



## COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

March 31, 2016

To: Jose Wudka  
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Jennifer Hughes, Chair   
Committee on Faculty Welfare

Re: Professors Assigning Their Own Text to Students

The Committee on Faculty Welfare met on March 15, 2016 to discuss the issue of requiring a text authored by the faculty member teaching the course. The University's Academic Personnel Manual states the important principle that University researchers must be free to pursue knowledge and that this freedom, which is essential to the research process, must not lightly be abridged. The committee strongly affirms the right of our faculty to assign their own work in their classes. We recognize that our faculty are field experts and have in many cases written definitive and important texts from which the students may benefit. Reading a faculty member's work is one of the benefits of studying at a research university. We also recognize that this may need to be explained or articulated to our undergraduate students who may be encountering the practice for the first time. Steps should be taken to educate students and thus to avoid future confusion. We suggest the development of a published policy that can be referenced in syllabi and course websites.

The committee also recognizes that a conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict may emerge. The Committee on Faculty Welfare does not agree with the exploitation of textbooks in the classroom for personal financial gain. When a researcher has a financial interest similar in nature to those required to be reported under the University Conflict of Interest Code requiring disclosure, his or her judgment may appear to be affected by potential financial gain rather than by the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore we suggest that campus policy urges faculty assigning their own texts to also consider making these texts available in no-cost form when possible (by placing copies on library reserve or making available password protected pdfs).

The Committee recommends that a statement be formulated to guide faculty and educate students. This statement should include links to relevant policy such as APM 028-10 and be placed on appropriate venues like the registration webpage.