



One of our guest speakers, the widely acclaimed social activist Ai-jen Poo (see p. 2 and 4), recently recognized the important work of the CGWR “family.” We have indeed become a family, a team of students, faculty and staff working to improve dignity at work. This semester, we released our first major research report, focusing on workers’ rights in El Salvador (page 2). The Center is organizing its first Global Labour University Conference in the United States, to begin in late September, and to feature a GLU alumni school at Penn State (page 3). We are also recruiting an exciting group of MPS students for next year, while current students enjoy a new course on Gender in the Global Economy taught by Mary Bellman (page 5). As we go to press, the Penn State chapter of United Students Against Sweatshops has just won a year-long campaign to get PSU to drop apparel company Jansport as a University licensee because of that firm’s refusal to join a worldwide Accord improving rights for Bangladeshi workers (page 1).

## *USAS Wins a Major Victory: Penn State Cuts Jansport Contract*

by Denny Braviera Monteiro and Zhihang Ruan,  
LGWR students

USAS is a student-run organization that advocates for workers’ rights locally and internationally. Since 2014, the USAS chapter at Penn State has been running a campaign to cut the university’s contract with Jansport, a division of VF Corporation, for its refusal to sign on to the Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, which aims to protect workers’ safety in Bangladesh after the Rana Plaza Fire.

On December 15th, 2014, Penn State sent a letter to Jansport giving it 90 days to sign the Accord. By late March, Jansport hadn’t signed, and on March 26, Penn State President, Eric Barron, called a meeting with USAS to inform them that the University was cutting its contract with Jansport based on the refusal of both it and its parent, VF Corporation, to sign onto the Accord. Since its founding, the Center for Global Workers’ Rights has been supporting Penn State’s United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS). Center Director, Mark Anner, serves as USAS’s faculty adviser.



**PSU President Eric Barron (center) and VP of Student Affairs Damon Sims meet with USAS members on March 26 to inform them that Penn State is cancelling its relationship with Jansport and VF Corporation.**

## *Ai-Jen Poo and the Work of Care*

by Shirley Lee Pryce and Michela Cirioni, LGWR students

On February 11, the CGWR was honored to host Ai-Jen Poo, director of the Domestic Workers Alliance, 2014 MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellow, and one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World for 2012. Ms. Poo introduced her book, "The Age of Dignity" and gave an inspiring speech on "The Future of Care: What We Need for a Changing America," by addressing the role that society, the government, and labor unions can play in advancing this cause. Care for the elderly is done by a significant number of workers, ranging from housekeepers, caregivers and domestic workers. They are a heterogeneous group that include migrant workers.

The relevance of care-giving activities affects every single American, as family member, consumer, worker, and taxpayer. Care work addresses three crucial spheres of life and society: work, family, and health. Care work is a growing part of the U.S. economy, and the quality of care can make a difference in terms of health and emotional bonds.

Ai-Jen Poo also stressed the importance of supporting the work of those who care for elders and disadvantaged people, by increasing quality and well paid jobs. This is the goal of the campaign known as Caring Across Generations. Care workers are highly visible in our neighborhoods and families, yet invisible under our labor laws as "non-employees." They represent the protagonists in any system of future care.

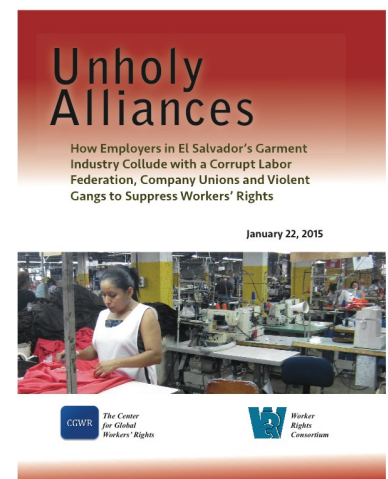


First row, from left: Professor Mark Anner, CGWR Director; Ai-Jen Poo, director of the Domestic Workers Alliance; Danna Jayne Seballos, LGWR student; Lisa Pierson, CGWR staff; Paul Whitehead, LGWR Professor. Second row, from left: Mary Bellman, LGWR Professor; Shirley Pryce, LGWR student from Jamaica; Michela Cirioni, LGWR student from Italy; Chad Gray, LGWR post-doc; Denny Braviera Monteiro, LGWR student from Brazil; and Zhihang Ruan, LGWR student from China.

## *CGWR Research Report: Workers' Rights in El Salvador*

The Center for Global Workers' Rights, together with the Worker Rights Consortium, released its first major research report in January. The report, "Unholy Alliances: How Employers in El Salvador's Garment Industry Collude with a Corrupt Labor Federation, Company Unions and Violent Gangs to Suppress Workers' Rights," is the result of two years of research and fieldwork. It documents how, in the hyper-competitive global garment industries, employers are turning to gangs and employer-controlled unions to keep wages low and good unions out of the factories. The full report can be accessed here:

[http://lser.la.psu.edu/gwr/documents/UnholyAlliances\\_January2015.pdf](http://lser.la.psu.edu/gwr/documents/UnholyAlliances_January2015.pdf)



*The Center for Global Workers' Rights to co-host the*  
**10TH ANNUAL GLOBAL LABOUR UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE**  
*“Sharing the Gains – Containing Corporate Power”*

Washington, D.C. — September 30 - October 2, 2015

The Center for Global Workers' Rights and the AFL-CIO will co-host the Tenth Annual Global Labour University Conference, which will be held in Washington, D.C., 30 September - 2 October 2015. The theme of the conference is “Sharing the Gains — Containing Corporate Power.” The Conference will explore causes for the unequal distribution of wealth along global value chains (GVCs) in recent decades and to analyze mechanisms to contain corporate power and ensure that the vast wealth generated by corporate-led globalization can be more equitably distributed. MNC-coordinated GVCs account for 80 per cent of global trade, and the income from trade flows within GVCs has doubled over the last 15 years. Yet, this vast corporate income is not fairly shared with workers who produce the wealth.

Seven tracks will examine the overall conference theme:

1. MNCs, Trade Agreements, and Workers' Rights
2. The Role of the State: Regulating Corporations
3. Strategic Corporate Research and Campaigns
4. Human Rights, Labour Protection & Regulation, and Corporate Liability
5. Precarious Work: Organizing the 'Bottom' of the Supply Chain
6. Wages, Bargaining, and Binding Agreements with MNCs
7. Development, Sustainability and Resistance



For more information see:

[http://www.global-labour-university.org/fileadmin/download/CfP\\_GLU\\_Conference\\_2015.pdf](http://www.global-labour-university.org/fileadmin/download/CfP_GLU_Conference_2015.pdf)

*Shirley Pryce, LGWR student, invited to talk at*  
**UN Conference in NY**

The CGWR sponsored the participation of Shirley Pryce, LWGR student, in the UN Conference on CSW59/ Beijing+20 held in New York City in March.



Shirley, as President of the Jamaica Household Workers Union, was a guest speaker in the conference.

She also attended the march organized by the UN on International Women Day.



## *CGWR Speaking Event: Justin McBride and the Car Wash industry*

by Zhihang Ruan and Michela Cirioni, LGWR students

Last December 2014, Justin McBride, the Director of the CLEAN Car Wash Campaign, joined our Brown Bag Lunch Speaker Series with a talk on “Strategic Campaigns and Immigrant Work Organizing in the LA Car Wash Industry”. With over 500 car washes and around 10,000 car wash workers in just the area of Los Angeles, the CLEAN Car Wash Campaign started in 2007 to address the crucial need of better working conditions and labor protections in the car wash industry. Cars are considered a status symbol in LA, and car wash work can be extremely labor intensive, without any specific labor protection. According to McBride, characteristics of the car wash industry demanded a non-traditional strategy, and thankfully, the CLEAN Car Wash Campaign was able to establish union contracts and ensure basic rights to workers. McBride pointed out the importance of a union’s choosing an organizing strategy that fits a specific industry, and he urged unionists to be willing to adjust strategy over time, because every campaign and every employer is different, and the structure of the industry always plays a crucial role.



**Justin McBride, second row, third from the right, at Penn State with the LGWR students and CGWR staff.**

## *Solidarity Immersion in Dominican Republic*

by Denny Braviera Monteiro, LGWR student

Every year the Center for Global Worker’s Rights funds an amazing one-of-a-kind trip to the Dominican Republic for an outstanding student in Penn State United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS). The Solidarity Immersion to Villa Altagracia is organized by Solidarity Ignite (¡Si!) and provides students organizers from all over the country the opportunity to meet with union leaders of Alta Gracia, the first ever living-wage union-made factory producing college logo apparel. In January, Asifa Moue, a junior majoring in Labor Studies and Employment Relations, had this life-changing experience. She shares with us the highlights of her trip:

“I have never had a more fulfilling learning experience. The Solidarity Immersion trip has taught me that the level of injustice on this planet is unfathomable and the only way to eliminate it is to work together as citizens of the world. During the trip, I gained a comprehensive understanding of social justice organizing through personal exchanges with union leaders and hands-on workshops that focused on social justice campaign building. In addition, I got the opportunity to network with students from universities all over the USA who were all there for the same purpose: to learn from, empathize with, and help others. I can confidently say that travel has been my greatest teacher. The Solidarity Immersion trip will eternally hold an exclusive place in my heart”.



**Asifa Moue, LER student**

## *CGWR Spring 2015 Team*

**MARK ANNER**, Center Director and LGWR professor of International and Comparative Employment Relations, and Work in the Global Economy.

**PAUL WHITEHEAD**, LGWR professor of Global Workers' Rights.

**MARY BELLMAN**, LGWR professor of Gender and Work in the Global Economy.

**CHAD GRAY**, Center 2014-2015 post-doctoral scholar and LGWR instructor of Research and Writing for Labor Practitioners and Strategic Corporate Research and Campaigns.

**LISA PIERSON**, Center administrative assistant.

**DORA SARI**, lead researcher, CGWR "Workers' Rights in Law and Practice" database.

**EMILY MORRISON**, Administrative Support Assistant for the MPS in Labor and Global Workers' Rights.

**DANNA JAYNE SEBALLOS**, LGWR student, U.S., supports the MPS program recruitment and provides assistance to new students.

**DENNY BRAVIERA MONTEIRO**, LGWR student, Brazil, Strategic Corporate Campaign Research website.

**SHIRLEY LEE PRYCE**, LGWR student, Jamaica, CGWR speaker series and relationships with USAS.

**ZHIHANG RUAN**, LGWR student, China, collaborates with the CGWR's database project and with USAS.

**MICHELA CIRIONI**, LGWR graduate student from Italy, develops grants and edits newsletter

## *Spotlight Shines on Mary Bellman Lecturer for Global Labor Center, Penn State University*

by Danna Jayne Seballos, LGWR student

One thing Mary Bellman, Ph.D., has in common with her fellow faculty members is her approach to teaching and learning. They are rooted in a belief that learning comes from everyone in the classroom. The Global Labor and Workers' Rights Masters Program is in its inaugural year at Penn State, and so is Dr. Bellman. Prior to this position, Dr. Bellman worked at the University of Minnesota's Labor and Education Service, from 2008-2014. Her Ph.D. and M.A. are in Political Science from the University of New Mexico where her research focused on union organizing by women in Central America. She also served as a program director for a labor solidarity organization in Guatemala where she coordinated educational programs with union women across Central America.

At Penn State, Dr. Bellman is teaching a course titled, Gender and Work in the Global Economy. "What is your dream course?", asked Dr. Mark Anner, director of the Global Workers Rights Center at Penn State. This is it, and she is happy to be teaching university students. She enjoys watching people evolve and is able to build upon her knowledge and ability to see how there are ripples in the labor movement that spread across international waters. Dr. Bellman wears a second hat at Penn State as a Labor Educator Coordinator, and in this role too, she draws from the diverse background of her students to help broaden perspective on labor efforts and conditions.

In her six months in being part of the Global Labor University (GLU), Penn State division, Dr. Bellman sees the GLU as a network of people who are working from a common mission, committed to the labor movement. For the students it is a place to broaden their thinking, gain strategic skills, and build connections for the future. A key for Dr. Bellman's work with the students is acknowledging and bringing out the women's voice in the labor movement. "I have seen how women have made [the effort] more powerful," she said. "If you don't have that voice, you are missing something."



**Dr. Mary Bellman**

## *New Hybrid Course on Strategic Corporate Research*

The CGWR and the GLU are currently developing a platform for conducting and teaching strategic corporate research (SCR). SCR is a methodology developed by practitioners and academics as a means to understand a corporation's structure, its power relationships, and its key actors. A semester-long course on SCR is currently being offered at Penn State's LER school, and the topic will be a central focus of the "Sharing the Gains-Containing Corporate Power" conference in October 2015 as well as the GLU alumni school to follow the conference.

## Recent Publications by Center Team Members

*Michael Fichter, Mark Anner, Frank Hoffer, and Christoph Scherrer*, "The Global Labour University: A New Laboratory of Learning for International Solidarity?" *Working USA: The Journal of Labor & Society*, 17: 565-577. This article explores the ten year history of the Global Labour University and its impact on policy and solidarity by preparing labor unionists with needed theoretical understandings and analytical and research skills.

## GLU launches free MOOC on *Workers' Rights in a Global Economy*

Starting on 1 June 2015, this six weeks online course will discuss what Global Workers' Rights are and which instruments and strategies can be used to implement them. Based on a careful mix of video lectures, readings, online resources, and interviews with activists and labor scholars from around the world—including Penn State's Professor Paul Whitehead!— participants will gain both knowledge and practical skills for furthering workers' rights worldwide. To get an overview of the course, you can watch a short trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8u8dpMVfFh0>

## Post-doctoral and Visiting Scholars Positions, and Student Funding

The CGWR provides opportunities for scholars engaged in research on workers' rights by supporting a yearly post-doctoral and hosting visiting scholars. It also 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. For more information, go to: <http://lser.la.psu.edu/gwr/>

## Global Labour Journal

Don't forget to check out the latest issue of GLJ, an open access, online journal co-hosted by the CGWR: <https://escarpmentpress.org/globallabour>. The latest issue includes articles on organizing at Wal-Mart, transnational solidarity with Turkey, informal work in Mexico, unions and public opinion in Canada, and sex workers in India.



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