

University Resources - Used or Misused?

The cast of characters:

1. **Dr. John Doe is a Full Professor** at Southern Research University—a public research university. Five years ago, Doe co-authored a well-received textbook. Updates to this text are done every two or three years and consume a large amount of his time, but his classes are well taught and students receive appropriate assistance and mentoring outside of class.

Dr. Doe gives Ms. Lock his textbook manuscripts and updates to type during her normal university work hours. Textbooks do not count as research for promotion or tenure in his College, but Dr. Doe conducts other research projects, so this is not an issue for him. Dr. Doe also keeps all of the profits from his textbook. His office phone, computer, fax and office copying machine are used in updating his textbook.

2. **Dr. Jane Smart is a Professor of Practice** at the same university and started several small businesses, eventually selling each of them for a substantial profit. Within the last decade, she has also written two well-received popular-press books on starting small businesses.

In addition to her normal research and teaching, Dr. Smart has also been putting the finishing touches on a third popular-press book, *A Survival Guide to Starting a Home Business*. Over the course of the semester, she has used the department copy machine to print and photocopy several drafts of the manuscript for copy-editing purposes and uses her university email to distribute the manuscript to others for comments.

By the end of the fall semester, Smart's book is ready for press and she decides to offer a one-day, for-profit seminars between semesters in May on starting a home business. By the middle of March, much of Dr. Smart's time on campus is consumed by preparation work for these seminars; she spends a number of hours every day phoning local convention hotels to reserve space, sending out advertisements, tracking pre-registrations, responding to information requests, arranging catering, preparing seminar content, and so on.

Smart has also passed on a great deal of work to **Samantha Smith—an Undergraduate Office Assistant** for her department. Among other things, she has asked Ms. Smith to photocopy registration materials, print and assemble hundreds of seminar name badges, and stuff hundreds of information packets for the seminars. This work has taken several hours for Samantha to complete.

3. For the last two years, **Dr. Don Hitt**, has been working primarily as a private consultant for small business owners and would-be entrepreneurs. In addition to this, Hitt is a **part-time Adjunct Lecturer** at Southern Research University, where he was recruited to teach one or two classes a year on issues related to entrepreneurship.

This year, Dr. Hitt is contracted to teach a two-semester course on *Special Topics in Entrepreneurial Management*. In order to maximize contact with the students, Hitt decided to spend as much time on campus as he can. For this reason, he currently does much of his consulting work from his University office. He has given all of his clients the phone number for his campus office and regularly uses this phone to talk to them. Moreover, he regularly uses his office computer for consulting research purposes and for communicating with clients.

- 4. Ms. May Lock is a Staff Secretary II on the Support Staff** at Southern Research University and also sells Avon beauty products on the side. Dr. Doe gives Ms. Lock his textbook manuscripts and updates to type during her normal university work hours. She likes being involved with publishing and works on his changes before doing other faculty work. She is able to accommodate all faculty requests, but just at a slower pace.

May uses her computer, sometimes on her lunch hour, to contact clients, usually from her Gmail account, but sometimes using her university email account. She also browses the web when she isn't busy with work to keep up with competitor's specials. On occasion, faculty must wait for her to get off the phone with a client so give her their copying instructions.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1.) Is it ethical for Dr. Hitt to use his campus office, phone, and/or computer for his personal consulting work? If so, why? If not, how is this behavior unethical?
- 2.) Is it an appropriate use of university resources for Dr. Smart to use department printing/copying resources for her book manuscript? Why or why not?
- 3.) Is it appropriate for Ms. Lock to spend her time working on Dr. Doe's textbook? What if this means other faculty must wait for their copying requests, etc. to get done? Dr. Doe keeps all of the profits from his textbook; does that impact your decision? Is there any further information on which this answer might depend?
- 4.) Do you think that Dr. Smart is behaving ethically when she has Ms. Smith do this preparation work for the seminars? Why or why not?
- 5.) Suppose that you were the Department Chair. If you were to find out about these behaviors, how would you respond to this situation?
- 6.) What policies should be in place regarding the use of university resources? Is there a sharp line between appropriate and inappropriate use of university resources? Do the same standards apply to graduate students, part-time or non-tenure-track faculty, tenure-track or tenured faculty, and administrative staff? If so, why? If not, in what ways might these standards differ and why?