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UA: a student's view

How the institution, its students and faculty are integrated into this jewel of the desert

03/14/08

10:11:00 am, Categories: [University of Arizona](#), 472 words 

The UA: Not just for students

While some people undoubtedly stay away from the UA campus because they feel they don't fit in with the college crowd, some others may stay away because they feel they don't belong. That's just plain wrong!

The UA has plenty of things to do on campus that are free and open to the public. Here are some "for-instances":

The UA Campus is one, big [arboretum](#). If you walk around pretty much anywhere on campus you'll see trees, bushes and plants with plaques giving their names in English and Latin. Look [here](#) for a list of clickable maps and walk descriptions.

The [UA Museum of Art](#) has rooms of art just waiting for your perusal. Go see the Samuel H. Kress Collection, which contains art in myriad forms from as far back as the 14th century. It is open every day except Mondays.

The [Center for Creative Photography](#) is absolutely fascinating and is so far my favorite spot on campus. It has more than 80,000 photos in its archives. You can see the collected works of Ansel Adams, who helped found the center in the 1970s. The center is open every day and it's free, but if you like what you see, throw a few bucks in the donation box.

The [UA School of Music](#) offers dozens of free performances each semester. Next week is spring break so there are no performances, but starting the week after, you can go listen to talented students play saxophones, harps, pianos and more. There are also shows by professional performers. A few of the performances have an admission fee, so check the [calendar](#) for dates, times and cost.

There are some great not-so-free things on campus as well:

The [Arizona State Museum](#) is a wonderful repository of cultural collections, including Native American pottery, Navajo textiles and native jewelry, mining tools and photographs. Check out this [video](#) about the museum on its Web site. Open every day. Suggested donation: \$3. That's a bargain!

The [School of Theatre Arts](#) presents several performances each season. The current production is William Shakespeare's "Titus Andronicus," which "is a sordid tale of revenge spawned from political turmoil," according to the [production information page](#). Admission ranges from \$17 to \$24. Not bad for

UA: a student's view

JENNIFER TRAMM is a non-traditional student of journalism at the University of Arizona who is married and has two children, ages 5 and 14. She has lived in Arizona since 1989 and in Tucson since 2005. When she started back to school in 2003, her youngest child was just 9 months old. While her baby slept, she did her homework and forgot what sleep felt like. It's still something of a mystery.

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theatrical entertainment.

These are but a tiny snapshot of what is available for the public's enjoyment at the UA. There's more to be found at the [Things To Do](#) on campus Web page.

One tidbit that may save you some trouble and cash: Parking is free on the weekends and after 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at meters and in Zone 1 lots, (though some departments validate garage parking – call ahead to see). If you come during the week before 5, be prepared to circle endlessly and compete with students trying to get to class.

~Jennifer Tramm

329 comments



03/11/08

🕒 08:53:21 pm, Categories: [University of Arizona](#), 342 words

Textbooks cost too much

Average citizens not attending a college or university may not give two hoots about textbook costs, but they should.

Their tax dollars go to subsidize public universities and also go into grant programs, such as the [Pell Grant](#). Pell Grants are funded by the federal government, which is funded by the American taxpayer.

In a July 2005 U.S. Government Accountability Office [report](#), the cost of textbooks between 1986 and 2004 rose 186 percent. The books' price increased at an average rate of 6 percent since 1987 while the annual inflation rate stayed around 3 percent.

This means a dermatology book that cost as little as \$188 in 1986 would likely have cost \$350 in 2004. A college algebra book that cost about \$58 in '86 cost \$107 in '04.

The bills both deal with making textbook prices transparent and making instructors more aware of what they are ordering. Right now, instructors are blind to the prices of the books they're ordering. Many instructors are shocked when a student tells them how much a book cost.

The changes in the book for the difference in price are negligible, often consisting of reordering the chapters and changing some practice questions. Many instructors I've spoken with on this issue say that, had they known the minitude of the content change, they would have ordered the older – and less expensive – books.

Another issue the bills are tackling is bundled books and materials. The bills require that students have the ability to pick and choose what they actually need for their classes.

The House bill, [HB 2230](#), passed Feb. 19 by the Arizona House Higher Education Committee, without the price and content information and unbundled requirements. Those parts were taken out, along with the bill's teeth.

The average taxpayer probably doesn't think hard about textbook prices, but think of it this way: Lower textbook prices means more taxes to put somewhere else and more time students can spend on their studies, making Arizona proud. We all want more bang for our buck. It's not just about the students. It's about all of us.

Jennifer Tramm

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