Faculty Spotlight:
Carla Katz

Feature Article:
Confronting Economic Inequality

New ULA Classes:
Health Safety & Power
Labor & Community Organizing

Upcoming Certificate Classes and More!

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Contact Rutgers LEARN
LaToshia Wells, Program Coordinator
latoshia@smlr.rutgers.edu
848-932-9504

Todd E. Vachon, Director
todd.vachon@rutgers.edu

Djar Horn, Labor Education Specialist
djar.horn@rutgers.edu

Labor Education Center, 50 Labor Center Way, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8520

Newsletter designed by Djar Horn. Cover Art by Paul Fell 2014
Dear LEARN Community,

It's been a very busy year at LEARN and the Labor Center. As in years past we've worked hard to deliver the greatest amount of high quality programming with the resources we have at hand. We were fortunate enough to receive funding to add Djar Horn to our team as Labor Education Specialist for the year. We also welcomed a new Program Coordinator, LaToshia Wells. And thanks to LaToshia's work, we now have three wonderful work study students – Yoseph, Cynthia, and Selene – helping out in the LEARN office. But the demand for our classes, custom trainings, and research continues to outstrip our capacity.

This program was established by an act of the NJ state assembly in 1947 with the stated purpose 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.” The statute called for the creation of programs of instruction, free to residents of New Jersey, including classes, lectures, conferences, institutes, demonstrations, forums or other informal educational services designed to bring about among management, labor and the public a better understanding of their mutual problems and obligations. The statute also called for establishing programs of research in the field of management and labor relations in order to develop new material and techniques to aid in carrying on the educational activities required by the act. To achieve these goals, the statute called for a budget line of fifty thousand dollars ($50,000.00) to carry out the requirements of the act.

For more than seven decades LEARN has carried out the activities detailed in the statute, including classes, workshops, research projects, conferences, and public talks. These have contributed to New Jersey having one of the most developed and functional labor relations systems in the country.

However, coming out of Covid and in a time of extreme economic inequality, we are witnessing the erosion of labor-management relations across the U.S., but especially in states that lack the sort of education, research, and public programming on labor relations that LEARN offers. Neighboring states that receive dedicated state funding to offer labor relations programming have been expanding their reach and their economies are faring much better. For example, the Worker Institute at Cornell University receives $4 million per year from the State of New York to provide labor education programming. The University of California program has received $13 million this past year and is building additional labor centers on campuses across the state.
The University of Illinois receives $1.5 million annual in public funding for labor education. The labor education program at Minnesota receives annual funding from the state. Similarly, UMass, Iowa, and Oregon all receive some public funding to provide free and reduced-cost public education programs and research for workers, management, labor relations practitioners, and the general public.

In the absence of public funding in New Jersey, LEARN has fulfilled its statutory duty in recent decades on a fee-for-service model, imposing costs on students and making some classes inaccessible to many of New Jersey's lower income residents who would benefit the most from such programs. The lack of funding has also severely hampered the ability to perform timely and important research on labor and employment issues in the state.

Considering these factors—the continued rise of labor unrest, the prohibitive costs of labor education for some workers in the state, and the lack funding for labor extension in New Jersey compared to other neighboring states—supporters of LEARN have proposed that the state of New Jersey recommit to labor-management education by reinstating the budget, adjusted for inflation. Providing LEARN with a budget will support its continued efforts to “enhance the unity and welfare of the people of the state” by: 1) offering free or reduced cost non-credit classes, workshops and conferences that promote and teach the latest techniques and methods for labor relations and labor-management cooperation as well as workers’ rights, 2) providing scholarships for historically marginalized and underserved students to attend such programs, 3) funding ongoing research on important work and employment issues in the state, 4) creating and maintaining an online resource center for workers, worker representatives, and labor relations professionals, and 5) creating and curating a labor history archive to preserve the stories of working New Jersians and educate the public about the history of labor, labor education, and labor-management relations in New Jersey.

If you agree, I would kindly ask for your support by signing on to this public letter, either as an individual, or on behalf of your organization.

Thank you for your consideration.

In solidarity,

Todd Vachon, Director
Rutgers LEARN
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:
Carla Katz, Esq

Carla A. Katz, Esq. is an associate professor at Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR) in the Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations, where she teaches labor studies and labor and employment law. Prior to joining the faculty full-time, Ms. Katz taught at SMLR as a Visiting Lecturer for more than 12 years, teaching courses in Collective Bargaining, Union Organizing, Women and Work and Occupational Safety and Health among others.

Ms. Katz is also an attorney with the law firm of Cohen Placitella Roth PC in Red Bank, New Jersey. Prior to joining the firm, she was an attorney with Fox and Fox LLP in Livingston, New Jersey. Her legal practice is primarily focused on labor and employment law representing unions and employees. She works closely with New Jersey's firefighters and other public employees.

As an officer of the Rutgers AAUP-AFT, Carla has spearheaded dramatic improvements in pay, title, and job security for all Non-Tenure-Track (NTT) faculty.

Carla teaches Collective Bargaining, Negotiation, Conflict Resolution, Workplace Investigation, and Labor Law. Additionally, she teaches a wide variety of extension and executive education workshops for the labor community.

Take an online class with Carla
Workplace Investigations & Interviews: Overview
Click here to register
Thursday, February 22, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)
Workplace investigations and interviews as a whole, including an overview of issues and the law related to the field from an experience local union president and accomplished labor lawyer.
LEARN welcomes Marouane Laabbas-el-Guennouni to the Labor Education Center for the Spring of 2023 to work with LEARN Director, Todd E. Vachon on issues related to labor and the environment.

Marouane is a PhD candidate in labor and social security law at Rovira i Virgili University (Spain). He holds two Bachelor’s degrees, Law and Labour Relations (both with honours) and holds a Master’s degree in Environmental Law (with honours as well). He is member of the Tarragona Centre for Environmental Law Studies, the research group Territory, Citizenship and Sustainability, the Research Institute in Sustainability, Climate Change and Energy Transition. He is also editor of the Catalan Journal of Environmental Law.

He had professional experiences as research support technician and research fellow both at university level (concretely, at Rovira i Virgili University) and in European Institutions such as the European Court of Justice (in Luxembourg). He also practiced Law at VAHUSARI Advocats. His scientific interests are linked to labor law, labor market and its connection with environmental sustainability. He has also been awarded with a Fulbright Grant to fulfill a research stay at Colorado State University and Rutgers University. His aim is to demonstrate the environmental implications of labor market from a comparative approach between the EU and the US.
Economic inequality is at record high levels and it’s tearing us apart.

According to the Federal Reserve, the top 1% of earners now take home 22% of all income in the U.S., the top 10% own 70% of all wealth, and real wages for American workers have been stagnant for decades. Rising inequality has been associated with increased social and health problems, lower life expectancies, decreased child well-being, a decline in trust in public institutions — including schools and governments— and an erosion of support for democracy itself.

It’s not just a national problem. New Jersey is among the richest states in the union but ranks 10th highest for income inequality. Economic disparities are amplified along the lines of race, gender, and citizenship status and can be even more pronounced at the local level. For example, Hudson County has one of the highest per capita incomes in the state, but its level of income inequality is 28% higher than the U.S. as a whole, leading the New Jersey Department of Health to label it a “reason for concern.”

So, what is driving the rise in inequality and what can be done about it?

In my previous research, I have found some of the major drivers of rising inequality to be declining unionization; tax cuts for the super-rich; labor market deregulation; the replacement of full-time, permanent jobs with part-time and temporary work; a weak social safety net for working families; and the increased role of finance, insurance and real estate in the economy.

At the local level, my current research on Hudson County, and Jersey City in particular, shows that while personal income has increased by nearly 600% since 1980, the gains have been very uneven. For example, the share of income taken home by the credit intermediation industry has risen 343% in the past 20 years while the share of income for repair and maintenance workers has actually declined by 26%. The ratio of income for the top 20% of earners to the lowest 20% of earners has increased from 17:1 in 2011 to 21:1 in 2021, an 18% increase in inequality in the past decade.

Much of the growth of inequality in Jersey City can be attributed to the massive redevelopment of the city, especially the explosive growth of luxury housing. The building boom of the past decade has seen more than 50,000 new multi-family building permits, the construction of 25 high-rises, and an increase in overall apartment values by 55% between 2018 and 2022. Unfortunately, the workers who build, maintain, and clean these buildings and provide valuable services for their residents are not fully sharing in the rewards of development and many can no longer afford to live where they work.
Feature: Confronting Inequality
By Todd E. Vachon, pg 2

Despite promises that the construction of large residential buildings would “bring new life and new opportunities,” the rising towers have instead brought rising housing costs and rising inequality.

Construction companies like Lefrak have paid non-prevailing wages and created unsafe working conditions on building projects while simultaneously accepting tax breaks and other government aid. Thankfully, we still have an opportunity to correct course and make a real impact on inequality at the local level.

To be sure, addressing runaway inequality requires major reforms, but bringing all stakeholders to the table as Jersey City Councilwoman Joyce Waterman has called for can go a long way toward righting the course locally.

From construction tradespeople to maintenance and cleaning workers at residential properties, the hard-working New Jersey residents whose labor drives local economic growth must be included in conversations about future development, including negotiating industry wage and benefit standards that reflect the value of their labor and their contributions to the growing economy.

The most recent State of Labor in New Jersey report from Rutgers University shows that unionized workers bring home 20% more in wages than their non-union counterparts. The benefit is even greater for Black and Latino workers, who see a 25% and 27% bump in pay, respectively, when having a union. However, just 3% of workers in service industries currently have union representation.

Ensuring prevailing wages and embedding strong labor protections in future development plans either through union contracts, community benefit agreements, or as terms for development, including for the workers who service and clean the new buildings after they are built, can go a long way toward lifting the floor for New Jersey workers and reducing inequality.

Already the 10th “tallest” city in the 10th most unequal state, Jersey City is looking to build a dozen more high-rises in the coming years. Our elected leaders need to ensure that these new projects, which are valued at more than $5 billion, center the interests of workers and local residents, not just the profits of wealthy developers. This is one major way we can short-circuit rising inequality in Jersey City and Hudson County to ensure shared prosperity, improve health outcomes, and protect democracy. Our collective well-being depends on it.

*This essay appeared first on NJ.Com: https://www.nj.com/opinion/2023/09/inequality-is-skyrocketing-empowering-local-workers-can-help-fix-it-opinion.html*
What We Have Been Up To - Fall 2023
Specialized Trainings

Last fall we had the pleasure of working with many Unions and Organizations on specialized trainings. We have many more planned for 2024. Contact the LEARN office to discuss a specialized training for your members or organization.

Blue Cross Blue Shield National Labor Office
Rutgers LEARN was delighted to present at the board meeting of the National Labor Office, Blue Cross Blue Shield in sunny Orlando. Director Todd Vachon and professor Carla Katz discussed the state of labor, the benefits of apprenticeship programs, and ways to build career pipelines for students.

LEARN offers Grievance Handling workshops. Djar Horn worked with URA Local 1766-AFT at their Steward Training in New Brunswick.

CWA Local 1036
We had a great time teaching public sector economics at the CWA Local 1036 Steward Leadership Conference in Atlantic City. Photo: LEARN hosted the AFTNJ for their Summer Activist Conference at the Labor Education Center. AFT NJ President Donna M Chiera and Todd Vachon welcomed educators and school support staff for a day of LEARNing.

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.
What We Have Been Up To:
Fall 2023 Classes

**Fundamentals of Collective Bargaining:** September 28, 2023
Instructor: Rebecca Givan

**Conflict Resolution at the Workplace** October 19, 2023
Instructor: Saul Rubinstein

**Countering and Preventing Harassment** December 1, 2023
Instructor: James Cooney

**Labor and Employment Law: An Overview** September 22, 2023
Instructor: Tamara Lee, Esq.

**Employment Relationships from Start to Finish** October 20, 2023
Instructor: Melanie Lipomanis, Esq.

**Constitutional Rights and the Workplace** November 17, 2023
Instructor: James Cooney, Esq.

**Leave and Absence Workshop** December 14, 2023
Instructor: Rosemarie Ciparullo, Esq., J.D.

**Public Sector Labor Law: An Overview** September 29, 2023
Instructor: Leonard Schiro, J.D.,

**Public Sector Collective Bargaining** November 2, 2023
Instructor: Anthony Bagliore

**PERC Policies and Procedures** December 7, 2023
Instructors: Joe Blaney, Esq.

**US Labor History, 1776-2023.**
September 11 - October 16
Instructors: Professors Naomi R Williams, Will Brucher, Dan Sidorick, and Todd E. Vachon

**Building Strong Unions: The Role of the Shop Steward**
November 1 - December 13,
Instructor: Djar Horn

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

Black History Month and Women’s History Month

"LEARN Lessons" is a collection of mini-lectures delivered by various experts on topics of importance to unions, labor relations professionals, health and safety advocates, and others working in the field of work and employment. We hope that you will find these video lectures helpful in your daily work.

Over the next two months, we will release 6 short video lectures on covering labor history topics including

- Paul Robeson and the Labor Movement
- Norman Rayford, 1199c organizer
- A. Philip Randolph, A fusion of labor and civil rights
- The history of unions excluding African Americans and the struggle for equal rights and participation.
- Seabrook Farm Strike in 1934
- Black Women’s labor organizing outside of labor unions during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Look for one new video each week, beginning February 1, from Professors Will Brucher, Chris Hayes, Danielle Phillips-Cunningham, Francis Ryan, Dan Sidorick and Mike Slott.

Save the Dates
February 15, 22 and 29, 7:00pm EST

Webinar series covering new rules and decisions under the Biden NLRB. Each Webinar will cover one of the following areas.

- Representation Process
- Joint Employer Bargaining
- Cemex Decision

Senior Organizers, Labor Attorneys and Labor Studies Faculty will discuss strategies, pitfalls and opportunities.
Programing for Winter 2024

BOOK TALK WITH KIM KELLY 2/12/2024

KIM KELLY WILL SPEAK IN THE EVENING, AT THE LABOR EDUCATION CENTER IN NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ. HYBRID EVENT.

Meet & Greet to follow

Register Today
New Classes for Winter 2024
UNION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Health, Safety and Power
Instructor: Carmen Martino
Are you looking for an organizing model to address Health and Safety issues. Try this course. We will look at the historical, economic, and cultural forces that shape how we address occupational safety and health problems in the U.S.

DATE
THURSDAYS
JANUARY 25–FEB 29

TIME
530P–830P EST
ONLINE ONLY

Labor and Community Organizing:A-Z
Instructor: Michael Reagan
This course walks through the mechanics of organizing a campaign for social justice based on workplace, housing, neighborhood, racism/social justice, or environmental issues. We look at the building blocks of a campaign from starting a mobilizing list, to forming organizing committees, picking winnable campaign goals, target research, escalating campaign tactics, having one-on-one organizing conversations, and more.

DATE
THURSDAY NIGHTS
MARCH 14–APRIL 18

TIME
530PM–830PM
ONLINE COURSE

Have friends or colleagues who may be interested in LEARN programs? Like and share our courses on Facebook and Twitter!
Bias, Harassment and Discrimination - Instructor: Akhila Naik, Esq.
Click here to register
Thursday, January 25, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)
This course will cover the federal and New Jersey state laws prohibiting disability, gender, and race discrimination, and harassment. Topics will include legal definitions of disability, legal requirements of reasonable accommodation, what constitutes disparate treatments on the basis of gender and race, and other issues of special concern.

Workplace Investigations & Interviews: Overview -Instructor: Carla Katz, Esq. J.D.
Click here to register
Thursday, February 22, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)
Workplace investigations and interviews as a whole, including an overview of issues and the law related to the field from an experience local union president and accomplished labor lawyer.

Workers' Compensation - Instructor: James Cooney, Esq.
Click here to register
Friday, March 22, 2024
Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)
Covers the New Jersey workers' compensation law; which provides cash and medical benefits to those disabled by work-related injuries and diseases. Includes employee coverage, compensable injuries and diseases, ensuring payment, and workers' abilities to sue employers for damages.

Register for Labor and Employment Law Classes HERE
Public Sector Grievance Handling & Discipline - Instructor: Joyce Klein, Esq., J.D.
Click here to register
Thursday, January 18, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)
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 - Instructor: Christine Lucarelli-Carneiro, Esq.
Click here to register
Friday, March 1, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)
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.

Grievance Arbitration I - Instructor: Joan Parker, Ph.D
Click here to register
Thursday, March 21, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)
This sequence of two courses is designed to increase the practitioner's skills in preparing and presenting grievance arbitration cases. Students must complete the first in order to take the second.

Grievance Arbitration II: Advanced - Instructor: Joan Parker, Ph.D
Click here to register
Thursday, April 11, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Major subjects discussed: preparing for arbitration, the hearing, presenting a case, standards for just cause, evidence, criteria for contract interpretation, remedies, the decision, and different systems.

Public Sector Contract Interpretation - Instructor: Steven Weissman, Esq.
Click here to register
Friday, May 3, 2024, Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)
How the meaning and enforceability of contract language negotiated under the N.J. Employer-Employee Relations Act has evolved over the last 40 years, and how court decisions, arbitrators' opinions, and PERC rulings have served to establish a set of principles and guidelines for negotiating binding contract language in the public sector.

Register for Public Sector Labor Relations Classes HERE
The bread-and-butter of labor and employment relations is the collective bargaining system and its associated dispute and conflict resolution mechanisms. The six courses in this certificate program provide a comprehensive overview to all that union and labor relations professionals need to know, in either the private or the public sector, successfully to negotiate and enforce collective agreements.

Interest-Based Bargaining - Instructor: William Dwyer
Click here to register
Friday, January 26, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)
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.

Strategic Grievance Handling and Contract Enforcement - Instructor: William Dwyer
Click here to register
Friday, February 23, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (EST)
This class explores valuable methods and techniques to help ensure that negotiated contracts are successfully enforced and the hard-won gains at the bargaining table are honored and sustained.

Grievance Arbitration I: Foundations - Instructor: Joan Parker
Click here to register
Thursday, March 21, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
This sequence of two courses is designed to increase the practioner's skills in preparing and presenting grievance arbitration cases. Students must complete the first class in order to take the second.

Grievance Arbitration II: Advanced - Instructor: Joan Parker
Click here to register
Thursday, April 11, 2024 Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Major subjects discussed include preparing for arbitration, the hearing, presenting a case, standards for just cause, evidence, criteria for contract interpretation, remedies, the decision, and different systems.
Pre-requisite: Grievance Arbitration I course must be completed
To commemorate our 75th anniversary, LEARN launched a white paper series titled “A Better Tomorrow: Research & Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of Workers.” The contributions include original research, reflections from scholars and practitioners, and chapters from forthcoming books by LEARN-affiliated faculty, students, and friends.

**Overview of the White Paper Series and call for Submissions**

**Paper #7501 "From Mutual Destruction to Common Preservation" by Todd E. Vachon**

**Paper #7502 "Revaluing Work(ers) for Democracy and Sustainability" by Tobias Schulze-Cleven and Todd E. Vachon**

**Paper #7503 "Pop Culture and Class Conflict in the Marvel Cinematic Universe" by Steven Manicastrì**

You can read the full call for papers as well as the first few white papers on the LEARN webpage, [here](#).
LEARN Director Todd Vachon and LEARN professor Rebecca Givan listed among Top Labor Influencers in NJ by ROI-NJ news!

APNews From strikes to new union contracts, Labor Day’s organizing roots are especially strong this year.

APNews From Hollywood to auto work, organized labor is flexing its muscles. Where do unions stand today?

APNews Autoworkers are the latest to spotlight the power of US labor. What is the state of unions today?

APNews The power dynamic in labor has shifted and pickets are seemingly everywhere. But for how long?

CNN Kaiser Permanente labor deal shows why short, disruptive strikes are becoming more common

CNN Trump stabbed labor over and over. Now he says he supports striking auto workers?

Guardian The Fed shapes the US economy. Its New York dining staff struggles to afford groceries

Reuters UAW expands strikes against GM, Stellantis

Wall Street Journal Teamsters, Yellow Step Up Accusations on Trucker’s Collapse

NJ Spotlight What’s prompting a ‘summer of strikes’? VIDEO

ROI Influencers: Union Leaders — Non-Building Trades

- NJ Biz Labor group membership trends higher in NJ
Learn in the News

NJ spotlight NJ shuts down 27 Boston Market locations

ROI Why union membership is on the rise, expert says: Workforce — and consciousness — growing post-pandemic

CNN The UAW is already looking ahead to its next auto strike

Restaunt Dive It's not just Starbucks: Why cafes are hotbeds for unionizing

Pennsylvania Capital-Star Pennsylvania Democrats seek balance between environmental policy and loyalty to labor

WHYY Meet the paid medical actors at Jefferson Health trying to unionize amid budget tightening

NJ spotlight Starbucks workers strike on company’s ‘Red Cup Day’

Huffpost New Study Finds Working This Many Days At Home May Help The Planet

Reuters With U.S. labor tight, union workers make bolder contract demands

VOA UAW Escalates Strike at Two Major US Automakers

NPR Marketplace "UAW and Trend of Short Strikes" 9.14.23


Turkish news agency Anadolu - Unprecedented wave of labor strikes' in US affecting auto, health, entertainment industries

De Standaard (Brussels) - In Amerika vinden de vakbonden hun tweede adem.

WHYY Philly's Good Karma Cafe Workers United union may dissolve

WHYY Good Karma Cafe baristas vote against Workers United union in rare reversal