

CGWR, FALL SEMESTER 2014

The Center for Global Workers' Rights (CGWR) is off to an active start to the 2014-2015 academic year. This semester it launched its Labor and Global Workers' Rights Master's program, which provides students with an innovative platform for debate, research, and in-depth study of contemporary issues in the field of global workers' rights (see article below). The Center and its MPS program are offering a course on international labor standards that includes a joint analysis of International Labor Law cases and virtual exchange with students at the University of Campinas in Brazil (see page 3). As part of its speaker series, the Center hosted Michael Fichter, faculty member of the Global Labour University in Germany, for a vibrant talk regarding the challenges posed to union organizing at VW's Chattanooga plant (see page 2). The students and faculty in the program bring a broad range of backgrounds and interests to Penn State. We put the spotlight on two of these, Shirley Pryce and Chad Gray (see pages 4 and 5). The Center also is continuing to support the campaigns of the Penn State chapter of United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) (page 4). Finally, the Center is now co-host to the prestigious Global Labour Journal (see page 6).

Workers' Rights MPS Starts at Penn State

The Center for Global Workers' Rights is extremely excited about the launch of its Labor and Global Workers' Rights Master's program this academic year. Students in the program have at least three years of practitioner experience and will pursue careers related to workers' rights. The program is part of the Global Labour University (GLU) network, which has programs in Germany, India, South Africa, and Brazil. The Penn State program is the North America participant in the GLU and the newest member of the network. Students at the Penn State program will study a variety of topics including international and comparative employment relations, gender and work in the global economy, strategic corporate research and worker organizing, and international labor standards. Two courses are taught in coordination with GLU programs in Brazil and South Africa via teleconferencing sessions. The twelve-month program includes a summer internship and a capstone project.



Photo, from left to right: Patricia Everhart, Administrative Assistant; Claudia Paul, Visiting Scholar; Mark Anner, Director and LGWR faculty; Emily Morrison, Administrative Support; Shirley Pryce, LGWR student (Jamaica); Zhihang Ruan, LGWR student (China); Chad Gray, Postdoctoral Scholar and LGWR faculty; Paul Whitehead, LGWR faculty; Danna Jayne Seballos, LGWR student (United States); Mary Bellman, LGWR faculty; and Michela Cirioni, LGWR student (Italy).

LSER Speaking Event: Jack Fiorito, Florida State University

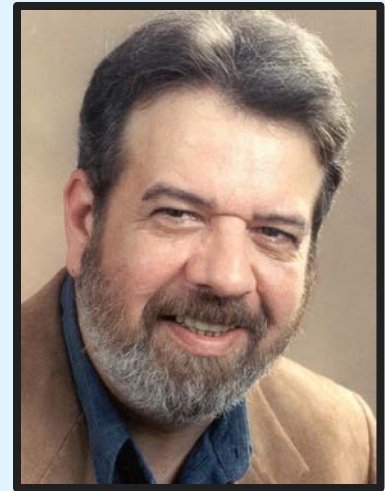
By Michela Cirioni, LGWR student, and Claudia Paul, LGWR Visiting Scholar

On September 29, Jack Fiorito, J. Frank Dame Professor of Management from Florida State University, visited the LER School to give an interesting lecture on the topic of “why workers choose to join and participate in unions.” His lecture reported on his research paper, “Justice, Just Us, or Just Unionism”.

This research attempts to find out “why workers support, join, and participate, and maybe what that says about the past, present, and future of U.S. unions.”

To address the research question the study analyzed scholarly literature on the topic and provided a historical perspective on union ideology as well as recent trends in public opinion.

During his lecture, Professor Fiorito underlined a crucial question: “To what extent do social values, versus self-interest, drive workers to join unions?” Workers decide not to join unions for several reasons, including membership cost and the appeal of free ridership. Fiorito argued that the fact that unions have not fully pursued their potential role as a force for positive social change has had an impact on why union membership is still strongly associated with personal or group interest. Professor Fiorito concluded his presentation by asserting that “unions need to be a sword of justice, both at work and in the broader society, and need to communicate their roles more effectively.”



Professor Jack Fiorito

CGWR Speaking Event: Michael Fichter, GLU, Germany

By Zhihang Ruan, LGWR student

On October 23, Dr. Michael Fichter, adjunct faculty member of the Global Labour University in Germany, gave the first lecture of the Center’s Brown Bag Lunch Speaker Series on the case of Volkswagen in Chattanooga. The lecture was organized and hosted by the Center for Global Workers’ Rights. Professors and students of LER participated in the lecture. Dr. Fichter has been active as an observer of the UAW’s organizing drive in Chattanooga, TN. His lecture, entitled “Exporting the German Labor Relations Model? Reflections on the VW Chattanooga Case,” told the story of transnational cooperation between the UAW and the German IG Metall. His talk covered the history of the unions’ collaboration, the various strategies used during the organizing drive, and the attitudes of local workers and managers within the plant.



Dr. Michael Fichter with LGWR students and professors

The election, held in February 2014, was a defeat for the union, but in July 2014, the UAW decided to form a new local (UAW Local 42), with a voluntary membership. The new local aims to create a collective voice for its members and to facilitate Volkswagen’s efforts to form a German-style works council made up of workers and management. He also pointed out the implications of this case for the international cooperation of trade unions.

“LIVE! FROM STATE COLLEGE AND SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL...!” Students in Penn State and Brazil Work Together

This fall, students in the Penn State Labor and Global Workers’ Rights program are working with their fellow GLU students at Campinas University in Brazil to complete course assignments, deepen their learning about international labor issues, and build relationships for the future. The teleconferences are taking place as part of a course in international labor law that makes aggressive use of technology.



All this happens through a “blended” GLU course that was a full year in the making. Last fall, Frank Hoffer of the Bureau of Worker Activities at the International Labor Organization (ILO) challenged GLU universities around the globe: could their faculty create a “common course” on the world’s growing body of international labor standards? That vision led to an August 2014 launch of the “blended” (part Internet, part in-person) seminars. And that was just in time for the first cohort of GLU students at Penn State to arrange their semesters to include three cross-campus exercises with faculty and students at Campinas. And so, for example, in mid-September, GLU students at Penn State and Campinas came together via teleconference to discuss and debate the causes of earnings inequality across the globe. In mid-October, they presented and discussed major labor rights cases from Bangladesh and Argentina. Another U.S.-Brazil session will take place in November.

Students Use Teleconferencing To Discuss Groundbreaking Case With Geneva-Based Labor Rights Lawyer

On October 15, Penn State’s GLU students hosted, via teleconference, the Geneva-based labor lawyer and activist, Victor Hugo Ricco, for 90 minutes of lively exchange. Ricco recounted his pursuit of a 2011 labor rights case against the Netherlands-based Nidera Corporation, a multi-national agricultural products firm. His presentation demonstrated how global labor activists can use the growing body of international labor standards to improve the lives of workers laboring in some of the toughest jobs in the global economy.

The international exchange was part of a required course in the first semester of the new Labor and Global Workers’ Rights M.P.S. program. That seminar, International Labor Law, introduces students to the work of the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the Office of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and other organizations issuing or incorporating the world’s growing body of international labor standards.

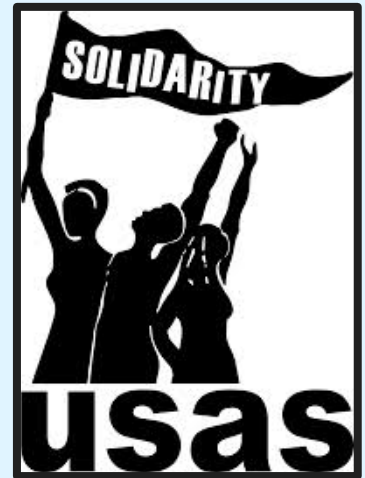
The 2011 case focused on the treatment of seasonal agricultural workers at Nidera’s two dozen large farm holdings in Argentina. At those operations, Nidera required workers essentially to work, eat, sleep, and live at the company’s seed cornfields for periods of intense seasonal labor. Speaking from the headquarters of the International Labour Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, Ricco told students how he had spent months carefully developing the supporting evidence as well as crafting a strategy to produce the best possible scenario for the case presentation.

As part of an OECD complaint mechanism (the case was filed with the Dutch National Contact Point), Nidera adopted a new global company human rights policy and a concrete human rights due diligence procedure for work related to the detasseling of corn by rural temporary workers, and then it put those measures into practice at its Argentinian operations. On the critical question whether conditions had improved for the workers, Ricco was able to report that Nidera in fact kept its promises at least for the following growing season, and many “before and after” photographs drove the point home.

USAS Campaigns At Penn State

By Shirley Pryce and Zhihang Ruan, LGWR students

United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) is a student-run organization that advocates for workers' rights locally and internationally. Historically, USAS has run and won campaigns against multinational athletic producers and retailers such as Russell Athletics, Nike, and Adidas. Since last year, the USAS chapter at Penn State has been running a campaign with the goal of cutting the university's contract with Jansport. Jansport is a division of VF Corporation which is also the parent company of brands such as The North Face, Vans, and Timberland. VF Corporation has a long list of human rights violations and is currently refusing to take responsibility for its workers' safety. Despite multiple requests by Bangladeshi unions, international labor organizations, students, and consumers across the United States, VF has refused to sign the Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh. The Accord is an independent agreement designed to improve the safety of all garment factories in Bangladesh. At the beginning of 2014, Penn State committed that it would require all its licensees to sign the Accord or else have its contract terminated. Now Penn State has cut almost all brands that have refused to sign onto the Accord, except for one brand: Jansport. In September, USAS Penn State delivered letters to the new President of Penn State, Eric Barron, demanding it live up to its promises. On September 29, USAS Penn State had a meeting with Damon Simms, vice president for student affairs. Now USAS Penn State is continuing to run a campaign on this issue and asks for support from all faculty, staff and students.



For more information
check out:
NorthFaceDeathtraps.com
To sign the petition:
[Facebook.com/PennStateU
nitedStudentsAgainstSwea
tshops](https://www.facebook.com/PennStateUnitedStudentsAgainstSweatshops)
Or Email:
don5037@psu.edu or
emm321@psu.edu

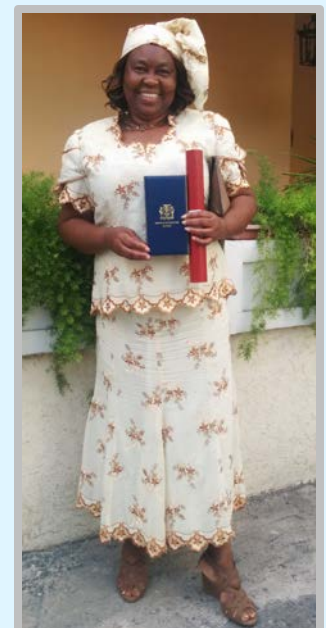
Shirley Lee Pryce, LGWR Student, Received The Order Of Distinction In Jamaica

By Claudia Paul, LGWR Visiting Scholar

On October 21, 2014 - National Heroes Day in Jamaica - GLU student Shirley Lee Pryce was honored in formal recognition of service to Jamaica and its citizens by the Jamaican Government for sterling contribution to the Jamaican Household Workers Union (JHWU) and the Caribbean Domestic Workers Network (CDWN). Shirley received the Order of Distinction in the rank of officer.

Shirley has been an activist for domestic workers' rights for more than 30 years. As the President of the JHWU and chairperson of the CDWN, Shirley fights for the ratification of the ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Work (No. 189) and its implementation in national laws and policies.

Claudia Paul, Visiting Scholar of Labor and Employment Relations at the Center of Global Workers Rights, accompanied Shirley Pryce to Jamaica. On October 21, 2014 Claudia attended a meeting of the JHWU in Kingston and discussed with the participants the specificities of a trade union for domestic workers regarding organizing, collective bargaining and strike action and the possibilities resulting from the duty of a Government to implement the ILO C189 in consultation with trade unions.



Shirley Lee Pryce O.D.

Center for Global Workers' Rights Team

Mark Anner is the Director of the Center for Global Workers' Rights (CGWR) and Associate Professor in the LER School. Mark holds a Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University and a Master's Degree in Latin American Studies from Stanford University. He teaches *International and Comparative Employment Relations* and *Labor in the Global Economy* for the MPS program.

Paul Whitehead is a Professor of Practice in Labor and Employment Relations, specializing in labor and employment law. He earned his B.S. in Labor Studies and M.S. in Industrial Relations from the University of Wisconsin. He is an honors graduate of Harvard Law School. Paul practiced law for almost 30 years for the United Steelworkers in Pittsburgh, PA, serving as general counsel from 2001-2009. He teaches on *International Labor Standards* in the MPS program.

Mary Bellman is a Lecturer of Labor and Employment Relations and the LER School's Labor Education Coordinator. She coordinates education programs with unions and workers. Mary holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Political Science from the University of New Mexico where her research focused on union organizing by women in Central America. This spring, she will teach a course on *Gender and Work in the Global Economy*.

Lisa Pierson is Administrative Assistant to the CGWR. She joined Penn State in 2008 working for Labor and Employment Relations. She offers support for both the Center and the LER School, overseeing promotion and tenure, travel, event planning, and budgets. Lisa's assistance is vital for all aspects of the Center, ranging from long-term preparation for events to everyday operations.

Spotlight Shines on Chad Gray Post Doc for Global Labor Center, Penn State University



Chad Gray

By Danna Jayne Seballos, LGWR student

This year's Post-Doctoral Scholar at the Center for Global Workers' Rights is Chad Gray. With a background as an activist and a researcher, Chad's appointment is set to strengthen the Center's core mission of strategic research and campaigns. Chad notes that the US labor movement has been able to turn one of its weaknesses into a strategy for renewal. "Because of a combination of weak labor laws, the strength of multinational corporations, and the effects of deregulation and deindustrialization, the labor movement has seen a decline in its density and had a harder time fighting back with the tools and strategies it used when unions were stronger. The labor movement's weaknesses have forced them to develop new strategies that can help them rebuild bargaining power and strengthen organizing efforts in this globalized

Some of these tools include strategic research and comprehensive and global campaigns. His current goal is to help the GLU's first North American cohort in developing their ability to conduct high quality independent research into labor rights issues and to help strengthen the Penn State campus of the GLU as research hub capable of assisting unions to conduct research into corporations, industries, and expose workers' rights violations. His method: to apply his research, passion, and respect for the diverse students' experience in-the-field in the class room. Before coming to Penn State, Chad studied Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University, focusing on transnational organizing and bargaining campaigns in Latin America. At Cornell, he studied and worked under Kate Bronfenbrenner, known for her prominent research into union organizing strategies. Before Cornell he worked as an organizer for the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE).

Center for Global Workers' Rights Co-Hosts the Global Labour Journal

The Center for Global Workers' Rights joins the International Center for Development and Decent Work of Kassel University and the Research Committee on Labour Movements of the International Sociology Association in co-hosting the Global Labour Journal. The online journal publishes on a range of topics on labor and workers' movement in the global economy by top scholars in the field. It is an open access journal and is run by an editorial team from the Global South and Global North. For more information, please see: <http://www.rc44labour.org/rc-44-and-the-global-labour-journal/>

To access the Journal, go to: <https://escarpmentpress.org/globallabour>

Application to LGWR Master

The deadline for applications for the next academic year is February 1, 2015. Assistantships and scholarships are available and awarded based on need and the quality of the application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to acquire some complementary support from their trade union, labor federation, or related organization.

For more information about the goals and curriculum of the program, please email us at: lgwr@psu.edu

To apply, please see: <http://www.global-labour-university.org/323.html>

Opportunities for Student Funding

The CGWR offers funds in support of individual or collaborative undergraduate and graduate student research on themes related to the protection of workers' rights in the global economy. If you are a student interested in research on a topic related to global workers' rights, please email us at: cgwr@psu.edu

Post-doctoral and Visiting Scholars Positions

The CGWR provides opportunities for scholars engaged in research matching the Center's agenda by supporting a yearly post-doctoral scholar fellowship and opportunities for visiting scholars. This semester, the Center was proud to host Claudia Paul, a German labor lawyer from the University of Halle-Wittenberg, where she is working on her Ph.D. dissertation, "The Disable Person's Delegation within the German Works Constitution."



Claudia Paul

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