

The Grinnell College Apparel Purchasing Committee
Annual Meeting Convened on November 28, 2006

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)

In attendance at this meeting was:

Latona, Smita, Evelyn, Cecilia, Cassie and John

The committee reviewed the Annual Report of the committee from last year. Discussion ensued, about licensing of Grinnell College logo and name. At this time there are no licensing agreements.

John also discussed the issue of talking with Dining Services and Facilities Management over their compliances with the “code of conduct”.

Cassie discussed how items are selected for the Bookstore. Only reliable vendors who have provided a “code of conduct” statement are employed. She talked about the FLA and the WRC and how they contact her on a regular basis either via e-mail or by phone to let her know of any updates on vendors that may be suspected of using sweatshops and those complying with the “code of conduct”. The Independent College Bookstores of America (ICBA) also gives her daily updates on this topic.

Cassie shared with the committee her fall trip to the regional clothing vendors show. Here she learned that one of her vendors takes trips to other countries to make sure that they are following the fair labor practices. She informed the committee that the imprinting of the Grinnell College logo’s are actually imprinted here in the United States, even though the garment may be manufactured in another country.

Evelyn talked on behalf of the Athletic Department. Since most of their purchasing is done through catalogs, they send letters to them to determine that they are following a “code of conduct”. Since there may be many manufacturers represented in a catalog, there is less accountability in situations like this. Any new catalogs that are used are sent a letter to verify the code is being met. Mary Kissinger is in charge of sending these letters and making the contact.

The discussion was brought forth that this needs to be done every even year to all of the catalogs that they use. Evelyn is checking on this to make sure that this has been done since we are in an even year and if it has not yet been done than it will be followed through with.

The letter that is sent out to the campus community explaining the purchasing of Grinnell College Apparel was discussed. It was reviewed as to whether there needs to be more information provided. At this time the letter states that before making a purchase they need to contact John to verify the company is following the code. At this time the letter will read as is and will be reviewed at a later date if the committee feels that there is not compliance.

Evelyn mentioned a concern that not everyone may be getting the information and one group she said specific was the Mortar Board for the Hoof'n it Run t-shirts that they purchase. Latona said she would be checking into this and verifying that they are using a reputable vendor for their shirts.

The discussion continued on the letter as to when would the letter be most effective in going out to the campus community. Due to the differences of groups and the nature of the buying season it was determined that the letter would be sent out twice a year. The committee members decided that the letter should be sent in April and again in August after the school year had begun.

Under New Business; Cassie talked about the Designated Supplier Programmer. The program aims to designate specific factories that are following fair labor practices. Rather than determining which companies are compliant, the focus is on the factory. This is under discussion and still is in the works, some of the larger colleges are trying this to see if it works. The smaller colleges have not gone this direction at this time although there may be more discussion about this issue.

Latona shared with committee that she has talked with friends from larger colleges and the action the students took on the subject of Designated Supplier Programmers last spring was to take direct action with the college's President. She said she has been discussing this with some other small colleges and seeing how this can be implemented in the small colleges.

No other new business was brought forward.