

Forum Committee Report

By Satomi, Katie, Christina, Michelle, Shane, Antoinette, and Christine

UCLA forum on Assi workers' campaign held on March 5, 2004, with co-sponsorship by CAPSA.

The forum committee was able to successfully organize a forum because we all worked on each other's strengths and weaknesses. Yet, just as any other committee or work group, the planning and organizing process was bit of a challenge. It was challenging because each of us is highly involved in various organizations on campus with respective meeting times as well. Finding a common free time amongst all of us was trying at first. However, Michelle patiently waited for our availabilities and found a free day and time for everyone to meet weekly. Thus, we met late nights each week to plan and organize for the forum.

It was in the first meeting where we each threw out ideas for the forum, which eventually set the skeleton for the rest of our follow-up meetings. It was in the first meeting that we decided to work with CAPSA, contact speakers, and find a room. The meetings thereafter were mainly to go into detail of each program of the forum and handle logistics.

Along the way, we also found it challenging to find a room conducive for our programming. We knew we did not want a lecture hall because we wanted our forum to be interactive and more personal. It was also challenging to find a room because the rooms we preferred were booked. And as we neared our forum date, each of us were assigned to inquire about rooms in different areas such as Kerchoff, Ackerman, ORL, and lecture halls.

In addition, as we worked with CAPSA, we found it imperative to first set out expectations for one another and to establish what type of roles we each can play. This was a bit of challenge for us at first as well because we relied on relayed messages, emails and reports. It also took some time to finalize our agenda because we had to make sure that both the forum committee and CAPSA were satisfied with it. We had to constantly question whether or not certain aspects were relevant or as important as others. We realized we had to cut some of our ideas out due to time, so we again had to prioritize or question what it was we wanted our target audience to gain from, which brings up another point. We first had to decide who our target population was in order to cater our program for that particular group.

And finally, once all the logistics were set, in terms of room, speakers, and agenda, we went ahead and volunteered for parts that helped us develop our leadership skill. CAPSA and forum committee members were paired up for each section of the forum and was responsible to set aside their own subcommittee meetings, on top of our weekly committee meetings. Consistent communication was achieved through emails, phone calls, and weekly meetings.

Overall, these challenges were a blessing because it helped us all work together and discipline ourselves in being patient and persistent! Most importantly, throughout the process, we were genuinely supportive, understanding, patient, and encouraging of one another, which helped us

carry out our work more effectively. These genuine virtues that we carried in our committee was our greatest strength, which helped us to eventually overcome our challenges.

Katie Li

1. Through my work on the project of my committee, I learned that the support of UCLA students for immigrant workers' campaigns for justice is important because there is a power in numbers. Showing up to rallies, showing support really energizes a crowd that has been fighting for a long time. UCLA students can offer new ideas, new energy and a huge sense of support for immigrant workers.
2. In my committee, I worked on developing a new leadership skill of listening to others by going to CAPSA meetings and trying to coordinate others' ideas with my own. I tried not to dominate discussion, and tried to use everyone's talents and ideas into the final project. I also tried to ask more questions, allowing others to formulate their own responses, rather than just telling them mine.
3. In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skills by encouraging them to take on roles that they never would have wanted to take on. For instance, I was very proud that Shane did the hosting for the forum night and encouraged him as best as I could. I also helped others develop tools for endorsing campaigns and encouraged others to take lead roles in their sections.
4. I also helped the work of the class as a whole by making a presentation to the following campus groups and classes about the Assi campaign. I helped to present the information to the AAS 130 Chinese American Experience and helped in giving the presentation to the ACA general membership. ACA became an endorser of the campaign.

Shane Yoon

1. Through my work on the project of my committee, I learned that the support of UCLA students for immigrant workers' campaigns for justice is important because students are a valuable resource to the campaign. Students have two very important things which can aid in the campaign for labor issues, which are time and resources. Students do not work 40 hours a week and can do many things that the workers cannot do as they are busy supporting their families. Also, UCLA students have great access to resources such as professors, theories, and classes which they can in turn enlighten the workers.
2. In my committee, I worked on developing a new leadership skill by preparing myself for public speaking. I was actually the MC for the forum held on March 1, 2004. It wasn't so much that I needed help with my public speaking, but I wanted to work on planning for my public speaking duties. I was able to do this through my forum group and got to practice it.
3. In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skills by seeing what they needed to work on and actually applying it. For instance, a lot of my group members were overachievers in which they loved to do everything and be in total control of the project.

They wanted to work on delegating responsibilities and letting others help out. I was able to volunteer myself for various tasks and helped them to lighten their workload. I took the initiative in taking charge of certain things.

4. I also helped the work of the class as a whole by making a presentation to the following campus groups and classes about the Assi campaign. I was able to educate my girlfriend and my family members in terms of the ongoing events at Assi. A lot of the classes I was in for winter quarter were already taken by other members of the class. However, I was able to get some of my friends to come to the picket and help in stopping the labor issues. I mainly focused on friends and family as my primary targets of making them become knowledgeable. Hopefully, I will take everything I have learned in this class and pass on the knowledge to other people I meet in the future.

Christina Kaoh

1. Through my work on the project of my committee, I learned that the support of UCLA students for immigrant workers' campaigns for justice is important because the capitalist system gives us credibility and resources to be involved in campaigns like these. The system that creates the inequalities and exploitation that we are trying to correct and eliminate is actually the system that legitimizes our actions and gives us power. Immigrants are the backbone of society, the hidden workforce, the basis of our economy, and because we share similar histories with them, because they are our families, our friends, ourselves, we need to ensure that their voices are heard.

2. In my committee, I worked on developing a new leadership skill, critical evaluation, by questioning how successful we will be by taking one approach, offering other solutions that may or may not be better than the current one, and questioning how effective we will be. I think I offered my input a lot, just to question whether what we were doing was the best thing, not because I think I have a better solution, but because I am always so unsure about what might be best so I have to ask.

3. In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skills by encouraging words of support and my help. I have been able to do develop because I had the strong support of people around me, so I know how important that is when all you do is doubt yourself. I hope I helped encourage my classmates because each of them is very capable.

4. I also helped the work of the class as a whole by making a presentation to the following campus groups and classes about the Assi campaign: Social Justice Alliance, United Students Against Sweatshops, Immigrant Rights Coalition, DREAM Act forum. I gained the endorsement of the following groups United Students Against Sweatshops, Social Justice Alliance, Conciencia Libre, APALA.

Michelle Teng

Through my work on the forum committee, I learned that the support of UCLA students for immigrant worker's campaign for justice is important because their struggles are tied in with our struggles as minorities. Also, because we are privileged as college students – we have the time and resources to help support a cause, and we can provide legitimacy for a campaign. In the forum committee, the leadership skills I developed were compassion for others and motivation to

actually do something by helping organize the forum and by spreading what is happening in K-town to my friends and family. I tried to work on my laziness by becoming active in helping organize our meetings and emailing updates and information within our group. In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skill by contributing my ideas, but also being flexible and letting others carry out their vision on different parts of the forum. Due to my work schedule, I actually didn't have a chance to make a presentation to any classes or campus groups, but I sent out emails to my friends and members of Asian American Christian Fellowship, and I brought four friends not actively involved in the Assi Campaign to the Forum.

Antoinette Reyes

1. Through my work on the project of my committee, I learned that the support of UCLA students for immigrant workers' campaigns for justice is important because it declares in one voice that the workers are not alone in this fight. Many of these campaigns are long and drawn out and require an abundant amount of stamina and strength. The workers, no matter how devoted, can not keep on fighting unless they have the support of their communities. The UCLA community can provide this support in many different and effective ways — they provide resources, morale, and experiences that can improve and expand the movement. In addition, workers are the foundation of society—they provide the services that we take for granted. It is our responsibility to ensure that they are given the respect that they deserve.

2. In my committee, I worked on developing a new leadership skill by participating in organizing work. At first, I noted one of my weaknesses to be in writing or drafting proposals. Unfortunately, I was not able to develop that skill. However, through my work in this committee I was able to find weaknesses I did not know I had and, in turn, improve upon those. I gained confidence in my abilities to present information to people. Instead of simply talking about the issues, I was able to act upon them. Before this committee, I would find myself wavering between stepping up and staying quiet. After this experience, I feel I could step in even though I may not be completely prepared.

3. In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their leadership skills by identifying what they are and enriching them. In addition, I also gave them encouragement and advice when dealing with an activity that was meant to address their weaknesses. All of these were achieved by asking for endorsements, coordinating with other groups, working on getting supplies, asking for everybody's input and allowing everyone to have a hand in the creation of the forum.

4. I also helped the work of the class as a whole by making a presentation to the Student Initiated Outreach Committee. I also emailed and talked to many of my friends who have graduated or attend other schools (i.e., Community Colleges and other UCs) of the forum. I gained the endorsement of the SIOC.

Christine Corpus

1. Through my work on the project of my committee, I learned that the support of UCLA students for immigrant workers' campaigns for justice is important because it boosts the morale in the longwinded struggle for justice. I feel that after awhile, as the struggle continues, the worker is tired, yet he/she persists. But, with the support of others, especially the students, a

sense of energy and hope is rejuvenated. I saw how thankful the worker was when she was given the opportunity to share her story in the forum. It is helpful to know that this is not just her struggle, or just the workers' struggle, but everyone is affected and connected to the struggle. In addition, as students of such a prestigious school, we can also offer resources and educate others on the campaign.

2. In my committee, I worked on developing a new leadership skill of actually taking a step back to listen and to participate, rather than being the main facilitator or initiator of every committee meeting. One of the realizations I had from this committee is that I am almost always the assumed or appointed main facilitator or MC for the group, and almost always, I take on the role. This time around, I found it very interesting to play the other role of listening and participating once someone else initiates or facilitates a meeting.

3. In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skills by constantly reinforcing their confidence by words of encouragement, and suggesting any strategies or ideas I learned from past experiences that maybe each person can also find useful as it has for me.

4. I also helped the work of the class as a whole by making a presentation to the following campus groups and classes about the Assi campaign: Kappa Psi Epsilon, Pilipino Recruitment Enrichment Program, and I took my friend, Chris Aquino to the K-Town tour. I gained the endorsement of PREP and KYE. Chris Aquino to this day actually shares the knowledge he learned about the Assi campaign to his five other roommates.