



Jessica Dimitrijevic  
Andrew Draa  
McGrawHill

November 1, 2022

Dear Jessica and Andrew,

It pains me to write this letter and pierces my heart knowing my students also are acknowledging these facts and similar experiences.

My students expended time and resources to learn from Understanding Business by Nickels, 13th Edition and since the first chapter the students and myself have been victimized and marginalized by the conscious and unconscious racism incorporated within these pages.

Over my 25 year professional career I have served as a business executive, client service professional, entrepreneur, and diversity champion at two of the four largest professional service firms in the world, KPMG and Deloitte. For nearly 15 years, I have also dedicated my life to the college classroom teaching upper and lower division undergraduate courses and graduate courses at multiple colleges and universities across the San Francisco Bay Area, specifically the University of San Francisco, California State University East Bay, Las Positas College, Golden Gate University, and the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley. Over the past two years, I have also served in the role as Dean of Academic Services and I currently serve as the Chair of the Curriculum Committee at Las Positas College. I have seen more than my fair share of inequities in corporate America and in education.

In the Fall of 2022, I elected to teach the Introduction to Business course at Las Positas College, a community college primarily serving students interested in transferring to four year universities. I was pleasantly surprised to see the number of diverse students in this classroom, I even remarked how I have never had this many student of color in one classroom. My motivation was sharpened, and I began reading each chapter carefully to ensure I was best prepared to guide my students in mastering the principles of business.

On September 16, 2022, I reported one example of an extremely offensive textbook excerpt where the author chose to illustrate the advancement of technology in production methods by referring to the cotton gin. This example caused significant harm to me as an instructor and to several other students. The introduction of the cotton gin allowed for more raw materials to be processed, which resulted in more Africans being kidnapped and brutally transferred to the Americas to harvest cotton on land that was stolen from the Native Americans. These are well known and widely available facts. Simply put, this is a horrible example to highlight. Even worse, this example begins to peel back - but does not acknowledge in its entirety - the crimes

of our country against people of color. To have this egregious example in the first chapter, sets the stage for the rest of the semester.

Within the first chapter, I pointed out to the class three other instances of conscious or unconscious racism.

Myself, and two other Las Positas College business colleagues, met with McGraw Hill representatives on Friday, October 14, 2022. By this time, I had surfaced over six other instances of conscious or unconscious racism within this textbook. I shared one example during the meeting, but did not list them all because it is not my responsibility to serve as an uncompensated equity consultant for McGrawHill. The McGrawHill representatives shared the process for reviewing materials before and after publication, and verbally issued a sincere apology for the harm caused by having to read these offensive excerpts in the textbook.

On Monday, October 24 2022, I was reading Chapter 14 of the same textbook and landed on page 369. I was simultaneously shocked and saddened to see a derogatory term that was used for nearly two centuries to dehumanize, brutalize, and demoralize my ancestors, while using their flesh to increase profitability. This term should never appear in any Business related textbook. I was left to ponder whether McGrawHill is intentionally creating products to discourage African Americans from learning and teaching using its materials. How can you expect anyone to open themselves up to learning when they are constantly being reminded by the author about how little their contributions to society have been valued?

The professor and students of section 22034 of Introduction to Business at Las Positas College are demanding the following:

---

***Refund for all students who purchased this textbook in the Fall of 2022 and enrolled in Section 22034.***

I do not intend to use this textbook for the remainder of the semester. My students should not have to pay for materials that are not conducive to a constructive learning environment.

---

***\$100 gift card to the Las Positas College Bookstore for all students who purchased this textbook in the Fall of 2022 and enrolled in Section 22034.***

McGrawHill needs to demonstrate its commitment to all students, and assure them this specific textbook is not indicative of all its products. A complimentary McGraw Hill book in a future semester will allow our students to see for themselves that all McGrawHill products do not contain conscious and unconscious racism.

---

---

## **A written apology to the professor and Las Positas College**

Mistakes are unavoidable, but the pain caused by these mistakes cannot be taken away. Even still, a written acknowledgment to the college and to me directly will serve as evidence that McGrawHill is committed to constantly improving.

---

## **Commitment to creating an equity based learning supplement for Understanding Business and other textbooks**

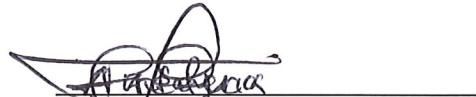

I have given tremendous effort in teaching from an equity based perspective, despite the conscious and unconscious racism layered throughout the textbook. Business professors, including myself, should be contracted by McGrawHill to create a teaching supplement to present alternative views of each chapter, including teaching activities that reflect the current students within the classroom.


I am respectfully requesting a response by November 15, 2022. We intend to share this response with the Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee at Las Positas College to collectively agree on the appropriate next steps.

Sincerely,



Professor Erick O. Bell, CPA

  
Student  
Student  
Student  
Student  
Student  
Student

  
Student

  
Student


  
Student

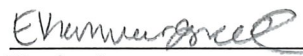
  
Student


  
Student

  
Student


  
Student

  
Student

  
Student

  
Student

  
Student

  
Student

  
Student

  
Student

*Abil K... [Signature]*  
Student

*[Signature]*  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student