

## **The Grinnell College Apparel Purchasing Committee Annual Report for the 2005-2006 academic year**

### **Committee Members**

Committee members during 2005-2006 included:

Elisa McCool , (Student), Smita Sharma (Student), Latona Giwa (Student),  
Cecilia Knight, (Faculty) Evelyn Freeman (Faculty),  
John Kalkbrenner (VP for College Services, and committee chair)  
Cassie Wherry (Bookstore Manager)

### **Committee activities this year**

The 2005-2006 academic year was the third year in which the committee existed. Good progress has been made this year. The order of business continues to be to review the College's apparel purchasing procedures and to make sure that the college is not currently purchasing any items manufactured under sweatshop conditions.

Two units on campus purchase most of the apparel which the college buys. Those units are the Bookstore and the Athletics Department. In the Athletics Department, coaches order apparel for their teams from intermediaries, not from original manufacturers. So, it is difficult to know exactly what company manufactures items. The committee decided that the best approach would be to contact all retailers from whom the Athletics department buys and request a code of conduct letter. This will serve to make retailers more aware of the growing concern about the sweatshop issue and will, in turn, make them pressure their suppliers toward compliance. The committee has worked with the Athletics Department to put in place procedures for contacting all retailers from whom they purchase apparel. Also, the committee crafted a letter and supporting materials to be sent to such vendors.

In the case of the Bookstore, Cassie Wherry has required vendors to provide a written document outlining their commitment to not deal in merchandise produced under so called "sweat shop" conditions. These documents are often referred to as a "code of conduct". Cassie has a book containing dozens of such "code of conduct" letters from vendors with which the Bookstore does business.

The Committee looked into the issue of licensing the Grinnell College logo and name for printing on various apparel items. At this time, the college has no licensing agreements and therefore this is not a concern for the committee.

This spring, the committee continued to investigate other college departments that also purchase apparel. Discussions with the Dining Services Department and Facilities Management has revealed that they are in compliance. Finally the committee crafted a letter to all departments that may possibly purchase apparel reminding them of the college policy and asking them to notify the committee if they make any purchase.