

Memorandum

University of Tennessee Faculty Senate

To: Mr. Steve Thomas, President
From: Danielle South, Graduate Research Assistant
Date: 3/25/2013
Re: Faculty Assignment of Self-Authored Texts to Students

The ability for faculty to assign self-authored textbooks to students in their classes is a highly debated topic in academia. There are several blogs and articles touching on the subject, but despite the issue being so controversial, many of our peer institutions have not addressed this issue in a publicly searchable manner. Most of our aspirational and peer institutions such as the California State Schools, University of Virginia and The Ohio State University have general conflicts of interest policies. These policies state that it is against policy for the faculty to engage in any activity that would create a conflict of interest from the financial gain from activities that would interfere with their normal course of business.

Other institutions, such the University of Michigan and the University of Washington have policies in place that prohibit faculty from directly engaging in the sale of materials (including textbooks) directly to students. At these institutions, the sale of materials should go through the bookstore, if possible, and if not, should be conducted through the faculty's department office – either through a secretary or another neutral party.

Institutions that have a policy in place that prohibits faculty from requiring a self-authored text in his/her classroom are the University of Maryland, the University of Texas-Austin, North Carolina State, Clemson, and Auburn. All of these university's policies state that if a faculty member wants to require that that his/her text be used in the classroom, the faculty member must have the text approved by someone in a higher position of authority. This person of authority ranges from the department chair all the way up to the President of the University via the Dean. The University of Texas-Austin's policy even states that if the faculty is going to assign students a self-authored text, that faculty member should avoid changing texts too often (although the term "too often" was not defined). Auburn's policy states that if a faculty member wants to require students to purchase his/her book then he/she can forfeit the royalties from the sale of books to those students or have the text reviewed to see if the faculty's text is necessary for the course.

If the goal of this research is to determine whether the UT Faculty Senate should engage in this issue, it should also be noted that in 2010, then State Representative Stacy Campfield introduced a bill that would have prohibited faculty members in Tennessee from receiving royalties from the sale of textbooks purchased by students who were required to purchase the book for that faculty member's class. The bill ultimately stalled in a house subcommittee but based on the articles that I found, the issue was quite unpopular amongst faculty members. The full summary of The Top 25 University's policies can be found in Appendix A, attached.

Appendix A

University	Policy (Yes/No)	Summary
Berkeley	No	conflict of interest policy relates only to research and research of human subjects
UCLA	No	Conflict of interest policy directed towards intellectual property
Virginia	No	Conflicts of interest policy doesn't touch on anything close to book-
Michigan	-	Conflict of interest- faculty cannot sell students books directly
UNC Chapel Hill	No	
UMD College Park	Yes	Faculty approved text must be approved by the dept chair- should not be sold to students in the classroom
UT Austin	Yes	Faculty authored text must be approved by the President of the University- shouldn't be sold in the classroom- should avoid changing editions frequently, if must change after the first year, a letter must be sent explaining why through the Dean to the president.
Illinois	No	
Ohio State	No	
UC Davis	No	
Washington	Yes	Faculty can't directly sale materials to students
Minnesota	No	General conflict of interest policy- royalties received from the commercialization of intellectual property don't have to be reported but most other conflicts of interest do- it is unclear whether this commercialization of textbooks would be covered- it seems as though it would be
Purdue	No	Instead of prohibiting conflicts of interest, they believe that they can be managed if strict guidelines (which they lay out) are followed.
Rutgers	Information unavailable	
UC Santa Barbara	No	
Indiana	No	General conflicts of interest policy
Penn State	No	Conflict of interest policy directed towards research
Wisconsin	No	Conflicts of Interest are required to notify their department heads
Georgia	No	Conflict of interest policy lists many examples of potential conflicts but requiring students purchase self-authored text isn't one of them.

Iowa State	No	Conflict of interest policy lists many examples of potential conflicts but requiring students purchase self-authored text isn't one of them.
Pittsburgh	No	General Conflict of Interest Policy
Texas A&M	No	General conflicts of interest policy
NC State	Yes	Faculty-authored texts, required for purchase by enrolled students, must be approved through the process defined in the author's Conflict of Interest statement.
Clemson	Yes	Sale of Textbooks and Other Course Materials to Students. Under no circumstances should the faculty member engage in the direct sale of textbooks or other course materials to students. Faculty members who wish to assign textbooks or other course materials that they authored or edited as part of a Clemson University course must first complete a written disclosure form (provided in Appendix K) identifying the economic interest they may have in the textbook or materials. This disclosure form should be submitted to the faculty member's Department chair – or if the faculty member is the Department Chair to their Dean – for final approval in accordance with the SC
Michigan State	No	General conflicts of interest policy
Florida	No	Conflict of interest policy was unavailable
Auburn	Yes	Selection and production of instructional materials by faculty is essential to providing quality instruction. The freedom to choose instructional materials is central to the principle of academic freedom. Auburn University encourages faculty to publish instructional materials through reputable publishers that are marketed and used nationally. If such materials produced by a faculty member are appropriate for use in the faculty member's classes and if the sale of such materials produces financial gain for the faculty member or his immediate family, faculty may (a) assign the material and choose not to accept financial gain that might result from royalties or other income

		<p>generated by the sale of such materials by students enrolled in the faculty member's class, or (b) turn the decision for selecting teaching materials over to an alternate responsible entity (e.g. a department chair or a departmental committee) qualified to determine if the materials are appropriate. Each department will develop a methodology for identifying the alternate responsible entity.</p>
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