

SEPTEMBER 26, 2006 MINUTES

At a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing, held on Tuesday, September 26, 2006, in the Burden Room, 206 Low Library, the following members participated:

Merritt Fox, Faculty (Chair)	Albert Horvath, Administrator
Robert Boothe, Alumnus	Peggy Kauh, Alumna
Burton Edelstein, Faculty	Cóilín Parsons, Student
Frances Freedman, Alumna	Allan Reiss, Alumnus
Charles Hailey, Faculty	Sidney Small, Student
Geoffrey Heal, Faculty	Stephanie Yee, Student

The meeting was called to order at 6:20 p.m. The Chair led a round of introductions for new and returning members.

Call to Order and
Introductions

The Chair discussed the work accomplished by the Committee in 2005-2006. He briefly explained the Committee's mandate to advise the University Trustees on social or ethical issues that Columbia may encounter in its role as an investor, and stated that for the past several years the Committee's work has focused on voting shareholder proxies related to social issues, as opposed to those on corporate governance, as the first have been of greater concern to the University community and the second are more appropriately left to the judgment and advice the university receives from professionals in these matters.

Summary of the Committee's
Recent Work

The Chair took a moment to address the Sudan divestment decision reached last year. He explained that the Committee focused on non-U.S. companies, as the U.S. government imposes sanctions against Sudan which prohibit domestic companies from doing business there (with specific exceptions for companies that have been granted waivers by the government.) The Committee recommended divestment from companies meeting very specific criteria, namely foreign companies operating in Sudan that provide substantial revenue to the Sudanese Khartoum government through their operations in the oil or infrastructure (energy and telecom) industries. He emphasized that the Committee and the University set a high bar for divestment recommendations and, consequently, they have been rare.

Finally, the Chair addressed the overall structure of the year, noting that during the fall the Committee takes time to gather information and set the Annual Agenda, and during the spring the Committee focuses on voting shareholder proxies. The Chair noted that this fall the Committee would also undertake a process to monitor the Sudan divestment list.

The Committee turned its attention to the draft 2005-2006 Annual

Draft 2005-2006 Annual

Report, noting that its goal was to approve the Report at the following Committee meeting. Committee members recommended restructuring the report to better highlight its work on the Sudan and the resulting recommendation and University policy.

Report

The Committee discussed possible processes for monitoring the Sudan divestment list. The Committee will further develop its thinking on a process at the next meeting.

Sudan Divestment
Monitoring Process

Members indicated an interest in again inviting guest experts from the Columbia community to address the Committee this year and initially identified climate change and certain environmental issues as possible subjects for presentation. Other members thought it might be useful to invite an SRI fund investment professional to address the Committee to explain, for example, how their organization approaches proxy voting and/or how their organization applies ethics to their investment policies.

Ongoing Issues: Guest
Speakers

The Committee approved the proposed 2006-2007 Calendar. The remaining meetings for the fall will occur on Tuesdays October 17, 2006 and December 5, 2006. The annual Town Hall will take place on Tuesday, November 14, 2006, and the Chair will address the Senate on Friday, December 8, 2006. The Committee noted that the key goal of the fall is to develop the Annual Agenda, the approval of which must occur at the December 5th Committee meeting.

Calendar

Committee members discussed the likelihood of seeing certain topics, such as health care issues, arise in the course of proxy season; the Committee noted that a preview of the upcoming proxy season usually becomes available in January. Some members expressed interest in pursuing activities in addition to proxy review, such as looking into SRI funds.

Other Business

The Committee learned that the Columbia Business School would likely not co-sponsor a workshop on corporate social responsibility, as two other universities are sponsoring similar conferences this year, and there would be too much overlap.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Katy Hogan
Coordinator, SRI