

Advisory Committee on Corporate Responsibility in Investment Policy
(ACCRIP)

Minutes of the Meeting – 21 April 2009

Present:

Beth Burlingame (By phone)	James Palardy	Sandra Seibel
Sam Byker	Louis Putterman (Chair)	Anne Sharp
Stephen Houston (Late)	Harry Reis	Christine Sprovieri (New member)
Kirsten Howard	Kathleen Morrissey (New member)	Luiz Valente

Agenda:

- I. Introduction of New Members
- II. Discussion of Committee's Voting Quorum Policy and General Inactivity
- III. Review of HEI Card Check Neutrality Issue
- IV. Presentation by HEI Employee and Student Labor Alliance Members
- V. Discussion of HEI Card Check Neutrality Issue
- VI. Socially Responsible Investment Fund Update
- VII. Last Meeting's Minutes Approved
- VIII. Discussion of Membership Next Year

Meeting commenced at 3:05 PM

Items:

- I. Introduction of Members
 1. Committee members briefly introduced themselves to Kathleen and Christine who will be replacing Beverly Travers and Beth Burlingame next year as representatives of University staff.
- II. Discussion of Committee's Voting Quorum and General Inactivity
 1. Determined that Kathleen and Christine could act as voting members for this meeting in the interest of having more votes. There appears to be no written formal rule regarding what constitutes a quorum. Standard past practice has been that at least half of voting members must participate for a decision to be taken on behalf of the committee.
 2. Sandra Seibel explained that the committee has been inactive this year because the Investment Office sold holdings that usually result in proxy resolutions. However, she advised that the university will be reinvesting in direct stocks soon, and also the committee seems to still be useful in other ways, as illustrated by the seeking of our advice on the HEI matter.
- III. Review of HEI Card Check Neutrality Issue
 1. Several members have objected to the idea of having an HEI employee speak to the committee, as that would go against the principle of equal representation from both sides of the union struggle.

2. Card Check Neutrality is a unionization method where union reps get employees to check off their names on cards if they're for unionization and the company pledges to stay out of the discussion.
3. The committee discussed the matter in December 2008 and determined that it did not want to suggest to the President that the university take a stance on which unionization method is preferable.
4. Since then, the Student Labor Alliance has made presentations to the President and to the Brown University Community Council, and ACCRIP agreed to hear the SLA's views and to consider again whether to recommend that Brown take some action on the matter.

IV. Presentation by HEI Employee and Student Labor Alliance Members

1. SLA members arrived, as agreed, but brought an employee to present employees' views despite the Chair's suggestion not to do so on grounds that this would necessitate a committee discussion of whether to hear that individual. The committee asked the group to wait while it discussed how to proceed. The committee decided to invite the group to make its presentation, with the employee presenting his views first, then leaving the room while the committee discussed the matter further with the SLA members.
2. Mr. Herman Romero, a former cook at the Sheraton Hotel, Crystal City spoke (translated by student Dani Martinez). He made allegations of unfair layoffs of employees who were attempting to unionize, and unfair working conditions. 46% of total workers in the hotel are in favor of unionization (SLA passed a document around showing photo-copied signatures of employees). The employees are asking for card check neutrality because the secret ballot method allows the hotel management to campaign against the union and thereby (allegedly) intimidate employees.
3. SLA asked that Brown abstain from investing in HEI in the future, and write a letter to HEI stating its resolution.
4. SLA answered committee member questions. They are a pro-union organization. They are not in favor of a secret ballot vote by HEI workers, the option offered by HEI, because they believe that it is not what the HEI workers want.

V. Discussion of HEI Card Check Neutrality Issue

1. It was determined that ACCRIP should make a recommendation to the President for the university to make issue some kind of statement to HEI in the interest of putting Brown on record as being concerned about the workers' allegations.
2. It was determined that there is not enough evidence of worker maltreatment to merit a resolution to divest from HEI, regardless of whether or not we have holdings in the company.
3. One member was concerned that Unite HERE and SLA would spin our statement to mean that we are taking a position on card check neutrality, even though we do not intend to do so.
4. It was determined by unanimous vote that the Chair would draft a letter to President Simmons suggesting that Brown draft a letter to HEI showing that the university is concerned about the allegations of worker maltreatment. The letter would suggest that Brown finds some of the allegations of worker abuse,

especially dismissal of workers for union activity, to be matters of concern, although Brown cannot determine at the present time whether those allegations are well-founded. It would indicate that Brown intends to follow the situation in an ongoing way, and it would not be a request for a one-time explanation of the matter by HEI management. It would not take a position on card check neutrality.

VI. Socially Responsible Investment Fund Update

1. Sam Byker and Kirsten Howard's proposal for a fund was approved by the university. There may be future discussion about sponsoring a proxy resolution through holdings that this fund acquires.

VII. Last Meeting's Minutes Approved

VIII. Discussion of Membership Next Year

1. Luiz Valente will be on sabbatical in the fall but will remain on the committee
2. Stephen Houston is leaving the committee and the faculty's Committee on Nominations is arranging for a replacement.
3. Harry will not be on the committee next year.
4. Beth and Beverly will be replaced by Kathleen and Christine.
5. Kirsten Howard will no longer be the research assistant so a new selection process will take place in the fall.

Meeting adjourned at 4:34 PM.

*Minutes prepared by Kirsten B. Howard on 4 May, 2009,
amended by Louis Putterman on 15 May, 2009.*