Financial Interests When Selecting Text

Introduction:  When a faculty member assigns a text in which s/he has a financial interest, s/he needs to receive approval from the department chair, dean, and provost.  These approvals are meant to ensure that a faculty member is not using textbook selection for financial gain, but instead, for the best interests of student learning.  The two pertinent guidelines are from WSU's PPMs and the Utah Board of Regents

Manual:

First, PPM 4-16

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**I. DEFINITION**

Textbook - The term textbook shall include books, pamphlets, manuals, lab books, etc., that a course instructor requires to be purchased and shall include other materials, either printed or recorded, that a student is required to purchase in order to participate fully in a course offering.

**II. POLICY**

A. The selection of textbooks shall rest with the faculty. Textbooks selected will be cleared in the department and a record of the textbooks selected shall be maintained by the department. It shall be the responsibility of the department chair to provide his dean and the Bookstore a list of the textbooks required by his/her department for the next academic year, before dead week of Spring Quarter.

B. When selecting a required textbook(s), faculty members shall be particularly sensitive to the following factors:

1. Utility

The textbook should serve the purposes of the course adequately and will be needed and used by students.

2. Cost

Care should be exercised in keeping textbook cost minimal. Careful consideration should be given to the selection of paperbacks if the criteria of utility and cost can be met.

C. A strong attempt shall be made to select a common text for those classes involved in multiple sections. The textbook(s) shall be selected by the participating instructors and approved by the department chair.

D. The number of textbooks required shall be optional with the instructor. If the total cost is deemed excessive, copies shall be made accessible in the Reserve Room of the Library.

E. Textbooks selected shall be adopted for not less than one year and preferably for two years. Departure from this policy shall be permitted only in very special cases upon the approval of the department chair and the dean.

F. The Bookstore shall maintain and post in a conspicuous place a list of the textbooks that shall be required for a particular academic year. The list shall be kept current by reflecting any officially authorized changes.

G. When a textbook change is made prior to the one-year or two-year adoption period, such a change shall be reflected on an official change form approved by the department chair and the dean and distributed to the Bookstore and the Signpost to effect changes in the textbook list and to appropriately advise the students.

H. No faculty member shall require students to purchase textbooks, as that term is defined herein, in which the faculty member has a financial interest without a prior approval of the appropriate dean or, in his/her absence, the provost.

IN addition, there is the Utah Board of Regents Manual.  Item R465 includes the following:

4.3.1 When in a position to decide or influence issues that would result in personal gain, no employee of a USHE institution may demand or receive any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, service, or anything of value, present or promised, in exchange for requiring students to purchase a specific textbook or course materials (other than recovering the direct cost of the materials) unless the requirement has been subjected to an appropriate level of institutional review and approval.

So: the point here is that IF any faculty member is in the position to make money by deciding upon a textbook, we have to ensure that we go through an approval process.  Within the A&H College, chairs will notify faculty of the PPM and the Regents Rule, ask if any of them are assigning their own texts, and request an explanation from them to offset the appearance of "personal gain."  The easiest offset, of course, is to have a committee make the text decision.  If a committee decision is not possible (and it may be for a wide range of reasons), the next easiest offset would be to have the faculty member provide evidence of the widespread use of the text in other schools.

Chairs will forward all such explanations to the Dean, who will review them and forward them to the Provost.