



LABOR EDUCATION NEWS

UCLA CENTER FOR LABOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

SUMMER/FALL 2008

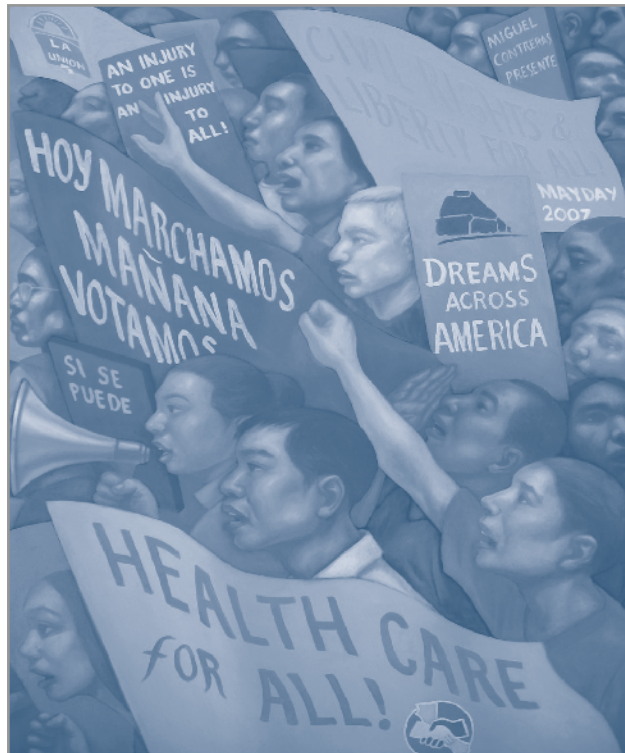
Governor Attacks Labor Center Funding Again

Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed all funding for the University of California's Miguel Contreras Labor Program, the parent program for the UCLA Labor Center, just before signing the state budget on Tuesday, September 23. Schwarzenegger and California Republican legislators have long targeted the program for elimination.

The Miguel Contreras Labor Program is named to honor a man whose life's work was dedicated to improving the quality of life for workers. The UC Regents voted unanimously to rename the state-wide labor program in honor of Miguel in 2007, a move that was celebrated by unions and workers throughout California. The governor's actions are a direct affront to the working people of California.

This was the only UC program that the governor chose to eliminate, without justification, consultation, or

review. The governor's action violates fundamental principles of academic freedom and university governance.



The \$5.4 million program represents only a small fraction of the funds allocated to business schools

throughout the UC system. Yet the working people of California pay taxes to support the university. This attack is a huge burden on the faculty, staff, and students who have worked so hard to build and maintain one of the premier labor studies programs in the country.

Assembly Speaker Karen Bass released a statement on Tuesday, saying, "The Governor has... broken his promise, again, to fund the Miguel Contreras Labor Institute. I am deeply disappointed in his actions today, and they set the stage for yet another difficult budget in the year ahead."

We will continue to work at getting back into Schwarzenegger's January budget, and we need your help. Please take a minute to send a letter to the governor demanding that the Miguel Contreras Labor Program be included in his January budget. See the sample letter on our web site at <http://www.labor.ucla.edu>. Thank you for your continued support.

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DURAZO HEADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE



MINOR GRADUATION



LABOR CENTER BANQUET



UNDERGROUND UNDERGRADS



MLK 40TH ANNIVERSARY



PLEASE VOTE NOVEMBER 4!

Student Leadership Academy 2008

Thirty current college students and recent graduates from Southern California campuses participated in the Labor Center's inaugural Student Leadership Academy (SLA) April 26–28, 2008. The SLA is a three-day leadership-development training for students launched this year in collaboration with the Dolores Huerta Labor Institute, which promotes labor education and training at Los Angeles' community colleges. The goal of the program is to give emerging student leaders and activists in-depth experience with careers in the labor movement.

Participants engaged in interactive workshops and discussions to develop skills such as public speaking, to



deepen their understanding of the role of young people in the labor movement, and to bond with other students who have similar interests in social-justice work.

The academy was highlighted by participation from veteran activists and from members and staff of organizations who are leading some of the most dynamic worker campaigns, including UNITE HERE Local 11, the Teamsters, the Change

to Win Federation, the Writers Guild of America, and the Service Employees International Union.

The Student Leadership Academy will be offered again next spring. For more information, please contact Lanita Morris at lmorris@irle.ucla.edu.

Labor Summer Internship Program 2008

Twenty-five undergraduate students participated in the 2008 Labor Summer Internship Program (LSIP) to study the experience of workers and the historic role of the labor movement in American society. Through readings, lectures, panels, and discussions, the class focused on topics such as labor and community organizing in Los Angeles, globalization and crossborder solidarity, migration and globalization in Southern California, and issues of race and gender in the labor movement.

At the same time, students learned firsthand about the inner workings of unions and other social-justice organizations through their internships, where students had the opportunity to work on such projects as a high school leadership project, a skid row history project, and a contract

campaign. Students also assisted with research on gentrification and wage claims, voter registration, media outreach and publicity, volunteer training, and community outreach.

This year students interned at AFSCME Local 2712, the AFL-CIO, CHIRLA, the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, LAANE, ENLACE, the Garment Worker Center, InnerCity Struggle, KIWA, Los Angeles Poverty Department, Los Angeles Taxi Workers Alliance, NDLON, Maintenance Cooperation Trust Fund, SEIU Local 1877, UNITE-HERE Local 11, and the Community Labor Environmental Action Network.

For more information on LSIP or to sponsor an intern, contact Gaspar Rivera-Salgado at 310/206-3910.



California Construction Academy

The focus of the California Construction Academy was on local hire, project labor agreements (PLAs), and the impact of “green” jobs on the construction industry.

Academy Director David Sickler opened the conference along with Robert Balgenorth, director of the State Building and Construction Trades Council. María Elena Durazo of the L.A. County Federation of Labor provided the opening for the second day.

The opening panel focused on the new Construction Careers Policy adopted by the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA), and featured Deputy Mayor Larry Frank, Cecilia Estolano and Board Member Madeline Janis from the CRA/LA, and Richard

Slawson from the LA/OC Building Trades Council. The Construction Careers Policy requires that contractors on most CRA-subsidized projects hire more local and “at risk” residents and comply with a PLA that ensures more jobs on these projects are middle-class, union jobs

The second day focused on “green” jobs and was led by Robert Balgenorth, Tim Rainey from the California Federation of Labor, Jonathan Parfrey from Green L.A., and green contractor Ed Smeloff. A special workshop addressed the impact of California Assembly Bill 32, which addresses greenhouse gas emissions.

For more information, contact David Sickler at ddavidsickler8@aol.com or 213-480-4155 x218.



María Elena Durazo Heads Advisory Committee



María Elena Durazo introduces Arlene Holt Baker at the 2008 Labor Center banquet.

The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor’s Executive Secretary-Treasurer María Elena Durazo was elected by acclamation to serve as the new chair of the UCLA Labor Center advisory committee on August 11, 2008. This is the first time the top leader of the Los Angeles labor movement has assumed this position.

With over three hundred local unions, the L.A. County Federation of Labor represents over eight hundred thousand workers in every key industry.

David Sickler, who served as the Labor Center advisory committee chair for the past fifteen years, stepped

down in order to assume his responsibilities as the director of the new California Construction Academy. Durazo acknowledged David Sickler’s many years of service and said she was honored to serve as the new chair: “The UCLA Labor Center is an important resource for unions and workers of Los Angeles. The Downtown Labor Center has become a vital hub for research, education, and new partnerships between the university, labor, and the broader community.”

Following the meeting of the advisory committee, Durazo addressed students from the Labor Center’s Labor Summer Internship Program. She said that the students represent the hope for the future of the labor movement.

On September 11, María Elena was also the featured speaker at a forum on labor and the 2008 elections, held at the Downtown Labor Center. She reported on her trip to the Democratic National Convention and her role as national cochair of the Obama for President committee. A spirited discussion followed her talk on the role of labor in the elections and the potential impact of the presidential elections on labor.

Labor and Workplace Studies Graduation Luncheon



Kent Wong and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado congratulate graduate Gregory Allan Cendana.

With the support and input of students in the minor, the Labor and Workplace Studies graduation luncheon took place on June 14, 2008, attended by sixty-five students, staff, faculty, and friends and family of the graduates. UCLA Labor Center Director Kent Wong gave the welcome address, followed by the student-chosen faculty speaker, Labor Center Project Director Janna Shaddock-Hernández.

Graduating senior Gregory Allan Cendana spoke on the theme “Celebrating Labor and Community Activism and Academic Excellence.” Cendana reflected on how the labor and workplace studies minor has allowed students to dig deeper into the labor movement, to explore the injustices that surround working-class people in Los

Angeles, and to apply this knowledge after graduation.

Cristina Lopez, project coordinator for the Labor Center, recognized the students who took part in producing the book *Underground Undergrads*, which portrays the experience of undocumented students at the university. The luncheon culminated with the commemoration of graduates by Labor Center Project Director Gaspar Rivera-Salgado and Kent Wong. Graduates received a certificate of completion and a special gift in recognition of their achievements.



Spring 2008 labor and workplace studies minor graduates.

Labor Center Banquet 2008

Director Kent Wong captured the spirit of the 2008 Labor Center banquet in stating, “There is no better time and no better place to be working with the labor movement than here and now in Los Angeles.”

The banquet drew seven hundred attendees, making this the Labor Center’s largest annual fund-raising event, including friends and supporters representing workers from all walks of life, from elected leaders to community

leaders, students to educators, labor leaders to clergy, and members of community-based organizations to employers.

Speaker of the Assembly Karen Bass kicked off the program, which celebrated outstanding leadership represented by the honorees: Senator Gilbert Cedillo, a champion for working people and a leading immigrant-rights advocate in California; Arlene Holt Baker, a former union activist from Los Angeles who is now the first African American officer of the AFL-CIO as executive vice-president; and Robert Balgenorth, a progressive union leader who oversees building and trades unions throughout California.



Speaker Karen Bass.



Banquet honorees Robert Balgenorth, Arlene Holt Baker, and Gilbert Cedillo, with Labor Center Director Kent Wong.

The banquet also showcased two exciting new initiatives: The Miguel Contreras Worker Resource Center, which will focus on immigrant workers, and the California Construction Academy, led by David Sickler.

Thanks to all our friends for your continued support.

Miguel Contreras Worker Resource Center



Worker-leaders from twelve different unions involved in organizing immigrant workers filled the conference space at the Downtown Labor Center on July 27, 2008, to share strategies and campaign announcements and to build a solid network of mutual support. Participants included worker-leaders from the CLEAN car wash campaign, Iron Workers Local 416, Teamsters, United Steelworkers, UNITE HERE Locals 11 and 52, ILWU, LIUNA, SEIU ULTCW and Local 1877, and United Day Laborers of Baldwin Park.

The gathering provided the space for worker-leaders to share their successes and challenges in campaign

organizing, the importance of learning from each other, and the common issues that unite them. Participants engaged in team-building exercises, personal testimonies, and theatrical skits that allowed them to address themes related to immigrant-worker struggles. Workers plotted their personal struggles and campaign fights on a twenty-year timeline that highlighted the history of the immigrant-rights movement, establishing a powerful connection within the group.

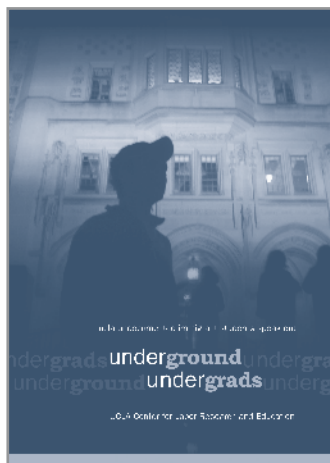
At the end of the day, a true sense of solidarity emerged, and participants agreed to keep meeting regularly. In the next session, workers will delve deeper into how they can support each other further in their struggles.



Underground Undergrads Book Tour

Underground Undergrads: UCLA Undocumented Immigrant Students Speak Out was published by the UCLA Labor Center in April 2008 and is already in its second printing. This is the first book of its kind that features voices of undocumented students in higher education.

In spring 2008, ten UCLA Labor Center interns assisted in the promotion and distribution of the book. UCLA interns organized press conferences, appeared on TV and radio shows, and spoke at the National Education Association Conference, the Urban Educators Conference, the national AFL-CIO, the Southwest Labor Studies Conference, and the convention of the Labor Council



for Latin American Advancement. Interns also testified before the L.A. Unified School District board and the L.A. Community College board.

These education and outreach activities could not come at a better time. The California Dream Act passed the California state legislature in September 2008 and is now on the governor's desk. The Federal Dream Act will likely be reintroduced in Congress in 2009.

The UCLA Labor Center is grateful to our outstanding interns, Zeenat Bhamani, Miguel Carvente, Carolina Coronado, Oscar Espino, Lourdes Galindo, Fabiola Inzunza, Gabriela Madera, Matias Ramos, Ernesto Rocha, and Stephanie Solis. Special thanks go to Tam Tran and Susan Melgarejo, Public Allies interns who coordinated these efforts. In the coming year, Lourdes Galindo and Matias Ramos will continue the work to conduct education and outreach on undocumented students.

To purchase this publication please visit our website, <http://www.labor.ucla.edu> or call 310/794-9111.

Martin Luther King Jr Fortieth Anniversary



Rev. James Lawson Jr.

At a symposium commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., Rev. James Lawson Jr. urged UCLA students and Los Angeles activists to demand justice and stand up for an America without government-sanctioned violence and economic oppression. The event also featured Faith Culbreath, president of Security

Officers United in LA (SOULA 2006) and Rev. Eric Lee, CEO of the L.A. Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and was sponsored by the UCLA Labor Center's minor in labor and workplace studies, the Black Graduate Student Association, and the Departments of Chicano Studies, History, Sociology, and World Arts and Cultures.

Lawson reminded the diverse crowd of more than 125 attendees that African Americans and people of color in this country remain in poverty because American society continues to relegate people of color to jobs with low wages and inhumane working conditions. "In '68 we wore signs that read 'I AM A MAN,' and that phrase is still true today. As human beings, we are entitled to dignity and respect."

Lawson's discussion followed presentations by Culbreath and Lee, who led an effort in 2007 that organized four thousand security officers into a union, nearly doubling the entry-level wage for L.A. security officers. "The struggle for access to UCLA and the struggle for access to good quality jobs are linked," said Lee, one of several African American community leaders who last year urged the UCLA administration to improve diversity among UCLA students and institute fair enrollment practices. "It's all about improving the community and the development of a fair and just society. That is the lesson of King."

**HAPPY 80th BIRTHDAY,
REV. LAWSON!**

Occupational Health Internship Program

For the fourth consecutive summer, UCLA-LOSH sponsored the Occupational Health Internship Program (OHIP) in Los Angeles, supervising interns who learned first-hand how workers' jobs can affect their health. Interns from UCLA Departments of Chicano/Chicana Studies, Public Health, Social Welfare, Political Science, and Urban Planning learned from workers in refineries, industrial laundries, car washes, and taxis.

Biridiana Rios and Lillian Jalali collaborated with the UNITE HERE Health and Safety Department and Local 52 stewards to measure and document high levels of heat in two industrial laundries. They also held education sessions at lunch, working with stewards to strengthen

the workplace health and safety committee.

Sayaka Takaku and Thongdy Sisounthone partnered with United Steelworkers Local 675. They interviewed workers to evaluate measures to protect workers and the



United Steelworkers Michelle Kendig and Erica Kent with interns Thongdy Sisounthone and Syaka Takaku.

surrounding community from potential explosions from South Bay plants and met with the mayor of Carson to promote a local industrial safety ordinance to minimize chemical releases.

Cathy Dang and Brenda Perez collaborated with the Los Angeles Taxi Worker Alliance (LATWA), studying the inhumane treatment and impact of a lack of access to restrooms on drivers' health. The interns presented their findings to LATWA's Health Committee and will submit them to the Taxi Cab Commission. Cathy and Brenda also joined the coalition of United Steelworkers and the Community-Labor-Environmental Action Network to explore the hazards experienced by car wash workers.

For more information, call 310/794-5964 or e-mail loshinfo@ucla.edu.

Latino Migrant Civic Engagement

The UCLA Labor Center hosted a one-day convening, “Today We March, Tomorrow We Vote: Latino Migrant Civic Engagement,” on May 27, 2008, bringing together civic leaders and advisors to discuss Latin American immigrant integration into U.S. society. The overarching objective was to identify the factors that encourage or block immigrants’ direct political participation and engagement in civic life. Three panel presentations on citizenship campaigns, getting out the vote, and binational civic engagement allowed time to discuss the ins and outs of immigrant organizing.

In-depth interviews with leaders of migrant-led organizations, labor organizations, and neighborhood

groups, conducted prior to the meeting, shaped the discussion areas. This two-step approach of interviews followed by a convening was designed to address the challenge of disentangling which factors weigh most heavily in the decision-making process and how that reflection can guide targeted action and educational strategies.

The convening was an opportunity to consider ways to translate the extraordinary civic energy experienced in the recent years’ immigration marches into the nitty-gritty of building

representative organizations with staying power and of encouraging immigrants to exercise their right to vote.



Angelica Salas, CHIRLA; Nancy Berlin, Mobilize the Immigrant Vote; and Roberto de la Cruz, SEIU.

Parent Universities

The Justice for Janitors union, SEIU Local 1877, recently won a major victory in their last contract, which will support the development of Parent Universities. This new project will help parents improve their capacity to work with their children’s local schools. Two-thirds of janitors have children in public schools, and they are located in some of the worst-performing schools in Los Angeles. The janitors contract will provide three cents per hour to support this work and will also provide a contractual right for parents to be absent from work to attend parent-teacher conferences. As one SEIU organizer said, “The union can get our members another \$3 per hour, but what they want is a better life for their children.”

On July 25, key labor and community organizations met at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center to discuss the potential expansion of this project. The organizations included the United Teachers Los Angeles, SEIU United Long-Term Care Workers’ Union, UNITE HERE Local 11, SEIU Local 721, Community Coalition, and InnerCity Struggle. Most of the members of these unions have children who attend schools in the L.A. Unified School District. If organized as a force, this group would constitute the largest parent organization in California.

The next action steps include disseminating the curricula for the Parent Universities and expanding this project to other unions. Gary Blasi from the UCLA School of Law and

John Rogers from the UCLA School of Education are working closely with the Labor Center to implement this plan. UCLA alumnus Mariana Zamboni, who just received her MA in education from Harvard, has been hired to assist with the project.

SAVE THE DATE

***Summer Institute
on Union Women***

August 11-15, 2009

**Hosted by the UCLA
Labor Center and LOSH**

**Contact Lanita Morris
lmorris@irle.ucla.edu**

UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education
PO Box 951478
Los Angeles CA 90095-1478
phone 310/794-5983; fax 310/794-6410

UCLA Downtown Labor Center
675 S Park View St
Los Angeles CA 90057-3306
phone 213/480-4155; fax 213/480-4160

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Thom Davis
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LABOR EDUCATION NEWS is designed
and edited by Julie Monroe