



Position Statement

TO: Members, ECU Faculty Senate

FROM: Charles E. Bland, Professor and Chair
Department of Biology

RE: Recommendation of Faculty Affairs Committee
regarding the potential monetary conflict of
interest in selecting textbooks and
collateral materials

DATE: January 24, 1991

Department of Biology

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The purpose of this statement is to express my strong objection to the recommendation that is on the floor before you today from the Faculty Affairs Committee regarding a potential monetary conflict of interest in selecting textbooks and collateral materials for purchase by students. This matter has received inadequate consideration by the committee within a very brief time-frame, and there has been no opportunity for input from affected faculty, departments or students. Serious consideration should be given to what effect such action will have on the students who purchase these materials. Negative effects of a restrictive and inflexible policy include but are not limited to: (1) Increased costs to students using commercially published materials, (2) Another and redundant set of administrative barriers for faculty who place an emphasis on teaching, (3) Lack of incentive for preparing material that is most appropriate for the course as it is customized for our student body and available resources/equipment; ie, laboratory manual.

While I am not aware of how widespread the questioned practice is at ECU, I do know that it is very widespread nationally and that it is standard practice for a royalty to be paid to the developer(s) of said materials. In the Department of Biology customized materials have been sold to students for over twenty-five years. I contend that through this practice there have been benefits to all involved, and that there has been absolutely no monetary conflict of interest. Based on our experience, I recommend strongly that this entire matter be given the serious consideration it deserves. Current procedures should not be scrapped merely because there is the potential for a conflict of interest. There are checks already in place that monitor constantly for such conflicts.

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