

John Hennessy
Office of the President
Building 10
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-2061

Re: Stanford University's Entrance into the Workers' Rights Consortium and Designated Suppliers Program

Dear President Hennessy,

We are writing to you because we are concerned with Stanford University's sourcing policies. In a 2000 study commissioned by five universities including Harvard and University of California, it was found that sub-par working conditions exist in apparel factories in all seven countries they visited. Issues of concern included excessive work hours, limitations to freedom of association, and widespread health and safety problems. To our knowledge, Stanford University does not currently adhere to any labor standards for the production of its clothing or to any monitoring system that ensures humane working conditions. We would like to see this situation change.

Fortunately, there is a system in place for Stanford to guarantee that their clothes are not made in sweatshops. Through independent monitoring, the consolidation of factories producing Stanford clothing, and a factory certification process, the Workers' Rights Consortium (WRC) and Designated Suppliers Program (DSP) ensure that factory conditions are humane. Under this system, workers are guaranteed a living wage, the right to unionize, freedom from harassment and intimidation, and a safe working environment. Furthermore, by requiring licensees to sign long-term contracts with their suppliers, the DSP will stabilize an industry known for constantly shifting its production from country to country and provide garment workers with a reasonable level of job security.

Today, 166 schools, including Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Brown, and the University of Pennsylvania, are all a part of the Workers' Rights Consortium. 30 schools, including Columbia, Cornell, Georgetown, Duke, and the entire UC system, have taken the next step by also joining the Designated Suppliers Program. Clearly, the WRC and DSP are well-established and respected mechanisms through which we can ensure the protection of fundamental human rights in the manufacture of our apparel. As students, we ask that Stanford University take a vigorous stand against sweatshops by affiliating itself with the WRC and DSP.

President Hennessy, we admire your initiative in confronting some of the world's most pressing problems by embarking on "The Stanford Challenge." Yet, while we search for solutions, we must make sure that we are not part of the problem. As our world adjusts to an increasingly globalized economy, we must do everything within our power to ensure that our business practices reflect our values. While we do not expect licensees to support Stanford's entrance into the WRC and DSP, we feel that Stanford's moral integrity must remain paramount. As you stated when announcing The Stanford Challenge, we must, "meet the commitment made by Jane and Leland Stanford 'to promote the public welfare by exercising an influence on behalf of humanity and civilization.'" Joining the WRC and DSP presents the perfect opportunity for Stanford to do just that.

We look forward to hearing from you. Please contact Daniel Shih (Political Science, '09) at ddshih@stanford.edu and Mark Liu (Asian American Studies, '07) at mvliu@stanford.edu.

Sincerely,
The Sweat-free Stanford Coalition