University at Albany
Fair Trade Resolution

WHEREAS

- What we choose to purchase, eat, and drink impacts farmers, workers, artisans and the environment;
- Growers of coffee, tea, chocolate and other products produced in Latin America, Africa, and Asia are often paid less than a living wage, and forced child labor may be involved;
- Conventional means of growing coffee and other commodities are often damaging to the environment, harming local ecosystems;
- Fair Trade ensures fair wages, safe working conditions, and environmental sustainability, and prohibits forced labor of any kind;
- Many campus groups around the country and the world already support Fair Trade;
- By becoming a Fair Trade College/University, the University at Albany will demonstrate a commitment to sustainability;
- By becoming a Fair Trade College/University, the University at Albany will more effectively educate the campus community about Fair Trade;
- By becoming a Fair Trade College/University, the University at Albany will inspire other institutions and organizations to support Fair Trade.
- By becoming a Fair Trade College/University, the University at Albany will enhance its image as a leader in sustainability and social justice issues;

BE IT RESOLVED:
That the University at Albany should dedicate itself to be a Fair Trade College/University, which would consist of the following:

1. **Dining facilities:** The college/university will work with its food service contractor to make Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate, and other Fair Trade products available in its dining facilities, consistent with the terms of food service contracts and where the resulting costs do not significantly jeopardize board rate costs.

2. **Catered events:** The college/university will work with its food service contractor to make Fair Trade products available at catered meetings hosted by the school, consistent with the terms of the food service contract.

3. **Offices:** The college/university will work with its food service contractor and/or office supplier to make Fair Trade products available for administrative and faculty offices whenever possible and consistent with the terms of existing contracts.

4. **Stores:** The college/university will include Fair Trade food products, apparel and handicrafts (such as jewelry, and other gift items) in campus stores whenever possible and subject to the terms of vendor contracts.

5. **Education:** The college/university will support students, staff, and faculty working to increase on-campus awareness of Fair Trade through events, the incorporation of Fair Trade into curricula, and other efforts.
6. **Procurement**: The college/university commits itself to exploring the incorporation of Fair Trade procurement into current purchasing practices and policies. This process will begin within six months after the ratification of this document.

7. **Acknowledgment**: The college/university will identify and promote Fair Trade products at campus functions and stores with appropriate signage or information.

8. **Implementation**: The college/university, in consultation with the (e.g., FAIR TRADE COMMITTEE, CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL, etc.) will oversee the implementation of the above commitments.

_________________________  ____________
Name  Date

Title

(College / University President)
MEMO

March 5, 2019

TO: James Mower, PhD; Chair, University Senate
FROM: Dennis McCarty, PhD
SUBJECT: Request for a Senate resolution supporting Fair Trade certification for UAlbany

I am writing to you as someone who has worked as a part-time lecturer during the past 15 years for the School of Criminal Justice, the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity, and the Honors College. I also serve as the faculty adviser to UAlbany Students Stopping Trafficking and the Exploitation of People (SSTEP).

I am requesting that the Faculty Senate consider passing a resolution recommending that the university seek formal recognition as a Fair-Trade institution. We are seeking similar resolutions from the Student Association and Graduate Student Association.

This memo provides background information about Fair Trade generally, NYSUT’s past support for Fair Trade practices, and the certification process that UAlbany would have to complete. The memo also includes a brief summary of the outreach that I have made to other university officials about this initiative and a brief overview of the effort that both Barnes & Noble and Sodexo have made for several years to support Fair Trade. A sample resolution is included at the end of the memo.

Fair Trade

Much of the food, apparel, and other goods that we use or consume on a routine basis are made with the assistance of slave and/or exploited labor. Fair trade traces its roots to 1946 when Edna Ruth Byler started selling hand crafted goods from Third World artisans in her basement. This modest beginning ultimately grew into Ten Thousand Villages which opened its first store in 1958. Ten Thousand Villages is now the largest fair-trade retailer in North America and has a store in Stuyvesant Plaza.

Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_trade) provides a concise overview of the fair trade concept: “Fair trade certification strives to guarantee not only fair prices, but also the principles of ethical purchasing. These principles include adherence to ILO agreements such as those banning child and slave labour, guaranteeing a safe workplace, adherence to the United Nations charter of human rights, a fair price that covers the cost of production and facilitates social development, and protection and conservation of the environment. The Fair-trade certification system also attempts to promote long-term business relationships between buyers and sellers, crop pre-financing, and greater transparency throughout the supply chain and more.”
**NYSUT’s Position on Fair Trade**

NYSUT is a long-standing supporter of fair trade. It passed a resolution in 2006 “as a sign of solidarity to encourage locals to support other workers by pledging to purchase Fair Trade products, especially coffee, tea, and chocolate whenever possible.” The resolution also called for the creation of a Fair Trade Task Force to partner with the New York State Labor-Religion Coalition. The work of this task force has since been incorporated into the Civil and Human Rights Committee. A copy of NYSUT’s resolution can be found by following this link: https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/social-justice/fair-trade-project

NYSUT has continued to support ethical purchasing practices since the resolution was passed 12 years ago. By way of illustration, NYSUT partnered with a Fair Trade coffee company in December 2018 to raise funds for disaster relief efforts. (https://www.nysut.org/news/2018/december/nysut-partnership-with-fair-trade-coffee-company-to-benefit-disaster-relief-efforts)

**The Certification Process for Interested Universities**

The Fair Trade Campaigns initiative was formalized in 2013 when leaders of the “Fair Trade Town” and “Fair Trade College & University” campaigns cooperated with organizations such as Fair Trade USA, the Fair Trade Federation, Catholic Relief Services Fair Trade, and Green America to write a comprehensive mission statement and develop a common strategic plan. The mission and plan unified several types of campaigns under one umbrella and expanded the scope to include church congregations and other types of institutions. (www.fairtradecampaigns.org) A Steering Committee consisting of students, faculty, and other Fair Trade advocates now manage the program. Oversight and financial support are provided by Fair Trade USA, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that sets standards, certifies, and labels products that promote sustainable livelihoods for workers and protect the environment.

The “Criteria for Becoming a Fair Trade University/College/High School” are outlined below (https://www.sandiego.edu/mccasa/documents/FairTradeIntro.pdf).

1. Form a Fair Trade Committee.

   The Fair Trade Committee includes students, faculty, and representatives from a variety of campus organizations. The Committee has responsibility to:

   - Hold regular meetings as appropriate to the school’s schedule.
   - Oversee a Fair Trade University campaign action plan.
   - Develop a Fair Trade University Advisory Board when appropriate.
   - Monitor the progress of the Fair Trade University campaign and policy implementation.
• Submit an annual progress report to the national Fair Trade University governing body.

2. Make Fair Trade products available in university-owned/operated outlets as well as included in service contracts wherever possible.
• Each outlet must offer a minimum of two Fair Trade products, such as coffee, tea, sugar, clothing, gifts.
• In cases where this is not possible, a plan should be developed to introduce Fair Trade products in a timely manner.
• Product availability should be publicized and promoted appropriately.

3. Use Fair Trade products at university meetings, events hosted by the university and in university offices.
• Offer Fair Trade coffee, tea, sugar, and other products in faculty lounges, at special events, and in administration offices.

4. Develop a Fair Trade Resolution and Fair Trade Procurement Policy.
(A sample resolution has been added at the end of this memo.)
• The procurement policy can apply to food and beverages, sports balls, clothing and uniforms, musical instruments, etc.
• The resolution and policy must be approved by appropriate student, faculty, and administration governing bodies.

5. Commit to Fair Trade education, awareness-raising and growth of the Fair Trade campaign.
• In order to maintain momentum, it is recommended that the university community complete at least two activities per semester/trimester or one activity per quarter related to Fair Trade education, awareness-raising, and growth of the Fair Trade University campaign. This includes inclusion of the subject of Fair Trade in class curricula, seminars, etc.
• Campus publications and other media should provide coverage of the campaign. Each institution will develop its campaign according to the academic schedule, structure of the school, and campus culture. Fair Trade institutions become part of a growing national network of organizations promoting the values and benefits of Fair Trade and contribute to the growth of the global Fair Trade Movement.

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The university is asked to submit documentation that it has met each of the requirements outlined above to the Fair Trade Campaign’s Steering Committee for review. There is no on-site inspection or external audit to verify compliance.

Fair Trade Campaigns has certified the 55 colleges and universities that are listed below. I have bolded the six that are in New York. UAlbany would be the first SUNY campus to be certified if it decides to move forward.

1. University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh (WI) – 2008
2. University of California, San Diego (CA) – 2010
3. **Siena College (NY) – 2010**
4. Western Kentucky University (KY) – 2011
5. Manhattan College (NY) – 2012
6. Saint Michael’s College (VT) – 2012
7. Loras College (IA) – 2012
8. Penn State, Brandywine (PA) – 2012
9. Creighton University (NE) – 2012
10. University of San Diego (CA) – 2012
11. Pomona College (CA) – 2012
12. Assumption College (MA) – 2013
13. Rollins College (FL) – 2013
14. Villanova University (PA) – 2013
15. DePaul University (IL) – 2013
16. Cabrini College (PA) – 2014
17. Champlain College (VT) – 2014
18. Colby Sawyer College (NH) – 2014
19. Loyola Marymount University (CA) – 2014
20. Saint Joseph’s University (PA) – 2014
21. Saint Mary’s College of California (CA) – 2014
22. Berea College (KY) – 2014
23. Tulane University (LA) – 2014
24. Neuman University (PA) – 2014
25. Hartwick College (NY) – 2014
26. Seattle University (WA) – 2014
27. John Carroll University (OH) – 2014
28. Saint Mary’s University (TX) – 2015
29. Moraine Park Technical College (WI) – 2015
30. Gustavus Adolphus College (MN) – 2015
31. Carroll College (MT) – 2016
32. Point Loma Nazarene University (CA) – 2016
33. Butler University (IN) – 2016
34. Fordham University (NY) – 2016
35. Colorado State University (CO) – 2016
36. California Lutheran University (CA) – 2016
37. University of California, Los Angeles (CA) – 2016
38. University of Dayton (OH) – 2016
39. Rockhurst University (MO) – 2016
40. University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point (WI) – 2016
41. Green Mountain College (VT) – 2017
42. St. John’s University (NY) – 2017
43. Middlebury Institute of International Studies (CA) – 2017
44. Miami University (OH) – 2017
45. University of North Carolina, Asheville (NC) – 2017
46. Texas A&M University (TX) – 2017
47. University of Wisconsin Fond du Lac (WI) – 2018
48. Lynn University (FL) – 2018
49. University of California, Berkeley (CA) – 2018
50. Arizona State University (AZ) – 2018
51. University of California, Irvine (CA) – 2018
52. Quinnipiac University (CT) – 2018
53. St. Thomas Aquinas College (NY) – 2018
54. California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (CA) – 2018
55. North Seattle College (WA) – 2019
Cost

The university would not have to pay any fees or annual dues in order to earn Fair Trade certification. The university would, however, incur the indirect costs associated with assigning staff to complete the necessary tasks. The members of SSTEP and I are eager to assist any way we can. SSTEP could, for example, organize two activities related to Fair Trade education each semester as noted in requirement #5.

It should also be acknowledged that consumers pay more for fair-trade products than for products that are made by exploited laborers. According to a publication from a certified university (the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh), “Sodexo estimated that offering Free Trade coffee at the student dining hall would cost students around an additional $1.00 total per year…Other items may have more of a cost difference, and it may be that in a few cases a Fair Trade product is so much more expensive that it is cost-prohibitive. This is why in our declaration we use the term ‘whenever possible.’ Cost is something that we will consider and constantly evaluate. Ultimately, we believe that if paying a few cents more each time you buy a fair trade item makes the world a more equitable place, we should all make that investment.” (https://www.uwosh.edu/sustainability/fair-trade)

Progress to Date and Support from Major UA Vendors

In November of 2018, I sent a note proposing that UAlbany seek Fair Trade certification to Todd Foreman (Vice President of Finance and Administration), Michael Christakis (Vice President for Student Affairs), and William Hedberg (Senior Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs). I also copied Dean Robert Griffin and Assistant Dean Jennifer Goodell of the iCollege of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity. I offer a course on human trafficking each semester for the iCEHC, and my interest in fair trade stemmed directly from what I learned during my research. Two student leaders of SSTEP, Ali Hansen and Ashley Davidson, were likewise included in the distribution list.

Mr. Foreman subsequently asked Stephen Pearse, the university’s Executive Director of University Auxiliary Services, to conduct some initial research. Mr. Foreman also informed me on February 22 that he had participated in a planning exercise to help draft the university’s next Sustainability Master Plan. The group consisted of faculty, students and administrators and might be a good vehicle for exploring the idea further. Mr. Foreman added Mary Ellen Malia (Director, UAlbany Environmental Sustainability) to the thread since she is leading the plan’s development.

Current UA Practices

Mr. Pearse has kindly shared some reports with me concerning relevant business practices that the Barnes & Noble bookstore and Sodexo currently follow to serve the UAlbany community. The reports indicate that both companies have already embraced fair trade practices. I have copied key excerpts from the documents below.

Bookstore
“The issue of labor practices in the workplace is a very important topic to Barnes & Noble College Booksellers, LLC. Over the years there has been an increased awareness generated by student groups over business practices and the eradication of sweatshop labor in the United States and abroad. As a service provided for over 750 colleges and universities across America, Barnes & Noble College Booksellers, LLC applauds these efforts and is committed to conducting business in a socially responsible manner. For any non-book apparel company seeking an approved status, whether licensed to use college logos or one not using the co-branding approach, we require their membership with the Fair Labor Association before granting a vendor number. Our commitment to students is that all non-book products carried in our stores is subject to proper monitoring practices.

As part of this movement, in October 1998 we adopted The White House Apparel Industry Partnership “Workplace Code of Conduct”. The Fair Labor Association evolved from the Apparel Industry Partnership and was formally established in 1999. Barnes & Noble Booksellers, LLC is a member of the Fair Labor Association and sits on its University Advisory Council. To become an approved vendor, we require that all our vendors review the FLA Workplace Code of Conduct and return the certification form, signed by a senior member of your organization, no later than two weeks from the date of this letter.”

Sodexo

“Sodexo is dedicated to increasing the amount of fairly and responsibly traded products we purchase. By doing so, we encourage a more robust market for fair trade and directly affect the people and environments where these goods are produced. We currently offer a range of products that meet these criteria through Asprettos, Jazzman's, Seattle's Best, Kraft and more.

There are currently two certification systems Sodexo uses to identify fairly and responsibly traded products from tropical regions: Fair Trade Certified and Rainforest Alliance Certified. These certifications help our clients and customers feel confident in, and connected to, the production of their food and beverage in far-away places.

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Conclusion

The Fair-Trade movement is not perfect. It will not end labor exploitation. That said, the members of SSSTEP and I believe that university certification would be a meaningful way to go on record as seeking equity in trade and supporting the creation of opportunities for economically and socially marginalized producers. We also believe that fair trade certification is consistent with the university’s long-standing core values and that the university could proudly cite this recognition in its promotional materials. The university’s leadership may ultimately motivate other SUNY campuses to join this important cause as well.

Strong fair-trade practices that the bookstore and Sodexo already have in place establish a strong foundation on which to build. I sincerely hope that the Faculty Senate will support our efforts to move forward.
I greatly appreciate your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions!

Several resources are available at https://fairtradecampaigns.org/resources/. The sample resolution on the next page was retrieved from https://fairtradecampaigns.org/resource/sample-resolution/