

President's Advisory Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights

MINUTES

April 11, 2014, 11:30-1:00pm

2609 School Social Work Building

***Attendees:** Kristen Ablauf, Ravi Anupindi (chair), Kelsea Ballantyne, Khaled Eid, Jim Gannon, Allen Hicken, Maya Menlo, Nicholas Rine, Susan Waltz*

***Absent:** Arjun Bhalla*

Committee Business

Committee approved the March 21 minutes. Members can expect a draft copy of the end of the year report to be circulated by email before submission to the President's Office. Members provided their spring and summer availability for any issues that might require committee discussion between April-August.

Operational Leadership

Licensees were sent a letter with President Coleman's directive on the Accord. The letter, dated April 10, reiterated adherence to the Code for those sourcing out of Bangladesh. Committee discussed the Accord and the requisite that all alternatives presented by licensees not yet signatory to the Accord to align directly with the criteria laid out in the Accord.

Research and Educational Leadership

The Fall 2014 conference will be held on October 10, 2014 with Professor Michael Posner, Stern School of Business, New York University confirmed as a guest speaker. Committee discussed various conference title options. Panels will be decided over the summer months. Committee will seek co-sponsors by reaching out to other centers, faculty, organizations and departments across campus.

Cambodia internships

Interns are working with NRine on the final arrangements of their placements. Both interns will work with the Community Legal Educational Center. <http://www.clec.org.kh/>

Update on Case Study Alta Gracia

KBallantyne summarized her experiences in the Dominican Republic where she participated in a site visit to the Alta Gracia factory and neighboring areas. She and a student colleague conducted video and voice recorded interviews of factory affiliates. The next step in the Case Study is a site visit to the Knights Apparel headquarters in South Carolina where they hope to obtain more data on Knight's Apparel's supply chains in Bangladesh.

KBallantyne explained that in addition to her focus on the Case Study, she is involved in a secondary analysis with the Positive Organization Scholarship Center. Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) focuses on the life-building, capability-enhancing, capacity-creating dynamics in organizations. Within a business framework, if worker autonomy exists along with the potential for learning new skills, research has demonstrated that absenteeism is reduced while worker retention increases. She suggested that interested committee members do an internet search for the *Micro benefits app* to find out more about this topic.

Monitoring and Compliance

-Fire and Building Safety Issues: committee discussed this issue previously under the Operational Leadership category. Ravi will send an article to the committee.

-Report on UAC meeting of the FLA March 6:

Since KBallantyne was absent during the March PACLSHR meeting when the Chair presented on this year's UAC meeting in Dallas, KBallantyne presented brief highlights on the UAC meeting describing her participation as a member of the FLA student committee. This group made individual presentations to each other on their labor standards/human rights work at their home universities, met with the new CEO of FLA and later participated in the UAC meeting.

-FLA and WRC financial reports:

AHicken provided an overview of the most recent FLA financial report (2011). The FLA has been expanding its activities over the last several years adding new sectors to its agenda (ie FoxConn, conflict minerals) while revamping their monitoring system to address root causes of labor issues. The FLA has been conducting fewer factory assessments and there is a lack of information on follow-up assessments to get a sense of the strength of the monitoring program. While the Worker Perception Survey has been the FLA's most recent tool aimed at gathering information to address root causes of labor issues, the question remains: what does the University of Michigan gain from its membership with the FLA? Chair recommended that the committee invite the CEO to a fall meeting.

KEid suggested that AHicken access FLA's form 990 to delve further into how membership dues are used. He used the WRC 990 form to aid in his analysis of the WRC's 2011 report. KEid then reported on the WRC's work describing their mission to appear unchanged. The WRC tends to outsource most of its work. A small number of permanent employees suits the moderate budget. KEid requested more time to address the membership/value to U-M issue more closely. The committee will re-visit this discussion in the fall.

New Business

Chair reported on a recent conversation he had with the former chair of the committee, Siobán Harlow. They discussed the idea of launching a cross school 1-2 credit seminar course on labor standards and human rights. The class content would be structured on a speaker lecture series. Speakers could be faculty on campus or NGO affiliates, corporate leaders or visionaries. Discussion included initiating this course via a seminar series mentioned during the committee's last meeting. An on-campus seminar series, once launched, would use that venue to announce the course to interested students.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00.