

U of Toronto anti-sweatshop protest ends

By Nicola Luksic

Source: The Varsity

TORONTO (CUP) - After 10 days holed up in the University of Toronto president's office in hopes of forcing the University to adopt a code of conduct for clothes bearing the school insignia, the Students Against Sweatshops reluctantly left their post.

The University refused to negotiate with the demonstrators until the office was freed.

But the students say their action can be considered victorious

"We're seeing it as a victory," said Derek Laventure, a cognitive science major who's

looking forward to catching up on missed sleep.

During the entire occupation, the lights were left on 24 hours a day and all other power sources were cut. Over the last weekend the campus police blasted music into the office.

The occupiers unveiled an open letter signed by 17 notable labour specialists from across North America that stated U of T has no reason to stall in its inclusion of "living wage" in the code.

The code would be the first in Canada that would require all manufacturers dealing with the University to provide details on factory working conditions.

"It did a lot of good

to put pressure on administration," said Laventure.

The student protesters have collected over 100 e-mails of support, including one from Stitch, a non-governmental organization in Guatemala.

Support from other areas in the world is also spreading.

"Their actions are in the grandest tradition of Ghandi. It's a great way to push for policy change," said Elaine Bernard, executive director of the Trade Union program at Harvard University. "I think the university should be standing by them.

"In today's world you need to think globally and act locally. I like the fact that this generation of students care about workers around the world," she asked.

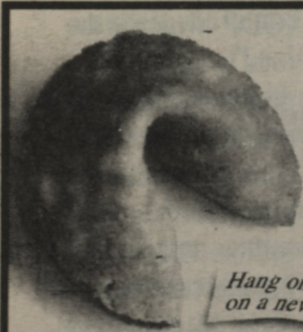
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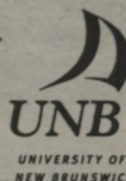
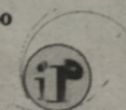
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