
OER in Action: UVA's Labor History

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ENWR 1510

Serves 97.5% of UVA students

Discussion-based seminar

Inquiry-focused pedagogical model

Writing About Labor

Fall 2023, two sections of 18 students each.

Goals:

- Practice college-level writing
- Understand UVA's labor history
- Investigate the relationship between language and politics

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Militant
Terrorist

Community-engaged pedagogy

Writing About Housing Equity

Writing About Food Justice

Writing Democracy: A Publication Project with Algerian Writers

Personal Writing/Political Activism

Global Advocacy, Democracy, and Public Narrative

Race, Place, and History at UVA

UVA's labor history (abridged)

1943: Walkout of Black workers at UVA Hospital results in higher wages

1944: Work stoppage threat results in eight-hour workday

1945: Workers formally organize with State, County, and Municipal Workers of America as Local 550 of the SCMWA-CIO



UVA's labor history (abridged)

May 1945: Local 550 recruits 80% of UVA Hospital's Black workforce

January 1946: Virginia General Assembly bans state officers and agencies from recognizing public employee unions



CIO Is Refused Contract At University

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Jan. 27
—Although the adoption by the Virginia General Assembly of Governor Tuck's policy of non-recognition of labor unions apparently would have no effect upon the present setup of a CIO organization of Negro workers at the University of Virginia Hospital, it would preclude any possible hope of future recognition that the workers may have, according to information obtained here today.

Governor Tuck, in his message to the Assembly, asked that a resolution be adopted declaring that the unionization of public employees, State or local, in violation of the public policy of Virginia and that it is beyond the authority of any public official to recognize or negotiate with such a union with respect to any matter relating to government employees or their services. The Governor explained, however, that his recommendation was not intended to abridge the right of any employee to join a union.

Writing About Labor

How to engage meaningfully with 75 years of labor law

→ **Community-engaged pedagogy**

Working with stakeholders for whom this project would have some tangible use

→ **Primary-source research**

Searching for documents to fill “archival silences”

→ **Recursive writing practices**

Encouraging students to reflect on their own learning process



→ Graduate Labor Union

→ Staff Union of UVA



Community-engaged pedagogy

Establishing relationships with other labor groups in the area (past and present)



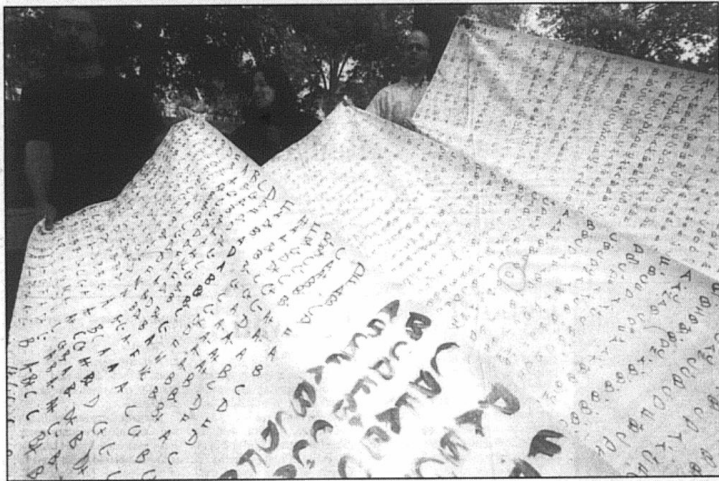
→ Graduate Labor Union

→ Staff Union of UVA



→ May 2021, General Assembly passed legislation allowing for public entities (cities, counties, towns, school systems) to participate in collective bargaining if those entities choose to do so

→ October 2022, Charlottesville City Council voted unanimously to pass a collective bargaining ordinance for its workers



The Daily Progress/Ronna Grady

During a rally on the University of Virginia's Lawn, English graduate students (from left) Ray Malewitz and Jill Rappoport, and economics graduate student Bill Craighead unroll sheets of paper covered with grades, symbolizing the work that graduate instructors will do this semester.

UVA graduate students form labor union

Organization announces plans to affiliate itself with international workers' rights group

By ERIC SWENSEN
Daily Progress staff writer

Seeking more financial support and improved health insurance, about 50 University of Virginia graduate students have formed a union and plan to affiliate with an international labor union.

During a Monday rally on the Lawn, UVA's Graduate Labor Union announced its intention to align with the 750,000-member Communications Workers of America, which also is affiliated with the recently formed Staff

Union at the University of Virginia. The CWA has branches on about 100 college campuses.

CWA representative Richard Verlander said he believed the graduate student union is the first of its kind established in Virginia.

Along with UVA's staff union, the student union faces large obstacles under state law, which prohibits public employees from striking and bars state agencies from collective bargaining with unions.

But the student organiza-

tion can still have an impact with the help of the CWA, said student union President Daniela Bell, pointing to the international union's experience in other states such as Texas with similar labor laws and its lobbying muscle in Richmond.

"We can put a lot of pressure on through the media and through lobbying, and unions are a strong way to do that," she said. "Together with [the UVA staff union] and other union members, that creates a very powerful voice."

Members of the staff union, together with faculty and undergraduate supporters at Monday's gathering, described UVA's 3,300 graduate students as central to the university's mission.

"It's clear that you guys do the foundational work that lays the ground for the research and teaching that goes on here," said Scott Saul, an English professor who helped form a graduate student union while at Yale University.

Graduate students "teach the See UVA on B2

Primary sources

Visiting UVA's Special Collections Library, and gaining fluency in UVA's digital and print archival holdings

Transit Heads Call For More Efficiency In Service

By DANNY BARKIN

Charlottesville Transportation Task Force met again last night to hear presentations by University Transit System Director Kevin Adams and Yellow Bus System owner, Jerald T. Graves in conjunction with a discussion of possible criteria and primary client groups for good mass transit.

Mr. Adams stressed throughout his presentation his desire to conceive a bus "service" instead of a bus "system."

He said the central guideline used to develop an effective

and popular transit system should be parity with the automobile in terms of convenience, trip time, comfort and dependability.

Utility For All

Setting forth other criteria, Mr. Adams envisioned Charlottesville bus system which would have utility for the immobile and poor, as well as middle and upper income individuals.

"A good working bus system would afford urban space usually reserved for parking," he said.

Mr. Adams did concede that an effective bus system could

not operate at a profit. "Instead, we should be concerned with minimizing our losses."

Satyendra S. Kuja, Director of Planning for the Charlottesville Department of Community Development, echoed Mr. Adams' remarks, saying the ideal transit system should shape the criteria with regard to the potential users of the system.

Attract Commuters

In a memorandum distributed to each member of the Task Force, Mr. Kuja emphasized the relationship between an economically

Primary sources

Visiting UVA's Special Collections Library, and gaining fluency in UVA's digital and print archival holdings



Recursive writing practices

Reflecting on the writing process during and after assignments using multimodal activities

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Navigating the “maze-like passageways of old records, manuscripts, and original sources.”

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“I used to think archived papers were merely old and grossly written handbooks that people used as diaries in the past, but they are more than just yellowed pages; they are like the university’s attic, storing the skeletons of its history. I felt like a spy as I came across old documents and odd objects.”

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“At the beginning of the journey, I would imagine this history as a queue: different unions in different periods come onto the stage, and perform their own stories as they leave. Now, I see it more like a stack: the coming-up unions build on top of the previous unions’ stories, and together push us high to the place we stand right now.”

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The end?

- We'll be sharing some of my students' research and writing in an exhibition in the Lower Gallery of the Special Collections Library from March to June of this year!
- The open-access book will also include an account of some students who have continued working with me after the course ended, as well as some of our Community Curatorial Partners from UCW-VA, GLU, SUUVA, and ATU

Thanks to:

- Judy
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- Jacob Hopkins
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- Dan Cavanaugh
- You!