

1558 Sweatshop Free UEA - Electronics Watch

Proposer: Rosie Rawle (Communications Officer)

Seconded: Chris Jarvis (DIY Society)

Union Notes:

- 1) That our University, like many others in the UK, purchases its electronic equipment from large multinational companies, who in turn often outsource and subcontract out work to suppliers in the Global South.
- 2) That across the world, electronics industry workers are subject to forced overtime, long shifts, health hazards, few days off, wages lower than living wage and in some cases authoritarian management.
- 3) That Electronics Watch is the world's first independent monitoring organisation working to achieve respect for labour rights in the global electronics industry through socially responsible public purchasing.
- 4) That Electronics Watch is a partnership of 42 organisations led by SETEM (Spain), Danwatch (Denmark), Fundacja CentrumCSR (Poland), People & Planet (UK), SOMO (Netherlands), Südwind Agentur (Austria) and WEED (Germany), is funded by the European Commission, and is set to launch in 2015.
- 5) That if the University were to affiliate to Electronics Watch, the organisation would investigate working conditions in the factories of our supply chains; issue detailed public reports; work with factories, apparel and electronics companies, workers and local organizations to correct problems and improve respect for worker rights; launch factory assessments in direct response to worker complaints; and also initiate assessments on a proactive basis.
- 6) That for four years, the Union has been lobbying the University to affiliate to the Worker Rights Consortium, a similar body that works to ensure labour rights for textile workers in our supply chains. This affiliation was finally agreed to by University Senior Management in September 2013.

- 7) The affiliation of other universities to the WRC has enabled workers to have a number of major successes in defending their rights, including against Fruit of the Loom and Nike.

Union Believes:

- 1) That the process of outsourcing labour in the electronics industry denies responsibility for the factories in which their products are actually made.
- 2) That suppliers often crush workers' attempts to improve their conditions and join trade unions, due to pressure from brands to cut costs, and that this should not be allowed to continue.
- 3) That our University should monitor its supply chains, to ensure that its garments are being made in factories which respect workers' rights.
- 4) That the University should affiliate to the Electronics Watch.
- 5) That Electronics Watch is the only electronics monitoring organisation that is credible with workers and their organisations, and is explicitly dedicated to monitoring public body supply chains.
- 6) That once issues have been reported by Electronics Watch, labour rights NGOs and student organisations have an important role to play by taking action in solidarity with workers in the university's garment supply chain.
- 7) That the more student organisations working together in solidarity with workers in the university's supply chain, the greater the improvements in human and workers' rights that can be achieved.

Union Resolves:

- 1) To lobby the University to affiliate to Electronics Watch, and set up a Sweatshop Free Purchasing Group of staff and students that will monitor the reports provided by the organization.

- 2) To mandate the Communications Officer to write a proposal for the next meeting of the Executive Team that reiterates our demands to affiliate with Electronics Watch.
 - 3) To mandate all student officers who sit on the purchasing committees to push for more ethical and more sustainable electronic products from University procurement managers.
 - 4) To work in solidarity with workers in the global south by affiliating to People & Planet's Buy Right campaign, thus committing to communicating the workers' rights issues tackled by the campaign and promoting the campaign actions that students can get involved in on a monthly basis via the Unions' Social Media.
 - 5) To mandate SOC to support the Sweatshop Free Campaign, and People and Planet Society in continuing to lobby for positive change in University supply chains.
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