Labor Education and Research Center

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The Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) was established at the University of Oregon in 1977 with funding provided by the Oregon legislature to serve the educational and research needs of Oregon workers and their organizations. LERC has an advisory board that includes representatives from state labor and community organizations and other related constituencies. LERC faculty collaborate with academic departments on research, teaching, and public service projects.

The center serves as a liaison between members of Oregon's labor relations community and the state university system. The center's research and educational programs provide a catalyst for interaction among labor leaders, public officials, arbitrators, labor relations specialists, community and nonprofit organizations, and members of the academic community.

The center produces educational programs including seminars, conferences, workshops, and short courses on campus and throughout the state. It offers training and education to workers and unionists in grievance handling, arbitration, collective bargaining, health and safety, and other issues of concern in today's complex and rapidly changing economy. Most of these programs are offered without credit.

Faculty members conduct both applied and scholarly research on current and emerging issues in labor relations and working life. Areas of research include the changing environment and structure of collective bargaining, sustainability and green jobs, immigration and Oregon's changing workforce, workplace health and safety, economic justice and the low-wage economy, privatization, and worker rights in organizing and dispute resolution.

For students enrolled at the University of Oregon, the LERC faculty teaches for-credit courses in academic departments on topics such as labor history, labor policy, immigration, and economic justice. In addition, LERC also provides a participatory learning experience for undergraduate students, an intensive internship with Oregon labor organizations on research and related projects—Supervised Field Study (LERC 406). Students earn 4 credits each term of the internship. To participate, students must get pre-approval from the LERC faculty.

LERC also offers a GE research position each year to a graduate student working on issues related to labor, employment policy, or worker justice.

LERC in Portland

LERC offices in Portland offer services to the metropolitan area through general and specialized programs. The Portland office is located in the University of Oregon's White Stag Block at 70 NW Couch Street, Suite 353; telephone 503-412-3721.

The Labor Education and Research Center is a member of the United Association for Labor Education and the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association.

Faculty

Mark Brenner, career instructor. BA,1991 Wake Forest University, MA, 1994, The American University, MA, 1997, PhD, 2000 University of California Riverside (2018)

Robert Bussel, professor. BA, 1973, Cornell; MEd, 1983, Rutgers; PhD, 1993, Cornell. (2002)

Sherman Henry, instructor. BA, 2007, National Labor College; MS, 2011, Florida International. (2016) on leave from April 2021-April 2022

Jennifer Hess, associate research professor. BS, 1983, Western Washington; MPH, 1996, Washington (Seattle); PhD, 2004, Oregon. (2002)

Gordon Lafer, professor. BA, 1983, Swarthmore; MA, 1989, MPh, 1992, PhD, 1995, Yale University. (1997)

Emeriti

Barbara Byrd, senior instructor emerita. BA 1971, Rice; MS, 1978, Massachusetts, Amherst; PhD, 1988, Texas, Austin. (1994)

Lynn M. Feekin, senior instructor emerita. BA, 1972, Northern Iowa. (1994)

Margaret J. Hallock, professor emerita. BA, 1969, Southern California; MA, 1971, PhD, 1974, Claremont. (1988)

Steven F. Hecker, associate professor emeritus. BA, 1972, Yale; MS, 1981, Washington (Seattle). (1998)

Helen Moss, senior instructor emerita. BA 1982, San Francisco State; MA, 2001, Portland State. (2000)

Marcus Widenor, associate professor emeritus. BA, 1974, Antioch; MA, 1976, Massachusetts at Amherst. (1983)

The date in parentheses at the end of each entry is the first year on the University of Oregon faculty.