

Penn State Hosts the U.S.'s First-Ever Global Labour University Gathering



(University Park, PA) - - For one sparkling, blue-skied week in October, Penn State found itself at the epicenter of the world's workers' rights movement. Fifty labor scholars and activists from 22 nations convened here the Global Labour University's (GLU) alumni school from October 4 – 9 to share strategies and analysis for building sustainable power within a shifting global economy. It was the first such GLU educational event ever held in the United States.

Last year, Penn State became the fifth worldwide campus to join the Global Labour University, a network of universities, trade unions and civil society organizations that works with the International Labor Organization (ILO) to provide labor-focused academic programs. The Penn State program offers a Masters in Professional Studies, administered through the School of Labor and Employment Relations (LER) for mid-career professionals. The Masters program is in its second year, and currently includes seven students from Brazil, India, South Korea, and the United States.

“The GLU is the perfect combination of scholarly pursuits and labor practitioner experience needed to address complex worker rights issues in the global economy,” said Mark Anner, the GLU director at Penn State who also directs the Center for Global Workers' Rights and is an associate professor in the LER department. “Our students are acquiring the knowledge and skills they need and building the kinds of relationships that will sustain a broad-based, sophisticated and effective global labor movement.”

The group that gathered at Penn State in early October included people who have already graduated from one of the GLU's five campuses. Their home countries include Ghana, Indonesia, India, Nepal, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, the United Kingdom, Angola, the Ukraine, Zimbabwe, Germany, and South Africa to name a few.

Just prior to the GLU alumni school in University Park, the scholars and activists spent a week at the GLU's first-ever U.S.-based annual conference, held at the Washington, DC headquarters of the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor / Congress of Industrial Organizations). The conference was the 10th annual for the GLU and involved 226 participants from 44 nations.

Under the banner "Sharing the Gains – Containing Corporate Power," the group focused on cutting-edge efforts to improve workers' rights, new developments in global wealth distribution and fresh directions in the global labor movement. Panels and presentations focused on topics such as analyzing workers' rights in global supply chains, gender and work, developments in the informal economy, and new trade agreements. Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO President, offered the keynote address.

Penn State's Center for Global Workers' Rights co-sponsored the GLU conference and alumni school, along with the AFL-CIO, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, the International Center for Development and Decent Work (ICDD), and the International Labor Organization (ILO).

The deadline for admission to Penn State's GLU Masters program is March 1, 2016. More information is available at <http://lser.la.psu.edu/gwr> or by contacting lgwr@psu.edu.