President’s Advisory Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights
January 12, 2009, 2:00-3:30pm
B631 SSWB

MINUTES

Attending: Kristen Ablauf, Siobán Harlow (Chair), Allen Hicken, Brian Talbot, Stan Bies (Assistant General Council), Ada Verloren, Matthew Welch, Nancy Vander Kuyl (staff to committee).

Absent: Amy Cocuzza, Brad Farnsworth, Peter Jacobson, Leigh Wedenoja

1. Welcome, Announcements, Review of Agenda

2. Operational Leadership
   FLA – Enhanced Licensing Program (EHP) -- Heeral Coleman joined the meeting by phone and was asked to give a general synopsis of the EHP and its goals and respond to questions from committee members. She briefly summarized that the EHP pilot program began in 2007 to address the lack of code awareness of smaller licensees (category C companies). 100 companies participated in the pilot program and completed the assessment questionnaire. FLA’s expectations for this program are to train licensees in areas where deficiencies are noted and to determine next steps. So far they have reached 200 licensees via their trainings. Main topic of sessions to date has been remediation but they want to expand to include monitoring and training of internal compliance staff. In 2009, they plan to reach out to the pilot licensees, make site visits and help build compliance improvements. They also plan to initiate a practice of conducting announced audits. The program is now launched and all licensees are expected to complete the assessment questionnaire, which will be repeated annually. Concern was expressed about the possibility of companies gaming the system. Heeral indicated that the primary approach to prevent falsification of companies responses is the requirement that they provide supporting documentation.

   In partnering with universities, FLA is hoping to setup more events on 1) general orientation 2) topic-focused sessions (i.e. how to read an audit report, how to assess documents). The universities host the venue and cover incidentals (not travel). Limit of 40 people for a general session with about 3 month’s advance notice.

   Auret van Heerden, President and CEO of FLA makes universities tours twice a year. He is open to meeting with license committee, speaking in classes, and participating in a symposium. He may consider visiting UM if invited.

   CoLSHR questions on the EHP centered on the issue of confidentiality. Category C companies know that information from the questionnaires is shared with universities (but only available via a password protected web site to select individuals). That information will be viewable, not downloadable. FLA’s role is to make reports and information available to universities. It does not make recommendations regarding licensee decision making.

   Following the conference call, the committee discussed who the UM contact would be with access to the information from the EHP. The burden of time this role would place on a person is at issue and the committee discussed the need to recommend the need for additional staff support to review and monitor compliance documents and reporting. There is also a pressing need to establish procedures to respond to the new kinds of information made available from this new system. Sioban and Kirsten will follow-up regarding access. Brian Talbot will follow-up regarding the possibility of hosting trainings.

3. Compliance issue: Jerzees de Honduras
   Chair reported that University of Miami had terminated their contract with Russell and two others were considering doing so. The committee reviewed information and communications regarding the planned shut down of the factory, possibly as early as 1/19/09, which was likely to be before receipt of the investigative reports from the FLA. The FLA report was delayed due to complaints lodged by a number of workers rights organizations about the methodology of the investigation undertaken in Honduras. Kristen Ablauf reported that Russell has a 3 year contract with UM which ends in 2010. However, non-renewal can occur any year by March 31. The committee agreed to write another letter to Russell based expressing concern about closure of the facility while an investigation of freedom of association was ongoing. Chair will draft a letter and circulate for comment.

4. Enhancing Curricula and Educational Opportunities in the Area of Labor Standards and Human Rights
   a. Center for Ethics in Public Life (winter ’09) -- This symposium event will likely be postponed.

5. Approval of December minutes

6. New Business – next meeting is February 18 at 2:30. Another meeting may be held before then to further discuss Russell Athletics. Date to be determined.