President’s Advisory Committee  
On Labor Standards and Human Rights

MINUTES  
November 1, 2017, 9 – 10:30 AM  
2065 Fleming Administration Building

Attendees: Ravi Anupindi (chair), Richard Neitzel, Kristen Ablauf, Michael Counts, Lauren Smith, Monika Johnson, Khaled Eid, Fatima Nasir, Nicholas Rine, Stephen Yaros (staff to committee)  
Absent: Omolade Adunbi,  
Guests: President Mark Schlissel

Committee Business

Chair Anupindi called the meeting to order at 9:06 am. The meeting opened with discussion of the minutes from the October 16, 2017 meeting. NRine moved to adopt them; RNNeitzel seconded the motion. Committee unanimously approved the minutes.

Student Presentation

The committee sponsored three summer internships in 2017. One of the students, Lauren Smith, presented her summer work to the committee. The other two students will present at the committee’s December meeting.

Ms. Smith, a graduate student in the School of Public Health, reported to the committee on her project, “E-Waste, Labor Standards, and Human Rights”. Ms. Smith traveled to Chile over the summer of 2017 to study what e-waste is, its relation to labor standards and human rights, and what can be done to combat the problem.

E-waste is essentially any electronic product nearing the end of its useful life. Computers, cell phones, printers, and stereos are common e-waste. The production of e-waste has been on the rise over the past two decades with China as the top overall producer. The growth of personal computers and mobile phones has been one of the main factors contributing to the issue. Decreasing lifespan of electronic products produced today exacerbates the problem; items do not even have to be obsolete to become e-waste if newer products are that much more advanced. Furthermore, as electronics enters all types of products, the breadth of e-waste continues to grow. There are four primary ways e-waste is disposed: 1) through an official take-back system or program, 2) placed in a waste bin, 3) traded legally, or 4) traded illegally. Oftentimes e-waste is sent out of the country, and accounts for one of the largest exports of the United States.

Ms. Smith spoke about two case studies she researched related to this topic. The first, taking place in Ghana, studied Agbogbloshie, one of the largest waste sites in the world.
The e-waste created a micro-market in the area, which is unregulated, unsafe, and unstable. The second case study was in Thailand. It shared many similarities with Ghana, but their e-waste trade market involves more specialization by individuals. The work is still unsafe and hazardous, and effects the food and water supply.

Ms. Smith then spoke about her research while in Chile. Her objective there was to better understand the e-waste trading and disposal process, and closely analyze related data sets. With assistance from collaborators, she put together these data sets to learn about working conditions and medical information for those affected. Like the two case studies, Chile and its citizens suffer greatly from e-waste disposal and trade.

So how do we solve this issue? Ms. Smith spoke about supply chain management and responsibility, particularly in relation to local government. Governing bodies in Chile and other similar countries need to recognize the issue and start actively combating it. Similarly, United States could do more. We can push to recycle more, waste less, and learn more about where our e-waste actually ends up.

Chair Anupindi began a conversation about what the University of Michigan can do regarding its e-waste production and disposal. In the past, there have been designated days on campus centered around responsible disposal of e-waste. Further committee conversation ensued, and it was determined that although the University has made efforts on this front, there is more that can be done and the committee should look into possible solutions in the future.

**Operational Leadership**

Kristen Ablauf, Director of Licensing, Intercollegiate Athletics, shared that quarterly vendor contract renewals are due soon, and that electronic updates will be sent out to the committee.

**Monitoring and Compliance**

Chair Anupindi reminded the committee that he sent them an update from WRC regarding the Hansae Vietnam situation. He provided a brief background summary for new members, and then noted that this potentially could be the final update regarding this issue. He mentioned that the resolution was occurring quicker than usual, and that he was happy with the progress.

Chair Anupindi did not have a substantive update regarding FLA, except the fact that the annual advisory meeting is coming up in the third week of January K Ablauf would most likely attend this meeting.

**New Business**
Chair Anupindi mentioned that the student summer travel award information should be disseminated soon, and SYaros, staff to the committee, is sending it out to pertinent constituencies before the next committee meeting.

Chair Anupindi also mentioned that he is open to proposed changes to the charge of the committee if one is needed. This would potentially come from evolving priorities and focuses of the committee. He then posed this question to the committee. Mjohnson suggested that we look into what the University can do on supplier engagement.

Through the discussion, KAbluaf raised the issue that small licensees usually do not have the capacity to improve. Chair RAnupindi reminded that, with support from KAbluaf and Liz Kennedy of the CLC, a student team had been working on developing a licensee guidance document. The team had submitted a draft that the Chair will review and discuss with KAbluaf and Ms. Kennedy.

KAbluaf said she plans to speak with Liz Kennedy about the renewal process of small licensees. KAbluaf will also take a harder look at how many D companies are our licensees and what guidance we currently give them besides requiring ESEP participation. KAbluaf will find out if there are other options and how many licensees we are actually talking about in this current quarter for contract renewal. KAbluaf mentioned that there might be alternative learning modules that smaller licensees could use instead of ESEP participation. This would greatly reduce the cost for them. It will also help if we speak to other universities and get on the same page together.

Chair Anupindi said it would be best for KAbluaf to speak with Liz Kennedy and find a time in the near future for Ms. Kennedy to come and speak to the committee.

**Visit from the President**

President Schlissel joined the meeting at 10:00am. The meeting started with committee members briefly introducing themselves to the President.

The President thanked everyone for their participation on the committee, and expressed how important the shared commitment by the University to labor standards and human rights is. The president acknowledged that this is not always easy, but important work.

The President mentioned how helpful it is to have an existing structure in place to work on challenging questions and dilemmas regarding these topics. In this way, both predictable and unpredictable issues can be handled effectively, and it is reassuring that the committee exists to provide thoughtful recommendations to him.

President Schlissel took a moment to acknowledge that the recent contract with Nike had a hugely positive impact on students and the community, and something committee should feel proud to have accomplished.
The President mentioned how important the committee charge is and took special note of the final point regarding monitoring efforts. He then spoke about the future of sustainability on campus and stated that if we surveyed the local community and students, there would be lot of support for sustainability. However, current execution of this goal could be stronger and more robust.

President Schlissel asked the committee for input on what we can do to strengthen our overall commitment to labor standards and human rights. RNeitzel asked about extending the scope of the committee to include more environmental issues, and President Schlissel agreed that this is an interesting consideration. The Office of Campus Sustainability is focused on sustainability issues within the campus but does not usually consider the supply chain. The President wondered if any large, global organizations exist that could help facilitate this work. Chair Anupindi said this is something the committee can look into.

President Schlissel asked if this process would start in the licensing space or elsewhere. Chair Anupindi responded by saying that the licensing space has mostly focused on labor standards, but could certainly move into more environmental issues. In fact, Linda Greer, Senior Scientist from NRDC, visited the committee last year and spoke about her work in the textile industry concerning environmental impacts of textile production. Chair Anupindi suggested perhaps that investigation of the environmental footprint of licensed apparel could be a starting point.

President Schlissel continued conversation on this topic and KAblauf mentioned that the committee can use the licensee renewal questionnaire to start to acquire environmental information and determine baseline statistics. President Schlissel asked if there were other scholars who could come and speak to the committee in the future, and Chair Anupindi said he plans to look into it.

President Schlissel made note of the student report submitted to him by the committee towards the end of last year concerning labor standards topics in relation to procurement of non-licensed goods, and stated that it is still under thoughtful review by him and others.

The President then asked LSmith, who presented her research earlier in the meeting, to tell him a little about her experience. LSmith provided the President with a high-level overview of her research, and a brief conversation of the committee ensued. At the conclusion of this conversation, it was determined that we’ve been mostly focused on the inbound process of goods, so we might need to start focusing more on the outbound process and regulating where our waste goes.

RNeitzel also suggested the idea of having a course to investigate these issues. President Schlissel thanked the committee for their work again, and told them to feel free and reach out if there was any way in which he could help.

The meeting adjourned at 10:31 am.