

PEOPLE

UO LERC looking to fill two faculty vacancies

University of Oregon's Labor Education and Resource Center (LERC) is down two faculty members.

Sherman Henry, who joined LERC's Portland campus in 2016, left in April on a one-year leave of absence to accept a job at Morehouse College in Atlanta—helping to set up a new program in International Comparative Labor Studies. Morehouse is an all-male historically black college with many notable alumni, including Martin Luther King, Jr. For Henry, it's a return to the South; prior to LERC, he spent 20 years as an AFSCME union activist in Miami and taught labor studies at Florida International University.



Sherman Henry

Lina Stepick, who joined LERC's Portland office as a researcher in 2018, also left in April, to take job as senior researcher in community development for the Portland office of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

Their departures leave LERC with just three faculty members: Career instructor Mark Brenner at UO's Portland campus, and professor Gordon Lafer and LERC di-

rector Bob Bussel on the Eugene campus. Bussel says LERC will launch a hiring process this fall and hope to bring on two new faculty as early as Spring 2022.

Oregon Nurses Association leader steps down

Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) announced June 25 that executive director **Sarah Laslett** has resigned in order to support a family member facing serious illness. Laslett came to ONA in March 2020 after having trained members and staff as a faculty member at University of Oregon Labor Education and Resource Center (LERC).

Mayor Wheeler reappoints construction union leader to development agency

By unanimous consent at the June 16 meeting of Portland City Council, Mayor Ted Wheeler reappointed **Willy Myers** to a third three-year term on the Prosper Portland board of commissioners. Myers, a former Sheet Metal Local 16 union organizer, is the executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council, the coordinating body that most Portland-area building trades unions belong to. Prosper, formerly known as the Portland Development Commission, is the City's economic development agency. Myers' new term expires June 30, 2024.

Doctor Organizer Joe Crane



By Don McIntosh

In 2009, Joe Crane was working graveyard on the Frito-Lay snack assembly line in Portland. Twelve years later, age 40, he's national organizing director for a doctors union based in New York City.

Crane caught the union bug at Frito-Lay when he got involved in Bakers Local 364 as a steward,

union officer, and volunteer organizer. In 2011, he took a job as a professional union organizer at Communications Workers America Local 7901, supporting union campaigns at a chain of beauty salons and a prominent nonprofit. In 2015, he was off to work for Washington State Nurses Association, and helped 310 hospital

technicians unionize at PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center in Vancouver. In 2017, he became an organizer for the Union of American Physicians and Dentists (UAPD). Headquartered in California, it's a 2,800-member nationwide affiliate of AFSCME. Last November, Crane helped 120 doctors in Tacoma strike for two days and win N-95 masks, among other gains.

Now, with wife and three young kids, he's relocated from Washougal to New Jersey so that he can lead the organizing efforts of the Doctors Council. A 3,000-member national affiliate of SEIU, the Doctors Council represents unionized doctors in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Illinois.

I caught up with Crane by phone June 23 as he drove across the country, and asked him why doctors are starting to look at unionizing. Here's what he said:

JOE CRANE ON WHY DOCTORS ARE UNIONIZING

The general consensus around doctors organizing is that they want to be able to better advocate for their patients. For the older generation, they used to own their practice. They used to be the ones employing the nurses and the techs. By about three years ago, the majority of doctors were employees. They've lost that autonomy. Now they're being told how they're going to do it, what they're allowed to treat, how they're allowed to treat it. And that's been a breaking

point for the older generation. Then the new generation coming in, they don't want to be told that they can't have families [because they have to work long hours]. They don't want to be told that they can't care for patients. And they're like, 'If a union works for the nurses, it should work for us.'

If doctors unionize, it has the potential to change health care. We need to welcome them into the labor movement, because an injury to one is an injury at all."



REST IN PEACE, BROTHER At the Daimler truck plant in Portland, members of Machinists Lodge 1005 are mourning the loss of a beloved coworker. Khamsith Vorasai, 62, worked in the final chassis department. He died of a heart attack on Father's Day, June 19. Vorasai had been a truck plant employee since August 1992, and was several months away from retirement. Coworkers say he was known for his kind heart and his habit of welcoming everyone with a smile and greeting.



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