



To: To the Macalester Community
From: Kathleen L Johnson; Purchasing and Accounts Payables Manager; 651-696-6551
and
MPIRG Fair Trade task force members
Date: 4/21/2009
Re: Considerations When Procuring Apparel

In recent months, news of a serious violation of workers' rights by Russell Corporation has come to light, prompting many universities to reassess and cancel their contracts for athletic wear with the company. Russell is guilty of denying workers at the Jerzees plant in Honduras their right to unionize in order to improve their working conditions, deciding instead to close the plant and relocate the factory equipment to other, non-unionized factories in Honduras. The Jerzees plant was the only unionizing Russell factory in Honduras and the only one closed.

In light of this series of events, it bears repeating that Macalester's administration, student body, and alumni are all committed to the cause of ensuring that the poorest workers of the world be allowed to improve their station and their lives. Russell's actions stand in clear violation of that commitment, and as a result I am urging all coaches and managers to refrain from entering into contracts with Russell and instead to make serious efforts to buy from responsible and sustainable sources.

By buying responsibly we live up to our stated commitment to global responsibility and citizenship, and send a clear message to Russell and other companies that actions that violate the human rights of their workers are unacceptable as we move toward a more united global community. I encourage anyone with questions regarding responsible and sustainable sources of athletic apparel to contact me at johnsonkl@macalester.edu. Specific questions regarding the case of Russell can be answered by contacting Macalester's MPIRG Fair Trade task force at mpirg@macalester.edu.