

Worker Rights Consortium Governing Board Meeting Minutes: October 2nd 2000

Board members present:

Katie Quan--Advisory Council (UC-Berkeley), Daniel Long USAS (U-Wisc), Lauren Stephens-Davidowitz USAS (Yale), Horace Mitchell Univ. Caucus (UC-Berkeley), Marikah Mancini USAS (Purdue), Peter Romer-Friedman USAS (U-Michigan), David Moore USAS (Brown), Linda Chavez-Thompson Advisory Council (AFL-CIO), Marcella David Univ. Caucus (Iowa), Mark, Barenberg Advisory Council (Columbia), Rut Tufts Univ. Council (UNC), Ron Schurin (UCONN), Rev. David Dyson-Advisory Council—Lafayette Ave. Presbyterian Church

Staff Present: Maria Roeper-Interim Director, Charlie Eaton-part time

Opening and Introductions

Congressman George Miller addresses the board:

Miller regrettably resigns from the board of the WRC for reasons related to official functions/ non-official functions of Congress. Miller maintains his support of the WRC as an organization and wishes the WRC well and wishes us well. He expressed a wish to help the WRC in any way possible, and an intent to remain one of the WRC strongest congressional cheerleaders. The WRC presents an opportunity to really do something about sweatshops, not just do something about sweatshops in name. Miller thanked the board for the opportunity to serve.

Katie Quan of the Advisory Council chairs the Meeting Governing Board meeting on an interim basis.

Motion to approve the Agenda:

Motion passed unanimously.

I. Administration, Bylaws and the White Paper

A) Administration:

Motion to approve the minutes from the 7/20/00 meeting and put the minutes, minus individuals names up on the web.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion on the release of minutes. WRC staff and secretary will put forward to the board a draft of the minutes two weeks after the meeting. The Board will have two weeks to respond to the minutes and then the minutes will go up on the web as unofficial, unapproved minutes, until approved at the next meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to hire attorney Sherri Levine to officially draft the papers and submit the 501 c(3) application.

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on tax liability. Tufts and David will approach Sherri Levine about a letter regarding tax liability for the WRC.

Staff Report: Maria Roeper reported on finances, foundations applied to for grants, foundations that are planned on to apply to for grants, paying student interns, and the status of Board Insurance.

B) Bylaws

Final Changes to the Bylaws prepared primarily by Mark Barenberg and Marcella David. Important details/changes discussed and ratified by the board:

- 1) Constituencies elect their representatives and board only ratifies their newly selected representatives to the board.
- 2) Section 2.14 is Dues. Language from the white paper on university fees inserted into bylaws. Added a campus system clause. Difference now clarifies how the WRC would go about changing the fees requirement.
- 3) Article 5, adds definition of 3 constituencies other than already defined advisory council.
- 1) Article 7, added sentence that its not conflict of interest for students, administration, or professors to be at university large licensing revenues.
- 1) Page 15: drafted section 8.12, order of precedence, to make clear that no document supercedes bylaws.

Other Issues:

II. Agenda setting:

Motion to approve the following language:

“There shall be a standing board committee on the agenda composed of one director of each of the three constituencies. The executive Director shall draft the agenda. The standing committee shall approve the agenda for presentation to the board.”

Motion passed unanimously

III. Board member absentees:

Motion change language so that a board member that is absent from the Governing Board meeting shall communicate to the Executive Director as soon as possible explaining the absence.

Motion passed unanimously.

3) Checks, contracts, and deposits, section 8.5:

Motion for checks greater than \$5,000 will require a faxed signature of the Treasurer in addition to the Executive Director. The faxed signature is to ensure that money can be handled smoothly and yet still have oversight.

Motion passed unanimously

IV. Bylaw changes:

Motion to require a super-majority vote of 2/3s of the board to approve any changes in the WRC bylaws.

Motion passed unanimously

Motion to adopt the bylaws including all of the changes agreed upon by the board.

Motion passed unanimously

C) WRC Key Principles and White Paper.

Motion: As we talk about the key principles that follow we are talking about the bolded lettering in the WRC white paper document. Non-bolded wording will be considered an explanation of the principle.

Motion passed unanimously.

Principle 4:

Motion to change the “university should never be in the role of certifying ‘good’ companies” to “the WRC shall not play the role of certifying ‘good’ companies”.

Motion passed with 9 votes for it, 3 votes against, and one abstention. *Please comment, I am not sure this is the motion that had these votes.*

Principle 5.

Motion to Change the wording after the first sentence to:

“Limited university funds can improve working conditions if channeled to bring the experiences of workers to the public. The WRC shall engage with licensees to achieve the most effective remediation of abusive working conditions. The resources of the WRC shall be managed independently of the licensees and the economic activity surrounding collegiate licensing, and by people whose clear mission is to be responsive to the concerns of workers.”

Motion passed unanimously.

Principle 7:

Motion to delete the words " by the licensees" so that it applies to all parties and affiliates of the WRC.

Motion passed unanimously.

II. Executive Director Search (Executive Session)

III. Working Group Proposal Recommendations

A) Disclosure Report and Decisions:

Discussion: There was a great deal of reporting and cyclical discussion on the WRC disclosure issue. Please see the WRC disclosure group report as a reference on where the disclosure/ data collection group is.

The group made several requests of the board:

- 1) Standardize the format of collecting the factory disclosure information. The working group explained in detail which fields the WRC should use, and why. Essentially it is to make the data useable, and easily sortable. The suggested fields are a modification of the CLC data format because this modified format would be useful and is close to what schools are already reporting, and what the CLC is already reporting. The one field that goes beyond factory location information in the suggested format is a field on the amount of production, so that the importance of the data can be weighed. However, the data collection group suggested asking for the data dollars per licensee. The board noted that this would not help to weigh the data unless it was collected by dollars per production site. It was also discussed that eventually the WRC would like to collect further measures of working conditions that should be included in the same database. However, it was acknowledged that it would not be too difficult to add onto a location data base further information, and it is important for the WRC to consult with industry representatives, and licensing representatives, before deciding on this broad disclosure information and format.

Motion: use the proposed format for the WRC location disclosure information, with the understanding that broader disclosure is something for the future.

Motion passed.

- 2) Sending a letter to colleges and universities regarding disclosure information: The group recommended that the board authorize the WRC office to send letters to colleges and universities requesting disclosure information in the format discussed above. There should be a note included saying that if schools are already collecting the information in a format different than the one above that they should send the information to the WRC office. Over the summer the board authorized the office to send out a letter requesting disclosure information. The office did this but received very few responses. It has been brought to the attention of the office that some schools are not requesting the information from their licensees because they are not entirely sure how they should do this, and in what format, and do not realize the importance of the disclosure information to furthering the WRC programmatically. The question was raised of who should be requesting the format: whether the CLC should be asked about the format, or the schools. However, the CLC, or even the LRG does not cover all of the WRC schools. **It was concluded** that one action does not preclude the other, but that schools should receive a letter explaining the format and be able to request the information in the format most helpful to the WRC, and the WRC should talk to the CLC and the LRG about the format.

- 3) Hiring technological help for the WRC database. It was presented clearly that the WRC database will be sufficiently complicated, that it will need a person to be spending significant amounts of time on it. While the board would like to continue to look for pro-bono help, the board understands that this is probably not going to give us sufficient attention to the database. Therefore the committee will be charged with investigating options for hiring pro-bono, graduate student, or professional **theological (is this supposed to be technical??)** help. The work will need to be

supervised closely by members of the committee and WRC staff. Depending on timelines, the approval to hire someone on an interim basis can be done either by the Chair of the Board, or by the Executive Director in consultation with the Chair.

Motion to authorize the expenditure of money to hire technological assistance with the approval of the Chairman of the board, and/or the Executive Director as described above. Motion approved.

B) Networking Report and Discussion.

Discussion focused on the work the networking group has done, and would like to do in the coming months.

1) Survey. Here is a proposed survey. The survey clearly needs to be simplified and altered. The committee recognizes this.

Motion: the networking group will put information out to the board and expect comments back within two weeks. The group will then compile these comments to put together a better survey.

Motion approved.

Motion: The networking group modifies its proposal to request funds to send out the survey and follow up with phone calls. Instead the group will wait until the Executive Director is hired and assess at this time whether this would fit into the pre-approved mailing and phone budget.

Motion approved.

2) NGO partner guidelines proposal.

Discussion: most people agreed that the guidelines were appropriate. There was objection to guideline #6. The board did not want to limit itself from working with local governmental agencies. The board wanted to add another guideline, (that the networking group had already thought about and mistakenly been left out of the proposal) that was essentially that the organization be credible and have good references. There were also multiple questions of interpretation of the guidelines. It was concluded that there will be many matters of interpretation that must be handled by the WRC staff, under the guidance of the Executive Director for all of the WRC guidelines. There was some discussion on who approves NGO partners. The conclusion of which was that the board will meet quarterly to review the work of the Executive Director, but the day to day decisions and judgement calls will have to be made by the WRC staff.

Motion to approve the guidelines with the changes discussed above.

Motion passed *I'm not sure about this one again. Please comment.*

IV First Year Goals, and Pilot Project Development Proposal

A) Proposal for Worker Rights Consortium Working Group: "Pilot Projects and Code Verification Protocols"

Project proposal discussed, and eventually passed. The participants of the working group include at least: Mark Barenberg, Katie Quan, Daniel Long, and on approval from the nominee: Horace Mitchell.

B) WRC First Year Goals.

Discussion about WRC priorities: (in no order of importance)

Unify Constituents

Present publicly what we stand for

Stable, identifiable income for 3 yrs.

Complete 3 pilot projects that would develop protocols

Complete construction of database of all universities

Identify transparency

Establish global database of contacts

Resolve relations with the industry

Establish WRC Standards

Finish Institution building

V Wrap up Business of the WRC:

Motion to approve Mark Barenburg as chair of the WRC as nominated by the Advisory Council

Motion passed unanimously

Next meeting date: The WRC will strive to hold the next Governing Board meeting in mid January 2001.