

Labor Extension Bulletin

A Publication of the University of Massachusetts Labor Extension Program
 UMASS AMHERST ■ UMASS BOSTON ■ UMASS DARTMOUTH ■ UMASS LOWELL

VOLUME 14 ■ NUMBER 3 ■ FALL 2012

Challenging Times for Workers and Unions



Chicago Teachers Strike Support Public Education

As we go to press, the outcome of the election is unknown. Whatever the results, working people, their unions and organizations will continue to face uphill battles. As we've seen in the teachers' unions' struggle around "education reform and teacher evaluation" in Massachusetts and elsewhere, collective bargaining and rights such as seniority and job security are being chipped away. In discussion of the role of government and taxation, public sector workers are still being scapegoated and privatization is seen as the solution to municipal and state financial woes. Employers continue to fight unionization, often violating the law. A smaller labor movement impacts all of our ability to win at the bargaining table and beyond. We've seen some inspiring fight backs to these challenges: the Wisconsin struggle over collective bargaining rights, the Chicago teachers strike, and the national "OUR Wal-Mart" campaign to organize Wal-Mart workers. Addressing these issues is critical and the role of education is more important than ever. The Labor Extension Program has offered analysis and resources to address many of these issues in our past newsletters, which can be found on our website at: <http://umasslep.org/>. Visit the website and contact us for training and education.

Workplace Bullying: Time to Take a Stand

As workplace stress increases, for all the reasons cited in the article above, bullying in the workplace increases as well. Workplace bullying is a problem for workers and their families and for unions. Survey results (Workplace Bullying Institute WBI 2010) show that over a third of workers have experienced bullying first hand and another 15% have witnessed it. Are we seeing more bullying because of increased workloads and rising job insecurity or are we just now naming what we used to tolerate as "boss behavior?" Either way it is time for unions to take on this issue.

Workplace bullying is defined by WBI (see *Resource Corner*) as: ... repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators that takes one or more of the following forms: 1) verbal abuse; 2) offensive conduct/behaviors (including nonverbal) which are threatening, humiliating, or intimidating and/or 3) work interference—sabotage—which prevents work from getting done.

Bullying affects member safety and health as well the quality of work life. Unions should be out front advocating for an abuse-free work environment and dignity at work. Bullying has become a hot topic for many employers and if the union isn't involved in defin-

ing it and taking action, management will do so, and in ways that can be potentially harmful to our members. It is also a moral high ground issue around which to organize. What employer wants to be put in a position of defending bullying behavior? By the same token, what union wants to be seen as resistant to policy changes that address bullying? Our members need to see us as proactive and able to protect members while developing strategies to eliminate workplace bullying.

Unions can begin by adopting a policy of zero tolerance both in the union and the workplace. You can survey the membership about the extent of the problem. WBI will work with you at no charge to design a simple member survey, using an online data collection survey site. You can then negotiate language which allows the union to define bullying and grieve instances of bullying (see <http://www.workplacebullyingforunions.com/6a/> for language from SEIU/NAGE in Massachusetts.) Unions can train union leaders, stewards, staff and members (see *Spotlight on bullying workshops*) to recognize bullying when they see or hear about it and to handle it effectively when it occurs. Finally we can work to pass the Healthy Workplace Bill (H2310) here in Massachusetts, which would make workplace bullying illegal.

Around THE STATE

Fighting the Right and Building Social Justice Unionism, a talk by Bill Fletcher, Jr.

Wednesday October 17, 12:30 PM

Cost: free

Location: UMass Amherst Campus Center, Rm. 905-09
Contact: Dale Melcher, dmelcher@lrrc.umass.edu

Fighting the Right's 'Final Offensive' Against Unions, a talk by Bill Fletcher, Jr.

Wednesday October 17, 5:30 pm

Cost: Free

Location: PV AFL-CIO, 640 Page Blvd., Springfield

Contact: Lara Shepard-Blue, larasb@hotmail.com and 413-896-3015

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a long-time racial justice, labor and international activist, scholar and author. He has served in leadership positions in the ALF-CIO and the SEIU, and is currently the director of field services for the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). He is the author of "They're Bankrupting Us!" and Twenty Other Myths about Unions and "Solidarity Divided: the Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path toward Social Justice" (with Fernando Gapasin).

Addressing Working Women's Issues in Brazil: Building women's leadership in the United Metal Workers Union and the Brazilian Workers Party, a talk with Maira Neiva Gomes

Tuesday, October 23, 3-4:30 pm

Cost: Free

Location: UMass Boston, Healey Library 11th floor, 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston MA

Contact: Anneta Argyres at anneta.argyres@umb.edu, 617-287-7229

Labor Reform in Brazil: The Roles for Unions and the Brazilian Workers Party, a conversation with Maira Neiva Gomes

Tuesday, October 23, 5:30-8 pm

Cost: Free

Location: CPCS Plaza (Wheatley Hall, 4th floor), UMass Boston, 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston MA

Contact: Anneta Argyres at anneta.argyres@umb.edu, 617-287-7229

Maira Neiva Gomes currently works as the coordinator of the legal department and as an adviser for political education for the United Metal Workers Belo Horizonte and the Contagem Region in Brazil. Since graduating from law school in 2003, Ms. Gomes has devoted herself to workers' struggles, actively supporting such diverse efforts as the Landless Workers Movement (MST), the National Association

of Students (ANPG), and the World March of Women. In addition to her numerous published articles and book chapters on union and labor law, Ms. Gomes' book, Reflections on Contemporary Unionism, was published in 2011.

Arnold M. Dubin Labor Education Center Annual Awards Dinner

Thursday, October 25, 6:00 reception and dinner at 7:00

Cost: call in advance for tickets

Location: Venus de Milo in Swansea

Contact: for ticket and info, Diane Cruz at dcruz@umassd.edu, 508-999-8007

Please join us at our annual awards dinner as we celebrate our victories and honor our heroes. This year we will be honoring Larry Hanley of the ATU and Tess Ewing, retired from the UMass Boston Labor Resource Center.

Radicals of the Best Sort: A Celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Bread and Roses Strike of 1912

Thursday, Oct. 25th, 2012, 6:00 to 8pm

Cost: Free

Location: UMass Lowell, O'Leary 222, 61 Wilder Street

Contact: Susan Winning, 978-934-3127, susan_winning@uml.edu

Join us for this event co-sponsored by the Work, Labor and Society program at UML as Ardis Cameron, author of Radicals of the Worst Sort: Laboring Women in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1860-1912, discussed the important role women played in the historic textile strike of 1912. Bread and soup (food of the strikers) will be served.

Thinking Big/Moving Forward Breakfast Seminar on Worker Owned Coops

Late November/early December

Cost: Free

Contact: Anneta Argyres, Anneta.Argyres@umb.edu, 617-287-7229

Location: UMass Boston

Watch for more information about the next Thinking Big/Moving Forward.

North Shore Labor Council Women's Committee Breakfast

Saturday, Dec. 1, 2012, 10 am to noon

Cost: Free

Location: 10 Church St. Lynn, MA

Contact: Aliza Levine, 781-595-2538, northshorelaborcouncil@gmail.com or susan_winning@uml.edu

The 8th Annual breakfast theme is: Standing Up Against the War on Women: Weaving a Web of Defense. Join us for this inspiring event. Childcare and Spanish translation provided.



The Resource Corner

Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) (<http://www.workplacebullying.org/>), founded by Drs. Gary & Ruth Namie, is the "first and only U.S. organization dedicated to the eradication of workplace bullying that combines help for individuals, research, books, public education, training for professionals-unions-employers, legislative advocacy, and consulting solutions for organizations." Begin with the page defining the problem (<http://www.workplacebullying.org/individuals/problem/being-bullied/>) which provides some important facts and information on early signs of bullying. This website also includes a page on Workplace

Bullying Solutions for Unions and has a wealth of information with resources on help for individuals, research, and legislative campaigns.

The New Workplace Institute Blog (<http://newworkplace.wordpress.com/>), hosted by David Yamada, a legal expert on workplace bullying in the United States, and the author of the Healthy Workplace Bill. This blog posts education opportunities and successes of unions in taking on bullies. For example, the settlement agreement of the recent Chicago teachers strike, the Chicago Teachers Union "inserted an anti-bullying clause that prohibits abusive and demeaning conduct by principals."

Dealing with Bullying at Work: A guide for Workers. Government of Western Australia. http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe/PDF/Guidance_notes/Dealing_with%20bullying_english.pdf.

The Healthy Workplace Bill, website of the Healthy Workplace Campaign, which seeks a legislative solution. <http://www.healthyworkplacebill.org/>

Program Notes

■ UMASS AMHERST

Contrary to what was reported in our last Newsletter, Dale Melcher is still on payroll and available for workshops, educational events and consultation. She is looking forward to a real retirement date of mid-December. Meanwhile, summer was incredibly busy. We offered workshops on popular education to Center for Popular Economics (CPE), the MTA and WILD. We did stewards training for firefighters from Northampton and Holyoke, and taught leadership skills at the WILD Summer Institute. The highlight of the summer was hosting the 37th UALE Northeast Summer School for Union Women. The school, coordinated by the statewide UMass Labor Extension Program, brought 140 women to campus for five days of workshops, plenary sessions, networking and fun. Participants came from all over the Northeast, plus Texas and Bermuda. Finally, the Labor Center is delighted to welcome our newest faculty member, Jasmine Kerrissey, who's doing great work on the history of union mergers and on union members' political engagement.

■ UMASS BOSTON

The spring and summer have been a time of transition at the LRC, as Anneta Argyres has been trying to step into Tess Ewing's shoes, and as we gear up for our new Labor Studies Minor at UMass Boston. Word has spread to potential students both on- and off-campus through an open house that LRC hosted in June, and a welcome-back-to-school event we ran in September. For more information about our academic programs, please email Wally.Soper@umb.edu. Now that we've recovered from helping to coordinate the UALE Summer School for Union Women at UMass Amherst, we're turning our attention back to Boston-based events. We will be holding another Thinking Big/Moving Forward Breakfast Seminar after Thanksgiving to explore the cooperative movement and what roles union can play in worker-owned coops. Keep your eyes peeled for announcements about the time and location.

■ UMASS DARTMOUTH

This summer and fall, UMass Dartmouth Labor Extension has helped plan a conference on the privatization of education entitled, *The Assault on Public Education: The Corporate Agenda*. The conference was held on October 13 at a middle school in New Bedford and was planned with the Massachusetts Teachers Association locals in the area, the Union of Minority Neighborhoods and Massachusetts Jobs with Justice. Our transit justice work continues, as we work with Bus Riders United in New Bedford and Fall River and the Amalgamated Transit Union. We are part of a statewide advocacy for transit funding with the Green Justice Coalition and have had an impact on recent positive changes at the regional transit authority, SRTA. Join us at our annual dinner on October 25 as we honor the International President of the ATU, Larry Hanley and retired UMass Boston labor educator Tess Ewing. On an administrative note, the name of the extension coordinator has been changed from Wilson to Wilson Venancio.

■ UMASS LOWELL

Our labor program has formally changed its name to the Labor Education Program. This name change reflects the expansion of our work as more fully engaged with undergraduate students through our role in the Work, Labor and Society academic minor. We wrapped up the first semester of co-teaching the core course for the minor, and served as the service learning coordinator. Students evaluated the service learning projects very highly; they had the opportunity to do original research on the Lowell Textile strike, observed collective bargaining firsthand, and interviewed labor leaders whose interviews were then played on the Lowell cable channel. With our Future of Work funding, we have hired an UMass Lowell graduate student who is researching jobs and the economy in Lynn to help inform the work of the New Lynn coalition. We continue our commitment to the extension work, working with the Merrimack Valley and North Shore councils, providing workshops, and working with WILD.

S P O T L I G H T

Labor Extension Program workshops on Standing up to Bullying

In collaboration with George Luse, Training and Organizing Coordinator of the Mass Teachers Association, the Labor Extension Program has developed a series of workshops addressing bullying at work. The long version, called *Standing Up to Bullying in the Workplace*, provides a very comprehensive, multi-day workshop. We have also developed shorter versions called *Standing up to Bullying: What Unions Can Do* (2 hours) and *Bullying in the Workplace: Response and Prevention*.

These workshops start by identifying characteristics of bullying behaviors in the workplace and suggest some individual and collective responses. Through the workshops we also review some ways for unions to respond to and prevent workplace bullying. We end with a planning activity so participants can apply what they have learned by developing a strategy to address bullying in their own workplace. In the longer version, we examine how bullying is or is not like sexual harassment at work. And in the multi-day version we pay particular attention to the role of bystanders, as well as an in-depth analysis of a broad range of strategies workers can use to address bullying, including grievances, changes in contract language, internal organizing, worksite actions, and legislation. All workshops include handouts and resource materials from a range of sources.

We encourage unions to contact us to schedule an educational workshop with your members.

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UMass Amherst

Labor Extension Program

Labor Center, Thompson Hall

200 Hicks Way

Amherst, MA 01003-9277

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In the Past 5 months...

The UMass Labor Extension Program Has Provided Trainings On These Topics...

- **Advanced Grievance Handling**
United Association for Labor Education (UALE) NE Summer School for Union Women
- **Arbitration Basics**
MassCOSH
- **How to Assert Your Rights When Alone in the Workplace**
Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD)
- **Leadership Skills**
UALE NE Summer School for Union Women
WILD
- **Leadership Skills: Developing the Leadership of Others**
WILD
- **The Occupy Movement & the Economy**
WILD

To Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program:

■ **UMASS AMHERST LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**

Labor Center, Thompson Hall, 200 Hicks Way
Amherst, MA 01003-9277 www.umass.edu/lrrc
Dale Melcher: 413-545-6166 Fax: 413-545-0110
email: dmelcher@lrrc.umass.edu

■ **UMASS BOSTON LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**

CPCS Labor Resource Center, 100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125-3393 www.umb.edu/lrc
Annetta Argyres: 617-287-7229
email: anneta.argyres@umb.edu

■ **UMASS DARTMOUTH LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**

Dubin Labor Education Center, 285 Old Westport Road
North Dartmouth, MA 02747 www.umassd.edu/labored/
Kim Wilson Venancio: 508-999-8781 Fax: 508-999-9168
email: kwilson@umassd.edu

■ **UMASS LOWELL LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**

600 Suffolk St., 5th Floor, Suite 503
Lowell, MA 01854 www.uml.edu/laborextension/
Susan Winning: 978-934-3127 Fax: 978-934-4033
email: susan_winning@uml.edu

Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program at <http://umasslep.org>

- **Political Economy**
New Lynn Coalition

- **Popular Education: Education for Changing Unions**
Center for Popular Economics
Massachusetts Teachers' Association (MTA)
UALE NE Summer School for Union Women
WILD Facilitators

- **Public Speaking for Social Change**
SEIU 615 Higher Education Study Group

- **Steward as Organizer**
WILD

- **Stewards Training**
American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)
International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) 108
Professional Staff Union -UMB/MTA

- **"Taking it to the Streets" Mobilizing Conference,**
Greater Boston Labor Council

- **Workers' Rights**
Jobs with Justice Boston