Departmental Policy on Textbook Selection

Selecting the best textbook or textbooks for each course offered by the Department is an important and frequent task. In some cases the decision may be simple - for example it may involve moving to a new edition of an already accepted book for a specialized course. In some other cases the decision may be more complicated and more important - for example it may involve changing the textbook and the syllabus for a course that is central for our curriculum. The procedure described below addresses variety of possible situations.

At least once a year the Chair of the Department shall invite all Faculty members to comment about the current textbooks and to propose reviewing new textbooks that may be available for any particular course. Normally at least two weeks should be given for the comments.

Policy Statement:

The Department of Chemistry of the College of Charleston affirms its absolute commitment to the principle that the selection of textbooks and other classroom materials is the right and responsibility of full time faculty members (to include only tenured, tenure track, instructor, senior instructors, and visiting assistant professor faculty within the department) assigned to teach each particular course. For multi-section courses, once a text is selected for the course, it must be used by all faculty (full time and part time) until the Department's faculty selects a different text, using the procedures described below.

Within the bounds of that principle, the Department reminds faculty that:

- Multi-sectional, departmental courses for majors or non-majors should have in place mechanisms to ensure that textbooks used by all Faculty, including part-time Faculty and instructors, are properly selected in a timely manner, and that new hires are notified of deadlines and encouraged to submit textbook orders early;

- Unless there is a compelling pedagogical reason to change textbooks texts are normally selected for use in two years. The same texts used in the academic year are to be used in the following summer session. Using the same textbook from semester-to-semester allows students to resell books to the bookstore at a higher price, or sell them directly to other students;

- Where appropriate, we should select lower-cost options, including on-line materials, packets printed in-house, placing materials on library reserve, and selecting the least expensive textbook where several otherwise equivalent choices exist;

- They Department should submit textbook orders as early as possible to allow the bookstore to order used copies; and

- The Department should not order bundled texts unless they intend to use the entire bundled package. All materials should be relevant and should help faculty accomplish the educational objectives of the given course. There are no ethical problems with faculty assigning their own textbooks or other related materials, consistent with the policy outlined below. See the section on "Faculty Requiring Own Text for Class" and related information below.

- Receiving compensation other than royalties, contingent on the adoption of textbooks and other course materials, may be unprofessional and unethical. Receiving usual and customary remuneration for the review of textbooks or course materials is acceptable.
Faculty Requiring Own Text for Class

The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry policy regarding requiring students to purchase textbooks authored or co-authored by faculty members is based on past precedent. There is always a concern about a possible conflict of interest of Faculty making money from their students in this way, or even the appearance of conflict. At the same time, the Department wants to encourage its Faculty to use their expertise to write books, including textbooks. In order to protect both Faculty and students, the use of any College of Charleston faculty authored text must be approved by the faculty member's Chair. At many institutions, Faculty members often donate their royalties from textbook sales at their home institution to their Department. In the case of the College of Charleston, these funds should go to the Chemistry Fund of the College of Charleston Foundation.

Textbook Adoption Procedures:

For each course the Chair of the Department will select one of the following procedures in the designated order at the appropriate time to meet textbook adoption deadlines for the Bookstore.

1. Keep the existing textbook after informal consultation with faculty members teaching the same course,

2. Select a new textbook after informal consultation with faculty members teaching the same course,

3. Appoint a Chair and form an ad hoc Textbook Committee consisting of full-time Faculty of the department who teach in the course; the Chair of the committee should see that sufficient examination copies are available at least one week prior to the first committee meeting, the Textbook Committee should hold at least one meeting announced a week in advance open to all of the Department; during the meeting, the Committee should present all the available material pertinent to the textbook selection and listen to the faculty feedback; the Chair of the Textbook Committee will then present the recommendation and the committee vote to the Department Chair,

4. Call a Faculty Meeting to discuss the selection; in this case all full-time faculty members will act as a Textbook Selection Committee; the Faculty shall decide about specific procedures to be used before voting on the final decision.

Option 1 or 2 shall be selected only for very simple cases or in an emergency situation when the current textbook is no longer available and the decision must be made quickly. The Chair of the Department must select the option 3 or 4 if at least two full time faculty members of the Department request having a formal Textbook Committee. The Chair of the Department must select option 4 if at least four full time faculty members of the Department request that option. At any time the Chair of the Department may upgrade the option selected but may not downgrade the option. If the third option was selected and the Chair disagrees with the Committee’s recommendation, the Chair should either accept the committee’s recommendation or proceed with option 4.

After the selection process is concluded the information about the new textbook shall be sent to all faculty members and the new syllabus should be published.