
Submitted by Siobán D. Harlow, Chair

Accomplishments of the Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights
The University of Michigan’s long-standing interdisciplinary focus, the depth of our faculty scholarly expertise in areas relevant to and strong student interest in international labor standards and human rights place us in an exceptional position to contribute to and provide scholarly leadership towards the continued growth of the international labor standards effort. The Committee has completed the articulation of both a Code of Conduct and Procedures for their implementation, and now functions effectively in its effort to monitor complaints as they arise, provide intellectual guidance to our partner organizations (the Fair Labor Association (FLA), and the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC)), and to respond to relevant concerns of UM students. The University of Michigan is also in a position to provide scholarly leadership in advancing issues related to the intersection of human rights and labor standards.

Engagement with FLA and WRC
The University has continued to benefit from its memberships in both the Fair Labor Association (FLA) and the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), two complementary organizations. While the FLA generally focuses on internal and external monitoring, developed in consultation with companies, the WRC focuses on addressing problems identified through complaints from workers. Representatives of the Committee attend annual meetings for the University caucus of both organizations and consulted frequently with their leadership during the academic year. However, the University of Michigan is not represented on the executive boards of either organization.

The FLA is now producing an annual report. The 2004 FLA report can be accessed at www.fairlabor.org/2004report, the 2005 report has not yet been released. Despite our expectation of receiving an annual report from the WRC in 2004 in specific response to our request for one, the WRC did not provide a report in 2004. A series of memos and their audited accounts statement were accepted in lieu of a report in 2004. The Committee does believe that annual reports should be provided by both organizations to its stakeholders and members.

As each of these two organizations mature, their scope of work is changing in response to continued developments in the international labor standards movement and agenda. The FLA has rolled out a new proposed monitoring program (FLA 3.0) which focuses on pooling efforts of several companies to more effectively address need for long term change in supplier factories at the country level. The WRC has initiated two campaigns for increasing disclosure over the past two years, one related to information on wages and one related to information on volume. Questions arose over the course of the year regarding the role of the University in relation to these two organizations.

It is the outgoing chair’s recommendation that the committee spend some time gaining a better understanding of the implications of the changing foci and agendas of the FLA and WRC and reconsider how the University can best maintain its role as an effective partner in this international effort.
Procedural Guidelines for Acting on Complaints
A specific charge to the committee in 03-04 was to develop procedural guidelines for acting on complaints received by the committee. This activity occupied a considerable portion of the committee’s efforts of the 03-04 academic year. Procedures were developed, reviewed by relevant components of the University community, recommended to the President, and adopted. In the 04-05 academic year, the procedures were modified to clearly define procedures when noncompliance issues involved a supplier to a licensee as opposed to a licensee, themselves.

Complaint Monitoring
As is true each year, the committee continued to monitor complaints, situations that might lead to formal complaints and to recommend actions as appropriate. During the 03-05 years, the committee:

- Recommended that the renewal of the contract with Lands End be postponed until satisfactory resolution of complaints regarding a factory in El Salvador was addressed. Renewal was postponed in December 2003 until satisfactory remediation of the situation was documented in April 2004.
- Communicated with licensees about potential problems with a supplier of blank t-shirts, Gildan Activewear
- Communicated with Nike, expressing appreciation of their efforts on behalf of resolving the BJ&B complaint.
- Other specific factory and larger contextual situations that were discussed and monitored included:
  - Potential labor violations at CINTAS (laundries), referred to the Purchasing Task Force at the UM.
  - Bangladesh action failing to address lack of legal protection for freedom of association in the export-processing zones by the previously negotiated 2004 date.
  - Potential labor violations at Coca Cola in Columbia, referred to the Purchasing Task Force

Monitoring Wage Compliance
In February 2004, SOLE sent a letter to President Coleman requesting that the UM add language to our code of conduct requiring wage disclosure and citing the current action of the University of Wisconsin in this regard. The committee recognized the need for increasing compliance with our code of conduct and evaluated SOLE’s proposal along with eight other strategies for increasing wage compliance. As part of this review we determined that

- Compliance monitoring systems, although well-established for our large licensees, had yet to be established for the large group of small and medium-sized licensees, although the FLA began focusing their efforts on developing such systems for the Category C and D licensees in 2004.
- Standard procedures for monitoring for noncompliance in the area of wages is directed towards careful review of multiple pieces of information for a carefully selected subset of employees and considerable doubt exists as to whether, at the current time, generation of reports on average wages will effectively forward efforts to reduce noncompliance with wage clauses of codes of conduct.
- The options for the University of Michigan differ from that of some our sister schools because of our membership in both the FLA and the WRC, as opposed to only one of the two organizations.
In evaluating the strategies, we considered efficacy and timeliness and took into consideration the President’s stated expectation that compliance will largely be monitored through the FLA and WRC. We recommended that the University focus its efforts on strategies that would increase monitoring by:

- encouraging appropriate licensees to upgrade their FLA affiliations to that of Category A and B licensees and,
- defining the development of monitoring systems for category C companies as a priority issue for the FLA and holding the FLA to their stated timelines for developing and implementing compliance modules, including the implementation of monitoring training programs for affiliated companies.

Jointly with the FLA, we have identified licensees who may be willing to upgrade their affiliation status and are working with the FLA to forward their efforts. We are continuing to monitor the role out of the compliance modules for category C companies.

*It is the outgoing chair’s recommendation that the committee continue these two activities and encourage the FLA to keep to their timeline for rolling out the category C compliance program. The rollout has been considerably delayed and continued pressure on this point is warranted as it is a particular need of the University to hold all our licensees to the same standards.*

**Ending of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement and its Implications for Compliance with our Code of Conduct**

An issue of major concern in the 2004-2005 academic year was the ending of the Multifibre Arrangement on January 1, 2005 which was expected to, and did, result in substantial reorganization of production sourcing. The committee sent a letter to all licensees on October 15, 2004 emphasizing our expectation that licensees meet their obligations to uphold UM’s code of conduct.

The committee also has discussed pros and cons of the set of actions suggested by SOLE in their 4/18/05 letter to President Coleman. We have outlined the committee’s perspective on a number of issues in our letters to the President and to SOLE on 6/10/05.
**Intersection with the University’s teaching and research mission**
The committee continues to focus on the importance of bringing the strengths of the University’s teaching and research capabilities to advance knowledge and raise awareness of labor standards and human rights and to help stimulate productive synergies on campus. Towards this goal, the committee includes as a central part of its mission the organization and co-sponsorship of public symposia/workshops and continues to examine and initiate programs within the curriculum to expand understanding of these issues.

*a. Programs*
The committee continued to bring scholars and activists engaged in monitoring labor standards and advancing our understanding of the international labor standards movement to UM for educational symposia and workshops. The following activities were undertaken.

1) Kevin Kolben, UM Law School Alumnus  
   “Improving the Conditions in Cambodia’s Garment Factories: Trade, Monitoring, and the ILO”  
   November 13, 2003, 4:00-6:00 PM in 1636 SSWB  
   Cosponsored by ILIR, CSAS, Law School

2) Marta Ojeda Dominguez, Coordinator for the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras  
   “Organizing Maquila Women in the US–Mexico Border”  
   April 8, 2004, 6:00-8:00 PM, SSWB Conference Center  
   Cosponsored by the International Institute, Hedrick-Jackman Fund for Business Ethics, Project on Global Corporations and Well Being at the Center for the Advancement of Behavioral Science, ILIR, School of Social Work  
   This program also interfaced with the Global Feminisms Project, providing an opportunity for that project to formally interview Ms. Ojeda and contributed to the dissertation research efforts of sociology doctoral student and committee member Rosa Peralta.

3) With the Advanced Studies Center and the School of Public Health  
   *The Reproductive Rights of Globalized Workers: Integrating Labor Standards and Reproductive Health in Export-Processing Factories*  
   October 21 and 22, 2004  
   Cosponsored by ILIR, IRWG, PSC, CEW, Schools of Social Work and Law, CSAS

   This ground breaking workshop focused on advancing intersectorial collaboration between the fields of reproductive health, reproductive rights and labor standards, in concert with our corporate and monitoring organization partners. The aim of the workshop was to identify the critical gaps in discourse, knowledge and action that limit effective engagement across the labor standards, reproductive rights, and reproductive health movements and begin cross-sector network-building. It also helped identify gaps in rights-based reproductive health services provided to and women factory workers in various world regions and in national reproductive health policies. This workshop led to a student research project on sexual harassment programs and policies in supply chain factories, a student evaluation project of health education programs in Thailand.
4) Co-sponsored with SOLE the speaking engagement of Gilberto Garcia of Just Garments, November 2004

5) Co-sponsored talk by Ona Hahs, Law School student on her internship in Kenya November, 30 3004


7) Co-sponsored the screening of Rosa Peralta’s film “Rebellion de la Maquilaraña”

b. Student Internships.
The committee continues to identify and post information on its website regarding internship opportunities for students who are interested in gaining experience with monitoring labor standards and human rights. Two summer internships were developed stemming from the October workshop.

c. Training
The Committee continues to discuss the possibility of developing different kinds of educational programs at the University of Michigan. In the past, the committee played a key role in the successful launch of the Labor and Global Change program, an effort to understand and explore labor issues in the context of a global economy, at the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations which is lead by ILIR director and former chair of this committee, Larry Root, and Ian Robinson, assistant research scientist. Among the activities of this program was support for faculty-student research projects. In the past year, we helped identify and arrange funding to support the development of committee member Mary Gallagher’s new course Political Science 389 entitled Labor Rights in the Global Economy.