Minutes of the Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights
November 2, 2000

Members Present: Kristen Ablauf, Sioban Harlow, Robert Howse, Kevin Kolben, Larry Root, Steve Rosenberg, Scott Tradeau

Members Absent: Alan Deardorff, Louis Green, Veronica Johnson

The Chair notes that changes in the Committee’s schedule were made at the last meeting without consultation with Alan Deardorff. Through no fault of his own, he was unable to attend this meeting and will be unable to attend the meeting on November 16th.

The Committee approved the minutes of October 26th, with minor changes. They also agreed to have the web site made public. Committee members will be contacting the Chair with suggestions for url’s to serve as links from the Committee’s web page.

It was announced that a public presentation, “Negotiating Borders: The Apparel Industry, Trade and Human Rights among the disciplines,” will take place on Friday, November 10th, from 1:00 to 5:00. Among the speakers will be Robert Howse and Larry Root, both members of the Committee.

The Committee discussed the “draft letter” to licensees circulated by the Chair via e-mail. Some modifications were made and it was suggested that this letter be sent out as soon as possible. Kristen Ablauf, Director of Licensing in the Athletic Department and a member of the Committee, will send out the letter with a “draft code” attached (including any changes made to the “draft code” by the Committee up to that time). She will receive the responses from licensees and make these available to Committee members.

The Committee decided that licensees would be requested to respond within 2 weeks, in order to expedite this process.

The Committee then discussed the University of Michigan Draft Code of Conduct. A letter from the “Students Organizing for Labor and Economic Quality” (SOLE) and the “U Students Against Sweatshops” (USAS) was circulated to the Committee. This letter provided the perspective of these groups on the process of code formation and urged the Committee to take action as soon as possible to finalize a recommendation for the code.

The Committee began its review of the draft U-M code. The first 3 items (Forced Labor, Child Labor, Harassment and Abuse) were approved as currently written. The Committee discussed the current wording of the “non-discrimination” item. The Committee decided to amend the current wording by inserting “reproductive or familial situation” after “r status.”

The Committee accepted as written the item on “Health and Safety.” It was noted that a key issue in looking at health and safety programs involves the right of workers to be informed of hazards in the workplace. Although no suggested changes in language were made, the Committee agreed to consider that aspect of health and safety in further work on the code.

The Committee reviewed the section on “Women’s Rights,” making the following change for greater clarity. In the second sentence of the phrase “In addition” will be changed to “Without restricting the generality of the foregoing and for purposes of greater clarity and specificity.” The Committee also changed the word “implicit” in the first sentence to “included.”

The item on “freedom of association and collective bargaining” was approved with the following addition: “Licensees shall allow union organizers access to employees. Licenses shall recognize the union of the employee’s choice.”

The next meeting will be held on November 16th, in Room 2609-School of Social Work Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence S. Root, Chair