

Cleaning out my bank account for books

By LAYNE CLARK

"One hundred and twenty-seven dollars?"

"Yes. Cash, debit or credit card?"

Okay, I'm not one of those people who likes to ask, "I'm sorry, did you ring that in wrong?" or "Can you check to see if that price is right?"

Instead, I hand my debit card and hope that there's enough money on it to complete the purchase.

Usually, when I got home, I would get someone else to return the item for me.

But, in this case, I need this textbook. It's a requirement for my class and thankfully, I have just enough to buy it.

Once out of the store, my mind is thinking a million things. How could this cost me so much?

I wait outside and when my friend comes out, I quickly ask, "Was your book \$127, too?" She nods her head and tells me she even asked the cashier if the number was right.

This book is approximately 300 pages long in soft cover, and I'll probably never read the whole thing. It cost me what I would normally make in about two shifts of work - and that's not minimum wage.

As an 18-year-old student, going to school is my full-time job.

I don't have time to work two shifts to pay for one book, nevermind the cost of all the other books.

Not even that, but I'm taking a light load at SFU. I only have three classes - what about the other students who are taking four or five classes? How do they afford to pay the price of their books?

And I'm in the Communications department - what about people who have to buy all those huge math textbooks or biology 101 books? Those are bigger, denser and a heck of a lot more expensive.

In total, six books in soft cover, cost me about \$450.

Some of them, I will use over again (I have one on academic writing and another that's supposed to help me on my grammar), but still, six books?

Honestly, I'm not sure what the solution is, but something can't be totally right. A book from Chapters doesn't cost you \$127.

Why should a simple book at SFU be any different?

