Labor Standards and Human Rights Committee  
December 14, 2006  8:30-10:00 a.m.  
ROOM: 2218 School of Education  

Minutes  

Attending: Greg Cohen, Aria Everts, Kevin Ferrell, Mary Gallagher, Marian Krzyzowski, Ana Quinones, Steven Ratner, Larry Root (chair), Lisa Stowe (new member), Katherine Terrell, Ada Verloren (staff to committee).  

Absent: Kristen Ablauf.  

1. Approval of minutes  
The committee approved the minutes of the November 16 meeting.  

2. Website/Survey  
The chair informed the committee that the website/survey was almost ready to be launched.  

3. Announcements  
The chair thanked Kevin Ferrell for his valuable service to the committee and wished him well in his future career.  Lisa Stowe will replace Kevin as member of the committee.  

4. Conference ideas  
As part of its educational goals, included in the President's charge to the committee, the committee discussed having a session/conference/meeting about supply chains and the cross-national impacts of large, multinational companies.  

The committee agreed that it would be desirable to find a middle ground between addressing the system of production generally and, more specifically, compliance with the University's code of conduct. While a conference could start with one speaker framing the issues, and presenting an overview of global capitalism and sweatshops, a panel of speakers could then address compliance and enforcement. Committee members would be interested to learn how serious the code is taken, how it interferes with operations, and how the code can be enforced.  

The format could be a series of events, an afternoon event with different panels. Committee members agreed that it was important to get different perspectives. Students would be interested to hear viewpoints from large corporations such as Nike, or a clothing chain such as Steve and Barry’s. The purpose would be not just to educate committee members but also to educate a broader student audience. To achieve this, it would be essential to advertise the event well.  

Several options for panels emerged during the discussion, including the following:  

- Bringing in licensees and representatives from monitoring groups to explain what is working, what is not working, and why it is not working; monitors can talk about the effects of codes on the production process.  
- Focusing on issues with the supply chains in different regions such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The panels would include regional experts and union leaders from different regions who are familiar with codes of conduct.  
- Contrasting a factory, in which the code of conduct has been implemented successfully, with a factory in which implementation has been unsuccessful; representatives from both multinational corporations and workers can talk about successes and failures with code implementation.  
- Inviting licensees representing large, medium and small enterprises to talk about their supply chains.  
- Inviting different universities to find out how they ensure compliance with codes of conduct.  
- Inviting workers who make University of Michigan products to talk about aspects of the supply chain, for example “The making of a hat.”  

Possible titles for the event include:  

- Non-governmental approaches to enforcing labor law  
- Foreign direct investment, the roles of governments, and the roles of multinational corporations.  
- How do universities fill the role of global consumers?  
- Universities’ responsibilities in a world of sweatshops.  
- Improving working conditions and sweatshops: the role of universities.  

The committee will try to arrange the conference for early March.  

5. Meeting times next term  
Committee meetings next term will take place on Monday, 8:30-10:00 a.m. on the following dates:  

- January 29  
- February 12  
- March 19  
- April 16