

Can we require students to purchase clickers for our classrooms?

Single course purchase of a clicker may be illegal. *Instructional materials* are discussed in the Student Fee Handbook from the state chancellor's office. See p. 8-10 of the handbook at: http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/Legal/Ops/12-09_StudentFeeHandbook2012.pdf

Whether or not we can require the students to purchase a clicker system, the question of whether or not to go to a single clicker vendor or even single clicker model needs to be addressed.

My query to Legal Affairs at the State Chancellor's office:

Hello,

I am the faculty co-chair of the Bakersfield College computer and instructional technology committee, a participatory governance committee. I am appointed by our college Academic Senate and am a member of the Academic Senate Executive Board by virtue of that faculty co-chair position. The use of student (audience) response systems ("clickers") is increasing in colleges and universities across the country as well as in the California Community College System. An example of a "clicker" is one from iClicker at <http://www.iclicker.com/Products/iclicker/>. This type of instructional material is not addressed explicitly in the Student Fee Handbook from CCCCO, so we have two questions about the legality of charging students for an instructional material item.

Question#1:

Bakersfield College has multiple vendors for student response systems ("clickers") in use. Students will purchase a clicker for REQUIRED use in a one-semester course from our campus bookstore. Because multiple vendors are used at the college for the clicker systems, a student may be required to use one clicker model from a given vendor in one course and then be required to use another clicker from a different vendor in a different course. Under this scenario, we are not sure if we are legally allowed to require students to purchase the clickers since there is some question of the clicker's "continuing value outside of the classroom setting." Are we allowed to require students to purchase the clickers for use in a given course?

Clickers in use on the campus are an integral part of the classroom instruction in the classes where they are used to increase student engagement with the course content but the use of clickers may also include the taking of quizzes, taking attendance, other classroom participation credit. Therefore, the primary purpose of the clickers is for instructional purposes. Students purchase the clicker for a course from the campus bookstore at the same time they purchase their textbook for the course. Students may be able to purchase the clicker directly from the vendor.

Question#2:

Our current scenario in operation at Bakersfield College has multiple proprietary clicker systems from multiple vendors so it MAY fail the "continuing value outside of the classroom setting" requirement of the law. If the college adopted a single clicker system for use in its classrooms, we wonder if that would enable us to require students to purchase a clicker since they could use that clicker in any of the classes taught at the college and therefore have "continuing value outside" of a particular course.

Thank you for your help,

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Astronomy Notes website:

<http://www.astronomynotes.com>

Two CA Community College astronomy teaching faculty responded to my quick survey about how they get the clickers into the students hands (MiraCosta College and El Camino College). Both of them said that the clickers were purchased by the college and the clicker set remained in the classroom.