

Solicitors on Campus -- Independent Textbook Buyers

Date

8/16

PREMISE

Independent textbook buyers are a fact of life on every college campus. They solicit faculty and staff members directly, seeking to purchase the complimentary copies of books that accumulate when considering texts for adoption, as well as the desk copies of books no longer used in courses. These textbook buyers do not represent the interests of faculty, students, or textbook publishers. Furthermore, selling complimentary copies of textbooks to independent textbook buyers adversely affects the entire academic community:

- a. Professor-authors are deprived of economic return in royalties, and incentives to write textbooks are diminished.
- b. Students generally do not benefit from the sale of complimentary copies, as these books are sold at or only slightly below the new book price.
- c. Selling complimentary textbooks inflates the cost of all textbooks, as publishers must compensate for revenue lost from the sale of new books.
- d. Selling complimentary copies violates the tradition of respect by professors for the intellectual work of their colleagues and for the textbook publishers.
- e. Sometimes these textbooks actually turn out to be annotated instructor copies which include the answers to the problems given in the textbook.
- f. The future availability of complimentary textbooks may be jeopardized by the reluctance of publishers to risk further financial loss. Some textbook publishers have refused to honor legitimate complimentary/desk copy requests from USI faculty.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the University of Southern Indiana to prohibit all independent textbook buyers from soliciting faculty and staff for the purchase of textbooks on the grounds, in the buildings, and/or on equipment or networks owned/operated by the University. When approached by such solicitors, whether in-person, by telephone, or any electronic means of communication, faculty and staff shall decline to sell them any books, inform them of this policy, and ask them to leave the campus and refrain from future solicitation in any form. Individuals may choose, however, to ask the Office of Public Safety to handle the matter fully. In any case, the Office of Public Safety should be notified if a solicitor refuses to leave the campus after being asked to do so.

Anyone found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action by the University, up to and including termination.

DEFINITIONS

Independent Textbook Buyers: Independent operators who share no affiliation with textbook publishing/buying companies. It is important that these individuals not be confused with the publisher representatives seen regularly on campus for there exists a critical distinction between the two: Independent textbook buyers do not provide a service and are motivated strictly by personal gain.

Publisher Representatives: Employees of established companies who serve the vital function of providing faculty with the most relevant, up-to-date textbooks for use in courses.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees who know or suspect that other employees are engaged in activities that violate this policy have a responsibility to report such activity to their supervisor or appropriate administrator. However, in the interest of confidentiality or if the employee is uncomfortable reporting to his supervisor or administrator, the employee may notify the Internal Audit Department directly by one of the methods described in the Fraud Policy Statement Item F.39 under Reporting a Fraud.

Employees who report suspected policy violations will be protected from reprisal or retaliatory action as stated in the Whistleblower Policy F.54.