Minutes

Attending: Kristen Ablauf, Aria Everts, Marian Krzyzowski, Ana Quinones, Steven Ratner, Larry Root (chair), Lisa Stowe, Katherine Terrell, Ada Verloren (staff to committee).

Absent: Mary Gallagher, Greg Cohen

1. Approval of minutes

The committee approved the minutes of the January 29, 2007 meeting.

2. Report back on DSP meeting

The chair reported on the DSP meeting that took place on February 1 in Washington, D.C. The WRC reported at the meeting that on January 12, 2007, they formally requested a business review letter from the Department of Justice and was expecting to get an answer within 4-6 months.

Most of the meeting was devoted to discussing the revisions of DSP with the approximately thirty licensees who attended. Although there was some recognition of the positive direction of some of the changes, it appeared that most licensees continue to see the DSP as a burdensome and intrusive regulatory system. They noted that some of the revisions (e.g., the requirement for long-term contracts) made the DSP more complicated. Some licensees complained that they have worked with factories for many years that they believe to be good factories but would not be eligible under the DSP because they do not produce sufficient university goods.

The WRC’s University Caucus (all member schools) will meet on March 13.

3. Report on Website/Survey

The committee discussed the preliminary report on the pilot licensee survey. With the idea that the University of Michigan should play a more active role in the process of approving licensees, committee members suggested that it might be necessary to ask additional questions to make sure that licensees comply with the code of conduct. It would also be necessary to ask companies for documentation to make sure that they answer questions truthfully, such as the latest reports on factories. Ultimately, the University would consider incorporating compliance with the code into its licensing decisions.

Asking for factory certification might be a way to make sure that licensees comply with the code. The committee took note of various organizations that certify factories as meeting certain labor standards. These organizations include the following:

- Social Accountability International <http://www.sa-intl.org/>
- Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production <http://www.wrapapparel.org/>
- Fair Factory Clearinghouse <http://www.fairfactories.org/index.htm>

More information will be needed about these and other initiatives will be presented at the next meeting.

4. Licensees presenting on campus

Committee members agreed that the primary goal of having licensees come to campus should be to gather necessary information as to what the University’s role should be in making sure that licensees comply with the code.

Two content areas are of special interest to the committee:
1. Information about best practices of small and medium-sized companies to understand what is feasible.
2. Information about certifying factories as being in compliance. How does it operate? What programs for certification exist?

As part of the presentation, committee members would also like to hear from a worker/factory owner or NGO representative about conditions in factories.

The suggested date for the presentation is March 16.