



Collaborative Governance: The U.P. School of Labor and Industrial Relations in 2011 and beyond

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“The x x x global economic crisis and the inordinate amount of risk taking or ‘irrational exuberance’ that preceded it underscore the key role played by institutions in societies, in particular those institutions that regulate action. Douglass North defined institutions as the constraints – both formal (rules) and informal (norms) – that structure human interaction and their enforcement. He noted that while institutions are the rules or norms of the game organizations and their leaders or members are the players, and their interface shapes an economy’s institutional evolution.

Rules or norms and players are vital, too, to industrial relations, which for Thomas Kochan is the study of all aspects of people at work, including the behavior of employees and employers who may or may not join unions or organizations, the economics of employment relations, the public policy or legal framework governing employment conditions, and the comparative analysis of different industrial relations systems in different countries and time periods. Notably, John Dunlop also emphasized the industrial relations players or actors and their contexts and ideologies, and the need for rules to resolve tension among them. x x x.” (J.P. Sale, *Preface, Industrial relations as a discipline: Quo Vadis?*, Philippine Journal of Labor and Industrial Relations [2008])

Collaborative governance (rather than competitive governance) is worth putting into action, in and beyond the school. The school's vision and its expertise in theory and practice of labor and industrial/employment relations may be fully realized and channelled via exchange of information, harmonization of activities, sharing of resources, and enhancement of capacities (elements of collaboration identified by A. *Himmelman*) among faculty, administration, REPS, staff, students, trainers, trainees, alumni, and other stakeholders.

- The planned Ph.D. program is a step in the right direction. But the possibility of a bachelor's (or even an associate's) degree program ought to be studied, too (especially for workers who have not taken or completed college). Labor education should be an abiding purpose and program. And linkages with schools in other countries, e.g., Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, School of Labor and Employment Relations at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, must be explored further with quality teaching, academic, administrative, research, publication, and extension outputs as the end in view.

Book Project

The faculty and REPS of SOLAIR should be encouraged to collaborate on the publication of a book on labor and industrial/employment relations by writing/doing research for specific chapters thereof, depending on individual expertise and preference, with the support/assistance of the Graduate Studies Program (GSP), three centers (Centers for Labor & Grassroots Initiatives, Labor Justice and Industry Productivity & Competitiveness) and the Foundation (CLEARED, Inc.).

The book may come in three (3) volumes (or more) and be used in the teaching of graduate/undergraduate courses. It may also be used for training and extension activities. The first volume could come out in 2012, the second in 2013, and the third in 2014. These will strengthen labor and industrial/employment relations as a discipline.

Ph.D. and Undergraduate Programs

- The School of Labor and Employment Relations (SLER) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign offers several degree programs, i.e., Minor in Global Labor Studies, Bachelor of Arts in Labor Studies, Master's and Doctoral programs.
- The Monash University in Melbourne, Australia offers a Master of Work and Employment Relations program.
- The Université Laval in Quebec, Canada has a Department of Industrial Relations that offers a *Baccalauréat en relations industrielles*.

- The pioneering graduate studies program of SOLAIR has been in place since 1975. It is high time for the school and its faculty, administration, REPS, staff, students, alumni, and other stakeholders to start collaborating and putting together not only a Ph.D. program, but also a Bachelor's (or even an Associate's) degree program.
- Taking into account the University process for establishing degree programs, a reasonable timeline for implementation of the Ph.D. program is 2012 (because the process has already started at school level). The next UC meeting is on 12 December 2011.

- The Bachelor's (or Associate's) degree program may take longer since the process has not yet begun. Its implementation by 2014 may be a sound estimate.
- The degree programs ought to include intersections among work, home, family, community, and others, with class analysis or political economy as a basic approach.
- These will strengthen the discipline of labor and industrial/employment relations.

UPD General Education Program

- The school should also start offering general education courses (preparatory to the development of an undergraduate program of its own), e.g., History (study of the development or underdevelopment) of the Philippine labor movement.
- This is a specific concern expressed by Chancellor C.A. Saloma.
- This will involve SOLAIR in mainstream undergraduate teaching and strengthen the discipline.
- UPD General Education Conference (20-21 October 2011).

Labor Education Programs

The development of the school's labor education programs is another reason why linkages with schools in other countries should be explored. Currently, the longest-running labor education program of SOLAIR is the Workers' Institute on Labor Law (WILL). Like the University of Illinois' SLER, SOLAIR ought to consider offering basic and advanced certificate courses in labor studies (covering for example the Philippine labor movement, steward training, collective bargaining, the informal economy, other forms of workers' organizations, stopping discrimination at work,

etc.) that may be customized, depending upon the needs of participants. The possibility of offering them onsite, offsite and online may also be studied. These may involve consolidation of some existing programs. Implementation of these by 2013 (or earlier) is doable through the collaboration of the three centers, among others.

Labor and Social Legislation Reform

- Shaping public policy through research and publication has been an enduring concern of the school. The impact of globalization on public policy (and its environment and stakeholders) remains a fertile ground for labor and industrial/employment relations research. International forums on labor and social legislation reforms ought to be undertaken and/or participated in by the school. These should broaden opportunities for research dissemination.

One such forum, spearheaded by the Philippine Society for Labor and Social Security Law (PSLSSL) based in SOLAIR, is under way and would be held in November 2011. A follow-up conference may be organized by the school in 2014, in collaboration with PSLSSL, the Philippine Industrial Relations Society (another SOLAIR-based organization), alumni, and other stakeholders outside the school.

Faculty, REPS and Staff Welfare



This is not an exhaustive enumeration/
discussion.

To be sure, there are other
opportunities for collaborative
governance in and beyond the school,
which is hard to flesh out for now due
to limits posed by time and space.

Thank you.