

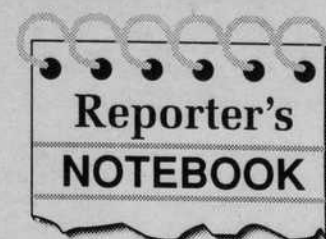
Full public disclosure is needed from UO's licensees

One month ago, the Human Rights Alliance offered a deadline of Nov. 17 for the University to require full public disclosure from its licensees. Since the time of that demand, the HRA has gained support from the community and student groups, faculty and students and received endorsement for this deadline from the ASUO Student Senate.

The past month has proven that full disclosure is an issue that concerns a much broader constituent group than the HRA alone. Moreover, it suggests that when the administration refuses to acknowledge such widespread concerns, it is no longer serving the University community. Vice President for Public Affairs and Development Duncan McDonald states that the administration is seeking advice from a "diverse and representative

community." What, if not the community and student groups currently supporting full disclosure, constitutes a sufficiently diverse and representative community for the administration to listen to?

The administration has tried to sidestep this deadline by asserting that, while they support full disclosure, they do not have the power to make this decision. Despite excuses to the contrary, the committee is not a decision-making body. All decision making power rests solely with University President Dave Frohnmayer. The administration uses its power in some cases but pretends when it is challenged that it does not have that power. McDonald exercised the power to appoint faculty to the committee (rather than relying on appointments from the Universi-



ty Senate, as is the usual procedure.) He again exercised his power when he requested disclosure from Nike after the company offered decisions, and it is an empty excuse for them to pretend they don't have that power.

The HRA believes that the advisory committee will serve an important role in researching standards, consortia, opportunities for pilot projects and available resources of the University to contribute to research projects related to international labor standards

and licensing. However, the advisory committee must work from an informed basis — the HRA asserts that disclosure information will provide that basis.

Public disclosure is the first necessary step in establishing a licensing code of conduct. The apparel industry is notorious for preserving the secrecy of the student anti-sweatshop movement and it is only within the past several months that — by the pressure of the student anti-sweatshop movement — that factory locations have been released. The grudging response of apparel companies to contractual demands for full disclosure made by universities across the country has proven that a "don't ask, don't tell" policy is in full effect. Unless we demand full disclosure of our licensees, we are not going to receive it.

The administration has demonstrated that process and neutrality remain their priority, creating a time line that does not reflect the urgency of sweatshop conditions. Martin Luther King Jr. said that "[time] can be used constructively or destructively... We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right." The alliance is disappointed that McDonald and Frohnmayer have not yet required full disclosure. Instead of accusing the HRA of marching to a "drumbeat" that is inaccurate, we hope that the administration will adopt a pace that reflects the concerns of this community and the priority of addressing sweatshop conditions from an informed basis.

Sarah Jacobson is a member of the Human Rights Alliance. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the paper.



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