

Statement of the Board of Trustees of Vassar College  
on Sweatshop Labor in the Apparel Industry

Whereas Vassar College states that one of its defining purposes is the promotion of "increased knowledge of oneself, a humane concern for society, and a commitment to an examined and evolving set of values," it is incumbent upon the College not to contribute to the mistreatment of workers.

Whereas the College purchases clothing for its Bookstore, and sports and work uniforms, it is incumbent upon the College never knowingly to purchase such apparel from vendors or manufacturers that use sweatshop labor, as well as to take an active stance in surveying and researching (through the IRRC and the White House Apparel Industry Partnership) the companies with which it deals, and to seek out and promote non-sweatshop alternatives, when necessary.

Vassar College will not contribute to the mistreatment and exploitation of workers and pledges never knowingly to use or sell any apparel that was produced under sweatshop conditions.

The College pledges not only to withdraw its business from vendors and manufacturers who profit from sweatshops, but also to reward with its business those which act ethically toward their workers, providing positive reinforcement for such behavior.

The College will report annually to the Trustee Investor Responsibility Committee on its apparel vendors and manufacturers.

Vassar College will hold any apparel manufacturers who are licensees of the College to the Code of Conduct of the White House Partnership.

## **Workplace Code of Conduct of the Apparel Industry Partnership**

The Apparel Industry Partnership has addressed issues related to the eradication of sweatshops in the United States and abroad. On the basis of this examination, the Partnership has formulated the following set of standards defining decent and humane working conditions. The Partnership believes that consumers can have confidence that products that are manufactured in compliance with these standards are not produced under exploitative or inhumane conditions.

**Forced Labor.** There shall not be any use of forced labor, whether in the form of prison labor, indentured labor, bonded labor or otherwise.

**Child Labor.** No person shall be employed at an age younger than 15 (or 14 where the law of the country of manufacture\* allows) or younger than the age for completing compulsory education in the country of manufacture where such age is higher than 15.

**Harassment or Abuse.** Every employee shall be treated with respect and dignity. No employee shall be subject to any physical, sexual, psychological or verbal harassment or abuse.

**Nondiscrimination.** No person shall be subject to any discrimination in employment, including hiring, salary, benefits, advancement, discipline, termination or retirement, on the basis of gender, race, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, political opinion, or social or ethnic origin.

**Health and Safety.** Employers shall provide a safe and healthy working environment to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, linked with, or occurring in the course of work or as a result of the operation of employer facilities.

**Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining.** Employers shall recognize and respect the right of employees to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

**Wages and Benefits.** Employers recognize that wages are essential to meeting employees' basic needs. Employers shall pay employees, as a floor, at least the minimum wage required by local law or the prevailing industry wage, whichever is higher, and shall provide legally mandated benefits.

**Hours of Work.** Except in extraordinary business circumstances, employees shall (i) not be required to work more than the lesser of (a) 48 hours per week and 12 hours overtime or (b) the limits on regular and overtime hours allowed by the law of the country of manufacture or, where the laws of such country do not limit the hours of work, the regular work week in such country plus 12 hours overtime and (ii) be entitled to at least one day off in every seven day period.

**Overtime Compensation.** In addition to their compensation for regular hours of work, employees shall be compensated for overtime hours at such premium rate as is legally required in the country of manufacture or, in those countries where such laws do not exist, at a rate at least equal to their regular hourly compensation rate.

Any Company that determines to adopt the Workplace Code of Conduct shall, in addition to complying with all applicable laws of the country of manufacture, comply with and support the Workplace Code of Conduct in accordance with the attached Principles of Monitoring and shall apply the higher standard in cases of differences or conflicts. Any Company that determines to adopt the Workplace Code of Conduct also shall require its licensees and contractors and, in the case of a retailer, its suppliers to comply with applicable local laws and with this Code in accordance with the attached Principles of Monitoring and to apply the higher standard in cases of differences or conflicts.