

LEARNing Together

SUMMER 2021

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**THE FUTURE OF
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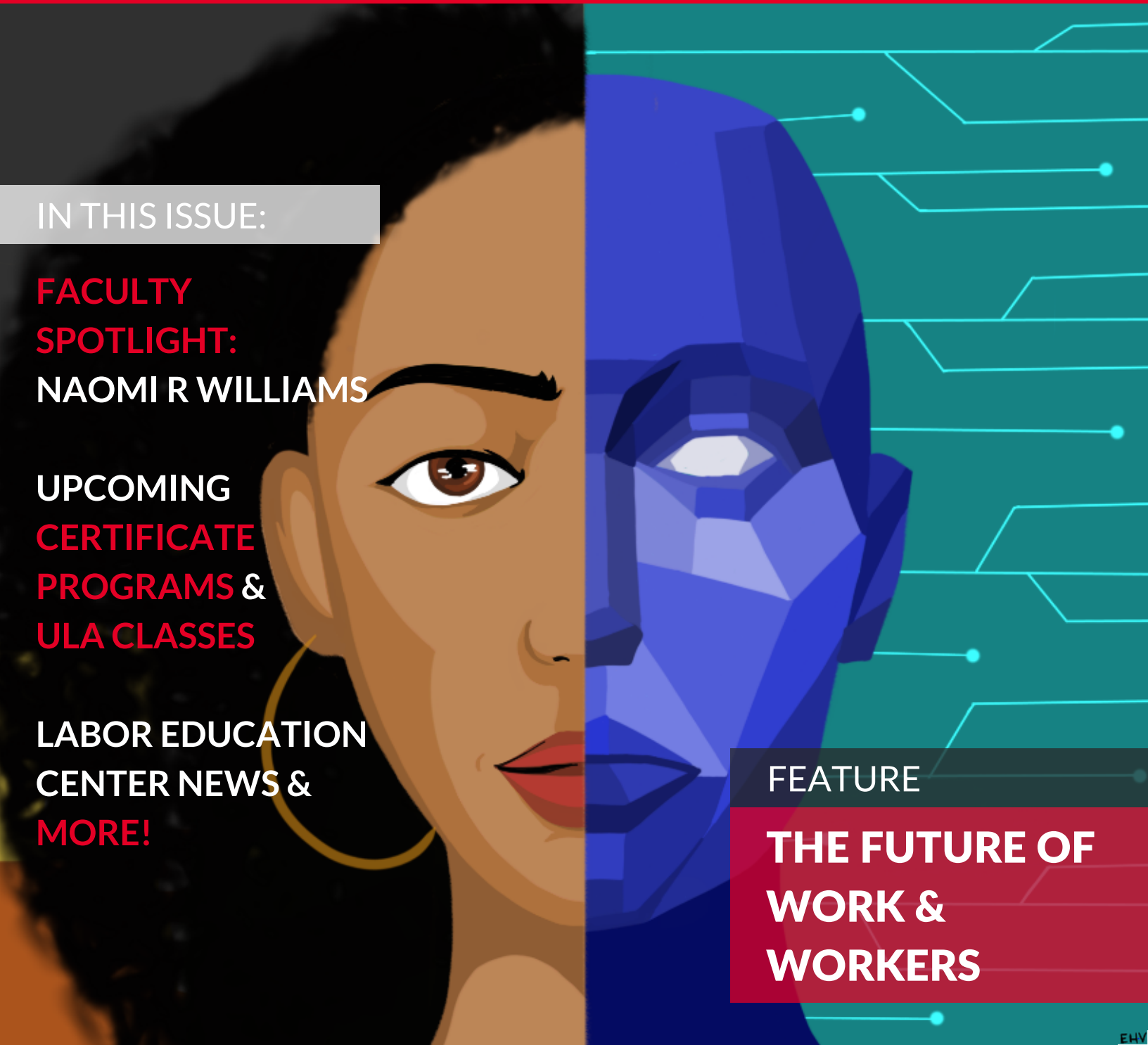


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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear LEARN Community,

Welcome to the Summer Newsletter-2021. I am especially excited to write this welcoming message because it is my first as the Director of LEARN. I look forward to furthering the work we started together this past year in my capacity as Faculty Coordinator. We will continue to draw from the rich history of labor education at Rutgers University as well as progress toward the new frontiers that lay ahead, including the unanticipated challenges and the boundless opportunities. But most importantly, we will do it together, because it takes a whole orchestra to play a symphony.

The coming year, 2022 will mark the 75th anniversary of this program. On June 19, 1947, New Jersey Governor Alfred Driscoll signed into law Assembly Bill 250-A, establishing the Institute of Management and Labor Relations (IMLR) to promote "harmony and cooperation between management and labor, and greater understanding of industrial and labor relations, thereby to enhance the unity and welfare of the people of the state." In order to carry out this assignment, IMLR was tasked with establishing programs to "develop new material and techniques to aid in carrying on the educational activities." While the name and staffing has changed over the years and the vision has expanded to match the changing times, the core mission of LEARN remains to enhance the unity and welfare of the people of the state.

The timing for this anniversary seems especially appropriate given the events of the past eighteen months and our ongoing move toward a new post-pandemic world. Looking in the rear-view mirror, I asked myself "what are some of the major lessons we learned from the pandemic" and "how can they help us plan for the future?" While the lessons were many, I lift up three in particular which can inform the course of this program going forward.

First, we were reminded vividly about the importance of education for the regular functioning of a healthy society – we need to recommit to growing and improving our educational infrastructure.

Second, we learned that our existing institutions are inadequate, lack accountability, and are too easily manipulated to serve the interests of one or another leaders – we need to strengthen our public institutions and make them more democratic.


Third, and most importantly, we were reminded that when workers have a voice, they are better off – we are ALL better off. We need to increase worker voice in the economy.

In other words, the pandemic has reinforced my strong belief in the importance of education, democratic practice, and organizing. To advance these three interconnected practices, LEARN will launch a new white paper series, titled "A Better Tomorrow: Research and Reflections on the Future of Workers." Contributions will include original research, reflections from scholars and practitioners, and chapters from forthcoming books by LEARN-affiliated faculty. If you have an idea or a piece you would like considered for this series, please do not hesitate to reach out. We also have twenty-one certificate course offerings, four Union Leadership Academy classes, and numerous free webinars lined up for the coming year – all advancing the mission of LEARN. And as always, we are on standby to help develop your next custom training program when you are ready.

As I close out this inaugural Director's message and we continue to move toward the post-pandemic future, I would like to remind us of that core union principal: "an injury to one is an injury to all." If we continue to abide by that golden rule, as so many in this community demonstrated during the past eighteen months, we're going to be ok. Actually, we'll be more than ok – we'll be laying the groundwork for the truly equitable, sustainable, and democratic society we all so desperately need.

I look forward to seeing you all again soon, maybe on a webinar or in a LEARN class, perhaps even in person one of these days.

In Solidarity,


Todd E. Vachon
Director, Rutgers LEARN

Intern Spotlights

LEARN is excited to welcome two summer interns to the program!



James Boyle (he/him) is a master's student in the School of Management & Labor Relations. As an undergraduate at Rutgers, James majored in communications and was an active student organizer on campus, enmeshing his coursework and political involvement to conduct quantitative analysis into the university's investment practices as well as broader qualitative research into various social justice issues. James was part of a team of student organizers that helped form the Endowment Justice Collective, which united a cross-section of student and community groups around a broad-based platform for ethical divestment of the Rutgers University endowment that centered climate justice, anti-racism, prison abolition, anti-militarism, and workers rights in its demands, successfully getting Rutgers to commit to divest from fossil fuels earlier this year. In addition to interning at LEARN, James is currently serving as a research assistant at the Education & Employment Research Center (EERC) at Rutgers, assisting in qualitative analysis of the center's work, with an interest in exploring how education and training programs can empower workers in the workplace and in society.

Shiloh Estacio-Touhey (they/them) is an undergraduate student in the Labor and Employment Relations program minoring in Agriculture & Food Systems and Sustainability and a member of Douglass Residential College. They have been a student organizer with Rutgers United Students Against Sweatshops and End Assault at Rutgers and held an organizing internship with the Hotel Trades Council and an externship with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Shiloh has also served as a research assistant under Kate Douthat in the Aresty Summer Science Program, studying the Impacts of Plants on Water Quality in Residential Green Infrastructure. They are interested in the intersection of the environmental and labor movements and would love to work as a researcher for a labor union or other community organization. In addition to academics, Shiloh is president of Rutgers UltraViolet, a discussion-based club for LGBTQ women and gender minorities, and sings in the Voorhees Choir.



UPDATES



PHOTOS BY: STEVE HOCKSTEN / HARVARDSTUDIO.COM

Rutgers OTEC Offers COVID Awareness and Prevention Training, Launches “High Road Seal of Approval” for Area Businesses During Pandemic

The Rutgers Occupational Training and Education Consortium (OTEC) has been issuing High Road Seals of Approval for area businesses after they complete a COVID-19 workplace health and safety program. At a critical time with the Delta variant spreading rapidly and OSHA neglecting to enact a universal pandemic-related workplace health and safety standard, both employer and worker action is key. This seal of approval communicates to both the public and other employers the importance of enacting high road workplace safety standards to protect worker and public health.

“These businesses are taking the high road by making health and safety a top priority as we enter this new phase of reopening,” said Carmen Martino, director of Rutgers OTEC. “When you see that seal on the storefront, it means they’re following best practices and going the extra mile to protect their workers and customers.”

The program is supported by federal CARES Act funding issued through the New Jersey Department of the Treasury and managed by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The Rutgers High Road Employer Program brings together Rutgers OTEC, the New Jersey Department of Health, New Brunswick City Center, the Protect NJ Workers Coalition, New Labor, and participating businesses.

Rutgers OTEC continues to provide COVID-19 workplace health and safety training to New Jersey workers as part of the NJ COVID-19 Awareness and Prevention Program. Working in partnership with the Protect NJ Workers Coalition and Rutgers Teaching and Learning with Technology, Rutgers OTEC has trained thousands of low-wage workers since the start of the pandemic.

REMOTE LEARNING TO CONTINUE IN FALL

Please note that all classes will remain remote at this time as we continue to navigate through uncharted waters. We will share updates regarding potential in-person and/or hybrid options as more information becomes available.

LEARN DIRECTOR HONORED AT ANNUAL WORK ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL AWARDS

The New Jersey Work Environment Council honored Todd E. Vachon, PhD, Director of the Labor Education Action Research Network (LEARN) at their Annual Award Ceremony on June 16, 2021, “for outstanding work throughout the challenging COVID-19 pandemic.” When the COVID pandemic hit in March of 2020, Todd and LEARN partnered with the NJ Work Environment Council and Jersey Renews to host the weekly COVID-19 Update Webinar, “Saving Lives, Protecting Workers.” The series, which ran for 59 weeks, delivered up-to-the-minute critical information to workers, health & safety professionals, and worker advocates across the state, and created an online community of caring, sharing and repairing that reached thousands of viewers over the course of the Pandemic Year.

“I am so humbled and honored to be recognized alongside such a magnificent group of honorees this evening,” Vachon said “WEC is an organization I have followed, admired, and participated in for years. To now be a recipient of an award from those I have looked up to for so long is truly an honor.” Other honorees included: Ellie Barbarash (HPAE), Debbie Berkowitz (NELP), and Nikki Baker (NJEA). The Protect NJ Workers Coalition and Wind of the Spirit Training team were also honored for their important work ensuring worker safety during the pandemic.



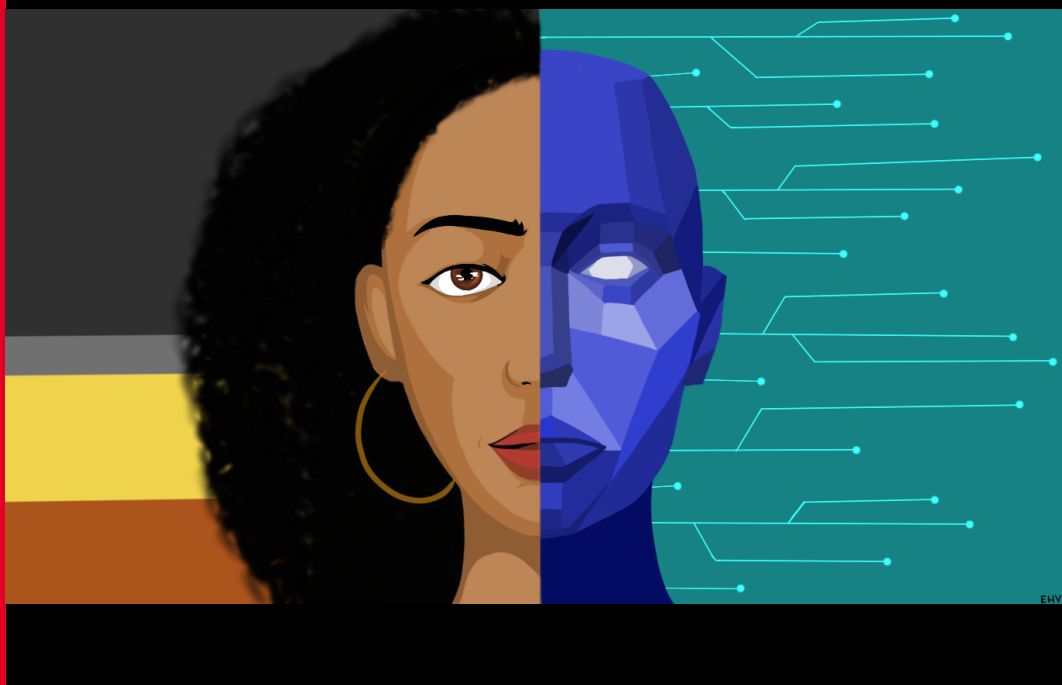
LEARN TO LAUNCH NEW WHITE PAPER SERIES

In partnership with academics, thought leaders, labor and employment relations practitioners and others across New Jersey (and the world) we are excited to bring you the new LEARN White Paper Series. This series will build a collection of research reports, thought pieces, policy proposals, and commentaries examining topics of interest to unions, labor and employment relations professionals, worker advocates, and social justice-oriented organizations. While LEARN has always produced research focusing on key issues in the field, the White Paper Series will be focused on distilling information on a variety of topics related to work, employment, and social change in a way that can help local and national leaders better prepare for the future.

The first paper in the series, titled “Toward Common Preservation,” is a consideration of how ordinary people have in the past and can in the future come together against great odds to ensure our common preservation in the face of powerful forces pushing us ever closer to mutual destruction. The second, by Tobias Schulze-Cleven and Todd E. Vachon titled “Revaluing Work(ers) for Democracy and Sustainability” outlines the necessary parameters for a debate on the future of work that faces up to the interlocking ecological, political, and economic crises currently engulfing societies. It argues that collective political action targeted at revaluing work and workers can greatly increase the long-term viability of contemporary social arrangements by curtailing capitalism’s infringements on democracy, facilitating social reproduction, and reducing environmental exploitation.

Feature:

THE FUTURE OF WORK AND WORKERS



Contemporary societies are beset by interrelated ecological, political and economic crises, from climate change to democratic erosion and economic instability. Uncertainty abounds about the sustainability of democratic capitalism. Yet the standard debate on the future of work tends to remain narrowly characterized by technological and market determinism. How can we build a world of work that delivers for workers and addresses systemic crises?

This is the question that motivates a new book edited by SMLR faculty, Tobias Schulze-Cleven and LEARN Director, Todd E. Vachon. The possible answers are also being pursued by faculty across SMLR as part of a new interdisciplinary initiative bringing together labor and employment relations scholars and researchers from STEM fields, including engineering, computer science, and more to explore the ways in which new technologies may impact work as well as how workers may use their voice to shape the development and use of technologies to ensure broad societal benefits, not just private profits and increased exploitation.

SMLR faculty, Professors Tobias Schulze-Cleven and LEARN Director, Professor Todd E. Vachon have edited the 2021 LERA research volume which presents a labor studies perspective on the future of work. The volume argues that revaluing work—the efforts and contributions of workers—is crucial to realizing democracy and improving sustainability. It emphasizes that collective political action, and in particular the collective agency of

workers, is central to driving this agenda forward. Moreover, it maintains that reproductive work—the labor efforts from care to education that sustain the reproduction of society—can function as a crucible of innovation for the valuation and governance of work more broadly.

The volume offers three reorientations for the current debate on the future of work, which articulate the most important gaps in the current discourse on the future of work when viewed from a labor studies perspective:

1. Beyond Ceteris Paribus: It Is More Than Technology.

Current approaches to the future of work overwhelmingly explore the projected impact of technological change while holding everything else constant (*ceteris paribus*). At their best, contemporary analyses of work's evolution consider how technological progress dovetails with deepening globalization. Yet, both of these drivers of transformation in the world of work — technological change and globalization — should be studied in their interaction with other “mega-trends,” such as demographic shifts and climate change, as well as in relation to inequality-increasing shifts in the economy, from financialization to workplace fissuring. Even changing value systems should be considered, given that they fundamentally shape how labor is divided across society, including with respect to the boundary of the labor markets and the allocation of paid and unpaid tasks. It is at the intersection of these pressures that societies will have to find new ways of organizing and valuing diverse forms of work that are performed by diverse groups of workers. By studying the world as it is, including the complex



REVALUING WORK(ERS): TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

EDITORS: TOBIAS SCHULZE-CLEVEN AND TODD E. VACHON

*New Book by
SMLR and
LEARN Faculty
Offers a Labor
Studies
Perspective on
the Future of
Work and
Workers*

causal processes that give rise to it, the labor studies perspective illuminates how a set of transformational processes interact to radically alter the social, political, environmental, and economic foundations of work. This perspective does not ignore technology; it addresses it by contextualizing it.

2. Beyond Perfect Competition: Strengthening Markets' Democratic Governance.

The contemporary debate on the future of work assumes that organizations will automate job tasks and functions as they become technically equipped and financially positioned to do so, in an effort to reduce costs and maximize efficiency. Yet real-world markets function quite differently from the dynamics theorized in economic models of perfect competition among price-taking firms. In practice, the governing institutions of democratic capitalist societies restrict both managerial control and market competition in order to safeguard social stability, realize democratic principles, and prevent market failures associated with such phenomena as information asymmetries and increasing returns. Dedicated to sustaining a "human-centered" world of work, a labor studies perspective acknowledges openly and engages directly with the democratic processes of rule-making that govern markets and determine the direction and strength of market forces. Just as in the golden-age boom years of the 20th century, when American

manufacturing companies paid wages to (typically) white and male breadwinners that diverged from ideal-typical scenarios of market-generated allocative efficiency, there continues to exist scope for the collective design of markets and of organizations that function in accordance with evolving social goals. In exploring the room for such institutions at different levels of

the polity, the field of labor studies emphasizes how individuals' productivity is rooted in the organization of work as much as it is in individual "human capital." Moreover, it acknowledges how perceptions of efficiency are deeply linked to market externalities and the allocation of property rights.

3. Beyond Structural Determinism: Possibilities through Collective Agency.

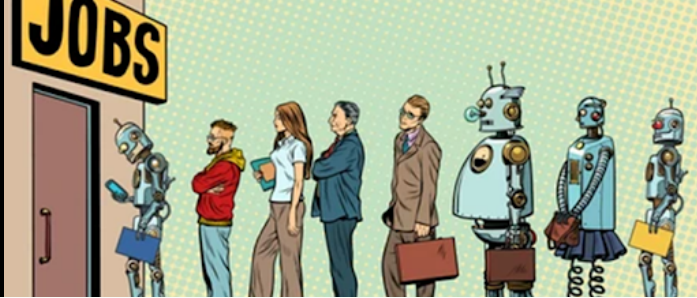
Dominant analyses of workers' future emphasize structural constraints on the evolving world of work. Yet this is a rather partial picture, given that all social forces, technology included, are plastic and subject to creative collective social agency. This is one of the main lessons from the "varieties of capitalism" literature that explored national responses to technological change during the 1980s. Building on these and related findings, a labor studies perspective emphasizes the power of collective agency in recasting multiple structural transformations, shaping the interactions between them, and devising new approaches to absorbing the cost of transition. Rather than restricting all possible responses to powerful technological change to simply one, "managing the future of work" (as an initiative at Harvard Business School frames it), the labor studies perspective contends there is not only scope to dramatically expand the range of responses appropriate for evaluation but also scope to create new ones.

Exploring these topics and more are a number of well-respected contributors, including: Robert Bruno, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; J. Mijin Cha, Occidental College; Dorothy Sue Cobble, Rutgers University; Sheri Davis-Faulkner, Rutgers University; Victor G. Devinatz, Illinois State University; Alysia Hannon, Rutgers

University; William A. Herbert, Hunter College; David C. Jacobs, American University; John McCarthy, Cornell University; Joseph A. McMartin, Georgetown University; Heather A. McKay, Rutgers University; Michael Merrill, Hudson County Central Labor Council; Yana van der Meulen Rodgers, Rutgers University; Saul A. Rubinstein, Rutgers University; Erica Smiley, Jobs With Justice; Marilyn Sneiderman, Rutgers University; Joseph van der Naald, City University of New York; Michell Van Noy, Rutgers University; Naomi R Williams, Rutgers University; Joel S. Yudken, High Road Strategies LLC; Elaine Zundl, Harvard Kennedy School.

The book, which is set for release this fall, is available for pre-order from Cornell University Press:

<https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/9780913447222/revaluing-workers/#bookTabs=1>



SMLR Hosted a Virtual Discussion and Q&A on Technology & the Future of Work

Building from and expanding upon some of the ideas put forth in the new book, SMLR and LEARN faculty have begun to engage our counterparts in the STEM fields who are thinking about and working on this topic as well. To initiate the dialogue, the school hosted an event on April 28, 2021 that explored these issues and was the kickoff for a year long conversation about how SMLR and STEM faculty can partner on Future of Work initiatives and efforts. This ongoing work has been funded by the Chancellor's Strategic Initiative Fund.

Featured speaker, Distinguished Professor, Dr. Fred Roberts from the Rutgers Department of Mathematics has worked on a variety of projects incorporating technology into the security workforce at stadiums, in airports and in many other places of work. Fred's remarks on the future of technology and work were followed by comments from two experts on our faculty: Professor Xiangmin (Helen) Liu and LEARN Director, Todd E. Vachon who helped frame the conversation from the SMLR perspective. The next meeting in early September will bring together SMLR and STEM faculty to discuss research plans and form working groups. **If your organization is interested in participating in research related to technology and the workplace, please drop us a line to join the conversation.**

Faculty Spotlight

Naomi R Williams (they/them), Assistant Professor of Labor History at Rutgers University, researches working-class urban politics in the late-20th century. Naomi has served in various union roles including steward, contract enforcement, treasurer, delegate to CLC, and has just been elected to the leadership committee of AAUP-AFT Local 6323, New Brunswick chapter. Naomi centers workers' voices in their research and teaching through life histories and other testimonials. Their current research project examines the transformation of class identity and politics in the second half of the twentieth century.

Professor Williams has taught numerous labor education courses and developed custom programs through LEARN for unions across the U.S., including most recently on "Intersectional Organizing." Professor Williams will be joining Professors William Brucher and Daniel Sidorick this fall to teach the Union Leadership Academy (ULA) class on "Labor History." More details on p. 19.



What We've Been Up To: Spring 2021



Strike for the Common Good: Fighting for the Future of Public Education A Virtual Panel

Rutgers LEARN, the Center for Innovation in Worker Organization, the Kalmanovitz Initiative at Georgetown University, the Action Center on Race and the Economy, and the Bargaining for the Common Good Network co-sponsored a panel drawing on the newly published *Strike for the Common Good: Fighting for the Future of Public Education*, edited by Rebecca Kolins Givan and Amy Schrager Lang. The panel, including Rebecca Garelli (Arizona Educators United), Marshé Doss (Students Deserve), Joseph McCartin (Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor), Rebecca Givan (Rutgers University), and Kenzo Shibata (moderator, Chicago Teachers Union), presented diverse perspectives on recent teachers' strikes, where teachers struck for the schools their students need and deserve. [Click here to view the event.](#)

Since its original publication in 1972, no book has done as much as Jeremy Brecher's *Strike!* to bring U.S. labor history to a wide audience. *Strike!* tells the dramatic story of repeated, massive, and sometimes violent revolts by ordinary working people in America. Fifty years later, the book still captures the imaginations of students, workers, and organizers alike, who continue to struggle for progressive social change to improve the lives of working people. Panelists Valarie Long (International Executive Vice President, SEIU), Kim Kelly (Freelance Writer and Organizer), Rebecca Givan (Associate Professor of Labor Studies, Rutgers SMLR), and Jeremy Brecher (Policy Director, Labor Network for Sustainability, and author of *Strike!*) joined in conversation to consider the legacy of *Strike!*,

Rutgers LEARN, CIWO, and LNS present:



Strike!

50th Anniversary Symposium
April 6th @8pm ET/5pm PT
Hosted by Todd E. Vachon | Panel Moderated by Javier Morillo

Keynote by Sara Nelson, President, AFA-CWA

Panelists:
Valarie Long
Kim Kelly
Rebecca Givan
Jeremy Brecher

RUTGERS School of Management | Labor Education Action Research Network (LEARN) | Center for Innovation in Worker Organization (CIWO) | LABOR NETWORK FOR SUSTAINABILITY

including lessons for the current political-economic moment. The event included an opening keynote by Sara Nelson, International President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA and was moderated by Javier Morillo (Fellow, Center for Innovation in Worker Organization). [Click here to view the event.](#)

What We've Been Up To: Spring 2021

With the inauguration of a new Presidential administration comes a new set of policy priorities, the appointment of a new cabinet, and staffing changes throughout the executive branch. To discuss what a Biden administration could mean for workers, Rutgers LEARN, the Center for Innovation in Worker Organization, and the Center for Women and Work assembled a panel of experts from the Rutgers

What the Biden Administration Could Mean for Workers – A Virtual Panel

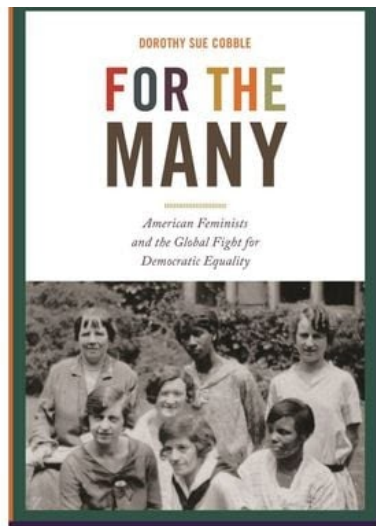
Health & Safety, Employee Ownership, Racial Justice, Labor Standards Enforcement, Labor Law - NLRB, Care Work...



Thursday, January 21st @3:00pm

Moderated by Todd E. Vachon, Faculty Coordinator of Rutgers LEARN

School of Management and Labor Relations to offer some insight into six key areas: Workplace Health & Safety, Employee Ownership, Racial Justice, Labor Standards Enforcement, Organizing and Employment Relations, and Care Work.



**Thursday, May 13,
2:00-3:30 pm EST
Zoom**

You can order your copy of *For The Many* from Princeton University Press

Hosted by the Center for Women and Work, School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University, and Princeton University Press.

To celebrate the publication of Dorothy Sue Cobble's
For the Many

Please join us for a conversation about the history and future of the global fight for women's rights and economic justice.

Deborah Gray White, Moderator

With comments from

Nancy Hewitt
Yvette Richards Jordan
Joanne Meyerowitz
Ruth Milkman
Jocelyn Olcott
Joan Sangster
Susan Zimmermann
and
Dorothy Sue Cobble, Author



In celebration of Dorothy Sue Cobble's new book, *For the Many*, LEARN partnered with the Center for Women and Work on May 13 for a discussion about the history and future of the global fight for women's rights and economic justice. This discussion was moderated by Deborah Gray White, and speakers included Nancy Hewitt, Yvette Richards Jordan, Joanne Meyerowitz, Ruth Milkman, Jocelyn Olcott, Joan Sangster, Susan Zimmermann, and author Dorothy Sue Cobble. [Click here to view the event.](#)

Celebrating Black History Month: “I Am a Man”: A Conversation with William Lucy



In celebration of Black History Month, 2021 Rutgers LEARN and the Center for Innovation in Worker Organization (CIWO) proudly presented a conversation with William Lucy, longtime AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer and co-creator of the iconic "I AM A MAN" slogan that became a rallying cry for workers during the 1968 Memphis sanitation strike.

The full recording of the conversation between SMLR Professor/Labor Historian, Francis Ryan and Mr. Lucy can be viewed on the [SMLR YouTube channel](#). An excellent write-up on the event can be read on [Rutgers Today](#) also.

36 Graduates Complete LEARN Labor and Employment Relations Certificate Programs



The final classes for the 2020-2021 Public Sector Labor Relations, Labor and Employment Law and Negotiation, Arbitration and Conflict Resolution certificate programs wrapped up in May. Congratulations to the 36 students who earned a certificate this year. By continuing your education and pursuing professional development opportunities you have done more than expand your own knowledge and skills. As you implement what you have learned you help to make a better labor and employment relations system that promotes prosperity for everyone. This year's graduates are invited to join the in-person graduation ceremony to be held next spring (details forthcoming).

All course hours in LEARN certificate programs count toward New Jersey Mandatory Continuing Legal Education hours (CLEs) and earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs). Students must complete six classes within a given program to earn the Rutgers certificate. If you have started a program, but not yet completed six classes, not to worry, we have fresh course offerings kicking off this fall starting in September - see p. 16 for more details!

UNION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CLASSES IN SPRING 2021 HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZING AND DEMOCRACY

The first ULA of the spring semester, The Power in a Union - Mobilizing at your Workplace, was led by LEARN director, Professor Todd E. Vachon from February 16 - March 23. The class focused on internal union organizing, including member-to-member communication, intentional education, and membership mobilization to realize the strength of the union. Discussions included how unions can "unionize" their members to support the values and goals of the union and the labor movement broadly. In addition to offering tried and true strategies and skills for member mobilization, this class was designed to be highly engaging, participatory, and fun!

The second ULA, "Preserve, Protect, and Defend" - The Constitution and the American Labor Movement, was instructed by Professor Michael Merrill from April 28 - June 2. The Presidential Oath of Office is written into the Constitution. Every president swears to "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States" to the best of their ability. But what does the Constitution say? And what have its provisions meant to and done for the labor movement? Students in this course studied the Constitution from the perspective of labor and explored how trade unionists can best preserve, protect, and defend American democratic rights and freedoms.



LEARN Partners with SURJ-NJ to Present: “Anti-Racism 101” Workshops for Unions Across NJ

LEARN has partnered with Showing Up for Racial Justice-New Jersey and developed a 90-minute primer on anti-racism with unions and union members in mind. The free workshop has been delivered a half dozen times for various union locals and mixed groups of union leaders and members from across the state.

The 90-minute interactive webinar discusses how white people specifically can learn to engage in conversation and activities about anti-racism and examine why the dismantling of white supremacy is critical for all workers. Participants also learn how to take action in their workplace and community as a first step in a lifelong commitment to anti-racism.

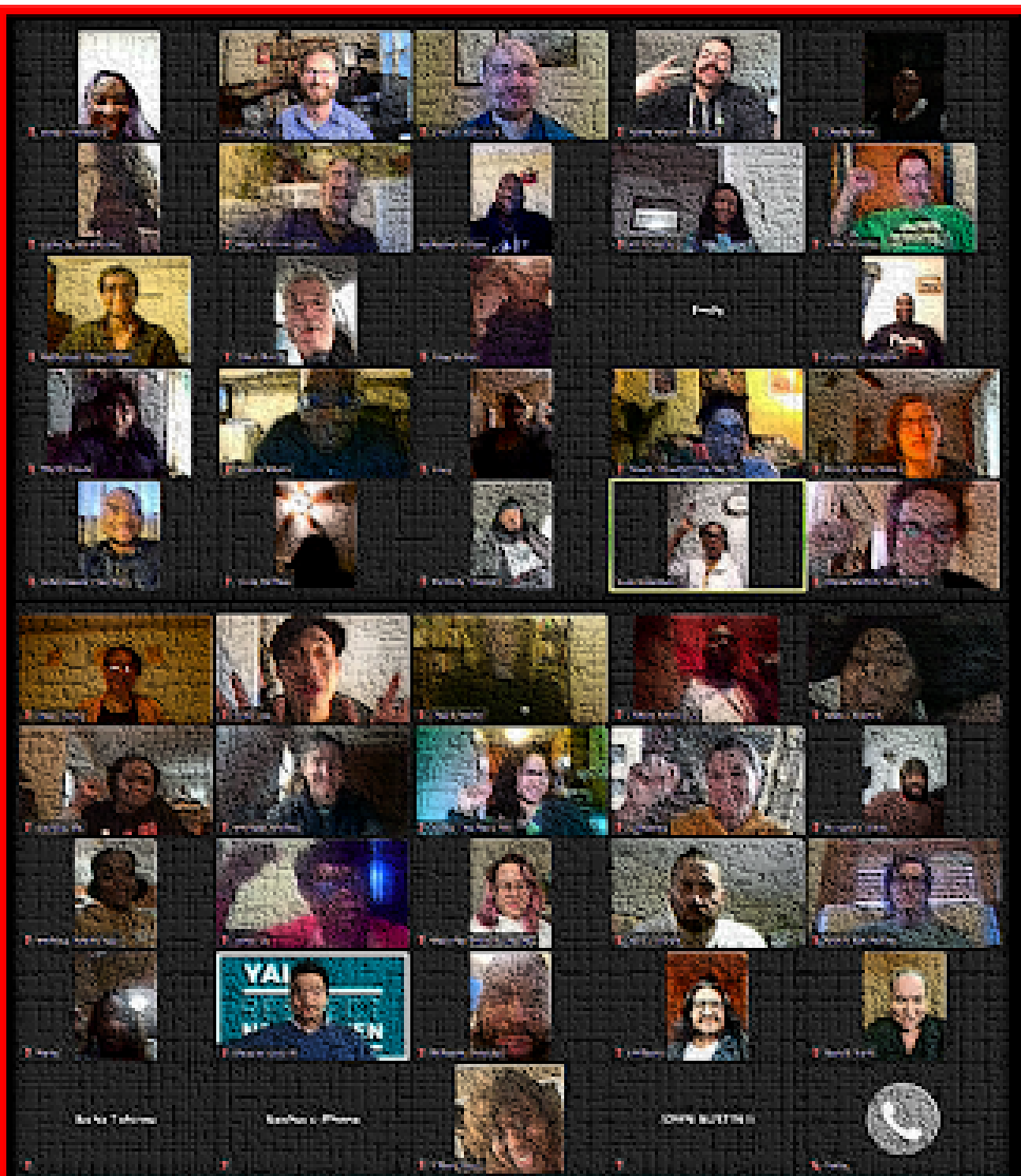
Our partner, Showing Up for Racial Justice - New Jersey (SURJ-NJ) is a network of groups and individuals working to undermine white supremacy and to work for racial justice. Through community organizing, mobilizing, and education, SURJ moves white people to act as part of a multi-racial majority for justice with passion and accountability. To learn more about the workshop or organize a session for your organization, contact: learn@work.rutgers.edu

Virtual Film Screening: 9 to 5 – The Story of a Movement

Rutgers LEARN was proud to co-sponsor in conjunction with UALE an advanced screening of 9 to 5: The Story of a Movement on January 27, 2021. Highlighting the trailblazing campaign of women clerical workers, the latest film by Julia Reichert captures the real-life fight that inspired a hit and changed the American workplace forever. The screening featured opening remarks by director Julia Reichert and secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, Elizabeth H. Shuler, and a post-screening panel with Karen Nussbaum, founding director of 9to5, District 925, SEIU, and Working America; Valarie Long, International Executive Vice President of SEIU; and Adriana Alvarez, a worker leader from Fight for \$15. Included are links to some resources from the film screening:



- [Am I Safe at Work?](#)
- [How to File a Charge of Employment Discrimination](#)
- [How to Talk about Workplace Issues with Coworkers](#)
- [Identify Wage Disparities](#)
- [Interested in supporting workers rights?](#)
- [Sexual Harassment Tool-Kit](#)
- [The Union Difference: What Unions Do](#)





**LABOR
EDUCATION
ACTION
RESEARCH
NETWORK**



**Rutgers SMLR - Labor Studies Program
Winter 2021**

Over a Dozen Custom Programs were Delivered in Spring 2021

LEARN faculty developed and implemented more than a dozen custom training programs for unions and other organizations this past spring, including collective bargaining trainings, labor and employment law workshops, leadership trainings, diversity equity and inclusion classes, and a 9-week labor studies program for 58 members of UNITE-HERE Local 274 in Philadelphia. UNITE-HERE members faced exceptionally high levels of unemployment during the pandemic, but their local took the opportunity to educate their members and organize around various issues important to their communities, including the right to vote. For more information about custom trainings or to discuss possibilities for your organization, contact: learn@work.rutgers.edu

After More than a Year of “Saving Lives, Protecting Workers,” COVID Weekly Update Series comes to an End



As everyone knows all too well, we were entering a dark and uncertain period in March of 2020 as the pandemic began to overtake the state and the world. Anxiety was running high, misinformation was rampant, and reliable information was difficult to come by. The federal government was not leading by example. In the face of this uncertainty, Rutgers LEARN partnered with the NJ Work Environment Council (WEC) to put on a webinar providing important information to New Jersey workers and worker representatives. That one webinar turned into the weekly series, “Saving Lives, Protecting Workers” which ran for over a year, with over 4,000 participants and 100+ guest speakers covering more than 40 unique topics, ranging from PPE to ventilation to racial disparities, executive orders, vaccines and more.

A complete summary of the topics, guest speakers and access to all materials that were shared throughout the course of the webinar series can be found [on the LEARN website](#) where they will be permanently housed. LEARN and WEC wish to extend our deepest gratitude to all who participate in this series and not only helped to shine light into the darkness but also built a genuine community of workers, advocates, and concerned citizens working to ensure worker and public health and safety. NOTE: Additional Special Episodes may be created as needed in the coming months as we confront the Delta variant and new uncertainties.

What's on the Menu for Fall 2021?

Three certification programs comprised of 21 classes



Labor & Employment Law Certificate Program

Labor and Employment Law: An Overview

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, September 30th, 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: Tamara Lee, Esq.

The LEL Overview Course will set the stage for all the classes that follow, as listed below. The course should provide a general overview of all the major areas of labor and employment law (as listed in the class description and the titles of the classes listed below). What does the legal landscape look like? What are the major laws or rulings that set the rules for each of the major areas of LEL? What agencies are at play in enforcing or adjudicating disputes in each area? Are the rules mostly legislated at the state or federal level for each of the major areas of LEL? Also, seeing as how we do not have a course dedicated to "labor law" in the sequence this year, this class could go into greater detail covering that topic (e.g. Private sector, Public sector - state and federal, etc).

Employment Relationships from Start to Finish

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, October 29th, 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: Melanie Lipomanis, Esq.

An overview of state and federal laws that intersect all phases of the employment relationship from pre-hire through termination. Learn the critical points in the employment process where litigation arises, and how to protect the rights of employees, supervisors, and employers.

Constitutional Rights and the Workplace

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, December 3rd, 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: James Cooney, Esq.

Covers the reach of Constitutional protections at the workplace, what is protected and what isn't, including free speech, rights to privacy, whistle-blowing, testing and other issues. Also reviews the implications of the appeal to free speech protections in recent decisions, e.g., Janus v. AFSCME.

[Click to here to learn more and view spring classes](#)



Have friends or colleagues who may be interested in LEARN programs? Like and share our courses on Facebook and Twitter!



Public Sector Labor Relations Certificate Program

Public Sector Labor Law: An Overview

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, September 23rd, 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: James Mastriani, M.S.

This course will explore the fundamentals of public sector labor law, with a special focus on the New Jersey Employer-Employee Relations Act. Participants will receive an overview of key public sector legal concepts, practices, and procedures, with topics including the role of administrative agencies, scope of negotiations, representation cases, unfair practices, and impasse procedures.

PERC Policies and Procedures

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, October 22nd, 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructors: Mary Beth Henessey-Shotter, Esq. and Jonathan Roth, Esq.

This course will review the basic procedures for the filing of petitions and charges with PERC. Topics include filing unfair practice charges; and filing petitions regarding representation issues, scope of negotiation issues, notices of impasse requesting mediation, as well as petitions requesting interest and grievance arbitration.

Public Sector Grievance Handling & Discipline

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, November 19th, 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: Joyce Klein, Esq., J.D.

This course will examine the grievance procedure, employee and employer rights and responsibilities, standards of just cause and their application to real life cases, and the burden of proof. Participants will discuss how to resolve grievances at the lowest level and will be given a brief overview of the arbitration hearing process.

Scope of Public Sector Negotiations

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, December 10th, 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: Christine Lucarelli-Carneiro, Esq.

This course will address all aspects of the scope of negotiations in New Jersey's public sector. It will trace the legislative, judicial, and PERC developments that have affected the issues that can and must be the subjects of collective negotiations and grievance arbitration. Also, how PERC decides the scope in particular cases.

[Click here to learn more and view spring classes](#)



Negotiation, Arbitration and Conflict Resolution Certificate Program

Getting Ready to Bargain and Win

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, September 24th, 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: Don Dileo

Successful negotiators are prepared and ready for anything. This course will describe what individuals and organizations need to do in order to get ready to bargain for the best possible contracts.

Conflict Resolution at the Workplace

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, October 28th, 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: Saul Rubinstein

This course looks at different models of labor-management cooperation and surveys ways to reduce dysfunctional conflict at the workplace, in the grievance process, and at the bargaining table.

Countering and Preventing Harassment

[Click here to register](#)

Thursday, November 18th 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: James Cooney

This class will cover the various federal and state laws prohibiting workplace harassment based on sex, race, religion, LGBTQ+ status, and other protected categories. We will cover the implementation of employer policies aimed at preventing harassment, and in conducting effective investigations to remedy employee complaints. Finally, we will review the topic from the perspective of labor unions, including compliance with the duty of fair representation.

Interest-Based Bargaining

[Click here to register](#)

Friday, December 17th, 2021

Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: William Dwyer

Mutual gains for all concerned in bargaining and grievance handling by identifying interests, exploring options and reaching win-win agreements through a tried and true joint problem-solving process.

[Click here to learn more and view spring classes](#)



Union Leadership Academy

First Session:

Contract Interpretation and Enforcement

[Click here to register](#)

Dates: Wednesdays, September 8th - October 13th, 2021

Time: 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. (EST)

Instructor: Peter Donatello

Collective bargaining agreements are only effective at protecting wages, benefits, and working conditions if union members know how to enforce those agreements. Students will learn about how to understand and interpret contract language and how to use grievance procedures, unfair labor practices, labor-management committees, member education, and collective action as tools for enforcement.

Second Session:

Labor History

[Click here to register](#)

Dates: Wednesdays, November 3rd - December 15th, 2021

Time: 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. (EST)

Instructors: Todd Vachon, Naomi Williams, Will Brucher, Dan Sidorick

Students will explore and understand the life of working people and the organizations they created in the 19th and 20th centuries, how the history of labor can be preserved and promoted in the 21st century, and how lessons from the past can help to build a more vibrant and powerful labor movement today.

VETERAN DISCOUNT



The Labor Education Action Research Network (LEARN) at Rutgers University is **proud to honor our veterans and active-duty military personnel by offering a 10% discount on all classes and certificate programs.** To "LEARN" more about our course offerings, visit our Courses and Certificate Programs page. To register for classes and use the veteran discount, email learn@work.rutgers.edu or call 848-932-9504.

Custom Training Programs Targeted to Your Needs



LEARN offers customized training programs for labor unions and joint training programs for labor and management. The customized training programs begin with consultation sessions with our faculty members, in which they learn and assess your needs. After understanding your particular needs, we design the curriculum specifically to meet your needs and deliver the programs at times and in locations convenient to your organization.

To learn more, email learn@work.rutgers.edu or call (848) 932-9504.



LEARN in the News

Why Tourism Industry Workers are Missing in Action

San Antonio Express News | June 30

Why are some hospitality jobs hard to fill? **LEARN's Todd Vachon** says, "[They] were low paying to begin with, then you add on that you will be exposing yourself to billions of strangers every week, including those who possibly didn't get the vaccine."

Why the Teamsters Union Drive at Amazon could Succeed where Bessemer Faltered

Yahoo! Finance | June 25

The Teamsters will take a different approach to unionizing Amazon. As **LEARN instructor and SMLR Professor Rebecca Kolins Givan** notes in an interview with Yahoo Finance, "They'll have the ability to make their demands in different and potentially quite creative ways."

How hard is it to get cost-of-living raises during times of inflation?

Marketplace | June 16

Some unionized workers receive wage increases to balance the rising cost of products and services during inflation. But as **LEARN** tells Marketplace Business News, declining union membership means fewer workers have this protection.

With the public health emergency lifted, employers face tighter layoff notice requirements

NJBIZ | June 14

With increased layoff notice requirements resulting from recent changes to the state's WARN Act, NJ "workers have a better chance of landing on their feet and hopefully finding alternative employment arrangements before reaching the economic floor," **SMLR's LEARN Director** tells NJBIZ.

The Labor Shortage and How the Pandemic is Shaping the Future of Work

XPrize | June 4

"A worker who can refuse jobs and be highly selective" **LEARN Director Todd Vachon** tells XPrize "is a worker who is empowered - A worker who is forced to accept whatever job they can find, no matter how bad because they just need to make some kind of money, is a worker who is disempowered." Read the full length, far reaching interview with Professor Vachon about work, COVID, labor shortage and more on XPrize's blog.

Maximum Rage

Luckbox Magazine | June 2

"What's needed," the **LEARN Director** said about unionization efforts at Amazon, "is a reset of the power balance, an update of U.S. labor law to give workers a fighting chance to bring home a bigger piece of the growing economic pie and not just make more pie for Jeff Bezos and Amazon shareholders."

There's never been a better time for US college athletes to unionize

The Guardian | May 27

A new bill would classify college athletes as employees, making them eligible to form a union. **SMLR Professor and LEARN instructor Rebecca Kolins Givan** says it would enable players in all sports to "bargain collectively and regain some control over their working conditions."

Biden Says He Backs a Just Transition for the Climate Crisis. Advocates Say, "Prove It."

In These Times | June 2

A just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy requires wage replacement, job creation, and other support for affected workers. **Todd Vachon of Rutgers LEARN** tells *In These Times*, passing the PRO Act would help.



LEARN in the News

Infrastructure Opportunities

NJBIZ | May 10

"New Jersey has no shortage of crumbling infrastructure in need of repair," **LEARN Director** tells *NJBIZ*. "Some projects... include the stalled Gateway Program and its plan to build two new Hudson River rail tunnels into New York City, and rehabilitate the existing 111-year-old ones that are showing signs of rapid decay." Some projects could also help to promote social and environmental justice, he noted, "including the replacement of old lead water pipes in our cities, both within housing as well as under the streets and buildings."

Amazon Denies Union Busting, Takes Advantage of Anti-worker Legislation

Daily KlasseKampen | May 5

"Segregationists fought against the idea that white workers should pay dues to, and belong to, the same organization as black workers," **LEARN** tells the Norwegian daily KlasseKampen about the origin of Right-to-Work laws in America (full interview in Norwegian).

Amazon defeated the union vote. What happens next?

CNN | April 9

Amazon's victory in Alabama may increase pressure on the Senate to pass the PRO Act.

Rutgers LEARN & SMLR faculty member

Rebecca Givan tells CNN, "The election in Bessemer demonstrated that under current labor law it is almost impossible for workers to unionize."

Amazon workers vote no on unionizing Bessemer, Alabama, warehouse

Marketplace | April 9

Forming a #union is difficult. **Rutgers LEARN** tells Marketplace, "There are just so many obstacles in the way. And so many opportunities for an employer to instill fear in the workers, to disseminate misinformation."

The American middle class is dead — The PRO Act would resuscitate it

The Hill | March 15

The average CEO earns 320 times more than the average worker. In an op-ed for *The Hill*, **Todd Vachon of Rutgers LEARN** argues the PRO Act would confront runaway inequality by making it easier for workers to join unions and bargain collectively.

The PRO Act may protect workers even if it doesn't pass

Marketplace | March 10

Why is the #PROAct important? **Rutgers LEARN** tells Marketplace, "We've seen jobs reclassified as gig work. People are working more and more hours and unable to... make ends meet. So I just think #workers are really fed up."

Pressure builds for companies to incentivize vaccines for workers

The Hill | March 3

"I believe providing paid time off for vaccine appointments is good policy. It allows workers who are eligible for the vaccine to receive it without having to choose between their health and going to work," said **Todd Vachon, Director of the Labor Education Action Research Network at Rutgers University**.

Amazon workers could 'make history' with historic union vote in Alabama

Yahoo! Finance | February 13

Why do #Amazon workers need a #union?

Rutgers LEARN instructor and SMLR professor

Will Brucher tells Yahoo Finance, it's a huge problem trying to keep up with the frenetic pace and not knowing "how are they going to try to squeeze you this week, how many miles you're gonna walk in a day."

*LEARN would like to thank SMLR Director of Media Relations, **Steve Flamisch** for his tireless work promoting our expertise to the news media and managing relationships with journalists.*

In Memorium

*"United, we cannot and we will not be turned aside.
We'll work for it, sisters and brothers. We'll stand for it.
Together. Each of us. To bring out the best in America. To
bring out the best in ourselves, and each other."*



Richard Trumka

1949-2021

Messages of condolence may be sent to: condolences@aflcio.org