

BUSINESS CASE

Proposed Project	Book Exchange — A web-based platform for university students to buy and sell used textbooks directly to each other. This project is currently in the proposal stage, and the name may change.
Date Produced	January 26, 2026
Background	University students face a significant financial burden from textbook costs, averaging \$1,200 or more per year. After completing courses, students are left with textbooks they no longer need, while incoming students must purchase the same books at full retail price. The campus bookstore offers buyback programs, but typically returns only 10-20% of the original cost to sellers. Currently, there is no dedicated, campus-specific platform that connects students who want to sell textbooks with students who need to buy them. Existing options like Facebook Marketplace or general classifieds are not tailored to course-specific searches and lack the trust of a campus community. This gap creates an opportunity for a simple, targeted solution.
Business Need/ Opportunity	There is a clear need for a platform that enables peer-to-peer textbook transactions within the university community. Students selling books would receive better value than bookstore buyback programs. Students buying books would pay significantly less than retail prices. The platform would promote sustainability by extending the life of textbooks and keeping resources circulating within the campus community rather than being discarded or undervalued.
Options	Option 1: Do Nothing — Students continue using existing methods (bookstore, general marketplaces) with no campus-specific solution. Textbook costs remain high for buyers, and returns remain low for sellers. Option 2: Build Book Exchange — Develop a web application that allows students to post, browse, search, and connect for textbook transactions. This provides a dedicated solution tailored to the university community.
Cost-Benefit Analysis	
Option 1: Do Nothing. Costs: None (no development effort required). Benefits: None. Students continue to lose money on buybacks and pay full price for books. No improvement to the current situation. Risks: Students remain financially burdened. Unused textbooks are wasted or discarded. Option 2: Build Book Exchange Costs: Development time (estimated 6-8 weeks), team effort, learning curve for new technologies. No financial cost as free tools will be used. Benefits: Buyers save 30-70% on textbook purchases. Sellers receive 2-3x more than bookstore buyback. Builds campus community connections. Promotes sustainability through reuse. Provides practical development experience for the team. Risks: Limited initial user adoption. Browser-based storage limits data sharing. Requires ongoing maintenance if deployed.	
Recommendation	

Proceed with Option 2: Build BookExchange. The project addresses a genuine problem faced by students, requires no financial investment, and can be completed within the course timeline. The benefits to both buyers and sellers clearly outweigh the development effort required. The platform provides immediate value while also serving as a learning opportunity for the development team.