

Faculty Senate Meeting
Friday, December 5, 2003
SC 214, 3:00 p.m.

- I. Call to Order: President Virginia Purtle
- II. Welcome Visitors
- III. Approval of Minutes from the November 7, November 21, and December 2, 2003 meetings
- IV. President's Report
- V. Committee Reports
 - a. Faculty Senate of Virginia – Tim Marshall
- VI. Old Business
 - a. Schedule for Distinguished Professors (report by Dr. Wheeler)
- VII. New Business
 - a. The use of faculty authored textbooks in author's class (written statement to FS by Dr. Green)
 - b. Amending October minutes (motion)
 - c. Faculty social functions (discussion)
- VIII. Other Items
- IX. Adjournment

TO: Faculty Senate
FROM: Gary Green (Dept. of Government and Public Affairs)
SUBJECT: Establishment of Campus Policy on Self-Assigned Textbooks

I urge the Faculty Senate to adopt a resolution calling for a University policy that disallows for-profit assignment of textbooks and other materials, whether that profit is based on royalties, or any gratuity or rebate, that would accrue to the professor.

First, such a policy is common practice at other institutions of higher education and is consistent with the canons of academia. Second, it is morally imperative that CNU professors safeguard against the exploitation of their positions in the classroom for monetary gain. Third, such a policy at CNU will go far to teach our students the importance of awareness about conflicts of interest.

The American Association of University Professors has asserted that faculty members should "avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students." (For full text of the AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics, see <http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/Rbethics.htm> .) Numerous other institutions have strict formal policies against the for-profit assignment of textbooks and other materials. The following are but a few examples:

University of Akron: "No University employee is to receive private gain arising from the sale of textbooks or other materials used in a course in which the employee is an instructor. When the employee as instructor believes that such textbook or material is appropriate for the benefit of the students, the employee must arrange either to (a) waive royalties or other type of personal gain or (b) designate the University or a recognized professional organization or honorary to receive such royalties or gain. The latter option must ensure that there will be no potential for future personal gain by the employee from this classroom use. All proposed plans are to be submitted to the University for prior approval through the Department Chair." http://www3.uakron.edu/facultysenate/revised_conflict120398.html

University of Missouri: "Textbooks, tapes, software and other materials authored by the course instructor may be assigned to be purchased by students for a course taught by the author if the royalties arising from the purchase of the assigned materials are returned to the University of Missouri, another educational institution, a charitable organization, or a not-for-profit foundation. Any proceeds from other University uses of such materials, such as purchase by the library, shall be the property of the faculty member." <http://www.system.missouri.edu/uminfo/rules/personnel/330015.htm>

Northern Illinois University: "University employees shall not retain royalties or derive other financial benefit from textbooks, tapes, software, and other materials used in courses taught by them or by others reporting to or influenced by them, or in courses for which they were involved in selecting those materials. Such royalties or other financial benefits shall not serve the employee's personal benefit but should be made available for the benefit of the university." <http://www3.niu.edu/provost2/facpers/appm/I10.htm>

As I noted previously, it is morally imperative that we at CNU create safeguards against exploiting our positions in the classrooms. I see assigning one's own text for profit as analogous to self-referrals by physicians (i.e., referring patients to diagnostic services and treatments performed at facilities in which the referring physician has a financial interest). Physician self-referral is a violation of the American Medical Association's canons of professional conduct, and is grounds for both de-licensure and imprisonment according to the laws of various states. These sanctions for doctors, and the aforementioned university policies for professors, represent the necessity for a self-imposed structure to prevent the exploitation of others. They spring from the realization that professionals have a duty to do what is in the best interests of those they serve, and that their judgment can not be compromised by the lure of extra rewards of personal gain—be it financial gain or some other benefit that occurs by virtue of their decisions. In short, human beings need to be policed when they have unchecked power and discretion to make professional decisions that have the potential to create additional personal advantages.

If such a policy were to be generated from the faculty ourselves, we would be sending a message to our students that we are aware of our responsibility to identify conflicts of interest in our professional lives. That example will have great impact on our students, and will empower them to be cognizant of such conflicts after they leave CNU. It is our responsibility, and our mission, to promote good citizenship among our students.

I am not asking the Faculty Senate to adopt a CNU policy that is the same as, or even similar to, those I have provided above. Nor am I asking you to require royalties to be assigned to the University, or to another charity. I am, however, asking the Faculty Senate to adopt a policy that forbids for-profit self-referral of classroom materials. To continue to ignore this long-recognized inherent academic conflict of interest would make an embarrassing statement about the principles and ethics of us all.

Thank you for your time.

Gary Green