

Annual Meeting of the WRC University Caucus
School of Continuing Studies, 640 Massachusetts Ave NW
Georgetown University, Washington, DC
Wednesday, April 18, 2018 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions

9:10 a.m. The Year in Review: 2017-2018

We will review the WRC's body of work over the last year, including in-depth review of several key factory investigations, updates on major issues, and reports on organizational developments.

Presentation by Scott Nova and WRC staff. Followed by questions and discussion.

10:15 a.m. The Bangladesh Accord: What Has Been Achieved for Worker Safety?

As the Bangladesh Accord reaches the end of its original term, and as we approach the 5th anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse, we will take stock of the Accord's work and assess the progress achieved: at collegiate suppliers, across the universe of Accord factories, and at factories covered by other inspection schemes. We will hear directly from senior Accord staff about the experience of the last five years and how the Accord has worked to overcome extraordinary challenges to make work safer for more than 2.5 million people.

Presentations by Joris Oldenziel, Deputy Director of the Bangladesh Accord Foundation, and WRC staff. Followed by questions and discussion.



11:20 a.m.

Coffee Break

11:30 a.m.

Alta Gracia Apparel: Accomplishments, Transition, and Future Prospects

Alta Gracia is the only independently verified living wage factory exporting clothes to the United States. As Alta Gracia undergoes an important ownership transition, we'll discuss the brand's past and future—and its significance in the context of the growing debate about living wages for garment workers.

Presentations by Chris Morocco, CEO of AG Triada (Alta Gracia's new parent company); a worker and union leader at the factory; and WRC staff. Followed by questions and discussion.

12:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Sara Ziff, Fashion Model and Founding Director of the Model Alliance

Sara Ziff has worked as a model for two decades and has been the face of H&M, Tommy Hilfiger, and other leading brands. In 2012, Sara founded the Model Alliance, which combats workplace abuse and promotes fair labor practices in the fashion industry. Sara will discuss the issue of sexual harassment in the modeling business, the impact of the #MeToo movement, and new efforts to combat workplace sexual abuse in the fashion industry.

1:00 p.m.

Lunch

1:45 p.m.

Transformation in Honduras: How the Russell Case Opened the Door to Sweeping Gains for Worker Rights

The countries of Central America have long been beset with worker rights challenges, but in recent years we've seen tremendous progress on associational rights in Honduras, the region's leading exporter. Most of these gains can be traced back to the breakthrough at Russell Athletic, in which universities played a vital role. We will discuss this progress and its impact on wages and working conditions and will hear the perspective of executives of the two companies where the progress has been most dramatic.

Presentations by Edward Bardales, V.P. of Human Resources for Latin America at Fruit of the Loom; a senior representative of Gildan Activewear; and Tara Mathur, WRC Latin America Field Director. Followed by questions and discussion.

2:45 p.m.

Open Discussion

Participants will have the opportunity to raise additional topics, projects, or cases of interest and/or to engage in further discussion of items on the agenda.

3:30 p.m.

Coffee Break

3:45 p.m.

Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination in the Garment Workplace: The Reality for Women Workers and the Prospects for Change

In the unprecedented national discussion about workplace harassment, there has been ample comment on a critical fact: low-skill workers are at greatest risk . We will discuss harassment and discrimination in the apparel supply chain, the challenges for labor rights investigators, and the prospects for change.

Presentations by Jess Champagne, WRC Deputy Director for Field Operations and Laura Gutierrez, Field Director for Bangladesh. Followed by questions and discussion.

4:20 p.m.

Wrap-Up and Adjournment