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Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2011 5:13 PM

To: , ; ; Van Brimmer, Rick

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Subject: URGENT: Letter of Delegation regarding Dallas Cowboys (Silver Star Merchandising) Licensing

June 1, 2011

Dear President E. Gordon Gee and Staff,

As students of the Ohio State University community who have dedicated ourselves to ending sweatshop conditions in the production of college apparel, we are disappointed that we have not received a response from you after two weeks since we raised our concern about the University's backroom process to consider inking a monopoly apparel licensing contract with the Dallas Cowboys. This monopoly deal would be a huge step backwards in the university's efforts to end sweatshop abuse in our college gear supply chain. We are deeply disappointed the administration would chip away at commitments to labor rights it has already made, even in the midst of the students' ongoing efforts to urge the university to take responsibility for Sodexo's dismal labor rights record.

We urge you to reject any attempt to consolidate licensing with the Cowboys because the deal will inevitably cripple our university's ability to enforce our labor code of conduct. We request a meeting as soon as possible with you or the appropriate decision-makers to discuss this bid process, the potential impact of the decision, and the incorporation of OSU United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) in the decision-making process.

We understand that the university is currently considering a bid from the Dallas Cowboys in response to a Request For Proposals aimed at consolidating apparel licensing and retail operations with a single company. Such a deal with the Dallas Cowboys, a company with no track record of social responsibility, should the university choose to move forward, would significantly hinder our ability as an institution to enforce the labor standards we currently require of licensees.

Additionally, we are disappointed at the lack of transparency in which this process has been carried out, excluding the involvement of students who have been tirelessly dedicated to ensuring that Buckeye apparel is produced under ethical working conditions.

Our most timely concern is the recent report by the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) that a Cowboys supplier factory in Indonesia, PT Kizone, illegally withheld from its workers the equivalent of more than half a year's wages. This sort of lawless exploitation is absolutely unacceptable for any factory producing Buckeye apparel, so a move to consolidate all licensing to one brand responsible for the PT Kizone fiasco ought to be unthinkable. Despite the Cowboys' misleading public statements about its role at PT Kizone, the legally-mandated severance owed to 2,000 workers was earned in a significant proportion from workers sewing Cowboys apparel, and the Cowboys continue business with the middle man that connected them to PT Kizone, a company called Green Textile.

More broadly, we question whether the current bid process is truly competitive and in the best interest of our university. The RFP creates conditions that qualify the Cowboys as the only single entity which currently has the capacity to fulfill the criteria listed. This raises grave concerns about whether or not the OSU administration is actually engaging in a good faith and fair process, or if it simply shutting out small and medium-sized Ohio-based businesses that have depended for decades on supplying Buckeye-logoed apparel. Regardless of this first point, an RFP that so closely fits one company cannot encourage the competition necessary to get the best possible deal for the university, its tuition-paying students and the state of Ohio.

Given our experience working nationally with United Students Against Sweatshops, we've witnessed the powerful role of universities in helping to reach historic labor agreements between licensees and workers, through leveraging its relationships with a multitude of licensees. Therefore, we understand the devastating impact that an exclusive agreement with the Cowboys would have on the progress in the realm of labor rights that OSU has made throughout the last decade.

We are disturbed to learn that our University is not only considering an exclusive licensing agreement with the Cowboys, but that students dedicated to issues of labor rights continue to be completely shut out of the decision making and RFP review process.

We request a meeting within the next week with the appropriate decision-makers to discuss the concerns outlined above, as well as how they will incorporate our role in reviewing the proposals before further progress is made on a decision that will affect the entire campus community, the state of Ohio, and the workers around the world sewing Buckeye apparel.

Sincerely,

Ohio State Students Against Sweatshops
terasia@usas.org

cc:

Rick Van Brimmer, Director of Trademarks and Licensing
Gene Smith, Director of Athletics