HARRY BRIDGES CENTER FOR LABOR STUDIES
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

EDUCATE. RESEARCH. ORGANIZE.




# 2026 ANNUAL REPORT

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Chair's Overview

Moon-Ho Jung

Amid a barrage of horrific policies targeting working peoples in the United States and around the world, the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies remains committed as ever to producing work that can help us understand and advance workers' struggles for justice and democracy. I could not be prouder to be associated with the Bridges Center, its principled staff, and you all, representatives of the wider labor community.

Over the last year, Rachel Erstad, the Research Director, and Maya Cruz, the Lead Research Analyst, have taken the research team to new heights. In August 2026, they completed and released their most ambitious report to date, "Rights on the Line: Policy and Regulatory Gaps Affecting Migrant Fishers in Washington State Ports." They have another report on apprenticeship programs in the pipeline, alongside many other projects.

Andrew Hedden, the Associate Director, taught a brand new course, Seattle Labor History, last winter to resounding success. He continues to oversee the Bridges Center's daily operation and fundraising efforts. Under his leadership, in partnership with the Strategic Funding Committee, we have made important connections that will be critical to the Bridges Center's future.

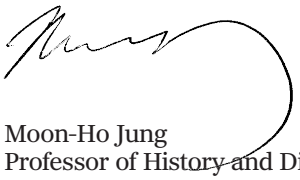
After a long leave of absence caused by administrative decisions beyond our control, Sai Ahmed came back to work in January 2026. They have been busy reviewing our curriculum and scholarship program to deepen student engagement with Labor Studies. Welcome back, Sai!

April Rubio, the Communications Coordinator, continues to extend the Bridges Center's reach and to produce eye-catching reports and newsletters. Please check out "Rights on the Line" for the latest example of April's superb work.

Soohyung Hur, who recently completed a PhD in Geography, has strengthened and expanded the Building a Movement Internship program. We are grateful that Dr. Hur can continue to work with BAM interns and our community partners this academic year.

In my four years as the Harry Bridges Endowed Chair in Labor Studies and the Director of the Bridges Center, we have been able to implement nearly all of the recommendations made by the 2023 Strategic Planning Committee. In July 2026, we hosted the first Summer School, an energizing event that we plan to make into an annual tradition. We also continue to organize urgent teach-ins to address our current moment. In April 2026, we planned and hosted a teach-in on "US Imperial Wars, Past and Present: Framing the Military Attacks on Venezuela, Iran, and Beyond" before a packed audience.

My term as the Bridges Chair/Director will come to an end next year. I am grateful for your generous support over the years. I promise to do all I can to make the transition to the next Chair/Director as smooth as possible. But, as I have learned during my term, it is really the staff and the community of students, activists, faculty, and supporters who are responsible for everything worthwhile at the Bridges Center. Thank you for your engagement and support!



Moon-Ho Jung
Professor of History and Director,
Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies
Harry Bridges Endowed Chair in Labor Studies
University of Washington

# Education

Through classes, internships, and events, the Harry Bridges Center educates young people about their power as workers.

## 2025-2026 Student Programs By the Numbers

The Labor Studies Minor provides students an interdisciplinary program of study focusing on the importance of labor to the economic, social, political, and cultural evolution of modern societies.

Students earning a Labor Studies Minor:

**35**

21 of those graduated with the Minor in 2025-2026

Number of Labor Studies Minor classes:

**69**

Number of enrollments in Labor Studies Minor classes:




The field of Labor Studies encompasses scholarship and teaching about work, workers and their organizations across many disciplines. From unions and organized labor, to the often unpaid caring labor taking place at home, Labor Studies is broadly conceived to include working people everywhere.

Funding Awarded:

**$96,500**



Funding Recipients:

**19**

scholarship, fellowship and prize winners out of 52 applicants

Each year, the Bridges Center awards thousands of dollars in scholarships and grants to support inspiring scholars and activists who are pursuing the study and practice of labor. Last year, we awarded $96,500 in scholarships, fellowships, and grants to UW graduate and undergraduate students, and faculty.




**2 Research Interns**
70 applicants

**18 BAM Interns**
91 applicants

**17 Hosting Organizations**

Now in its eighth year, the Building a Movement (BAM) Labor Internship program continues to connect undergraduate students at UW with the local labor movement, through partnerships with community organizations engaged with this work on a variety of levels. This year, eighteen interns were placed with local labor and social justice organizations, deepening their understanding of worker-led movements and collective action. The Bridges Center research team and MLK Labor's People's Organizing Center (POC) hired two research assistant interns in the spring quarter.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA
LABOR SOLIDARITY PROJECT

Seven years ago, **UW Tacoma's Labor Solidarity Project** was established to elevate the visibility of Labor Studies on campus and strengthen collaboration among faculty, students, and community partners.

**17**

courses

offered at UW Tacoma focusing on labor and working class history, part of a Major in Ethnic Gender, and Labor Studies.

**7** major events at **UW Bothell** featuring leading labor scholars and organizers, hosted by the Labor Studies Colloquium Study & Struggle series.

# Education

In 2026, many labor studies students and faculty made news with their accomplishments in the local community and more broadly.

## Students, Alumni, & Faculty in the News

**Community philanthropy allows Labor Studies PhD Student Ally Clonch to continue impactful research despite uncertain funding:** A gift from the Seattle Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will support graduate student research within the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences. Faculty members selected PhD student and Graduate Labor Research Grant recipient Ally Clonch to receive the gift. Read More

**Why the '996' schedule is capturing the interest of Silicon Valley leadership:** The "996" schedule is 12-hour shifts, 6 days a week and it's captivated Silicon Valley tech leaders. NPR's Ayesha Rascoe speaks with Labor Studies Faculty Margaret O'Mara about this workplace trend. Listen on NPR

**Ave Starbucks baristas continue picketing, Bridges Center Research Director Rachel Erstad weighs in on union activity:** Starbucks employees at the University Way Northeast location continued picketing outside the storefront Nov. 19, marking the sixth day strike of Starbucks Workers United's (SBWU) open-ended strike against the coffee giant. Rachel Erstad, research director at the Bridges Center, explained that the nationwide action represents an exciting collaboration in the field of labor studies. Read More

**Tip theft, harassment, and unsafe working conditions: An inside look at student labor exploitation on the Ave:** The tally of labor abuses reported by student employees is astounding. Tip theft by owners and managers appears to be ubiquitous, despite the fact that it is extremely illegal in Washington state and constitutes wage theft. Maya Cruz, lead researcher at the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, explained the essence of unionization. Read More

**2025 Labor Studies Scholarship recipient Rowan Minino reports on recent farmwork legislation in WA:** Farmworker union Familias Unidas Por La Justicia and farm owners packed the Legislature's hearing rooms to testify about SB 6045 and HB 2409, which would give farmworkers more collective bargaining rights. Read More

**Occupation is an important contributor to cancer burden in U.S., according to new research by Labor Studies faculty associate Marissa Baker and collaborators:** As mortality from certain cancers has been rising among high-income countries, researchers are beginning to ask if someone's job may be a risk factor. A new study published January 2026 in The Lancet Oncology looked at nearly a half million cancer deaths that occurred between 2020 and 2023 among working-age adults in the U.S. by occupation. Read More

**Massage parlor vigil organized by Labor Studies alums, JM Wong, Shuxuan Zhou, & Rachel Sun honors Atlanta spa shooting victims:** Dozens gathered in Seattle's Chinatown Sunday morning to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Atlanta spa shootings that killed eight people, including six women of Asian descent, while launching a new campaign to improve safety for massage workers. Read Article on King 5 News

**The fight continues: a look at union efforts in Washington state - Cascade PBS speaks to Bridges Center Associate Director Andrew Hedden:** As major employers across the Northwest continue to slash staff and close stores, some workers allege those are a part of efforts to bust unions. Seattle companies like Starbucks, Amazon and REI are among those that have drawn scrutiny for their actions related to unions. Watch Here

**The wealth across the water: Understanding the economic configuration of the East Side:** Andrew Hedden, associate director of the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies and lecturer on Seattle labor history, explained how the transformation of Seattle's economy in the 20th century came not only through the tech boom of the 1990s, but also through wartime airplane manufacturing by Boeing. Read More

**Students rally for May Day, call for labor rights and immigration protections:** Zeke Cohn, Labor Studies scholarship recipient and a fourth-year student and member of Socialist Alternative, pointed to recent labor actions, including a strike in Minneapolis, as evidence that large-scale worker organizing feels increasingly possible. Read More

**ICE presence at World Cup gets cold reception from Seattle protesters:** As she stood in Judkins Park waiting to speak, Eunice How, Bridges Center Alum and Lead Organizer for Unite Here Local 8, said she worried agents could use the games to round up local workers. Read Article on the Seattle Times



# Research

At the Center, university research works for the labor movement, highlighting issues that working people face to inform policymakers and campaigns.

## Courses



**LABOR 480: Applied Labor Research** entered its fifth iteration in the spring quarter of 2026, with nine students. Students worked on collaborative projects with unions or worker-facing organizations, investigating employers, surveying union members, and more.

## Internships



In September 2025, the Bridges Center and MLK Labor's People's Organizing Center launched the second iteration of our applied research internship. Two research interns were hired and collaborated with Nina Daro, former MLK Labor/POC Director of Strategic Research, and Maya Cruz, Bridges Center Lead Researcher on projects supporting King County and Washington workers. They both gained experience engaging with the local labor movement and applying strategic labor research to ongoing worker-driven campaigns. We will begin our third iteration of the POC/Bridges Center Internship in Winter 2027.

## Research Partnerships



We partnered with the Regional Pre-Apprenticeship Collaboration (RPAC) and JTM Construction Inc. to study the recruitment and retention of underrepresented apprentices in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

Worker-driven AI is a collaboration with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Puget Sound Chapter, and Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, to examine trends in how artificial intelligence may be impacting workers across identities, including race and ethnicity.

We are partnering with the City of Seattle Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) and faculty member Marissa Baker on a project to conduct focus groups with women and industry leaders about women's participation in the building trades, with a focus on priority hire.

We are working with the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development (OED) to better understand issues impacting the recruitment and retention of maritime workers in Seattle.

## Reports

**Rights on the Line: Policy and Regulatory Gaps Affecting Migrant Fishers in Washington Ports**




This project examines the working experiences of migrant fishers who have docked or offloaded catch in Washington state ports. It is a mixed-methods study that incorporates policy and regulatory data analysis with interview findings from fishers and a range of subject matter experts on commercial fishing, highly migratory species, human trafficking, regulatory environments, and more.

### How Race, Gender, and Precarious Employment Shape Educational Returns on Depression in Older Adults

*Anjum Hajat, Epidemiology*

This study examines how the mental health benefits of education vary by race, gender, and precarious employment among older adults.

Read Anjum's full report:

### Higher Cancer Mortality in Construction and Transportation

*Marissa Baker, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences*

This study looked at nearly half a million cancer deaths that occurred between 2020 and 2023 among working-age adults in the U.S. by occupation. The research team generated thousands of age-adjusted cancer mortality rates by sex and more than 400 occupations.

Read the full report:

### Using Creative Methods to Evaluate the Practice of Upcycling in Managing Textile Waste

*Ellie Cleasby, Geography*

Textile waste creates a myriad of economic, social and environmental problems, which become concentrated in places like Ghana in the Global South, where large volumes of textile waste are discarded. This report explores the ways in which individuals use upcycling practices to manage and resist these forms of structural inequality.

Read Ellie's full report:

### Precarious Employment and Evictions: Qualitative Study

*Will von Geldern, Public Policy and Governance*

This research shed light on how each dimension of precarious employment can lead to housing insecurity and ultimately to an eviction. Findings also help explain why racial and gender disproportionalities in precarious employment and housing insecurity are closely linked and enduring.

Read Will's full report:

# Research

In 2026, labor research grants were awarded to support projects by UW students and faculty.

## Washington State Labor Research Grants

Awarded to University of Washington faculty and advanced graduate students, the Washington State Labor Grants are designed to support policy-oriented research on aspects of labor directly relevant to policymakers in Washington state. We are pleased to announce four new projects for the 2026-2027 academic year, representing $20,000 in total funding.

**Evaluating Drivers for Safer Cosmetic Alternative Implementation in Nail Salons Through a Perspective-based Occupational Needs Assessment**
Jacob Ngo, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

**"We Can Take It!": Labor, Landscape, and the Organizational Roots of Workforce Inequity in Washington State Parks**
Lindsay Maurer, Sociology

**Who Bears the Cost? Investigating AI-Driven Workforce Displacement in Washington State**
Sana Khalil, Economics and Zaher Kmail, Statistics

**Labor Rights for Domestic Workers in Washington State**
Kim England, Geography

## Graduate Student Research Grants

Each year, the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies awards thousands of dollars in research grants to support graduate students and faculty in Labor Studies. These grants support scholars in any department at the University of Washington whose research focuses on work, workers, and their organizations, and contributes to the interdisciplinary field of labor studies.

**Magonismo and the Chicano Radical Tradition**
Diego Martinez-Lugo, Geography

**Illegalized Bodies: the Architectures of Debilitation, Capture, and the Emergence of Migrant Justice**
Carlos Alberto Yanez Navarro, Law, Societies, and Justice

**Who Cares for the Caregivers? Domestic Workers and the Fight for Minimum Wage**
Anna Nguyen, Political Science

**The Iron(ic) Automated Fish Processing Machine**
Runjie Wang, Cinema and Media Studies

**Korean Laborers During the U.S. Military Occupation (1945-1948)**
Caylee Song, History

## Bergquist Labor Research Grant

This grant honors the memory of the late Charles Bergquist, UW History professor emeritus and former holder of the Harry Bridges Endowed Chair. It is funded through an endowment created by Bergquist and his partner, fellow labor historian Hwasook Nam. Following in the spirit of Bergquist's scholarship, the grant recognizes graduate research that explores labor through an international, global, or transnational lens.

**From Reef to Table: Assessing Strontium-90 in Marshallese Seafood and Implications for Fisher Livelihoods**
Gioia Skeltis-Robinson, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

# Community Partnership

The labor movement is only as strong as the community it inhabits. In 2026, we were proud to partner with these organizations on student internships, research, and events.

American Federation of Musicians, Local 76-493

American Federation of Teachers, Washington

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, Seattle Chapter

Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG)/ A Center for Race and the Economy (ACRE)

BAYAN Washington

Casa Latina

City of Seattle Office of Labor Standards

City of Seattle Office of Economic Development

City of Seattle Finance and Administrative Services

Coalition for Black Trade Unionists, Puget Sound Chapter

Communities for our Colleges / Alliance for a Just Society

Driving Justice

Drivers Union

Fair Work Center/ Working Washington

Familias Unidas por la Justicia

Industrial Workers of the World, Seattle

International Association of Machinists, District Lodge 751

International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines

International Migrants Alliance

International Transport Workers' Federation

International Transport Workers' Federation Seafarers Trust

International Longshore and Warehouse Union

International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 19

International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Washington Area District Council

JTM Construction

Kilusang Mayo Uno

La Resistencia

LELO

Massage Parlor Organizing Project

MLK Labor's People's Organizing Center

OPEIU Local 8

Pacific Northwest Labor History Association

PROTEC17

Puget Sound Sage

Queer the Land

Regional Pre-Apprenticeship Collaboration

Seattle Asian American Film Festival

Seattle Seafarers Center

Seattle University Collective Bargaining Education Project

SEIU 925

SEIU Healthcare 1199NW

Tacoma For All

Teamsters for a Democratic Union

UCLA Labor Center, Young Workers Education Project

UFCW 3000

Union Summer

United Association for Labor Education

United Auto Workers Local 4121

UNITE HERE Local 8

United Farm Workers

Washington State Women's Commission

WeTrain Washington

WFSE Local 1495

Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Washington State Labor Education and Research Center

# University Partners

The labor movement is only as strong as the community it inhabits. At UW, we were proud to partner with these departments and centers on research, teach-ins, and events.

Community Engagement & Leadership Education (CELE) Center

Center for Human Rights

Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology

Department of American Indian Studies

Department of Anthropology

Department of English

Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences

Department of Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies

Department of History

Department of International Studies

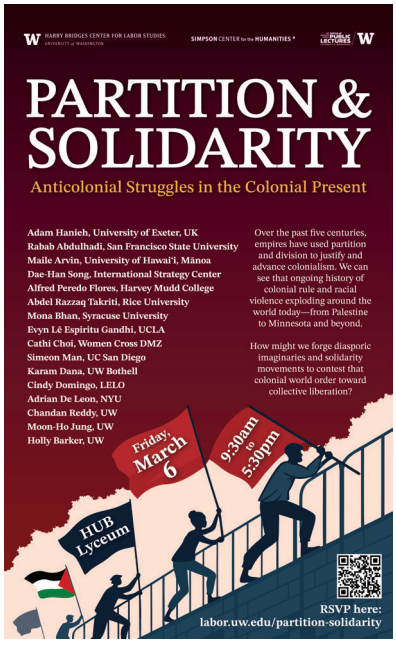
Department of Law, Societies, and Justice

Department of Middle East Studies

Office of Public Lectures

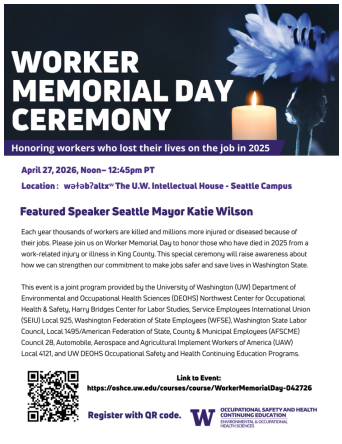
Simpson Center for the Humanities









# Labor Studies Alumni

After graduation, many Labor Studies students go on to careers in labor organizing and advocacy. Below is a list of some of the places our alumni are working.

AFSCME Council 2

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance

City of Seattle, Office of Labor Standards

Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies

International Longshore and Warehouse Union

La Resistencia

Massage Parlor Organizing Project

MLK Labor

National Labor Relations Board

Path2Papers

Puget Sound Sage

Queer the Land

Rooted Community Collective

SEIU Committee of Interns & Residents

SEIU Local 49

SEIU Healthcare 1199NW

SEIU 775

SEIU 925

TeamChild

Teamsters 117

Tobener Ravenscroft LLP

Together Rising as an Environmental Community

UFCW 3000

UNITE HERE Local 8

United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America

United States Department of Labor

Washington State Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals

Washington State Department of Labor and Industries

Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Washington State Labor Education and Research Center

Washington State Legislature















Alumni we saw at the 2026 Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO Convention (left to right, top to bottom): Ligaya Domingo (SEIU Healthcare 1199NW); Eunice How (UNITE HERE! Local 8); Jonathan Gonzalez (Teamsters Local 117); Amy Leong (Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance); Sofia Torres and Andrea Fernandez-Henry (Union Summer); Corina Yballa (Political Director, MLK Labor).






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BRIDGES CENTER FOR LABOR STU


SEIU 925
We
Students
C-O-L-A
UW WORKERS
NEED FAIR PAY

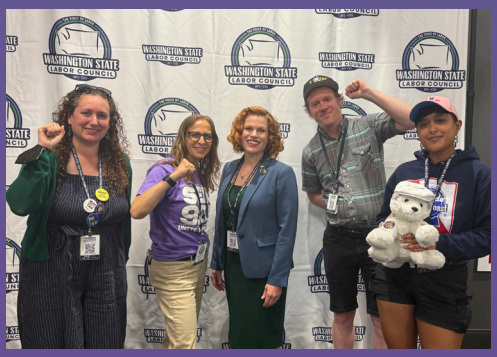



the
HUB








WASHINGTON STATE
LABOR COUNCIL


ON STRIKE
MAKE
THEM
PAY.
ONE
JOB
ENOUGH




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