

In the Past 4 months...

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

- **Workers Rights Training**
Center for New Americans
Warming Place
Smith Vocational HS Students
Anti-displacement Project
- **Leadership Skills**
WILD Summer Institute
UALE NE Regional Summer School for Union Women
- **Stewards Training**
Springfield Newspaper Employees Association
WILD Summer Institute
- **Treasurers Training**
MNA
- **Meeting Labor's Challenge: Talking Union Values**
UALE Conference
- **Still in the Minority: Evaluating Approaches to Women's Leadership Development**
UALE Conference
- **Political Mobilization**
UALE NE Regional Summer School for Union Women
- **Continuous Bargaining**
Labor Guild of Boston
Northern New England Council, SEIU
- **Strategic Planning**
North Shore Labor Council

To Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program:

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- **Contract Campaigns**
Vermont State Employees Association
AFSCME Local 1736
AFSCME Local 1298
UALE NE Regional Summer School for Union Women
- **Shrink-Shift-Shaft**
CSEA Local 1000, AFSCME (New York State)
WILD Summer Institute
- **Popular Education Training of Trainers**
WILD Summer Institute
- **Immigration Discussion**
Organizers Roundtable
- **Public Speaking**
New Bedford Mayor's Summer Youth Program
- **Coalition Building for Labor and Environmental Groups**
Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow

Political Mobilization

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anti-immigrant message. Finally we can root our understanding of the experience of immigrant workers in our own values—in our union values. Members who have gone through this process can speak from their heads and their hearts about a labor position on immigration reform.

How do we do this work in the most effective way possible, and how do we do this in a way that delivers a win on Election Day, increases our members' understanding and analysis of the issues, and builds our unions? That's the challenge, and education is the tool to help us meet that challenge. We will work with your union to help your political activists mobilize members and build the union's political capacity. Contact the labor extension coordinator in your area to talk about bringing this program into your local and customizing it to meet your organization's needs.



Labor Extension Bulletin

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

VOLUME 8 ■ NUMBER 3 ■ FALL 2006

Political Mobilization for the Long Haul

It is fall, and that means a major political push for the Massachusetts labor movement. This year the labor movement's focus will be on the governor's race, with the goal of putting someone in the corner office who will champion the interests of working families and be a friend to labor. Once again union activists will be asked to get involved, to talk to our members, to register them to vote, to educate them on the issues and to turn them out on Election Day to vote for the candidates labor endorses. Then we will drop those issues until the presidential election in 2008.

Meanwhile the Right will try to derail our efforts by heavily promoting wedge issues, such as gay marriage and gun control, to distract voters from the real issues. A wedge issue is a sharply divisive political issue that a candidate or party raises with the intention of breaking up their opponent's political base. Wedge issues are meant to distract our members and refocus their attention. Wedge issues play to the divisions within our own ranks, brought on by our failure to talk openly and honestly with our members about union values and issues.

We need a new strategy, one that builds our activist base over time and that doesn't start fresh each campaign season. We need an approach that allows us to win on our issues and candidates while building our members' commitment to a labor agenda.

The Labor Extension Program has been doing political education programs based on the SEIU/UFE model of Shrink-Shift-Shaft (see Labor Extension Bulletin Spring 2004, Vol. 5, #2) for several years. Shrink-Shift-Shaft offers a clear and easy-to-understand framing of the right-wing corporate agenda and suggests a way for activists to have ongoing political conversations with members about issues and candidates, based in a discussion of union values. It suggests that our task as activists is to talk to our members about our issues and candidates in a way that is rooted in union values, such as solidarity, respect, dignity, equality, fairness, justice and working peoples' right to a decent job,



Women in Leadership Development Summer Institute participants from June of 2006 at Wheaton College

housing, education and health care. We need to name wedge issues as a distraction, an attempt by the Right to shift our focus from the real issues, such as wages, jobs, the attack on unions and the erosion of health care and pensions. When we do talk about wedge issues we have to frame them in a way that reflects union values and neutralizes their ability to divide. And we need to use the same approach to discuss the larger political issues that concern our members and that impact on our ability to organize and represent, such as the war in Iraq and immigration reform.

Let's take immigration reform as an example. We need to separate myths from facts, examining popular assumptions that immigrants take jobs from native born workers or use more public services than the taxes they pay. We need to understand the anti-immigrant message, where it comes from, and how it blames immigrants for much larger problems, such as shrinking social services, the assault on wages and unions, the loss of jobs. We need to ask what is really responsible for these conditions, and what and who are behind the

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Open Enrollment Courses at UMass Boston Labor Resource Center

From time to time, the LRC at UMass Boston offers special courses that are open to the general public as well as to UMass students. Two such courses are planned for the spring and summer of 2007:

Strategic Analysis and the Labor Movement – A seminar series focused on how labor unions use strategic analysis to develop plans of actions for their unions and industrial sectors. The evening seminars will showcase Massachusetts labor leaders, they will share case studies of their own union's experience with and assessment of strategic planning. **Spring semester**

Popular Education – A five-day, hands-on, intensive course on the concepts and methods of popular education. Learn and practice interactive techniques. Examine the theory of learner-centered adult teaching and its relevance to union training and education programs. **July**

For more information about either course, contact the LRC at 617-287-7426, or check the website, www.cpcs.umb.edu/lr, where details will be posted as they become available.

Around THE STATE

Merrimack Valley Project Workers Center Open House

September 10th, 3:00-5:00pm

Cost: Free

Location: 1045 Essex Street, Lawrence

Contact: Susan Winning 978-934-3127

The Merrimack Valley Project will open the doors to its Lawrence-based Workers Center with an open house. The event will include food and conversation and a speaker from one of the participating unions as well as testimony from one of the temporary Gillette workers on their successful campaign. Upcoming programs will be announced, including a Workers Rights program led by the Labor Extension Program.

Working Waterfront Festival

September 23 and 24, 2006

Cost: Free

Location: Port of New Bedford

Contact: Kim Wilson 508-999-8781

Join the UMass Dartmouth Labor Extension Program as we lead a panel on workers and their organizations on the boats, on the docks, and in fish processing. This panel is on Saturday, Sept. 23 at 11:00 on the Fisherman's Wharf. Come and enjoy the weekend's events including boat tours, fishermen's contests, live music, and narrative panels.

Annual UMass Dartmouth Arnold M. Dubin Labor Education Center Banquet

October 26, 2006, 6:00 reception, 7:00 dinner

Cost: \$40.00 a person or \$400.00 for a table of ten

Location: Venus de Milo, Swansea

Contact: Diane Cruz 508-999-8007

Join labor and community activists from SE Mass in our annual evening of honoring labor and social change friends and highlighting organizing activities in our area.

WILD's 20th Anniversary Party!

Saturday, November 18th, 2006, 7pm- 12am

Location: Boston Teachers Union Hall, 180 Mt. Vernon St., Dorchester

Contact: WILD at 617-426-0520.

Join the Women's Institute for Leadership Development in celebrating 20 years of promoting women's leadership in the Massachusetts labor movement. Everyone is welcome.

UMass Dartmouth Future of Work conference: Economic Development: Creating and Sustaining Good Jobs for SE Mass December 9, 2006, 8:30 to 2:00

Cost: Nominal, TBA

Location: UMass Dartmouth Downtown campus, 888 Purchase St.

Contact: Kim Wilson 508-999-8781

This year's conference will explore ways for unions and the community to work together through advocating for commuter rail and energy related work to build sustainable jobs.

Organizers Roundtable

2nd Tuesday of each month, 9:30-11:00am

Next meeting: September 12th

Cost: free

Location: IBEW Local 103

Contact: Tess Ewing, 617-287-7352

Roundtable discussion on topics of interest to union organizers.

September topic: organizing an isolated workforce.

Program Notes

■ **UMASS AMHERST**

This spring UMass Amherst wrapped up the Workplace Rights Literacy Project, offering training on basic workers rights to clients of The Warming Place, students at Smith Vocational HS, and to members of the Anti-displacement Project, and introducing the workers rights curriculum to staff at the Center for New Americans. We will be exploring expanding this work in the Pioneer Valley, with a particular focus on immigrant workers and the organizations that support them. During the summer we taught leadership skills at both WILD's Summer Institute and the Northeast Regional Summer School for Union Women, and Political Mobilization for the Long Haul at Summer School. We hosted, here in Gordon Hall, an all-day discussion of labor educators on challenges and responses we face doing labor education at this moment in time. We participated, along with our extension colleagues around the state, in the UALE conference, offering a workshop that shared our developing curriculum on talking union values. In addition we offered stewards training and treasurers training.

■ **UMASS BOSTON**

The Labor Studies Program at CPCS has been gearing up for a new cohort of students starting in September. This group of 19 Labor Studies students will be the first to take the new labor-focused Critical Learning Seminar which incorporates the Future of Work in Massachusetts curriculum developed by the Labor Extension Programs. The course will expose the students to an exciting mix of labor history and an analysis of the changes that "work" is undergoing currently, while orienting them to the CPCS bachelors degree program. There is room to squeeze in a few more students - contact Wally Soper at 617-287-7426 if you are interested in attending the Labor Studies program at UMB. The Labor Resource Center held an initial stakeholders meeting for it new project to develop an on-line research center for labor unions and community organizations actively involved in research and/or organizing around jobs and economic development in Massachusetts. Additionally this will provide access to employer-specific data about job and employer characteristics. For updates on these programs and on new courses, check out the LRC's new website: www.cpcs.umb.edu/lrc.

■ **UMASS DARTMOUTH**

As the fall approaches, classes begin for Labor Studies 101 on the Dartmouth and downtown New Bedford campuses. This course involves field trips to factories and union halls as well as many guest speakers from the SE Mass labor movement. As October progresses, we will be holding our annual Arnold M. Dubin Labor Education Center Awards Banquet. We will be honoring Mayor Ed Lambert of Fall River and the youth activist organization Third Eye Unlimited. We have worked more with youth over the summer through a youth program set up by the New Bedford mayor's office. Labor Extension presented workshops on labor history, one on one organizing and public speaking. We are also preparing for our December 9 conference, which is part of the Future of Work Project, which will address issues of job creation and sustaining good jobs with a focus on youth. See box for more information.

■ **UMASS LOWELL**

Spring and summer are great times to take labor education on the road. We led leadership trainings for public sector unions in northern New England and New York state on continuous bargaining, the fair right agenda, and immigration. With our sister programs we tried out new ways to Talk Union Values at the annual labor educators' conference in Seattle, and helped form a new national task force on immigration. Closer to home we helped convene a "meeting of the minds" on immigration. We continued to offer our popular and effective training on strategic contract campaigns—we're always looking for more places to do this. We worked on curriculum and training for the WILD Summer Institute and the Northeast Women's Summer School, which was a blast—let's see more women there next year! And we continue to work with the Merrimack Valley Workers Center.

The Resource Corner

Immigration is one of the toughest topics facing labor today. How do we build labor solidarity across borders and races—and protect jobs and wages? How do we build alliances with immigrant organizations? How do we keep the Right from chewing us up?

Labor educators across the country have been coming up with solutions to these problems and now we're pooling our best stuff. The United Association for Labor Education is setting up a website that will contain fact sheets, talking points, workshop outlines, and links to more resources. You'll be able to try them out, see how they work, then add your comments and suggestions. Using the website we can pool all our brains and develop great materials faster.

The website should be up by the time you receive this newsletter. Contact your local Labor Extension coordinator for the address.

Future of Work Conference UMass Dartmouth

Saturday, December 9, 2006

The UMass Dartmouth Labor Education Center announces our Future of Work Conference scheduled for Saturday, December 9, beginning at 8:30. The focus is on developing networks and strategies for local activism around creating and keeping good jobs. There will be open sessions to discuss our particular challenges in SE Mass, as well as strategies used by other similar cities to create an environment of fairness for workers. One avenue we will explore are the possibilities for expansion of commuter rail for SE Mass. We hope to come out of this conference with some structures in place for continued work around economic development for the labor movement and progressive community groups and activists. All are welcome, from any part of the state, to participate.

S P O T L I G H T

The Arnold M. Dubin Labor Education Center

The Arnold M. Dubin Labor Education Center is located in Group 1, Room 106 at UMass Dartmouth. Part of the Center is the Worker's Education Program, which is housed in the Downtown UMass Dartmouth campus. WEP provides adult basic education and English classes and has twelve teachers. The Labor Center on the Dartmouth campus offers the full complement of Labor Extension offerings, including education and technical assistance for local unions, labor councils, and community groups, The Center also offers three annual events: the Awards Banquet in October, the Worker Memorial Day Race in April, and the Legislative Breakfast in January. The director, José Soler, has expertise in topics related to people of color and labor, labor films, and the development of the labor movement. Kim Wilson, coordinator of Labor Extension has experience in leadership development, corporate research, and labor history and art. Diane Cruz is the administrative assistant, who is a thirty plus year activist for AFSCME Local 507 and is an ardent health and safety fighter for all workers on campus.



The UMass Dartmouth Labor Education Center leadership from left, Cindy Rodrigues, Chair of Steering Committee and President of the Greater SE Mass Labor Council, Diane Cruz, Administrative Assistant, José Soler, Director, Penn Reeve, Chair of Labor Studies, Kim Wilson, Labor Extension Coordinator