

Chancellor's Labor Codes and Licensing Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2015 • 67 Bascom • 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

<http://www.news.wisc.edu/laborlicensing/>

**Committee members attending:** John Ahlquist (Chair), Valyncia Raphael, Jason Lee, Bruce Petters, Chelsea Anderson, Luke Gangler, David Gardner, Jason Weitzman, John Newton, Tammi Simpson, Cindy Van Matre

**Also attending:** Everett Mitchell, Lisa Hull

**Absent:** Randy Dunham, Ian Coxhead

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ahlquist at 12:00 noon.

**Minutes.** The minutes from the March 17, 2015 meeting were approved.

**Chair's update.** The Chair is required to produce a report to the Chancellor and the University Committee at the end of the year. This is to be a factual report on the activities for that period. Chair Ahlquist will draft it and send it around to the committee for review.

Chair Ahlquist will also circulate the Annual Report from the Alliance and a letter from a Fox Valley Labor Representative. (Sent to committee members on 4/14/2015)

Luke Gangler asked to add another meeting to the committee regularly scheduled meetings. An additional meeting was scheduled for April 28, 2015.

**Scott Nova, from the Worker's Rights Consortium** joined the meeting via telephone to answer a set of questions put to him by the committee.

Questions:

- a) Is there cooperation between Alliance and Accord? (SN=Scott Nova)  
SN: Limited cooperation. There are some joint factories that produce for brands who are members of both organizations. The Alliance is not supplying the Accord with their reports quickly enough, some were not provided until early this year. Although they are posted on the Alliance web site. Nova said the Accord and the Alliance are two very different initiatives, and although the Accord brands are asking for more cooperation with the Alliance, labor and staff won't allow it. The Accord staff is very suspicious of working with the Alliance.
- b) Safety and security in the country. Not safe to travel in parts of Bangladesh. Has this impacted implementation and verification of Accord and/or Alliance?  
SN: It's a very difficult situation. The impact on the Accord is that the inspectors are not able to get out. The key work now is the follow-up with the factories on safety measures. It was delayed in January but now seems to be back on track. They are able to function with extra security. He assumes the Alliance is the same.
- c) Have heard that Accord signatories are not living up to their financial commitments, is this true?  
SN: Compliance has been mixed. Some brands are stepping up and some are instead making private arrangements with factory owners. The brands think financial obligations are reinforcing setting precedence of making them responsible to pay for other things in

the future. Some brands are not paying at all. Some enforcement action is being taken by labor signatories, especially against 2 German retailers. Not all the Accord signatories will want to comply, many will try to evade paying. Enforcement will be an ongoing challenge.

As for the Alliance, only 4 companies are participating in the loan fund. He said he didn't much information on the Alliance, although he is skeptical. While there are challenges for holding the Accord brands responsible, there's no enforceability for the Alliance brands.

- d) Already two years into a five year agreement. What are the plans to evaluate effectiveness?

SN: We will tackle the 5-year timeframe in a year or 2. Right now the focus is on implementation and enforceability. The Government and the BGME (manufacturer's organization) want to delay and deter as much as it can.

What instances of specific differences between the Alliance and the Accord can you point to?

SN: The Accord has a long list of safety renovations on the website, which is being updated. The Alliance is not report if the actions actually were implemented.

Additionally, we (WRC) do not consider the Alliance to be a viable option. We do not have confidence they will renovate factories.

- e) VF/JanSport and choosing suppliers/autonomy to do so.

SN: All of their contact with JanSport goes through VF. JanSport has no record of producing in Bangladesh. From a labor perspective all VF companies are the same.

VF/JanSport response to Chair Ahlquist's request for a written statement regarding their supply chain:

- VF has corporate central control, and manages a network of suppliers from which a brand can choose. Jan Sport has not used, nor does it plan to use any production facility in Bangladesh.
- VF supports the labor standards they have implemented in their company.

Next meeting: Talk some more about another recommendation from the committee that the University terminate its contract with JanSport.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

**Meeting schedule 2<sup>nd</sup> semester:** Meetings will be held in Room 67 Bascom.

Tuesday, Jan. 20 from Noon – 1:30 pm

Tuesday, Feb. 17 from noon – 1 pm

Tuesday, March 17 from noon – 1 pm

Tuesday, April 14 from noon – 1 pm

Special Meeting: Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Tuesday, May 12 from noon – 1 pm