

Labor Education

NEWS

UCLA CENTER FOR LABOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

WINTER/SPRING 2005

UC Labor Studies Again Under Attack

Last year faculty, student, labor, and community leaders waged a successful campaign to save labor research and education at the University of California, after the governor proposed its complete elimination in the 2004–2005 budget. As part of the budget negotiations, Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez finalized an agreement that was approved by both the governor and the University of California to continue funding research and education on labor and employment.

Governor Schwarzenegger has again proposed to eliminate labor and employment research programs in his 2005–2006 budget released January 10, 2005. This is the only research program among hundreds within the University of California that the governor has specifically targeted for elimination.

By cutting the entire labor and employment research program without any academic review, the governor's attack violates fundamental principles of academic freedom and

university governance. This act could set a dangerous precedent for the governor to unilaterally remove any other research and educational programs that he does not like.



Speaker of the Assembly Fabian Núñez with Labor Center Director Kent Wong at the California Budget Update held at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center, March 18, 2005.

The \$3.8 million allocated for labor and employment research and education on the ten University of California campuses represents less than 0.14 percent of the General

Fund allocated to the university, while the working people of the state pay the majority of the taxes that support the university. This decision threatens to deny working people access to research and educational resources within California's premier public university.

In the coming weeks, we will be keeping you informed of our progress. The UCLA Labor Center is grateful for the past support and will keep supporters posted as the fight for our survival continues.

For more information on the Labor Center's activities and on local events and job openings, subscribe to the Labor Center listserv by sending your name and e-mail address to jamonroe@ucla.edu.

SAVE THE DATES!

UCLA Labor Center Banquet
Friday, June 24
6:00 p.m. reception
7:00 p.m. dinner
The Center at Cathedral Plaza
(see p. 3 for more details)

Wal-Mart Conference
Saturday, June 4
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
UCLA Ackerman Grand Ballroom
(See Community Scholars, p. 4)
Contact clopez@iir.ucla.edu or
310/794-4100.

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UPDATE



Speaker Núñez at State Budget Update

For the third year running, the UCLA Labor Center and the Liberty Hill Foundation were coconveners of the State Budget Update. Over two hundred participants filled the Immanuel Presbyterian Church to participate in a state budget simulation game to gain a visual and interactive understanding of the budget process. Expert Jean Ross, executive director of the California Budget Project, discussed why blame placed on “California’s spending problems” is misguided and analyzed the impact of the governor’s budget on low-income workers, seniors, and education.

A panel then focused on the key questions for Californians. Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg, chair of the assembly education committee, laid out the education picture and the dire need for increased funding given that in five years, California’s baby-boomer teachers will have retired, and another fifty-two thousand teachers will be needed to educate California’s youth. Angie Wei, political director of the California Labor Federation, laid out labor’s perspective and declared that progressives must move from defensive strategies to being more offensively focused.

Last up, Speaker Fabian Núñez provided the overall context and his approach to closing this year’s budget gap, stating his deep concern for those who would be directly affected by the budget cuts and outlining his work to prevent cuts concerning home health care, prescription drugs, living wages, and education. He concluded his message by encouraging questions and comments from community members and local organizations and by accepting suggestions as to how he could better strengthen his work in Sacramento.



Liberty Hill Foundation Director of Special Projects Michele Prichard and Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg.

Black History Month at the Labor Center

More than sixty African American labor leaders and union members from across the Los Angeles region attended “A Night of Celebration and Information,” the first UCLA Labor Center Black History Month event. Hosted by the UCLA African American Union Leadership School, the panel focused on economic challenges facing African American workers in Los Angeles and nationwide, highlighted the Los Angeles security organizing campaign, and included



An African dance troupe performs at the Labor Center’s Black History Month event.

SEIU 434B President Tyrone Freeman’s assessment of the future of black labor.

The evening featured UC Berkeley Labor Specialist Steven Pitts, who recently published “Organize to Improve the Quality of Jobs in the Black Community: A Report on Jobs and Activism in the African American Community.” His research highlights the crisis of bad jobs in the black community, jobs that pay poorly with few benefits, no future, and that offer no protection from employer harassment.

SEIU Local 1877 Organizing Director Jeffrey Richardson and Lead Organizer Jayson Pope presented a detailed analysis of the L.A. security officers’ campaign, the largest organizing effort of African American workers since the Pullman sleeping car porters in the 1930s. In Los Angeles, private security officers earn little more than minimum wage, are unable to afford health care benefits for themselves and their families, and do not receive adequate training. “This is a David and Goliath fight—and justice must prevail for these workers,” said Pope.

The event was comoderated by Erica Williams, vice president of CWA 9586, and Eric Brown, treasurer of IBEW Local 11.



UCLA LABOR CENTER

Tickets: \$100 • **Tables** \$1000 • **Hosts** \$5000

Ads: \$1000 full page • \$500 half page • \$250 quarter page • \$125 eighth page • \$50 friends listing

Make checks payable to The UCLA Foundation, and mail to UCLA Labor Center Banquet, PO Box 951478, L.A. CA 90095-1478.

Information: Julie Monroe at 310/794-5982 or laborcenter@lir.ucla.edu

save the date UCLA Labor Center banquet

friday june 24, 2005

6:00 p.m. reception

7:00 p.m. dinner

The Center at Cathedral Plaza

555 West Temple Street, Los Angeles

honoring

Karen Bass,
California State Assembly

Gloria Romero,
California State Senate

Eliseo Medina, Service
Employees International Union

Marvin Kropke, International
Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 11

SOS

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Design by Deborah Willis.

Forum on the Future of the Labor Movement

On February 11, 2005, the UCLA Labor Center assisted the L.A. County Federation of Labor in organizing a forum on the future of the American labor movement. Nearly one hundred and fifty key labor leaders of Los Angeles attended the event.

The forum began with a slide show by UCLA Labor Center Director Kent Wong outlining the challenges facing the labor movement in the face of the reelection of President Bush, declining union density, and growing economic inequality.

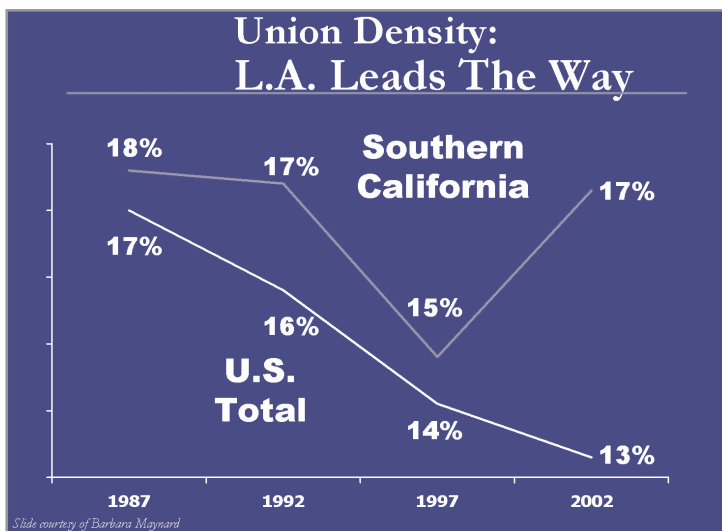
A panel of labor leaders presented their unions' proposals to change the AFL-CIO. The panelists were Harold Schaitberger, president of the Fire Fighters Union;

UNITE-HERE's President of Hospitality John Wilhelm; and SEIU's Executive Vice President Gerald Hudson.

The panel was chaired by *L.A. Weekly* Editor Harold Meyerson.

Following the panel, four strategy breakout sessions were convened to discuss the implications of the national debate to the local labor movement. Los Angeles has emerged as a focal point of the new American labor movement because of its significant political and organizing victories. There was a strong consensus

among the participants that unions locally should continue to work together regardless of the outcome of the national debate.



First Student-Labor Action Teach-In at UCLA

On February 15, 2005 the first Student-Labor Action Teach-In took place on the UCLA campus at Ackerman Grand Ballroom. Almost four hundred students from UCLA, community colleges, and area high schools attended the event sponsored by the Student Labor Action Project (SLAP), the Undergraduate Student Government General Representatives, and the UCLA Labor Center.

The Teach-In provided students with an opportunity to learn about social justice issues for low-wage workers on campus and in Los Angeles and to address budget cuts and tuition increases in higher education.

Plenary speakers included Maria Elena Durazo from UNITE-HERE, LaKesha Harrison from AFSCME, Jose La Luz from the AFL-CIO, and Rev. James Lawson,

long-time civil rights activist and a founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Arturo Rodriguez, president of the United Farm Workers, spoke during dinner. Many of the speakers emphasized the importance of student activism, how students have historically played significant roles in the struggle for civil rights as well as workers' rights, and the power that students have to act for social justice.

Workshops on issues like globalization, the state budget, and immigrant worker organizing were facilitated by organizers from the Garment Worker Center, Korean Immigrant Workers

Advocate (KIWA), the Institute of Popular Education of Southern California (IDEPSCA,) AFT, AFSCME, CUE, UPTe, Sweatshop Watch, and the UCLA Labor Occupational Safety and Health (LOSH) program.



SLAP members, Hevily Ambriz Espinoza, Vivien Luk, and Jennifer Tran register Teach-In participants.

Community Scholars Take on Wal-Mart

A dozen community and labor leaders are participating in a special Community Scholars course on Wal-Mart. Union leaders from UFCW, Teamsters, ILWU, SEIU, the L.A. County Federation of Labor, and the British Communications Workers join with community activists from Young Workers United, ACORN, Sweatshop Watch, the Garment Worker Center, and Senator Gloria Romero's office. Labor Center advisory board member Goetz Wolff is teaching the course.

The winter class on the Southern California regional economy brought the Community Scholars together with some fifty UCLA students, including several from the Anderson School of Management. Guest speakers ranged from UFCW Vice President John Grant speaking about the roots and consequences of the L.A. supermarket lockout/strike to the author of a pro-Wal-Mart study from the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation.

This spring quarter, the graduate class on economic development will be using Wal-Mart and Wal-Martization as the basis for analyzing the challenges to economic

development as well as to assess various economic development methods that can address the adverse consequences of the Wal-Mart model. The research and analysis by the Community Scholars will culminate in a special all-day Wal-Mart conference to be held at Ackerman Student Union on Saturday, June 4.

For more information on the conference, contact Cristina Lopez at 310/794-4100 or clopez@iir.ucla.edu.



Labor Center Launches Leadership Schools

As the country celebrates Juneteenth, commemorating African American freedom, education, achievements, and self-improvement, the **UCLA African American**



Akili helps kick off the 2003 African American Union Leadership School.

Union Leadership School will convene for the second time, June 15–18. Local unions are asked to support the leadership school by enrolling African American union members and emerging leaders who would benefit from a deeper education about the labor movement and how to turn knowledge into action. The leadership school continues the tradition of providing students a unique opportunity to

understand the labor movement and union strategies in the context of the African American experience.

In 2002 the Labor Center hosted the first African American Union Leadership School, bringing together more than twenty-five emerging leaders to explore historical labor struggles, receive strategic organizing and political education training, and focus on leadership development of new union members. In 2005 the school will build on that foundation by expanding the program to include a mentor/support project.

For more information, contact Lola Smallwood Cuevas at 213/480-4158.

On June 11, 2005, the UCLA Downtown Labor Center will host a one-day **Asian American Union Leadership Conference**.

This event will reach out to newly organized Asian American workers from successful campaigns in health care, home care, and the public sector, although all workers are invited to participate. The leadership school will be cosponsored by the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance.



UC Berkeley Labor Specialist Raahi Reddy leads a workshop at the 2002 Asian American Union Leadership School.

In 2003 the Labor Center launched the first Asian American Union Leadership School coordinated by former APALA Organizing Director Kathleen Yasuda. The school brought together a broad cross-section of predominantly Asian immigrant workers, including Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Asian Indian, Japanese, and Vietnamese participants from over a dozen unions.

This year's event will integrate hands-on learning modules, panelists of labor and political leaders, films, and cultural presentations. For more information, contact Kathleen Yasuda at 213/744-9470.

The third annual **Spanish-Language Union Leadership School (Colegio)** will take place May 18–21, 2005, at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center. This year the Colegio will examine UNITE-HERE organizing campaigns in Los Angeles.

In March of 2002, the Labor Center conducted the first multi-union Spanish-language leadership training program in the country. The Labor Center views the Colegio as part of its commitment to providing leader-



The Jornaleros del Norte perform at the 2004 Colegio.

ship development for union members and other immigrant workers.

Last year the Labor Center launched El Colegio II, bringing together not only union members but also immigrant workers involved with worker centers. Participants included janitorial, hospital, and home care workers from SEIU Locals 1877, 434B, and 399; as well as day laborers and a domestic worker from the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles and the Institute of Popular Education of Southern California; garment workers from the Garment Worker Center; a market worker from the Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates; and a nonunion janitor from the Maintenance Cooperation Trust Fund.

For more information on this year's Colegio, contact Victor Narro at 213/480-4156.

Labor Studies Thriving at UCLA

Over one hundred twenty freshmen were introduced to labor studies in 2005–2006 through the popular “Work, Labor, and Social Justice in the United States.” The three-quarter course is taught by a team of UCLA faculty including Labor Center Director Kent Wong.

This summer the successful UCLA Labor and Workplace Summer Institute returns to the Downtown Labor Center. The Institute offers students a unique opportunity to intern with labor and community organizations in Los Angeles. The six-week Institute includes a supervised internship in a labor union or community organization along with a seminar in which students study the

experience of workers and the role of the labor movement in American society, historically and in the present.

Juniors and seniors at UCLA also have the opportunity to focus on labor studies through the Labor and Workplace Studies minor. Enrollment in the minor has doubled in the last six months to sixty candidates for the degree. Students appreciate the innovative curriculum found in labor studies courses, such as in Victor Narro’s course on the United Farm Workers and Reverend James Lawson’s “Nonviolence and Social Movements.”

For more information on the minor, contact Erica Grove at 310/206-0812 or egrove@iir.ucla.edu.



Summer Institute interns tour the downtown L.A. garment district.

News from UCLA-LOSH



New UCLA-LOSH director Linda Delp.

recently working with LOSH and the UCLA Labor Center.

LOSH programs are based on a philosophy of worker empowerment. “Workers have first-hand experience with hazards on the job. LOSH education programs respect that experience. We provide information and skills so workers can improve their working conditions.”

The UCLA Labor Occupational Safety and Health (LOSH) Program welcomes Linda Delp as its new director. Delp brings extensive experience in worker health and safety starting as a student activist with LACOSH, later as SEIU Western Region health and safety director, and more

Contact LOSH at 310/794-5964 for information about the free twenty-four-hour health and safety specialist course scheduled at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center on June 6, 13, and 20. For more information, go to www.losh.ucla.edu.



Standing, June McMahon of the UCLA Labor Center, Isaura Navarro, Sheryl Moore from AFSCME Local 3090, LOSH educator Christina Zapata, and, seated, Rosario Felix, participate in an office ergonomics education project.

Staff Updates

Victor Narro is a project director at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center, where he provides leadership training and workshops for immigrant workers from



unions and worker centers throughout Los Angeles. Through the Center, Victor works on policy issues affecting low-income, immigrant workers and creating alliances among community groups, worker centers, and labor unions. Victor was formerly the coexecutive director of Sweatshop Watch.

Prior to his work at Sweatshop Watch, Victor was a project director for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA). Through CHIRLA's Workers' Rights Project, Victor organized day laborers, domestic workers, garment workers, and gardeners. Victor's innovative work in multi-ethnic organizing led to the creation of the Multi-ethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network (MIWON) and the Garment Worker Center. Through Victor's leadership, the day laborer project grew into the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON).

Victor received a law degree from the University of Richmond, Virginia, in 1991.

Before coming to the Labor Center, **Lola Smallwood Cuevas** worked as political and community coordinator for the SEIU Local 1877 security organizing campaign. She has a background in journalism, working for the *Chicago Tribune* and *Long Beach Press Telegram*.

Currently Lola is a project director for the Downtown Labor Center, where she coordinates the African American Union Leadership School, the Communications Working Group, and other projects.



Nancy Cohen comes to the Labor Center after working as a senior policy analyst at the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), where she played a key role in achieving a \$500 million community benefits agreement related to future development at

LAX. Nancy received her PhD in history from Columbia and is the author of *The Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865-1914* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002). She has taught numerous courses on labor and political history to workers and high school and college students in Los Angeles and New York City.



At the Labor Center, she is coordinating university-based labor research, supervising the undergraduate program in Labor and Workplace Studies, and facilitating dialogue between labor unions and environmentalists.

Alexandra Topete is a California native raised in Los Angeles. In 1998 she was accepted to New York University in the Social Work Program. She then transferred to the Public Administration Program at California State University, Los Angeles, and is currently working on her undergraduate degree. Alexandra worked for the L.A. Regional Food Bank for three years, helping to fight hunger in Los Angeles County and raising hunger awareness within the community. She is currently working at the Downtown Labor Center as the office manager. To reserve space at the DLC, call Alex at 213/480-4157.

Erica Grove is a recent graduate from UCLA with a BA in Chicana/Chicano Studies. As a student, Erica participated in an internship with MALDEF, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, as well as the UCLA Law Fellows Program, allowing her to pursue her interest in immigration law. Erica also worked with the UCLA Statewide Migrant Student Leadership Program as a resident assistant, aiding the program in its mission to provide academic resources to high school immigrant students while empowering them to pursue higher education despite multiple barriers.

At the Labor Center, Erica is assisting with the UCLA Labor and Workplace minor and coordinating Labor Center events and projects.





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