Policy
Textbook Royalties – Conflict of Interest

As many of the faculty members at Texas A&M University are leading scholars in their fields, it is natural that some faculty members will develop textbooks or other course materials for their classrooms. This is entirely appropriate, indeed laudable. However, when a faculty member receives direct financial benefit in requiring students to purchase such materials (e.g., royalty payments), a conflict of interest arises. Although this conflict of interest is to be avoided in every discipline, different disciplines may set different procedures to handle this problem. Be it therefore resolved, that

- The individual colleges of Texas A&M University are directed to develop and implement procedures to address the issue of the conflict of interest arising when a faculty member has direct financial interest in course material required for his or her own class. These procedures must be in place by January 1, 2008. The procedures must, at a minimum, contain the following:

  1. A mechanism by which such course materials are approved at a higher level (e.g. faculty committee, department head or dean) than the instructor involved.
  2. A mechanism to ensure that faculty members do not profit monetarily from requiring such material. Possibilities are: arrangements with publishers to reduce cost to local students by the amount of the author’s royalties, the author donating the amount of royalties received to an appropriate scholarship fund, or (for a sufficiently small class), a reasonable number of copies of the test being placed on library reserve.
  3. A mechanism to inform students in such a class as to how a conflict of interest was avoided (e.g., a statement to that effect on the first day handout).