

NADD Inquiry Results: Faculty Assigning their Scholarship for Required Readings

I am writing to inquire about your School’s policy &/or practice related to **faculty assigning their own books, chapters, and articles as required reading for their own classes**. Is this common practice? Are there exceptions?, or issues to anticipate with this?, and finally, is there a conflict of interest in any way if the student is required to pay for the book, which might benefit the faculty member financially?

University of Tennessee, Knoxville	Choice of reading material is a matter of academic freedom. However, if a faculty member assigns their own book they must report it and justify it as it relates to content and cost.
Westfield State University	The state of MA has strict policies and require disclosure to the president's office. The State Ethics Commission has determined that pursuant to G.L. c. 268A, §6, prior to assigning any instructional material in which they have a financial interest, a faculty member must file a written disclosure and receive a written determination from the Vice President of Academic Affairs indicating the financial interest is not so substantial as to constitute a violation of the conflict of interest law.
University of Michigan	I think it is very common for a faculty member to include articles and also books if they have published a text pertinent to a course. I think the conflict of interest ones are important but largely unexamined.
University of Southern California	We encourage faculty to assign their own publications. The students are excited to have instructors who are scholarly, at least in our experience. People do assign their own textbooks, too, and I would hope that no student would be denied the privilege of a good learning experience just because the faculty member who wrote the textbook happened to be their instructor. However, I do recognize there are mixed views on this.
University of Texas at Arlington	UTA has an approval policy when faculty use texts, etc. that cost the student money that also benefits the faculty member. If not financial benefit, they can assign whatever readings are appropriate given academic freedom.
California State University, Northridge	Our university is quite opposed to faculty assigning their own book for a class that they are teaching. That being said, we don’t police it very well. We have only had one faculty assign his own book (self-published, and assigned while he was chair); we stopped that after one semester. However, we do not monitor chapters and articles assigned. Faculty isn’t making money on that, I think that is the big deal from our university perspective.
University of Utah	<p>Code of Faculty Rights and Responsibilities:</p> <p>Any faculty member or employee of the University of Utah with authority to assign or recommend course materials for any course offered by the university shall do so based on sound academic values, without any prospect of personal financial gain.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-authored course materials are encouraged and may be</li> </ol>

assigned; but, except for reimbursement of out-of-pocket costs, faculty may not accept or retain royalties or any other personal compensation or material benefit from the sale or furnishing of self-authored course materials to students in their own classes, or in any classes in their department or single-department college for which they have authority to assign or recommend course materials.

2. Prior to completion of any course or teaching unit for which a faculty member has assigned or recommended self-authored materials that may generate any royalty or other author's compensation, the faculty member shall request, from all students subject to that assignment or recommendation, an anonymous statement of the number of new copies of such materials purchased by each student. This requirement can be satisfied by a form used for student course evaluations that include the above inquiry, or by a separate survey submitted for anonymous student response before the end of the course or teaching unit. Upon completion of the survey, the faculty member shall file with his/her department chair or dean a brief statement of the number of new materials purchased as reported in the above survey and the rate of royalty or compensation last paid or contracted by the publisher to be paid. The obligation to avoid prospect of personal financial gain shall be satisfied by including with the above report a written commitment to contribute a sum, equal to the number of new books purchased by students multiplied by the reported royalty or compensation rate, to a tax exempt organization (which may include the University of Utah) not later than six months following completion of the course. Alternatively, the requirement can be satisfied by reporting an arrangement under which the author professor's royalty is deducted as a discount from the price of the new book.
3. For purposes of this policy, the term "course materials" shall be interpreted to include not only books or similar traditional format of bound printed pages typically used in university courses at the time of adoption of this policy, but also materials, information, teaching instruments or data collections distributed in any media form, including but not limited to audio and videotapes, digital storage media such as optical or magnetic disks, and internet or similar transmittal for which fees are typically charged and author compensation provided.
4. Faculty compliance with the above procedures shall constitute complete and satisfactory demonstration that any self-authored course materials were not recommended or assigned for purposes of personal financial gain.

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania	I do not think this is a significant issue unless the book mandated is unrelated to the course and syllabus. Someone will benefit financially from any assigned book anyway, why not the instructor
University of Missouri-Kansas City	It is a conflict yes, it all depends on how well that is articulated to all involved, as to if it is a problem or not. Personally I think the textbook industry is highly profit motivated and the best interest of the students is not being met always.
Nyack	I will explore with the faculty here, but I will note the advice I received from an esteemed prof in my doc program at U of Rochester. He co-edited a reader of articles on the history of higher education. He always put his name second, claiming his colleague got first dibs on the return for the investment. His point was to reduce any conflict of interest that might also appear to take advantage of student resources.
Rutgers	No policy.
University of Wisconsin, Madison	Our faculty members don't write books really, but most do assign their own articles. No other policies.
Bryn Mawr College	Some faculty do require their books for class but most others, like me, select chapters and provide them as part of a reader.
California State University, Los Angeles	Our University is trying to set up policy that prevent faculty from doing this. We call it Conflict of Interest in purchase materials.
Boston University	No policy. One or two professors do assign their own work.
Texas State	Require the faculty to receive approval from the department chair and college dean. The faculty is also required to disclose his/her royalties and contract. Most important the faculty is required to submit a written proposal as to why their book should be selected for the course in question.
University of Maine	<p>Conflict of Interest Policy Concerning Use of Faculty Authored Instructional Materials</p> <p>Background and Purpose: The University of Maine recognizes the value of the scholarship produced by faculty and seeks to encourage their continuing contributions across all disciplines.</p> <p>Textbooks and other instructional materials (e.g., lab manuals, collections of readings) should be assigned based largely on their academic and pedagogical value. Every instructor is responsible for selecting the most suitable textbook(s) and other instructional materials for his or her course. University of Maine recognizes that there may be no single, obvious choice of textbook(s) or instructional materials, and that factors such as availability and price may influence an instructor's selection(s) provided that pedagogical value receives primary consideration.</p> <p>The purpose of this University policy and procedure is to describe the circumstances under which instructional materials authored or developed by UMaine faculty members and intended for purchase by students in courses they teach as part of the UMaine curriculum and on which they may or may not receive a monetary benefit may be used, and the procedure for obtaining prior approval to assign such instructional materials. This policy ensures that</p>

the University is responsive to actual or perceived instances of a conflict of interest, reaffirms the University's commitment to our students, and is consistent with measures taken at institutions of higher education to ensure that ethical standards are observed. When materials authored by faculty is given or loaned to students or otherwise made freely available (e.g., placed on library reserve, or available without fee elsewhere), this policy does not apply.

Policy Statement: The principle of academic freedom allows faculty members to select their own instructional materials. Faculty members are expected to assign course materials that best meet the instructional goals of their courses. Faculty members may conclude that what they themselves have authored will best help students achieve the courses' learning outcomes. The faculty member may or may not realize a monetary benefit from the assignment of such materials, but in all cases an actual or perceived conflict of interest exists. In cases where such instructional material is assigned to students and intended to be purchased, this policy applies and instructors must obtain prior approval.

Although collections of course notes or Powerpoint slides are not normally expected to be reviewed under this policy, this policy does apply if the faculty member receives any monetary benefit from the sale of these items.

When a faculty member wishes to assign instructional materials for purchase by students that the faculty member authored or developed in courses she or he teaches as part of the UMaine curriculum on which she or he may or may not receive any monetary benefit, that faculty member shall complete and submit the attached form to the unit's Peer Committee at least 6 weeks before the end of the semester prior to when the material will be used. When reviewing the faculty member's request, the Peer Committee shall consider the following criteria:

1. How the instructional materials are recognized and used by others in the field;
2. How the instructional materials offer a unique perspective on the topic of study;
3. How the faculty member will disclose to the students to whom they assign the instructional materials the actual or perceived conflict of interest.

The Peer Committee shall evaluate the faculty member's proposed instructional materials against the above criteria and communicate their decision to the department chair, school director or similar (hereafter "unit director") no later than four weeks before the end of the semester prior to when the material will be used. Peer committees may approve a selection of materials for use over multiple semesters. After three years from the initial

	<p>approval, a re-review by the peer committee is required.</p> <p>After receiving the decision of the peer committee, the unit director will review the application to be sure all procedures were followed and, if the unit director concurs, approve the request. If necessary, the unit director may ask the Peer Committee for further information. The faculty member shall be informed of the decision of the Peer Committee and the decision of the unit director.</p> <p>If the unit director disagrees with the Peer Committee decision, or the faculty member wishes to appeal the decision, the appeal will be forwarded to a three person committee. The committee will be composed of one faculty member chosen by the faculty member seeking the approval, the faculty chair of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, and a Provost designee.</p> <p>After receiving approval to assign the instructional materials for purchase by students, the faculty member shall inform students during or before the first class in a manner consistent with item 3, above, that she or he may or may not realize monetary benefit from assigning the instructional materials.</p>
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