

Lecture series on sweatshops to unveil Indonesian report

Two speakers will discuss their interviews with factory workers overseas and review photographs and videotape

By Anna Seeley
Oregon Daily Emerald

Instead of taking vacations to the coast, going on road trips or visiting relatives, two University graduates spent their summers in Indonesia visiting with factory workers who make various University products, including hats, clothing and stuffed animals.

Now back from their trip, Chad Sullivan and Agatha Schmaedick will speak about their summer experiences in "Eating Our Own Tears, Sweating in Indonesia," tonight in 110 Willamette. This is the first presentation in a weekly lecture series about worker rights sponsored by the United Students Against Sweatshops.

Sullivan and Schmaedick spent three months in Indonesia interviewing factory workers and documenting their research with video footage and photographs. Sullivan said they will be sharing their research tonight with a PowerPoint presentation and a short video featuring the workers they met. He said they talked with workers at 12 factories who made products for

Adidas, Nike, Gap, Old Navy and other companies.

"A lot of the workers were young and mostly women," he said. "They were working in some of the harshest conditions. A lot of times it was their first job."

Sullivan said many of the workers could speak for hours about their jobs and were definitely not happy with them. He said a lot of the workers had to work overtime, sometimes causing injuries.

Sullivan said he and Schmaedick wanted to present the lives of the workers accurately in the workers' own words.

"It was a really amazing experience," he said. "It was very powerful to see their courage."

The duo hopes their presentation will inspire people to take some actions, Sullivan said. He added that after Nike CEO Phil Knight's monetary return to the University, they want people to know Nike hasn't stopped exploiting its workers.

"There is no moral justification in any kind of relationship with Nike in my opinion," Sullivan said. "Not to say we should boycott their products, because that's not what the workers want, but we shouldn't be proud."

Randy Newnham, co-director of the Survival Center, said students can look at Sullivan and Schmaedick

Eating Our Own Tears, Sweating in Indonesia

What: Two University graduates share their experiences visiting Indonesian factories and speaking with workers

When: 6 p.m. today

Where: 110 Willamette

Source: Survival Center

and see they are students, just like themselves, and realize they can also bring social change.

"It's important for students to see the people out there making change are people just like themselves," he said.

Greg Dusic, member of USAS, said because students are a huge consumer group, it is important for them to see what the people making their clothes are like.

"This is an opportunity to go and 'meet' the people who make your clothes and make the connection with yourself, the clothes you are buying and the people who make them," Sullivan said, "even though it's halfway around the world."

"It's a very far-reaching problem we're talking about."

Anna Seeley is a student activities reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. She can be reached at annaseeley@dailymerald.com.

Student fees

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But for many students, the election — and the incidental fee — seems to have little connection to their lives.

Sophomore Isaac Kuhlman said he reads about student government leaders working with University administrators on behalf of students. But he said he doesn't see ASUO executives getting involved with students directly.

"I don't really hear about things they do with students," he said. "I just hear about things they do for students."

And while most students say they care where their incidental fee money goes, many have a vague understanding of what the fee is or what the fee pays for.

Klahn said he cares about how the incidental fee he pays for is used, but doesn't feel like he has very much control over the process.

He added that the fee would matter more to him if his parents didn't pay his tuition bill.

Oregon Student Association Executive Director Joelle Lester said students may seem apathetic about the incidental fee because they don't always make the connection between the fees they pay and the services their school provides.

But that doesn't mean students don't care, she said.

"Most students have an opinion about most things," she said.

ASUO President Nilda Brooklyn said the low voter turnout in campus elections reflects a national problem.

"It's frustrating to me that voting, in general, in this country is not stressed or seen as very important," she said.

Brooklyn added that incidental fees should be important to students because they pay for so many services on campus.

"Students should care because there's a lot at stake at the University," she said. "They should have an investment in where their money goes."

Kara Cogswell is a student activities reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. She can be reached at karacogswell@dailymerald.com.

Incidental fee breakdown

Total fee	Per student, per term
\$8,032,290	\$171.35
Program	Per student, per term
EMU Board Finance Committee	\$62.33
100-plus ASUO-affiliated student groups	\$51.94
Student tickets for football and men's basketball	\$23.76
Lane Transit District service for students	\$7.29
Career Center services	\$3.00
Oregon Daily Emerald student subscription	\$2.61
Project Saferide	\$0.96
MEChA	\$0.36

ASUO Special Election opens today

The two measures on the ballot propose changes to the Clark Document, a section of the ASUO constitution that governs the use of student incidental fees.

One would grant the Programs Finance Committee a one-year exemption to a rule limiting budget growth to 7 percent per year. The exemption would allow the 2002-03 PFC budget to grow by as much as 80 percent.

Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that groups at public universities can not go to the ballot to request funding by student incidental fees.

Because of this ruling, groups that previously went to the ballot for funding will bring their budget requests before the PFC this year. Without the exemption, PFC will not be able to include these programs without significant cuts.

Also on the ballot is a measure that would give the ASUO Student Senate more control over how EMU building reserves are spent. The building reserve fund, which is funded by the incidental fee, pays for maintenance and emergency expenses that arise during the year.

If passed, this measure would require the board to obtain approval from the Student Senate to spend more than 20 percent of the reserve fund without budgetary penalty.

Students can vote on DuckWeb from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. today and Wednesday. The ballot can be accessed on DuckWeb through the Student Menu.

— Kara Cogswell

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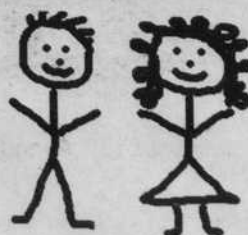
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