

The Grinnell College Apparel Purchasing Committee Annual Report for the 2006-2007 academic year

Committee Members

Committee members during 2006-2007 included:

Latona Giwa (student)
Smita Sharma (student)
Rebecca Chohlas-Wood (student)
Evelyn Freeman (faculty)
Cecilia Knight (faculty)
Cassie Wherry (Bookstore Manager)
John Kalkbrenner (VP for College Services and committee chair)

Committee activities this year

The 2006-2007 academic year was the fourth year in which the committee existed. 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 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.

In the Athletics Department, coaches order apparel for their teams from intermediaries (usually catalogs) which are not the original manufacturers. This can make it difficult to know exactly what company has manufactured an item. The practice has been to request "code of conduct" letters from catalog vendors. While they are not the original manufacturers, this practice will help increase awareness of "sweatshop" issues.

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.

If someone on campus becomes aware of infractions to the Apparel purchasing policy, the committee stands ready to investigate those concerns. There were no such concerns raised during the 2006/2007 academic year.