



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Office of the General Counsel

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January 9, 2008

VIA FIRST CLASS MAIL

Mr. Timothy O'Brien
1303 Ruthven Street
Houston, Texas 77019-5139

Re: **Texas Public Information Request dated December 17, 2007**
OGC Reference Number IR01114

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

In a letter dated December 17, 2007 directed to the Office of the General Counsel, you made a request pursuant to the Public Information Act for copies of the following documents:

1. The complaint for any lawsuit filed against the university and personnel associated with the university since Sept 15, 2007.
2. All policies concerning paid advertisements in the Daily Cougar.
3. An electronic copy of the advertisement place on September 26, 2007 on page 3 of the Daily Cougar entitled "University Response to Issues of Fair Trade Coffee & Ethical Treatment of Garment Workers."
4. Dick Cigler's (Daily Cougar worker) resume and salary information.

A copy of your request is attached for your convenience.

Please note that we have redacted the I.D. and contact information for Dick Cigler. If you are seeking this information, please let us know. Also, please be advised that the document responsive to your request number 3 is also being sent to you via electronic mail.

Sincerely,

Valerie Coleman-Ferguson



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University of Houston Response to Issues of Fair Trade Coffee and Ethical Treatment of Garment Workers

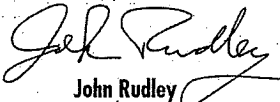
Questions have been raised about the University of Houston's policies regarding:

- Providing fair trade coffee on campus, and
- Joining the Workers Rights Consortium supporting the ethical treatment of international garment workers.

The University of Houston has responded fully and fairly over the past year to these concerns. Fair trade coffee is available to our campus community, and our vendors are complying with regulations governing the ethical treatment of garment workers. Listed below are the principal issues and demands raised and the University's actions to address them.

Fair Trade Coffee Demand	UH's Free Trade Coffee Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell ONLY fair trade coffee on campus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UH has fair trade coffee available through all vendors on campus. Shasta's Cones serves only fair trade coffee, and UH is developing another organic coffee program in the Roy Cullen building. The Starbucks slated for the Library will offer fair trade coffee. • The University believes in a Free Trade Coffee policy that provides options for students, faculty, staff, and visitors, and does not mandate only one type of coffee on campus. • The University sees no need to take further action on this issue.
Workers Rights Consortium Demand	UH Already Supports Ethical Code
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand has been made that the University pay a membership fee equal to 1 percent of all fees obtained from licensed apparel to become a dues-paying member of the Workers Rights Consortium (WRC), an independent labor rights monitoring organization advocating for fair labor standards. • Dues to the WRC support their on-site investigations of international manufacturing plants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UH has for years supported the Fair Labor Association (FLA) code of ethics that includes banning of forced labor or child labor, and supporting fair wages, limited working hours, and overtime compensation. The UH Barnes and Noble Bookstore has for ten years required its apparel vendors to adopt the FLA code. UH holds all of its apparel venues to this same policy. • UH sees no benefit to paying an exorbitant membership fee to an outside organization to reconfirm our support of the FLA code, which is the same as the WRC code. • The U.S. Attorney General currently is reviewing whether the WRC violates antitrust laws by mandating specific manufacturers. • The Texas Attorney General may have to rule on the constitutionality of spending university money on this type of membership.

The University of Houston agrees with the position of the Academic Consortium on International Trade (ACIT), a group specializing in international trade policy and economic law from universities including Columbia, Yale, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Maryland. ACIT believes that all decisions on these issues should be made only after careful research, discussion, and debate appropriate to shared governance and informed decision-making.


John Rudley

Interim President, University of Houston

(No state funds were used to print or distribute this information.)