December 2, 2016

Michael W. McCann, Professor, Political Science (Co-chair)
Norman G. Arkans, Associate Vice President, Media Relations & Communications
John J. Carroll, Manager, Central and Southwest Maintenance Zones, Facilities Services
Kim England, Professor, Geography
Debra Glassman, Senior Lecturer, Michael G. Foster School of Business
Kathy D. Hoggan, Director, Trademarks & Licensing (ex officio)
Nina E. Keaney, Director of Administration, Intercollegiate Athletics (ex officio)
Meghan McNabb, GPSS
Rod Palmquist, UW USAS
Anita Ramasastry, Professor, School of Law
Thomas Small, Technologist, Anatomic Pathology

Re: President’s Advisory Committee on Trademarks & Licensing

Dear colleagues:

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Advisory Committee on Trademarks & Licensing (ACTL). ACTL advises me on ways to achieve our institutional goal of ensuring the humane and ethical treatment of workers who produce UW licensed products.

Last year, following recommendations by students, I restructured the committee, a process which took several months. One result was that the committee did not begin its work until after the first of the year. Because of this, and in the interests of continuity, I have decided to allow several members whose terms were expiring to serve an additional year. Those members are: Rod Palmquist, last year’s student co-chair and UW USAS’s representative; Ella Torti, GPSS’s representative; and Norm Arkans, Associate Vice President, Media Relations & Communications, who will continue to fill one of the two pro-staff positions. I am awaiting nominations for three of ACTL’s thirteen members—two ASUW nominations, and one classified staff nomination—whom I hope I will be able to appoint before the committee’s first meeting.
ACTL’s faculty members have nominated Professor Mike McCann to serve as faculty co-chair, and by this letter, I am confirming his appointment to that position. The committee’s student members (once they have all been appointed) must nominate a student co-chair. Although Rod Palmquist was student co-chair last year, the students may nominate him again this year if they choose. Once they have chosen their nominee, they should inform my Chief Strategy Officer, Margaret Shepherd, who will assist me in considering the nomination.

ACTL’s charge from last year is ongoing. I look to the committee for advice on applying the University’s Licensee Code of Conduct to see that licensees conform to high ethical standards which respect the rights of workers. ACTL’s advice should include review and evaluation of UW licensees’ corporate responsibility and performance, suggestions on the most effective ways to work with those businesses, and recommendations for appropriate remedial action when violations of the Code of Conduct are identified. ACTL should also monitor the work of the University’s two member organizations, the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) and the Fair Labor Association (FLA), to support and collaborate with them and benefit from their efforts to improve working conditions in the global production of goods for the marketplace and hold manufacturers accountable to international standards.

The focus of ACTL’s work last year was a dispute between the WRC and Nike arising from Nike’s refusal to provide the WRC access to a factory in Hansae, Vietnam, where Nike was producing collegiate apparel. At the invitation of Georgetown University, our Director of Trademarks & Licensing, Kathy D. Hoggan, and my former Senior Advisor, Rolf B. Johnson (now with the UW Attorney General’s Office) participated in a joint meeting last summer between Nike, the WRC, the FLA, Georgetown, and the UW. The meeting resulted in the WRC’s finally obtaining access to the Hansae facility. The immediate issue at Hansae has thus been resolved.

The group brought together by Georgetown last summer intends to continue meeting to consider ongoing WRC access to Nike production facilities, to explore possibilities for better delineating the unique roles of the WRC and the FLA, and to find ways for the two organizations to work in tandem rather than, as sometimes seems to be the case, in opposition. I am encouraged that these meetings may help to improve the ability of both organizations to do their monitoring work while accelerating remediation when conduct-code violations are identified.

For the coming year, I would like ACTL to identify potential long and short term projects that it might undertake to further the University’s ethical sourcing goals. One such project I want ACTL to consider is an in-depth study of the types of responses available to the University when labor code violations are identified as well as the relative effectiveness of different responses.
In particular, I am interested in the merits and demerits of license-cancellation versus licensee-engagement with respect to improving conditions for factory workers in facilities where products bearing the University’s marks are produced. Also, I would like ACTL to identify how various corporations involved with university licensing compare with each other with regards to labor practices.

Once again, thank you for agreeing to serve on this important committee, and I look forward to ACTL’s advice in the coming year.

Best regards,

cc: Margaret Shepherd, Chief Strategy Officer  
Rolf B. Johnson, Assistant Attorney General