributors send sample editions to professors (at no charge).

The professor will look through the new book and weigh it against the text currently being used for a class. Dr. Nancy Wingfield, associate professor of history, says, "Professors in our department choose books that expand the written language of what you are teaching."

The professors are never told the price of the books they are ordering. The only way they would know the price of their book is high would be: the students complain about the price, the book stores call and make the professor aware of the price, or the professor actually asks the price before the order is made.

The actual selection procedure is all over the map. Some departments have group meetings where text books are agreed upon by all the professors. Still others work independently and will select books to fit their teaching style. Books can be independently selected even when there are several divisions of the same course being taught.

Once the book is selected, orders are turned over to the book stores. UNLV has two stores selling texts to students: the University Book Store and Rebel Books.

The University Book Store is run by Barnes & Noble (owners of BOOKSTAR), and is under contract with the university to manage the outlet. Rebel Books is strictly a commercial outlet.

Both stores maintain the price of their books falls beneath the price of similar stores on other campuses. Jean Field, manager of Rebel Books, says, "Rebel Books adheres to standard pricing of textbooks. Our mark-up is well under the prices suggested by the manufacturer and prices being charged at other university book stores."

The difference between the two is the University Book Store is audited each semester by the Student Union Board to make sure that 20 percent mark-up is being enforced. As of Aug. 24, the Student Union Board performed their biannual book store audit of the University Book Store.

They checked 340 prices out of 2,694 titles, finding 12 mistakes in all. Six in favor of the students and six in favor of the book store, which equaled an error rate of 4 percent.

What to do if you are out of money and still shy some books? Used books, when available, are at least \$3-\$4 cheaper than new books even if they are a bit dog eared and underlined.

Several professors suggested sharing books (and their price tag) with another student. This will take some planning and organization on every one's part, but it can be done.

Still another way to cut down on the price of hard cover books is to order them through bookstar, who gives a 20 percent discount off all hard covers, 30 percent off on *New York Times* best sellers and 20 percent off *New York Times* paperbacks. To order from BOOKSTAR, you will need the author, title and the ISBN (International Standard Book Numbers) of the book.

So when all is said and done it would appear that the price of books is going to be a necessary evil.

Accepted at
more schools
than you were.



It's everywhere
you want to be.