

Labor Education NEWS

UCLA CENTER FOR LABOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

WINTER/SPRING 2006

María Elena Durazo Elected to Lead L.A. Labor

María Elena Durazo was elected to serve as interim executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor on March 3, 2006. She is the first woman to hold this position.

María Elena is a long-time member of the UCLA Labor Center Advisory Committee and one of the Labor Center's most active supporters. She was featured in the Labor Center's publication, *Voices from the Front Lines: Organizing Immigrant Workers in Los Angeles*, and will be honored at the UCLA Labor Center banquet on June 10, 2006. (See page 5 for details.)

Before leading the federation, María Elena was president of the hotel workers union, UNITE HERE Local 11, a position she achieved in 1986. She played a central role in transforming Local 11 and the Los Angeles labor movement into a leading force for social activism. Local 11 spearheaded labor's work to embrace an organizing culture, to mobilize their membership, and to launch

major campaigns that have embraced the philosophy of nonviolence, including the use of civil disobedience, hunger strikes, and boycotts.



María Elena Durazo speaks at the 2005 Labor Center Student-Labor Action Teach-In.

María Elena has also played a leading national role in advancing the rights of immigrant workers. Local 11 was one of the first unions to aggressively recruit and train immigrant worker-leaders and to strengthen partnerships between unions and the immigrant-rights community. María Elena served as national director of

the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, a national mobilization to demand immigrant rights.

In addition to her role with the Freedom Ride, María Elena has held other significant national positions of leadership within the labor movement. She became the first Latina elected to the executive board of the hotel workers union in 1996 and general vice president in 2001. She also served as executive vice president of UNITE HERE, the merged union that represents hotel, casino, restaurant, textile, garment, and laundry workers.

María Elena was a founder of the L.A. Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) and has served as president of the board. Through María Elena's support, LAANE has spearheaded major campaigns for economic justice, including the living wage campaign and community benefits agreements.

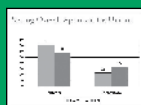
The daughter of Mexican immigrant farm workers, María Elena traveled from Oregon to California with her parents and nine siblings to work in the fields when she was a child. María Elena is the mother of two sons, Mario and Michael, and the widow of Miguel Contreras, former executive secretary treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO. María Elena earned a law degree from the People's College of Law in 1985 and was UCLA Labor Center Director Kent Wong's classmate.

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Labor Summer Internship Program 2006

Since its initiation in 2001, the UCLA Labor Center's Labor Summer Internship Program (LSIP) has forged strong bonds between UCLA students and the L.A. labor community. The program combines intensive study of the labor movement and skills-building trainings with hands-on work in the community. Over 75 percent of LSIP graduates tracked over the past five years remain involved in social justice work.

This past December, LSIP graduates organized the program's first reunion. Over thirty-five people discussed their current work with organizations like SEIU, IDEPSCA, UNITE HERE, and SCOPE/AGENDA. The graduates decided to use their network to

share resources and information through quarterly meetings and a listserv for ongoing education, increased discussion, and cooperation between different areas of organizing. At the second meeting, LSIP graduate, Diahnna Nuñez, led a grant-writing training based on her experience as a grants manager at the Fund for Santa Barbara.

This year's LSIP begins June 26 and runs through August 18 and will include the participation of former interns. Students interested in a life-changing summer experience and organizations interested in dedicated interns should contact Gillian

Claycomb at 213/480-4155 x207 or gclaycomb@iir.ucla.edu.



LGBT Leadership School 2006

The UCLA Labor Center will host the second Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Labor Leadership School, cosponsored by Pride at Work, May 19–21, 2006.

A committee of staff and members from organizations such as AFSCME, CWA, Lambda Legal, SEIU, the South Asian Network, and UNITE HERE, is working with the Labor Center to plan this bilingual institute, which will address challenges LGBT workers face and the connections between all inequities stemming from race, culture, class, national origin, and gender. LGBT and straight-ally labor activists will develop skills and strategies to organize for equal rights and representation on the job and across the labor movement.

In 2002, the UCLA Labor Center conducted the first LGBT Labor Leadership School for a diverse group of emerging leaders from across California. Many graduated to take on leadership roles within their own organizations as well as Pride at Work, the LGBT AFL-CIO constituency group. Now, with the changes in the labor movement and targeted political attacks on domestic partnership rights, it is time to follow up on this first school.

To get involved in building a strong LGBT presence in the Southern California labor movement, visit our website at <http://www.labor.ucla.edu>. The application is available in English and Spanish. For more information, contact Gillian Claycomb at 213/480-4155 x207 or gclaycomb@iir.ucla.edu



Lisa Kassner, Lilia Garcia, Francisco Dueñas, Gillian Claycomb, Shoshana Vogel, Joyti Chand, Sandra Telep, Jessica Lopez, and Jim Robbins.

Communicating to Win

Research results from a Los Angeles opinion poll on public attitudes toward labor unions were revealed to a crowd of nearly one hundred labor communicators and union leaders at the conference, *Communicating to Win: New Strategies to Build Broad Support for Working People*, held at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center on February 27, 2006. The research project was undertaken by the UCLA Institute of Industrial Relations, the UCLA Labor Center, Goodwin Simon Strategic Research, and an advisory board of labor communication specialists.

The conference brought together a panel of experts to speak on the research findings and the importance of new, proactive communication strategies. Panelist included Paul Goodwin from Goodwin Simon Strategic Research; Matt Witt, director of the American Labor Education Center and national labor communicator; Larry Grisolano, independent political consultant from Alliance for a Better California; Erin Aubry Kaplan, *Los Angeles Times* columnist and former *L.A. Weekly* staff writer; and Barbara Osborn, communications director from the Liberty Hill Foundation.

Immediately following the morning panel, conference attendees participated in small-group sessions to further



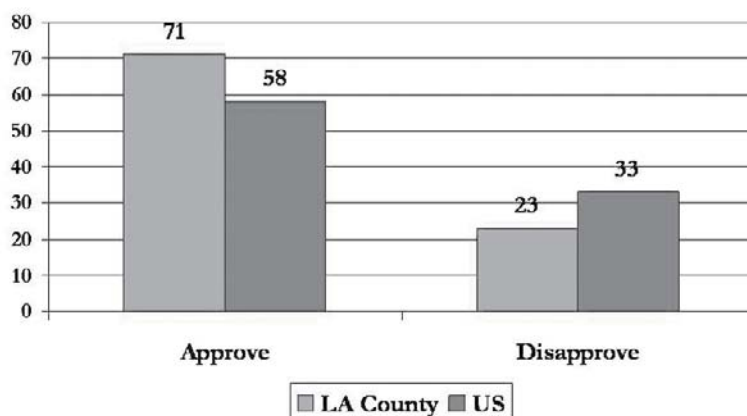
Larry Grisolano from Alliance for a Better California and IIR Associate Director Gary Blasi.

discuss the daily application of labor media strategies.

Based on the high level of interest from conference participants, the UCLA Institute of Industrial Relations, the UCLA Labor Center, and the advisory committee will continue their efforts to support communications work in the Los Angeles labor movement. Depending on interest, potential outcomes from the *Communicating to Win* conference may include the development of communications curricula, training materials, or the establishment of a communicators association with monthly round-table gatherings.

All conference materials are accessible on the UCLA Labor Center website at <http://www.labor.ucla.edu>, including a PowerPoint presentation by Lead Researcher Paul Goodwin, summarizing the research findings. If you are interested in receiving information regarding follow-up events to improve labor communication and media relations, please contact Erica Grove at egrove@iir.ucla.edu or at 310/206-0812.

Strong Overall Approval for Unions



Forum on the Future of the Labor Movement

On November 22, 2006, the Forum on the Future of the Labor Movement was held at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center and on the UCLA campus. Speakers included Change to Win Federation Chair Anna Burger and AFL-CIO Organizing Director Stewart Acuff. The forum was moderated by Harold Meyerson, editor of *The American Prospect* and the *L.A. Weekly*.



Change to Win Federation Chair Anna Burger.

National attention has been focused on the labor movement since last summer's split within the AFL-CIO. Several major unions left the AFL-CIO prior to their July 2005 convention, and launched the Change to Win Federation in September 2005. The major sources of disagreement

have centered on organizing, political action, and the allocation of union financial resources.

The November forum was the first time that labor and community leaders, faculty, and students in Los Angeles have had an opportunity to hear both sides



AFL-CIO Organizing Director Stewart Acuff.

present their positions. There was substantial agreement expressed by both the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win Federation on the central role of organizing and the need to challenge the policies of the Bush administration. Both sides also agreed about the critical importance of maintaining institutions such as the L.A.

County Federation of Labor and pledged to continue to encourage their local union affiliates to participate.

2006 California Budget Training

"Budgets, Bonds, and Bottom Lines" was the theme for the fourth annual California Budget Training held March 2006 and cosponsored by the UCLA Labor Center, the Liberty Hill Foundation, the California Partnership, and SEIU Local 660.

After Jeffrey Richardson, executive director for the Liberty Hill Foundation, opened the program, Nancy Berlin from the California Partnership and Saira Soto

from SEIU Local 660 provided an overview of the basics component of the state budget process and how advocates can get involved in addressing their issues. Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg then gave a presentation on this year's budget situation, Jean Ross from the California Budget Project focused on how the governor's proposed 2006–07 budget prepares California for the future, and finally, Nancy Berlin facilitated a timeline budget action activity.



California Budget Project Executive Director Jean Ross.

The afternoon session focused for the first time on the Los Angeles City and County budgets. Chris Espinoza from the Mayor's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, broke down the city budget process and some of the major budgetary issues facing Mayor Villaraigosa today. He was followed by a presentation on the Los Angeles County budget process by Kathy Ochoa, Lilian Coral, and Jenny Yang from SEIU Local 660. They focused on the county's social safety net and what Local 660 is doing to ensure a fair and equitable budget. Michele Prichard, from Liberty Hill Foundation, provided the closing remarks.

Labor Center Budget Update

The UCLA Labor Center is working closely with allies in the California state legislature to restore funding for the 2006–2007 fiscal year.

The governor vetoed all \$3.8 million of funding for University of California labor studies in July 2005. Labor studies was the only program the governor singled out for elimination within the University of California budget. After the state legislature requested that the University of California restore funding for the current fiscal year, the university restored only one-third of the funds, enough to avoid layoffs, but not enough to restore funding for research and education programs.

Several factors support the prospects for restored funding for next year. First, the governor suffered a major defeat in his special election in November 2005 and as a consequence, he has taken a less confrontational approach with the state legislature. Second, the California budget is more robust than last year, and there are more financial resources available for education. Third, 2006 is an election year, and the governor is trying to present a more bipartisan

image as he prepares for his reelection campaign.

Finally, the UCLA administration appointed a five-member faculty review committee to conduct a five-year review of the work of the UCLA

Labor Center and the Institute of Industrial Relations (IIR). The report, prepared by objective experts, was extremely positive and acknowledged the national significance of the work of the UCLA Labor Center and IIR to the field of labor studies.



Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg discusses the 2006–2007 budget at the California Budget Training.



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save the date UCLA LABOR CENTER banquet

honoring
Antonio Villaraigosa
Mayor of Los Angeles

John Connolly
American Federation of
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Maria Elena Durazo
UNITE HERE Local 11

Tyrone Freeman
Service Employees International
Union Local 434B

**saturday
june 10, 2006**

6:00 p.m. reception
7:00 p.m. dinner
The Center at Cathedral Plaza
555 West Temple Street, Los Angeles

RESEARCH FOR ACTION  EDUCATION FOR CHANGE

Community Benefits Agreement Institute

As part of an effort to promote Los Angeles redevelopment that integrates social and economic justice, the UCLA Labor Center collaborated with Partnership for Working Families to hold the first Community Benefits Agreement Institute. The event, made possible by the support of the Liberty Hill Foundation, drew seventy-two leaders, staff, and activists from labor, community, environmental, affordable housing, and faith-based groups in Southern California.

Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs), deals between community coalitions and developers addressing a broad range of community needs, ensure that communities share in the benefits of major development. CBAs allow community groups to take an active role in shaping a project by pressing for benefits tailored to their needs and enforcing commitments made by developers. The 2000 Staples Center CBA, where the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice negotiated a



A Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) publication on organizing in the Figueroa Corridor.

package of community benefits with the LA Arena Land Company, set the bar for CBAs in Los Angeles.

The institute's morning session covered the elements of community benefits campaigns—strategic research, coalition building, legal strategy, and community organizing. The afternoon session was devoted to working groups grappling with issues such as building unity among coalition partners, finding and using leverage, and sustaining participation in the implementation of CBAs.

Organizations cosponsoring the event included District Council 36 IUPAT, LAANE, the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, Los Angeles/Orange County Organizing Committee, SAJE, Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing (SCANPH), SEIU Local 1877, UNITE HERE Local 11, Collective Space, East Los Angeles Community Corporation, and the Environmental Defense Fund.

Dolores Huerta Labor Institute



A new labor studies program will soon be launched in the L.A. Community College District, named in honor of the legendary labor leader, Dolores Huerta.

The UCLA Labor Center has been working with the Los Angeles Trade Tech Labor Center, the Community College Faculty Guild (AFT Local 1521), and the Community College Board of Trustees to launch a new labor studies program to serve the 130,000 students of L.A. community colleges.

While the Los Angeles Trade Tech Labor Center has done an excellent job over the years in providing labor studies classes, most of their students have been drawn from the ranks of union leaders and activists. The Dolores Huerta Labor Institute will serve the needs of thousands of existing community college students who would benefit from learning about labor law, labor history, workplace rights, and the role of unions in our society.

The Community College Board of Trustees has already allocated \$100,000 per year for three years in start-up funds for the Dolores Huerta Labor Institute. The planning committee is soliciting matching funds from labor unions to double that amount. The search for a director and staff will begin soon.

The Dolores Huerta Labor Institute will provide opportunities to coalesce existing community college faculty who are teaching labor studies and to strengthen the curricula and course offerings on all ten community college campuses. Other plans include speaking tours, labor film screenings, and stronger partnerships between community colleges and labor unions.



The Southwest Labor Studies Association held its thirty-second annual conference, *The Future of the Labor Movement: How Can Unions Organize to Win*, at UCLA, March 10–11, 2006. The UCLA Labor Center cohosted the event that brought community and labor leaders, faculty, and students together to discuss the challenges facing the labor movement and its role in key issues such as Wal-Mart, the war in Iraq, and immigrant workers' rights.

The first evening plenary, "What's Up With Wal-Mart?," featured California State Senator Gloria Romero; California Assemblymember Judy Chu; Documentary Film Producer Robert Greenwald; and University of California, Santa Barbara Professor Nelson Lichtenstein. On Saturday

morning, former California State Senator Tom Hayden and representatives from Military Families Speak Out and U.S. Labor Against the War led "The War In Iraq" plenary.



Former California State Senator Tom Hayden and Labor Center Project Director Victor Narro.

The final plenary, "Organizing Immigrant Workers," featured newly appointed head of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, María Elena Durazo; Mariaelena Hincapie from the National Immigration Law Center; Pablo Alvarado from the National Day Laborer Organizing Network; and UCLA undergraduate student and campus labor activist, Daniela Conde.

More information on the Southwest Labor Studies Association and the conference can be found at <http://swlsa.org>.

UCLA-LOSH Update

The growing network of California health and safety advocates voiced their concerns and their vision for improved working conditions at a UCLA conference cohosted by UCLA-LOSH and sponsored by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). María Elena Durazo, interim executive secretary-treasurer of the L.A. County Federation of Labor, kicked off the event.

Many conference speakers graduated from UCLA-LOSH health and safety specialist courses offered through the Worker Occupational Safety and Health (WOSH) program. Sheryl Moore, a WOSH specialist and member of the SoCalCOSH Executive Committee, provided results of an ergonomics survey her AFSCME local is conducting with the assistance of UCLA-LOSH. "I was amazed to find that a high percentage of clerical workers come to work in pain every day." Norman Tuck, ILWU Local 13 member, graphically described the numerous accidents he has sustained in his many years as a longshore worker at the Port of Los Angeles. And Ignacio Garcia, a WOSH specialist from IDEPSCA, advocated for day laborers,

whose high injury rate was recently highlighted in a groundbreaking national study coauthored by UCLA's Abel Valenzuela.

For more information, go to <http://www.losu.ucla.edu> or call 310/794-5964.



Norman Tuck, ILWU Local 13

Workers' Memorial Day
April 28, 2006
12:00 noon - 4:00 p.m.
UCLA Downtown Labor Center
RSVP, cosponsor, or for a resource table,
contact Suzan Luu,
socalcosh@iir.ucla.edu or 310/825-0298



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