



NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Office Correspondence

To: All Student Organizations, and Unit Supervisors in Residence Life, Greek Life, Hillel Cultural Life, MCC (Asian/Asian-American Student Services, Hispanic/Latino Student Services), African-American Student Affairs, Chaplains Office, Health Education

From: Helen Wood, Center for Student Involvement

Date: February 10, 2004

RE: Public showings of rented videos and DVD's

VIA EMAIL

A student organization at Northwestern University has been accused of publicly showing copyrighted movies without the proper licensing and has been fined by the movie studios in question. While we are thankful that the studios have declined to pursue legal action against the student organization or its members, please be aware that they certainly are within their rights to do so.

Public showing of a copyrighted movie without the appropriate performance rights not only may result in civil penalties, but also could lead to criminal penalties, including imprisonment.

"The Federal Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code) governs how copyrighted materials, such as movies, may be used. Neither the rental nor the purchase of a videocassette carries with it the right to show the tape outside the home."
<http://www.albion.edu/campusprog/movie%20Viewing%202.asp>

Regardless of the number of people in the room and the cost of entry to the movie, unless you are in the privacy of your own home you may not show a rented movie. "A Public Performance Site License is a site-based license that allows entertainment films that are produced for "Home Use Only" to be exhibited in a specific public setting. Most exhibitions of an entertainment movie to groups outside the privacy of a home setting can be construed as a public showing. Most public performances of a videocassette or DVD in a public room (including library meeting rooms), whether or not a fee is charged, would be an infringement. Such performances require specific permission from the copyright owner." <http://www.movlic.com/faqlibrary.html>

If you have questions regarding movie rights or what constitutes a legal showing on campus, please feel free to contact any advisor in the Center for Student Involvement.

Cc: William Banis
Center for Student Involvement
J. William Johnston
Scott Warner