

# 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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## 2018: The year of the Strike!

From Florida to Vermont, from West Virginia to Hawaii, US workers are striking.

Strikes have never disappeared from the US labor scene—according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, workers have typically struck 50 to 60 employers each year since 1981 (as far back as this data goes). While this number has been trending downward in recent years, it's not that unusual that over 20 strikes have happened so far in 2018.

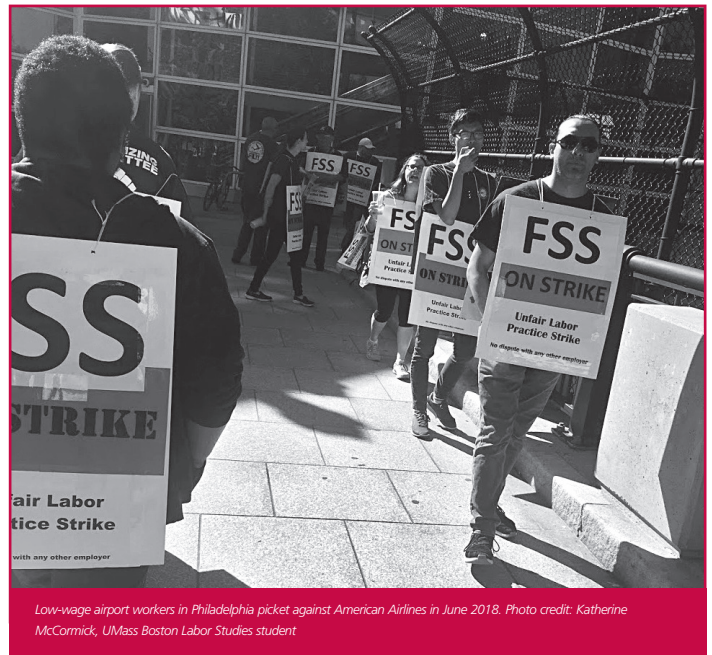
What is unusual, though, is the number of workers who are taking part in these strikes. During the past decade, an average of 65,000 workers have struck each year. **So far in 2018, over 445,000 workers have struck!** That many US workers haven't walked off the job since the early 1980's, and it's only September.

What's also unusual is who is striking. Both public and private sector workers have struck every year, and often the numbers of public sector workers on strike have exceeded those from the private sector. But, until this year, those striking public sector workers have worked in states where it is legal for public sector workers to strike. In states like California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Vermont, public school teachers have the legal right to strike. This year, though, we've seen public school teachers walk off the job in West Virginia, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Kentucky and Arizona—all states where such actions are illegal.

These actions have sparked renewed debate about whether or not public sector workers should have the right to strike. In Massachusetts, public sector workers are denied this right. But why? Western states have not collapsed because their public sector workers have retained the right to collectively withhold their labor. As we examine the narrowing of workers' legal rights that has occurred over the last few decades (increasingly so over the last two years), we should not forget to add this fundamental right denied to many public sector workers.

But, whether legal or not, striking is only an option if our unions are ready to take this step. The final decision on whether or not to strike rests with the members, and a successful strike takes careful planning, engagement, and coordination. Below are some steps union leaders can take to ensure that they are prepared if striking becomes the best option.

- **Leadership:** Who will make the decisions about the how the strike is run? Your local should discuss the option of a strike and what it would take to successfully strike. Establishing and educating a Strike Committee—the group of officers and leaders in charge of the strike and responsible to the members—well in advance of an actual strike will help ensure that the local is prepared to carry out a successful strike.



Low-wage airport workers in Philadelphia picket against American Airlines in June 2018. Photo credit: Katherine McCormick, UMass Boston Labor Studies student

- **Financial:** What financial supports can your union offer striking members? Supports could include: helping members plan their own finances in advance; help members with medical coverage (only New York allows striking workers to collect unemployment); prepare a strike fund to help alleviate the financial burden of members.
- **Public/ally support:** Many strikes succeed because community partners and allies – parents, students, customers, other public workers – stand with the strikers to demand what's right. How will you reach out to allies and what will you ask of them?
- **Emotional support for strikers:** Strikes can increase the stress in your members' lives, so being prepared to support your members socially and emotionally through this time is very important. Some types of supports that unions should explore include access to support groups and counseling for members with addictive or mental health concerns; access to shelter for any members (and their dependents) facing domestic violence.
- **Legal support:** What legal issues may your members face during the strike and how can the local help address them? The types of issues that may arise are debt payment, housing insecurity, visa/immigration status issues, bill collectors, in addition to assistance with any legal protections needed for participating in the strike itself.

See the Resource Corner for information and resources on strikes and other actions.

# Around THE STATE

## UMass Dartmouth Annual Awards Banquet

**Thursday, October 18, 2018, 6pm to 9pm**

*Location:* Venus de Milo, 75 Grand Army of the Republic Hwy, Swansea, MA

*Cost:* \$40 a ticket

*Contact:* Kim Wilson at kwilson@umassd.edu or 508-910-7106

Join us at this event to honor our labor heroes and strengthen connections as we move forward to build our movement. This year the Dubin awardee is Barbara Madeloni, the visionary past president of the Massachusetts Teachers Union. Approximately 200 union and community activists and leaders attend each year to celebrate and forge our bonds for the work ahead.

## 2018 James Green Memorial Lecture & People's History Walking Tour of Boston

**Saturday, October 20, 9:30 am – 1 pm**

*Location:* Democracy Brewing, 35 Temple Place, Boston MA 02111

*Contact:* Wally Soper (wally.soper@umb.edu)

In commemoration of the 100 year anniversary of the Boston Police Strike, Margaret Sullivan, the Boston Police Department Records Manager & Archivist, will give this year's lecture: "The 1919 Boston Police Strike Project: Researching the Men Behind the Strike." The 3 mile walking tour will include some of the sites from the strike. Join us at Democracy Brewing for light refreshments and the lecture; the tour will leave there at 10:30 am and return there afterwards.

## "Domestic Workers Building Dignity and Power, Past and Present"

**Thursday, November 1st, 2018 5:30pm**

*Location:* Bernie Dallas Room, Goodell Hall, UMass Amherst

Domestic workers are drawing lessons from past movements to organize on a massive scale and build feminist economies. A panel conversation with Linda Burnham (National Domestic Workers Alliance), Monique Tú Nguyen (Matahari Women Workers' Center), and Jennifer Guglielmo (Putting History in Domestic Workers' Hands), moderated by Diana Sierra Becerra (Putting History in Domestic Workers' Hands). This talk is part of the 2018 Feinburg Series.

## North Shore Labor Council's Women's Committee Annual Solidarity Breakfast

**Saturday, December 1, 2018**

*Location:* 10 Church Street, Lynn

*Cost:* Free

*Contact:* Katie Cohen, northshorelaborcouncil@gmail.com or 781-595-2538

Join union and community women to enjoy a hearty breakfast and to hear stories from women fighting for economic and social justice. Childcare and Spanish translation available.

## FUTURE OF WORK EVENT

### "Visions of Organizing: Workers' Stories and Building the Movement"

**November 8-10, 2019**

*Location:* UMass Amherst, Campus Center

"Visions of Organizing: Workers' Stories and Building the Movement" conference is designed to employ the power of film to inspire, energize, and spur creative action on movement issues and organizing in all forms—from unions to worker- and community-based movements to electoral politics. Workshops and plenaries will use a set of films as a medium to convey ideas that will be central to all discussions. The films will be organizing tools and will, for the most part, substitute for panels and speakers.

## The Resource Corner

### RESOURCES ON STRIKES AND OTHER ACTIONS

***No Contract, No Peace: A Legal Guide to Contract Campaign, Strikes and Lockouts***, by Robert Schwartz. This book is the revised and updated second edition of *Strikes, Picketing and Inside Campaigns*. An easy-to-read resource and a powerful tool for any union mobilizing its ranks, this book will help you organize your next contract campaign, work grievance action, or picket. This book, along with other books by Robert Schwartz, can be ordered from Labor Notes, who have taken over all books previously published by Work Rights Press.

***55 Strong: Inside the West Virginia Teachers' Strike***, July 5, 2018. Edited by Jessica Salfia, a West Virginia public school teacher, Emily Hilliard, a West Virginia-based folklorist, and Elizabeth Catte, author of *What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia*. This book gives on-the-ground insight into this historic strike with essays by teachers, organizing documents, images from the picket lines, and material on the history of the labor movement in West Virginia.

***Labor Notes***: many articles, including: "Verizon Strike Shows Corporate Giants Can Be Beat" June 03, 2016 / Dan DiMaggio (<http://www.labor-notes.org/2016/06/verizon-strikers-show-corporate-giants-can-be-beat>)

***Portside Labor*** – many related articles, including: "The Unions Strike Back: Janus, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and the Future of Organized Labor" June 5, 2018 by Nathaniel Pettit (<https://portside.org/2018-06-05/unions-strike-back-janus-west-virginia-oklahoma-and-future-organized-labor>).

***UE's guide*** for preparing for and conducting a strike ([www.ueunion.org/strikes](http://www.ueunion.org/strikes))



# Program Notes

## ■ UMASS AMHERST

This past Spring the Labor Center held an exciting two-day conference, Labor Under Trump. The conference brought together over 150 scholars and activists from around the country to talk about labor and resistance in the current political moment. This Fall the Labor Center is thrilled to welcome a new Director, Cedric de Leon. Cedric's research focuses on labor, race, and party politics in the United States, India, and Turkey. He also brings a strong activist background to the Labor Center, having started his career as a union organizer. The Labor Center has also added a new Manager of Academic Programs, Julie Rosier who will be supporting recruitment and the development of our limited-residency Masters program.

## ■ UMASS BOSTON

In April we held our second annual Boston Labor Conference with a full house of labor activists and academics, including visiting labor scholars Jane McAlevey, Janice Fine, Kim Bobo, William P. Jones, Sam Gindin and Adolph Reed. This spring semester we ran our Union Administration course as a joint Labor Studies/Labor Extension experiment, bringing undergraduate students and labor activists together to explore how to use budgeting, elections, data collection and management, communications and strike preparations to build stronger worker organizations. Many thanks to our visiting speakers: Susan Winning (UMassLowell/SEIU 888), Matt Lyford (1199SEIU), Ryan Berard (MNA), Laura Barrett and Scott McLennan (MTA). We closed out the academic year with our Spring Cruise recognizing Susan Moir's years of service to the Labor Resource Center, and celebrating our first graduating class from our new Labor Studies program!

## ■ UMASS DARTMOUTH

At UMass Dartmouth we have continued to build multi-disciplinary connections on campus. We are excited to continue working with a diverse group of interns and an example of this work has been the student development and delivery of a living labor and social movement history of the Fall River textile industry. We also brought noted poet, writer, and academic, Walidah Imarisha on campus for Women's History Month and Black History Month. In the local labor movement, we have presented training on internal organizing and a conference on strengthening the public sector. We cosponsored a fun labor and community cookout. For another community building event, join us as we bring together 200 labor and community activists to our Awards Banquet on October 18. And on a national level, Camilo Viveiros has spoken on participatory research and contributed to the Poor People's Campaign through training and curriculum development.

## ■ UMASS LOWELL

The Lowell program has had a busy year: With the North Shore Labor Council, we helped organize the Women's Committee Annual Solidarity Breakfast; worked on the NSLC legislative dinner and on the committee to organize the annual NSLC education conference. Within the university, we co-organized a conference, *Crossing Borders*, which highlighted student work in interdisciplinary programs, including poster projects from students in the *Introduction to Labor Studies* class. We also are working with a multi-union group to improve the flextime practices at the university. We hosted historian Annelise Orleck for university and community talks about her research on organizing efforts by low-wage workers. In our community work, in addition to ongoing labor council work, Susan Winning has been appointed to the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board. Elizabeth Pellerito has joined the boards for PHENOM and the Bread & Roses Heritage Festival. We also working with the Lowell Education Justice Alliance on projects including increased recess time, diversifying public school staff, and increasing the public education budget.



## Academic Offerings

### UMass Amherst

UMass Amherst offers a unique multi-disciplinary program leading toward an MS degree in labor studies. We offer a two-year residential master's program as well as a limited-residency format for trade union officers, staff, and activists. Scholarships are available. To learn more about our program, please visit our website at: <http://www.umass.edu/lrrc/>.

### UMass Boston

Our BA Major and Minor in Labor Studies is continuing to grow, along with our Certificate in Labor Leadership. Now's the time to start thinking about taking courses this spring. If you're interested in one course or the whole program, contact Wally Soper (617-287-7267 or [wally.soper@umb.edu](mailto:wally.soper@umb.edu)). Our fall courses will include: Labor & Working Class History; Labor and Migration; Labor & Community Organizing; Race, Class & Gender at Work; and Labor & Sex Trafficking. In addition we offer Field Placements for students wanting to get experience working in the labor movement. For more details about these classes or our programs, visit our website: [umb.edu/lrc](http://umb.edu/lrc).

### UMass Dartmouth

At UMass Dartmouth, we are reaching deeper to work with students through creating credit internships and offering career opportunities for students in the labor movement. We are also continuing to participate in classes as guest speakers and we are now working to create service learning projects connecting students to organized labor and low income workers. For more information, visit [www.umassd.edu/labored/workwithstudents](http://www.umassd.edu/labored/workwithstudents). To participate, call Camilo Viveiros, at 508-910-7108.

### UMass Lowell

The core course of the Labor Studies Minor, the interdisciplinary Introduction to Labor Studies, will have a sociological lens as we bid goodbye to longtime co-teacher economist Phil Moss and welcome sociologist Richard Hudak to teach with Susan Winning this spring semester. The course will continue its service learning requirement, in which students partner with local labor and community organizations. In the spring semester, we plan to launch the Labor Education internships, with students placed with the Labor Education Program for paid or for-credit internships. We are always looking to partner with unions and social justice organizations for service learning projects and internships. Learn more at [www.uml.edu/fahss/labor-studies](http://www.uml.edu/fahss/labor-studies).



UMass Amherst

Labor Extension Program

Labor Center, Thompson Hall

200 Hicks Way

Amherst, MA 01003-9277

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## In the Past 6 months...

The UMass Labor Extension Program has provided trainings on these topics...

- Addressing Micro-aggressions and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- Basic Social Media Skills
- Building Member Engagement/Increasing Internal Organizing
- Building Worker Power: Defending the Public Sector and Strengthening Our Unions
- Campaign Development 101
- Community-based and Worker-engaged Research: Lessons from the Field of Participatory Action Research
- Direct Action Curriculum Development
- Facilitation Basics
- Leadership Skills
- #MeToo at Work
- Movement Leadership and Grassroots Organizing

## 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](http://www.umass.edu/lrrc)

Clare Hammonds: 413-545-6166 Fax: 413-545-0110

email: [chammonds@soc.umass.edu](mailto:chammonds@soc.umass.edu)

### ■ UMass Boston Labor Extension Program

Labor Resource Center, 100 Morrissey Blvd.

Boston, MA 02125-3393

[www.umb.edu/lrc](http://www.umb.edu/lrc)

Anneta Argyres: 617-287-7229

email: [anneta.argyres@umb.edu](mailto:anneta.argyres@umb.edu)

### ■ UMass Dartmouth Labor Extension Program

Arnold M. Dubin Labor Education Center, 257 Union Street

New Bedford, MA 02740

[www.umassd.edu/labored](http://www.umassd.edu/labored)

Camilo Viveiros: 508-910-7108 Fax: 508-910-7120

email: [cviveiros@umassd.edu](mailto:cviveiros@umassd.edu)

### ■ UMass Lowell Labor Extension Program

Department of Sociology, Dugan Hall 205Q, 883 Broadway

Lowell, MA 01854

[www.uml.edu/LaborEducation](http://www.uml.edu/LaborEducation)

Elizabeth Pellerito: 978-934-3137 Fax: 978-934-4033

email: [Elizabeth\\_Pellerito@uml.edu](mailto:Elizabeth_Pellerito@uml.edu)

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

- Organizing for Student and Worker Power
- Planning Effective Actions
- Popular Education Training of Trainers
- Preparing for Collective Bargaining
- Social Justice Unionism
- Strategic Planning
- Understanding Janus: Its Origins and Impacts



### Welcome to UMass Lowell Labor Education Program

Elizabeth Pellerito comes to the Labor Education Program by way of Eugene, Oregon, where she worked as an organizer for United Academics, the faculty local at the University of Oregon.

Prior to that, she was an officer and staff for several AFT locals in her home state of Michigan, where she earned a PhD in English at Michigan State University. Elizabeth is active in PHENOM, the Bread & Roses Heritage Festival, the Merrimack Valley Project, and other organizations in the region that support economic, racial, and gender justice.