



Students at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill stage a sit-in last week outside of the university's chancellor's office. They were trying to pressure the administration to examine its association with clothing manufacturers that use overseas sweatshops.

Laura Leigh Page/Daily Tar Heel

Nike

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bor. Protesters said they didn't want donations from corporations that employ people for low wages in "deplorable" working conditions.

In fall 1997, SALE passed out leaflets and hung banners at a football game to protest the Nike donation.

In a Dec. 4, 1997, Emerald article, Duncan McDonald, vice president of affairs and development, said the University doesn't have any corporate ties that dishonor it.

"What we have is a growing level of corporate support that comes with no strings attached in only the hope that students get educated and this institution grows in excellence," he said.

In February, University of Wisconsin at Madison students logged 97 hours of sit-in time, and last week students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill spent 72 hours outside the chancellor's office before administrators agreed to change their policies.

"At UW, students have a rather high moral standard and tend to act on them," said Erin Clarequinn, Alliance for Democracy member and the sit-in facilitator.

Clarequinn said students should be concerned about labor issues. She said they should be asking themselves, "Do I want to go to school on blood money?" and "Do I want to go to a school knowing my school makes money off women in Third World countries who only have a fifth grade education?"

Students are demanding full disclosure of factory information from companies that have contracts or license agreements with the school. They are also demanding schools include a living wage clause in the Collegiate Licensing Company's Code of Conduct.

UW also demanded women's rights, such as a ban on forcing female workers to take birth control and pregnancy tests, and UNC requested an independent monitoring system.

Students on other campuses, such as Brown University and this campus, have organized task forces and committees to discuss and resolve the same issues.

Students say the issues are ones that have not been ad-

ressed by already established codes of conduct or by the Fair Labor Association, which is a spin-off from President Clinton's 1996 Apparel Industry Partnership, an initiative headed by manufacturers and labor and human-rights organizations whose goal was to establish a monitoring program.

Nike issued a challenge for universities and competitors to join the FLA, an organization made up of human-rights organizations, labor unions, corporations and some colleges and universities.

"It sets up a really strong infrastructure for monitoring, but what it monitors is hard to define," said Sarah Jacobson, a junior geology major and a member of the University's Human Rights Alliance. "I think the University needs to decide what standards should apply to products that are merchandised with the University logo."

"If we decide our standards are higher, we need to figure out how we're going to monitor those standards."

Some schools, such as UNC, have agreed that if a company with a contract cannot meet the school's Code of Conduct than the school will sever ties with the company.

But not everyone objects to Nike's labor practices.

Two students at Brigham Young University wrote their viewpoint for the school newspaper, The Daily Universe.

They wrote that corporations like Nike, Adidas and Reebok were being misrepresented by the media and that the debate among students was based on second-hand information.

After a short visit to Vietnam and a tour through a Nike factory, the two students concluded that Nike provided "valuable benefits to its employees" and that compared to the Vietnam minimum wage of \$25 per month, "\$40 per month [from Nike] is a humble, yet adequate wage."

They continued by stating, "Many students are asking for their college code of conduct to include a 'living wage' clause. We are unable to find the definition of living wage, but we feel after talking to workers in Nike factories, they are relatively happy with what they earn."

University official McDonald said establishing a code of conduct may be part of the solution,

but it's necessary to determine who is going to follow up on the code standards.

"Duke and Georgetown said 'We'll sign a code of conduct,' and they wrote a code of conduct," McDonald said. "But when it's all said and done, there was no assurance that they could monitor those labor practices."

UNC was successful when it by-passed the FLA and campaigned to pass a code instead that included a living-wage clause and full public disclosure. With the help of a task force, an educational campaign and a sit-in protest, students were able to convince the administration that the issue was important enough to make changes.

"We wanted independent monitoring because we feel the FLA doesn't address independent monitoring — so we got what we wanted," said Lorrie Bradley, a member of the Students for Economic Justice and one of the sit-in organizers. "The code says these are our principals, and we won't join the FLA unless they meet our principals."

This University of Oregon is still trying to decide whether to pen a code of conduct or join the FLA.

"I see the code doing one of two things," University Human Rights Alliance member Jacobson said. "Number one, it sets a standard for companies who have license agreements with the University because it's the University's reputation that's on the apparel. And if they can't meet the standards, then the contract is null and void or someone else steps in to take over the contract."

Three hundred or more companies are licensees of the University's name or logo, McDonald said.

"If we join the FLA, we will certainly ask all our licensees to agree to the terms of the FLA," McDonald said.

McDonald said Nike's challenge to universities and its competitors is an interesting tactic.

"I don't feel as if the University is in the middle of this," McDonald said. "You're not going to take corporations out of the equation, and you're not going to take government out of the equation and you're certainly not going to take colleges out of the equation."

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