Labor Standards and Human Rights Committee  
September 24, 2004 9:00-11:00 am  
4006 Fleming

Minutes

PRESENT
Mary Sue Coleman, Kristen Ablauf, Marlowe Coolican, Tim Fort, Ona Hahs-Tenny, Siobán Harlow (chair), Heather Johnson (ex-officio), Veronica Johnson, Rosa Peralta, Larry Root, Katherine Terrell

ABSENT
Lisa Stowe

1. Welcome and Charge to the Committee by President Coleman
   Mary Sue Coleman met with the committee, renewed the LS-HR Committee’s charge with emphasis on two particular points:
   · The committee is to evaluate whether it is of value to continue involvement with the Workers Rights Consortium and the Fair Labor Association and
   · Follow through on the concerns raised last year regarding compliance with the wage clause in our code of conduct.

   She emphasized her expectation that compliance will largely be monitored through FLA and WRC and that the University in its engagements should make effective and enduring contributions. The President also received the report of the committee’s activities for the 2003-2004 period.

   The chair distributed the report and summarized the Committee’s activities in 2003-2004.

   Larry Root briefed the President on the Dept. of Labor’s Rule of Law project, for which ILIR is a subcontractor.

   The Chair updated the President on the Committee’s activities regarding wage transparency over the summer months. The University of Wisconsin was the first university to request licensees to provide wage information. Georgetown also sent letters to its licensees in the spring. While some licensees indicated initial willingness to comply, there is currently more concerns emerging as continued discussion has occurred. WRC has not met its initial time table and does not have a procedure worked through with the University of Wisconsin licensees. The committee also gathered additional input from UM licensees. FLA has expressed interest in the possibility of encouraging licensees to become category B or category A licensees. WRC has expressed the opinion that alternative approaches to moving companies forward on wage compliance may be beneficial. The committee decided at its last meeting to discuss the pros and cons of a range of actions that will move concerns about compliance with the wage clause forward, and present options to the President.

3. Review and approval of minutes of 9/10/04
   The Committee unanimously approved the 9/10/04 meeting minutes.

4. Announcements
   S. Harlow announced that a new website organizing information on human rights activities across the campus will be published under the auspices of the Human Rights Initiative (a joint initiative of the International Institute and the Institute for the Humanities) will be published soon.

5. New issues and updates
   a. Gildan
      There has been a third party complaint filed against Gildan. Kristin reported that they are not a U-M licensee. There has been no communication from FLA or WRC suggesting actions at this time.

6. Wage Transparency – Discussion of Strategies
   The committee began discussion of the pros and cons of possible strategies for addressing the wage compliance issue. In addition to ideas suggested at the last meeting Ona Hahs had framed several options for the committee to begin its discussion. Discussion focused at this meeting on the benefits of forming a political coalition and taking collective action, with further discussion about what the appropriate constellations of schools might be.

   Discussion included clarification of the objective of actions/efforts:
   · Ensure licensees engage with suppliers on the wage issue
   · Ensure responsibility to monitor the wage clause in the code of conduct is being met
   · Ensure licensees and their suppliers are taking the code seriously.

   Discussion began on the pros/cons of hosting a conference with the purpose of discussing the wage transparency issue and possibly forming a common plan to deal with the issue with some discussion of the potential audience (Big Ten schools, 5 largest schools,
Pros:
- it would bring people together to strategize and coalesce and form consensus;
- help jumpstart the issue;
- help identify additional communities
- might focus on the question of how best to engender a culture of transparency
- if people don’t want to come, will clarify that it is not an issue about which a larger political coalition is likely to coalesce

Cons:
- Is it a necessary strategy?
- Requires considerable time, energy, and funds to organize
- Would need to identify a program/school/organization to coordinate the organization.

7. Academic programs (5 minutes)
- The workshop on “The Reproductive Rights of Globalized Workers: Integrating Labor Standards and Reproductive Health in Export-Processing Factories” will take place on October 21 and 22 2004 with the first day a public session and the second day a working meeting.
- Potential speakers on campus for other types of session include:
  a) The law school has visiting professor this fall from the University of Texas, Sarah Cleveland, who is helping in writing the labor law for Afghanistan.
  b) Mary Gallagher will be returning from China where she has been working on these issues including with some of the emerging NGO’s in China.

8. Dates for Fall meetings
   a. October 8 (and possible 29)
   b. November 19
   c. December 3

9. Microfibre Arrangement
   A short discussion occurred regarding the phasing out of the Microfibre Arrangement and a request was made that the committee discuss ways in which U-M might address concerns about the impact of this phase-out on efforts to advance labor standards and the potential to move production away from factories with strong labor organization and that comply with the codes.

10. New business (5 minutes)