Released: **January 18, 2005**

College Professors Overwhelmingly Favor New Texts; Prefer Texts with Print and Digital Packages, New Zogby Poll Reveals

College professors overwhelmingly prefer their students to have both current textbooks and supplementary materials such as study guides, online applications, and CD-ROMs according to a new Zogby International survey. The poll of 1,029 college professors was conducted from December 8 to December 20, 2004, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percentage points.

Eight-in-ten college professors (80%) say it is important that the material in texts used for their courses be as current as possible—a stand reflected by the nearly two-thirds (62%) who say they prefer to order texts with the most recent copyright date.

"College faculty want their students to have the latest, up-to-the-date facts," said pollster John Zogby. "That 80% number in our survey is an overwhelming figure. These professors believe that, as new data comes along in their fields, their students need to be on the leading edge of these trends."

The same survey found that 75% of professors either require or recommend their students purchase textbook packages that include supplemental materials, such as study guides, lab manuals, and digital media like CD-ROMs and online tools. This was particularly pronounced at four-year colleges, where half of the professors surveyed (48%) said they require their students to purchase texts packaged with additional instructional and tutorial materials. Only one-in-four professors would neither recommend nor require these textbook packages. A majority (55%) say they generally use the supplementary materials in the actual instruction of their courses.

"Three-quarters of college professors think it's important that their students have access to the latest in learning materials," Zogby said. "We're in the Information Age. Textbooks are no longer just paper and cardboard. Now they often include interactive materials. Professors see value in a multiple-media learning experience for their students—and this is even more true in the four-year schools, where half the faculty are requiring their students to buy these products."

College faculty overwhelmingly see textbooks not just as reference materials for their courses, but as an essential part of the instruction. By a lopsided margin of 84% to 7%, professors say their students absolutely must have the required textbooks to get a good grade in their courses. Three-quarters (76%) relate this to their students, telling them they need to use the texts to get a good grade.

"College professors continue to see textbooks as an essential part of their courses, and are not generally willing to compromise on something they consider vital to their students' success," Zogby said.

Zogby International conducted online interviews of 1,029 college faculty, from a nationwide list of 16,000 e-mail addresses of college faculty. All surveys were completed on servers located at Zogby International headquarters in Utica, N.Y., from December 8 through December 20, 2004. The margin of error is +/- 3.2 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

(1/18/2005)