



Labor Education NEWS

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WORKERS'
MEMORIAL DAY

For more information on the center's activities, visit the web site at www.labor.ucla.edu

The Fight for the Labor Center Continues

On February 25, 2009, a budget deal for the 2009–2010 year was announced, which did not include funding for the University of California Miguel Contreras Labor Program or the UCLA Labor Center. Members of the state legislature pledged that they will still attempt to restore funding before the close of the fiscal year.

On February 24, UCLA student organizations convened a Teach-In on campus to save the Labor Center. The event was attended by more than fifty students, all of whom presented compelling testimony on how the Labor Center has had a positive impact on their college educations. Many spoke of how they benefited from taking classes, participating in the labor studies minor, and working on internships sponsored by the Labor Center.

On March 13, the UCLA Labor Center worked with a broad-based coalition of labor and community organizations to sponsor a Teach-In on the California state budget at the United Teachers Los Angeles office. Speakers included Assembly Speaker Karen Bass and



María Elena Durazo, Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, and President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg in the capitol rotunda

Kent Wong, who presented a slideshow on the impact of the two-thirds majority required to pass the California budget

On March 31, Cesar Chavez Day, the Labor Center arranged for a display on the life of Miguel Contreras to be unveiled at the California State Capitol rotunda in Sacramento. María Elena Durazo spoke at the press conference, along with Assembly Speaker Karen Bass and President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg. A reception honoring the legacy of Miguel Contreras followed the unveiling.

On May 28, 2009, President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg will be honored at the Labor Center banquet, along with California State Controller John Chiang and Change to Win Chair Anna Burger.

In Summer 2009, the Labor Center will publish the first book about Miguel Contreras, entitled *Miguel Contreras: Legacy of a Labor Leader*. The center is also working closely with the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor to launch a foundation in Contreras's honor.

For more information, call 213/480-4155.

Green Jobs: Pathways to a Sustainable City

The UCLA Community Scholars Program is a unique learning experience that connects the research strengths of the university to grassroots efforts within the community by bringing together community leaders and graduate students. This year's theme, "Green-Collar Jobs, Green Buildings, and Social Justice: Pathway to a Sustainable City," attracted fifty participants, the largest number of scholars and students since the program began nine years ago.

This year's program was a joint initiative of the California Construction Academy and UCLA's Department of Urban Planning, Labor Center, and Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program (LOSH), and was developed in partnership with the Los Angeles Apollo Alliance and the City of Los Angeles.

The California Construction Academy, housed at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center, helped shape the course's research objectives by providing expertise in the areas of green building, workforce development, and connections to local union representatives. Research groups comprised of scholars and students will prepare final reports on topics such as climate change, green retrofits, and good jobs; implementing public sector green retrofits and creating career pathways for disadvantaged populations; creating demand for commercial and residential retrofits; and opportunities for manufacturing green building materials in Los Angeles.

The final result of the research will be policy recommendations on how to retrofit Los Angeles while creating good, green jobs and enhancing the health and well-being of our communities. A final conference to share the recommendations and solicit feedback from a wide range of stakeholders is scheduled to take place in June.



Community Scholar Shamari Davis, IBEW 11

Underground Interns

An audience of approximately five hundred students, staff, and community members welcomed the Underground Undergrads Project for a teach-in on the San Diego State University campus. The presentation was part of a statewide

tour that has taken the UCLA Downtown Labor Center's team of interns to more than thirty state colleges and universities. A packed Montezuma Hall signaled the largest presentation yet on this tour dedicated to highlighting the experience of undocumented students in higher education. Earlier that day, the traveling tour had visited Cal State San Marcos and presented in front of two hundred audience members.

The student publication, *Underground Undergrads: UCLA Undocumented Immigrant Students Speak Out*, is quickly becoming a fund-raising and

advocacy tool for a large number of immigrant student groups dedicated to the passage of the DREAM Act and an overall more humane immigration policy in our country. In addition to promoting the book, our internship team has been working on setting up campus fund-raisers and a hearing with members of the California congressional delegation.

The Underground Undergrads Project remains dedicated to building connections with other activists and educators committed to silencing the hateful rhetoric and telling the truth about the undocumented population in the United States.

For more on upcoming events and presentations or to purchase a book, visit www.dreamact2009.com and www.undergroundundergrads.com.



Labor Center intern Matias Ramos at San Diego State University teach-in

2009 UCLA LABOR CENTER BANQUET

Thursday, May 28

The Center at Cathedral Plaza
555 West Temple Street
Los Angeles

Reception 6:00 p.m.

Dinner 7:00 p.m.

Honoring:

Darrell Steinberg

President pro Tem, California Senate

John Chiang

California State Controller

Anna Burger

Chair, Change to Win

The Miguel Contreras Foundation



Miguel Contreras

María Elena Durazo, UCLA Labor Center Advisory Committee chair and Los Angeles County Federation of Labor executive secretary-treasurer, has announced the inauguration of the Miguel Contreras Foundation, in partnership with the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, to be housed at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center. Named after the late,

great labor leader Miguel Contreras, the foundation will focus on three initiatives he championed: educational access, civic participation, and immigrant integration.

In the area of education access, the foundation will strengthen community support for the Miguel Contreras Learning Complex and provide educational and leadership opportunities for students at public schools to access apprenticeship programs and higher education. The foundation will also create a student leadership academy for high school students and a series of workshops for parents to advocate for education improvements.

Through its civic participation program, the foundation will provide trainings and workshops for worker-leaders and organizers from the African American, Latino,

and Asian American communities on how to achieve empowerment through the political and legislative system. The foundation will accomplish this goal by partnering with the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, other civic organizations, and nonpartisan voter outreach and mobilization programs.

Under the immigrant integration initiative, the foundation will provide leadership development, workshops, and events to help strengthen the labor movement throughout Los Angeles. The foundation's key programs will focus on leadership programs for workers, workshops for organizers, an online resource center, monthly clinics, and cultural events.

For more information, contact
Victor Narro at 213/480-4154 x209.

June McMahon Retires



June McMahon

After twenty-five years of service to the CLA Labor Center, June McMahon has retired. On February 13, 2009, the Downtown Labor Center hosted a retirement luncheon attended by more than seventy friends and colleagues. June promised that she would continue to assist with teaching and labor education in her retirement. She thanked all of her coworkers at the Labor Center and all the people she has worked with in the labor community over the years.

June was praised as an extraordinary labor educator who has likely conducted more labor education programs and trainings than any other individual in the state of California. She has also been a mentor and inspiration to many other labor educators throughout the country.

2008 Collective Bargaining Institute

On December 8, 2008 the 17th Annual Collective Bargaining Institute convened at United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) headquarters. The institute welcomed one hundred students from area high schools, including Miguel Contreras High, Fairfax, Lincoln, and

San Pedro, among other. Students participated in mock collective bargaining sessions coached by seasoned union negotiators. At day's end, a few students decided to start negotiation clubs at their schools to reinforce and pass on their acquired skills.

This year's event also included thirty-three elementary students from Soto Street Elementary, who participated in "The Yummy Strawberry Co." curriculum. Students got a feel for organizing and negotiating by making and selling Yummy Chocolate-Covered Strawberries to the high school students, teachers, and coaches. When the "boss" demanded tougher work rules for lower pay, the students went on strike until the boss improved conditions and doubled wages from fifty cents to a dollar.

The event is cosponsored by the UCLA Labor Center, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, the Dolores Huerta Labor Institute, and UTLA.



CBI director Linda Tubach, left, with CBI graduates

Civil Rights Icons Teach at UCLA

In spring 2009, the Labor Center and IRLE are providing the most classes ever offered under Labor and Workplace Studies since the implementation of the minor in 2003. Among these courses is the long-awaited Nonviolence and Social Movements class, taught by Rev. James Lawson Jr. Rev. Lawson is a leading theoretician and tactician of nonviolence within the American Civil Rights Movement. His



Rev. James Lawson Jr.

course will provide an overview of nonviolence and its impact on social movements both historically and in its present context in contemporary society.

The Cesar E. Chavez Center is also providing a course entitled Picket Lines, Boycotts, and Action Plans, which will be taught by United Farm Workers leader Dolores Huerta and her daughter Lori de León. The class will examine such topics as the unethical Bracero Program, the lack of farm-worker protection laws, the violent struggles workers have endured when seeking to organize and obtain union representation, the lack of political representation and participation in the electoral system, the defunct immigration system, and the current conditions of farm workers and immigrants in the United States.

Other new and recurring Labor and Workplace Studies courses include the Sociology of Race and Labor, taught by leading scholar Edna M. Bonacich; Improving Worker Health, taught by UCLA LOSH director Linda Delp; Southern California Regional Economy, taught by Goetz Wolf, executive director of the San Pedro Harry Bridges Institute; and Work and Migration in the Americas, taught by IRLE post-doc fellowship recipient Angela Stuesse.



Dolores Huerta

Worker-Parents Improving Los Angeles Public Schools

Los Angeles low-wage workers place their hopes for the future on their children, and their hopes turn on the quality of their children's education. Despite historic campaigns to improve salary and working conditions, many unionized working parents in Los Angeles County live in low-income neighborhoods with often more than half of their children attending some of the lowest performing and most under-resourced schools in the county. Opportunities for these children to obtain college educations are especially limited by the poor preparation they receive in the public schools.

In response to this problem, the UCLA Labor Center, UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education and Access (IDEA), and UCLA's Program in Public Interest Law and

Policy are collaborating with local unions and community-based organizations to better understand and



support union members' capacities to advocate for their children's education. Participating organizations

include SEIU Locals 721, 1877, and 99, SEIU Long-term Care Workers Union, HERE Local 11, UTLA, Community Coalition, and Inner City Struggle.

The collaborative research project, "Educating for Our Future," proposes providing working parents with information and data as well as the training necessary to press effectively for greater access to equitable and quality schooling for their children. Through research and educational meetings, the project will help workers obtain the information, skills, and networks necessary to identify needs in their local schools, develop relationships with allied unions and community-based organizations, and determine strategies for using collective pressure to improve the schools their children attend.

Black History Month: Eyes on the Prize

More than sixty union activists and community members attended the UCLA Downtown Labor Center's Black History Month celebration, "Eyes on the Prize: The Employee Free Choice Act and Communities of Color." The event provided an overview of the legislation and its potential impact on African American workers in particular. The night brought together a dynamic panel featuring María Elena Durazo, Secretary Treasurer of the Los Angeles Country Federation of Labor; UC Berkeley Labor Specialist Steven Pitts; and AFL-CIO National Representative Yvonne Wheeler.

The highlights of the panel were the incredible stories of new union members who shared their painful organizing experiences. "If we had the Employee Free Choice Act while

organizing, we would not have had the outcomes we had in our campaign," said Teri Brown-Jackson, a member of the Writers Guild of America West. She told her story of organizing with fellow writers who were fired when they sought to join the WGAW union last year. Many of them are still looking for work.

Anthony Young, a pressman for the *Los Angeles Times* and recent member of the graphic communications arm of the Teamsters union, explained how activists were targeted for reprimand during that hard-fought organizing campaign; "People who had been there for fifteen years were written up for the smallest things because they supported the union, while people who sided with the company could make huge mistakes, and nothing would happen to them." Days after the

pressroom won their contract, the *Los Angeles Times* filed bankruptcy. His department has received more pink slips than any other department.



Yvonne Wheeler, AFL-CIO, explains the Employee Free Choice Act

*28th Western Regional Summer Institute on Union Women
AUGUST 11 - 15, 2009, at UCLA DeNeve Plaza*



**Early Bird Registration Deadline
JUNE 11, 2009!**

**Registration forms online at
<http://www.labor.ucla.edu/SIUW09.html>**

For additional information,
contact Lanita Morris at (213) 480-4155 x212,
lmorris@irle.ucla.edu

Si Ud. Hable español y quiera mas informacion, llame al (213) 480-4155 x208

The 28th Annual Western Regional Summer Institute on Union Women will be held August 11–15, 2009, at the University of California, Los Angeles. The four-day residential program brings together 150 participants from the United States' and Canada's western regions for exciting workshops and speakers on the history, struggles, and achievements of working women. This year's theme, "Women Workers of the World Unite," speaks to the inclusion of participants who represent not only labor unions but also workers' centers, community groups, and other organizations that focus on social and economic justice issues. In addition to hosting participants from Canada, we have also extended an invitation to workers from Mexico to build trinational solidarity for a global social-justice agenda.

New Staff



Natalia Garcia graduated from UCLA in 2008 with a BA in history and a minor in global studies. During her senior year, she interned with the UCLA Labor Center as a work-study student, assisting project directors with the Spanish-Language Union Leadership School and a publication commemorating the homecare workers organizing victory. While working at the Labor Center she learned about the important labor issues of our nation and gained a new perspective on community organizing and leadership. Natalia has now joined the Labor Center's full-time staff as an administrative assistant while she prepares to attend law school. Her experience at the Labor Center has further encouraged her to pursue a career in public-interest law.

While working at the Labor Center she learned about the important labor issues of our nation and gained a new perspective on community organizing and leadership. Natalia has now joined the Labor Center's full-time staff as an administrative assistant while she prepares to attend law school. Her experience at the Labor Center has further encouraged her to pursue a career in public-interest law.



Ami Pascual Spear joined the UCLA Labor Center in May 2008 as a fund development consultant. Before coming to the Labor Center, Ami worked as a development director at Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) and as an earned-income consultant with Strategic Concepts for Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE). She also worked as an office manager for the UC San Francisco Department of Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology for three years and executive director of the South of Market Foundation (since renamed Urban Solutions), an economic development nonprofit, for ten years. Ami operated a sidewalk steam cleaning and employment training business called SoMa Steam Clean and T.A.G., which trained teenagers to create murals throughout South of Market's alleyways. Ami has a BA in English and American literature from UCLA and a master's degree in city and regional planning from UC Berkeley.

Mourn for the Dead—Fight for the Living

The memories of the thousands of workers who have been severely injured or killed on the job are commemorated annually on April 28, Workers' Memorial Day, the anniversary of the founding of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. People in hundreds of communities and worksites in the United States gather to honor those killed and call for improved workplace safety.

To this end, UCLA-LOSH and SoCalCOSH sponsored their annual Workers' Memorial Day event on April 25 at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center to remember those who were lost, raise public awareness, and continue the struggle for good, safe, and healthy jobs.

Almost four decades ago, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, promising every worker the right to a safe job. Although decades of struggle by workers and their unions have resulted in significant improvements in working conditions, the toll of workplace injuries, illnesses, and deaths still remains unacceptably high. The most recent edition of the AFL-CIO's annual "Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect" shows that an average of fifteen workers a



Workers' Memorial Day event

day were killed on the job and each day, another 11,000 workers were injured or made ill in 2007. Overall in 2007, 5,488 workers died from workplace injuries, and 4 million were hurt or made sick by their jobs.

For more information, please contact
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