

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE



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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521-0132

April 6, 2016

TO: José Wudka, Chair  
Academic Senate

FROM: Jason Weems, Chair  
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Academic Senate Consultation on Professors Assigning Their Own Texts to Students

The CHASS Executive Committee had a wide-ranging discussion regarding faculty who assign their own texts. In many circumstances, we feel it is a logical and pedagogically useful practice. Why would we seek to limit the ability of an expert in a field—one who has carefully designed what they believe to be the most effective text for instruction on the topic—to deploy that text in their teaching. Indeed, the synergy between text and the classroom presentation is in many instances very useful to students. On the other hand, we also recognize that there may be financial and other inducements to assigning one's own text, and that faculty need to remain cognizant of potential issues that arise, such as added cost to students (Regarding the latter, we imagine that there could be a question of optics, especially as public scrutiny of university tuition and expenses increase). The committee came to no firm conclusions on the need for oversight of such activity, what form it should take, or how it might be enacted. One thought was that a requirement to report the use of one's own text to a department chair might be useful, although it we were not clear on what the chair might be expected to do with such information. A question also arose about the different reporting needs that might adhere with different texts. Should faculty report the use of freely available scholarship such as journal articles or scanned chapters of books, or only those texts that require student purchase.

Jason Weems, Chair

UCR CHASS Executive Committee