

In the Past 4 months...

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

- **Building a Contract Campaign**
SEIU 509 Private Sector
- **Building the Union (Management's Plan, Communicating and Involving Members, Mobilizing Your Members and Allies, Implementing Continuous Bargaining)**
AFSCME SUMMUP
- **Building a Stronger Union**
SEIU Local 888 Staff
- **Immigrants and the Labor Movement: Exclusion or Solidarity**
Mass. Labor Educators "Squatable"
- **Planning for Leadership Development**
WILD/Fit to Lead
- **Public Sector Health and Safety Training**
AFSCME Local 1067
- **Strategic Planning**
PSU/MTA Amherst Chapter Board
- **Stewards Training**
IBEW Local 2325
Western Massachusetts Union

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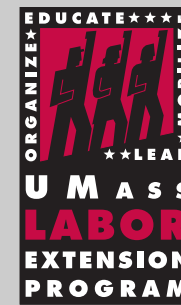


- **Unionization of Care Givers**
UMass Lowell Students
- **Unions 101**
SEIU 888 Family Childcare Provider Organizers
- **US Unions and How They Work/Sindicatos en los EE. UU. y Como Funcionan**
MassCOSH Workers Center
- **Women in the Fishing Industry**
New Bedford Working Waterfront Festival

Strategic Research for Union Organizing and Contract Campaigns

This spring Labor Extension will once again run our popular corporate research class, but this time in a new format and with new information included. Learn how to use the Internet to find out crucial information about employers that will help you plan organizing drives or contract campaigns. This hands-on class will explore the use of the Worldwide Web and online search engines and databases for corporate research. The actual content will be shaped to meet the needs of the participants. Plenty of computer time is included for participants to practice and hone their research skills.

For more details, see insert.



Labor Extension Bulletin

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

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Internet: Friend or Foe

There is no denying it, we are in the age of the Internet—and that's not news. We know some of the ways it can be used against us as workers, by employer surveillance for one example. But how can the power of the Internet be harnessed by us to build power for unions and help us win our fights?

There are numerous ways workers have fought back: from online letters and petitions to bad bosses to innovative ways to research employers for organizing or contract campaigns. At UMass Labor Extension, our mission is to build power for working people and we would like to invite all of our readers to our one day class, at UMass Boston on March 13, specific to internet research of employers and beyond for organizing and contract campaigns (see box insert for details). In this article, we'd like to discuss other ways to leverage the power of the Internet.

The University of California at Berkeley's has a vast database of union contracts. To find good language on a particular issue, or for new ideas, visit <http://www.irl.berkeley.edu/library/index.php?page=3>.

One way many members are connected to the Internet is through email list serve where you receive updates and notices from any number of organizations. It can be wise to pick and choose these lists and unsubscribe as needed to avoid "email fatigue". Unfortunately there has been a recent decision negatively affecting union rights to email members. Charley Richardson of UMass Lowell has been researching and reaching out to unions on this issue. We encourage you to visit <http://www.uml.edu/laborextension/>.

Web logs or blogs are another way to learn about other's opinions on labor and political issues. There are countless ones available, and the AFL-CIO's blog may be of special interest. And it's easy to start your own. www.blogspot.com is one site that makes setting up your own blog simple—and it's free.

One key way the Internet can be used as a tool by union members is through solidarity campaigns. Eric Lee of LabourStart (see Spotlight) has pointed out that rank and file unionists did not have any clear or easy way to participate in international labor solidarity issues before the Internet. The International departments of some international unions as well as the AFL-CIO handled international issues. This work was expensive, since it involved international travel. More importantly, it was centralized: local unions and rank and file members were given no opportunities to get involved and were excluded from decisions about which unions or struggles in other countries they could support. Now, rank and file members can directly participate through online campaigns such as those highlighted by LabourStart.



Students from past corporate research classes work together to learn how to use the internet for union power.

What LabourStart pioneered on the international level has been taken up here in the US by both the major federations and many unions, as well as by labor support groups such as Jobs with Justice. If you visit the Jobs with Justice website, you will not only see e-petitions to sign in support of major issues affecting US workers, but you will be asked to join e-activist networks that put you on list-serves to receive information about future campaigns. Even local unions get into the picture. The website of SEIU 509, for example, (www.seiu509.org/action/) provides people with everything they need to lobby their legislators about 509's issues, including information about the issues, a link to find out who your legislators are, and their voting records.

As important a tool as is the Internet, it will never replace one on one organizing, the core of all union building work. However, it gives us access to information and a way to reach out to our own members and union members around the world to catch up on other struggles that we may be able to help on. To win, we need to use every tool at our disposal.

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Around THE STATE

The Resource Corner

Internet Resources in Massachusetts

Massachusetts AFL-CIO: The website of the state federation in Massachusetts has a wealth of useful information about the labor movement in the state—including all the labor councils, as well as political action page, lists of all legislators, and their labor voting record. It also is a place that workers can go if they are interested in a union. <http://www.massafclcio.org/>

Central Labor Councils: many of the labor councils in the state have websites, which offer a range of information, including when they meet, which towns they represent, who their officers and affiliates are and stories of local labor struggles and successes.
Greater Boston CLC: <http://gbclc.com/>
Central Massachusetts AFL-CIO: <http://www.centralmassafclcio.org/>
Merrimack Valley CLC: www.mvclc.org
North Shore CLC: <http://nslaborcouncil.org/>
Pioneer Valley CLC: <http://www.pvun.org/>
Greater Southeastern Massachusetts Labor Council: <http://www.gsmlaborcouncil.org/>

Labor Education Programs

The Statewide Labor Extension Program provides training and education to workers, their unions, and other workers' organizations. The website lists each regional program, the range of trainings that we offer, and from the site one can download training materials and curriculum on immigrations, workers rights, and our new "Changing the Future of Work: curriculum." <http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/lep/>

The Labor Center at UMass Amherst offers two masters programs and labor extension services. <http://www.umass.edu/lrrc/>

The Labor Resource Center (LRC) at UMass Boston offers undergraduate degree program and labor extension. <http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/lrc/>

Arnold M. Dubin Labor Education Center at UMass Dartmouth offers a minor in Labor Studies and Labor Extension services. <http://umdlaborcenter.org/>

UMass Lowell Labor Extension Program offers extension programs and training on work restructuring and new technologies. <http://www.uml.edu/laborextension/>

Organizers Roundtable

Second Tuesday of every month, 9:30 - 11:30am

Cost: Free
Location: IBEW 103
Contact: Bill Corley, 617-436-3710
Roundtable discussions on topics of interest to union organizers.

Workshop with Cape Verdean Longshoremen

Thursday, February 14, 7:00 - 8:00pm

Cost: Free
Location: Seamen's Bethel, 15 Johnny Cake Hill, New Bedford
Come learn from the stories of a group of seasoned longshore work veterans as we honor their work and their union as part of African-American history month.
Contact: For more information, call Kim Wilson at 508-999-8781.

WILD in the Winter East

Saturday, Mar. 8, Time TBA

Cost: TBA
Location: Plumbers Local 12
Contact: Emily Hardt, 617-426-0520
Leadership training for women labor activists.

WILD in the Winter West

Saturday, Mar. 15, Time TBA

Cost: TBA
Location: TBA
Contact: Dale Melcher, dmelcher@lrrc.umass.edu, 413-545-6166
Join your activist sisters for networking, workshops, speakers and lunch.

Worker Memorial Day 5K Race and Walk

Date: TBA at this time due to conflict with another race

Cost: \$12 preregistered, \$15.00 day of the race
Location: UMass Dartmouth Ring Rd.
Contact: José Soler 508-999-8796
Come as an individual or make up a team with your union to participate in this annual race, which serves as an important fundraiser for the Labor Center.

Worker Memorial Day Commemoration

Date: Wednesday, April 30

Cost: Free
Location: UMass Dartmouth
Contact: Kim Wilson 508-999-8781
Each year the labor movement honors those fallen on the job. We will hold a public event for union members, families, and the public to commemorate these men and women and to renew the fight for safe and healthy jobs.

Program Notes

■ UMASS AMHERST

Amherst LEP offered a series of Basic Stewards Training classes this fall that culminated in a dinner with guest speaker Attorney Bob Schwartz, who spoke on the FMLA. We also designed and facilitated a strategic planning retreat for the Amherst Chapter Board of PSU/MTA and the kick-off goal setting workshop for WILD's new program, Fit to Lead. We continued to work with the Hampshire Franklin and Pioneer Valley CLCs, helping to generate funding for and hire a shared intern to do council building for both. Once again we taught an undergraduate course on women and work, introducing students to unions, organizing and the issues facing working women. We continue to work with our colleagues at the Labor Center on our Future of Work research project on immigrant workers in the Pioneer Valley. We are now planning a series of workshops for the spring on contract bargaining, both basic and advanced.

■ UMASS BOSTON

The corporate-driven globalization that is hurting working people here in the US is also wreaking havoc on workers in Latin America, according to 2 experts who spoke at a forum sponsored by the Labor Resource Center last fall. According to Professor Carlos Salas from Mexico, NAFTA has led to job loss and greater income inequality in that country. Prof. Marcia Leite, from Brazil, reported that the Workers Party government has been greatly constrained in its attempts to promote pro-working class reforms by the institutions and ideology of neoliberalism and global capital. In another LRC sponsored event, nationally acclaimed author and teacher of writing for social change, Louise Dunlap, presented one of the "Six Tools for Powerful Writing" from her new book. This spring, the Center has lined up six labor studies courses for the semester, including a five-day intensive course on "Popular Education for Labor Educators" that is open to union members and the general public. For more information, see the insert.

■ UMASS DARTMOUTH

Work continues with the People First economic development project of the Greater Southeastern Massachusetts Labor Council and the Community Economic Development Center of SE Massachusetts. We are fortunate to be working with the Housing Investment Trust of the AFL-CIO and the mayor of New Bedford in planning for a number of union built affordable housing units in our city. Work also continues in two other areas: the first is working with the primarily Cape Verdean Longshore union and building up our Labor Studies Minor program through a monthly speaker and discussion series, see program insert for spring speakers. In addition, the spring will be busy with training plans with the United Steelworkers Local 1357 in New Bedford and AFSCME Local 2824 in Plymouth as well as an open enrollment month long health and safety training series.

■ UMASS LOWELL

Lowell Labor Extension led a four-session union-building training for leaders of SUMMUP (state DMH and DPH workers). Our work with the Merrimack Valley and North Shore CLCs included leading strategic planning sessions for both as well as organizing events for women—a dinner for women in the MVCLC and the third annual women's breakfast with the NSCLC, which focused on health care and health care workers. In anticipation of development of the Lynn waterfront, we are participating on the NSCLC economic development committee. We are also helping WILD to develop a new intensive women's leadership development program called Fit to Lead. On campus, we co-taught a course on the Future of Work with professors from Economics, Mechanical Engineering, and Regional Economic and Social Development. The undergraduates in the class toured old workplaces (the Lowell textile mills) and new (Raytheon); read about new technologies and globalization; and looked at their own job opportunities in the future economy.

S P O T L I G H T

LABOURSTART

Want to know the labor news around the world? Want your labor news to come straight from the activist's mouth? Then check out LabourStart, founded by Eric Lee, an online news service maintained by a global network of volunteers. It serves the international trade union movement by collecting and sharing information—and by assisting unions in campaigning and other ways.

Its features include daily labor news links in more than 20 languages and a news syndication service used by more than over 700 trade union websites. News is collected from mainstream, trade union, and alternative news sources by a network of over 500 volunteer correspondents based on every continent.

LabourStart has also been involved in online campaigning for several years, but moved up a gear with the launch in July 2002 of the ActNOW campaigning system. Tens of thousands of trade unionists have participated in its various online campaigns and more than 50,000 are currently subscribed to its mailing list, receiving weekly mailings. All of this and more, including Radio LabourStart, LabourStart TV and an online bookstore, can be found at <http://www.labourstart.org/>.



<http://www.labourstart.org/>