

February 27, 2007

Sweatfree Coalition
c/o Students Organizing for Labor and Economic Equality
3909 Michigan Union
530 South State Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1349

Dear Members of the Sweatfree Coalition:

President Coleman and I have discussed your recent letter concerning the Designated Suppliers Program, and she has asked me to respond. I would like to begin by emphasizing President Coleman's and the University's strong and ongoing commitment to fair and lawful labor practices in the manufacture of University-licensed goods; the critical questions concern means.

As you know, we have an established process for review of matters associated with our licensing code. In this process, the president relies on advice and recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights, a standing committee of the University. Last year, the Committee devoted extensive time to discussing and evaluating this USAS proposal. At that time, the Committee recommended that the University not endorse the DSP, but that we continue to monitor the development and modification of this proposed program. The Committee also recommended that the University seek ways to make the current code of conduct more effective. President Coleman accepted these recommendations. Pursuant to its May 2006 charge from President Coleman, the Committee is monitoring development of the DSP. The president expects that the Committee will revisit its earlier recommendation if this seems to be warranted by changes in the DSP proposal. We believe it is essential for this deliberative process to be carried through with due rigor, and we do not intend to alter it in response to an externally proposed deadline. We expect that the Committee will report on progress on all of its current charges from the President, including the DSP, before the end of the academic year.

In this connection, I would like to note that in its April 2006 report, the Committee based its recommendation against adopting the DSP on a number of concerns, including issues of principle as well as practice and implementation. Whether changes in the DSP subsequently made or contemplated by the Working Group are sufficient to meet the Committee's concerns remains to be seen. The Committee's April 2006 report and the President's May 2006 response and charge to the Committee can both be found at <http://www.ilir.umich.edu/CoLSHR/Index.cfm>.

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As noted above, in May 2006 President Coleman also charged the Committee and the Department of Athletics with several other tasks aimed at improving enforcement of the code, and I know that the Committee and the Department have been working on them. Again, we look forward to a report in the weeks ahead.

President Coleman is willing to meet with your group, but until she has received a report from the committee, such a meeting seems premature. In the meantime, I would like to suggest again that you meet with Larry Root, the Chair of the Committee. I also reiterate my offer to meet with you.

Sincerely,

Gary Krenz
Special Counsel to the President