Picket Committee Report

By Grace Chen, Jasmine Cheung, Todd Honma, Ryotaro Isobe, Hanna Kim, Linda Lam, Allan Lo, Karyn Okada, and Dawn Omori

UCLA Student Picket at Assi Market in Koreatown
March 5, 2004

The picket committee has worked hard to make sure the March 5 picket and rally are a success. We started by brainstorming at weekly meetings, during which we went over all of the logistics, from outreach to student groups to finding speakers for the rally. Through committee members’ contacts, we spoke to the staff and members of many student organizations, such as the Nikkei Student Union and LASA, about the Assi campaign and our picket. We stayed in constant contact with Cindy Cho from KIWA, who came to UCLA to speak at meetings with us. We coordinated with students from Asian American Studies 197D who are also working on the picket. Some of us designed and distributed flyers on the forum and the picket. Others learned how to write a press release, which we sent to the *Daily Bruin* through the USAC media person, a contact we had through a committee member.

We want the picket to attract attention. We decided to create a 3’ by 15’ banner, which we will later give to KIWA, on which supporters will paint their handprints on the day of the picket. We bought (or coordinated with Ali) the supplies necessary for this and for the picket signs and badges we made at our work party on February 26.

With some help from Cindy, we created our program. We lined up speakers and student group representatives to make solidarity statements at the rally. We made sure that everything was taken care of, including the sound system, contact with the police, a committee member to talk to media at the picket, and what to do in case of rain. Many of us have volunteered to do security at the picket, which means making sure the picketers stay within the law but are not intimidated by Assi’s security workers. We also coordinated rides for the class as well as for personal networks, members of student organizations, and other students.

Allan Lo

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' support from an elite college would definitely empower workers to fight for their justice.

In my committee, I worked on developing a new leadership skill, methods of organizing and mobilizing, by learning from Toni Osumi and Alisa Delacruz. Their creativity and inspiration have great impact on us as new students in labor movement.

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 Market Champaign: Professor John Kao. I gained the endorsement of the Asian American Studies (Professor John Kao). I was able to speak in class and invite students to the event.
Dawn Omori
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 as students with immigrant backgrounds, and students of higher education, we are connected to the plight of immigrant workers. As students with the privilege of attending institutions of higher education, we have resources for educating, organizing, and mobilizing other students and communities in campaigns for justice.

In my committee, I worked on developing a new leadership skill, methods of organizing and mobilizing, by learning to identify core and secondary groups to mobilize. With this knowledge, I am now able to identify groups to target for mobilization. I also learned methods of organizing, such as identifying individuals who are interested in participating in activities such as the picket and rally, and using follow up methods such as email and call outs. In the beginning of the quarter, I stated that I wanted to learn better ways of organizing and mobilizing individuals for a cause. I think I definitely learned a couple new ways of mobilizing and organizing from this class.

In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skills by supporting and allowing each other to choose the tasks that we were interested in working on.

I also helped the work of the class as a whole by making presentations about the Assi campaign to Asian American Studies 20 with Delphina and the Nikkei Student Union. I gained the endorsement of the Nikkei Student Union (with the help of a fellow NSU staffer who is an intern at KIWA).

Grace Chen
UCLA student support is important for the immigrant workers campaign for justice because we are able to help make a difference through mobility. As a body of students, we are able to outreach to those unaware of the situation and at the same time build activism amongst ourselves and throughout our community to have our voices and immigrant worker’s heard.

I was able to use my new leadership skill for the committee by presenting in public in front of the organization LASA in order to get endorsements for the picket line. I gave a brief summary of what the Assi campaign is fighting for and why they have been treated inadequately.

At the same time I helped my classmates develop new leadership skills by building friendships because some of them wanted to develop listening skills and so that gave me a chance to talk. At the same time many of us wanted to develop public speaking skills and we all had equally a chance to speak our opinions by giving our input during our weekly meetings. I also helped out Karyn’s organization skill because I was able to be a resource in supplying a quote in the press release. I was helpful for Todd because he wanted to facilitate the meeting place by providing the graduate lounge so that we can have somewhere to sit and discuss our picket line.

Jasmine Cheung
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 have access to
resources that immigrant workers may not, such as time and a broader historical perspective. Students’ voices can be powerful, especially if there are many of us, because of our position in society. In addition, students are members of the community, and community support is essential in any workers’ campaigns for justice.

In my committee, I worked on developing my public speaking skills by speaking up more. I helped lead committee meetings and spoke in front of the class during committee updates. I also made a classroom announcement and helped get everyone organized at the beginning of our work party.

In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skills by encouraging them in their efforts to take on tasks that would challenge them. My committee was very supportive, and for each task we had to do, there was always someone willing to give it a try, even if she or he had no previous experience.

I also helped the work of the class as a whole by making a presentation about the Assi campaign to Asian American Studies 197D. I gained the endorsement of the Bruin Swing Dance Club.

Karyn Okada
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 learning involves more than simply sitting in class and remembering facts. Asian American Studies, in particular, was founded on a grassroots doctrine, and as students of this subject, it is vital that we not only learn the hard facts, but also gain first hand experience in the movement.

In my committee, I worked on developing a new leadership skill (public speaking) by standing up in front of the class to share my homework assignments on several occasions. I also gained experience in public speaking by attending an Asian American Studies class to educate students about the Assi Market issue, and to tell about our class’ involvement in the campaign. Through this, I encouraged others to come out to our class forum and picket line / rally, as well as to support the Assi workers in general. I have also volunteered to speak to a group of high school students about the Assi Market campaign on the day of the picket line, hopefully gaining more public speaking experience and developing this new skill.

In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skills by consulting the sheet that recorded everyone’s desired leadership skills. Keeping this in mind, I tried to encourage and give support others when they practiced developing this new skill.

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: Asian American Studies 107A (Ethnocommunications). I also signed up to gain endorsement from / give a presentation to UCLA Nikkei Student Union (NSU), yet when I went to do this, I found that someone (from the other Asian American Studies class who is also working on the picket line) had already gained their endorsement. Thus, I worked instead on talking about the issue to individuals in NSU on a more personal basis.
**Linda Lam**
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 support of UCLA students challenges the narrow perception that immigrant worker’s issues just affect immigrant workers. Immigrant workers campaigns for justice are intertwined with human rights, racial and economic justice, and other local and global issues.

In my committee, I worked on developing a new leadership skill of confidence in writing by writing and organizing a resolution to be passed by USAC. It was my first time to be the initiator of a resolution. I used the factsheets that were handed out with the endorsement cards and using past resolutions as guides. However, it was a difficult task because I still had to organize and write it in resolution format and made sure it flowed. Fortunately, I had classmates and non-classmates who were very familiar with the campaign proofread and provide suggestions.

In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skills by knowing the new leadership skills that my committee members wanted to work on and then acknowledging opportunities where a specific leadership skill could be developed. Furthermore, I helped my classmates develop their new leadership skill by supporting my committee members in their work so that they did not feel they had to do it single handedly.

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: Chicanos/Latinos for Community Medicine, Asian Pacific Coalition, Association of Chinese Americans, MEChA, Asian Pacific American Leadership Development Project. I gained the endorsement of the following groups: USAC.

**Hanna Kim**
I learned that the support of UCLA students for immigrant workers’ campaigns for justice is important because while the community may benefit from services that the students provide, ultimately students gain the most from working and learning with the community. Too much focus has been placed on traditional “academic” education and getting a degree. By actively participating in the lives of immigrant workers, students learn the importance of creating and affecting history.

In my committee, I worked on developing public speaking skills.

In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skill by having them present the campaign at student organizations, working collectively for ideas and strategies, making flyers, preparing materials and programs for the work party, educational forum and picket line and rally.

I also helped the work of the class as a whole by making presentations about the Assi campaign to Asian American Studies 197D, LASA, Apostolos Campus Ministries, AAS Graduate Students Association (AASGSA), and ACA. I gained the endorsement of LASA and AASGSA.

**Ryo Isobe**
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 immigrant workers need all the support they can get, and it is also important for us to understand the struggles of immigrants since our parents or grandparents went through similar struggles.

In my committee, I worked on developing a new leadership skill by making announcements about the picket and forum in other classes.

I also helped the work of the class as a whole by making a presentation about the Assi campaign to Asian American Studies M129A (Prof. Kagawa-Singer). I am also in the process of getting an endorsement from J-town Voice.

Todd Honma

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 education cannot be confined to just the classroom or the campus. We must make our education more meaningful and relevant to our lives by engaging in the communities within which we live, and work together with other members of our society, educating each other and reaching toward a collective goal of social justice. By participating in the picket committee, I’ve learned the importance of collaborating with community organizations such as KIWA and the necessity of learning from the struggles of the Assi supermarket workers.

In my committee, I worked on developing my facilitation and outreach skills by helping to schedule dates and locations of meetings and trying to keep our meetings focused on the issues at hand. Throughout the quarter I have also willingly tried to "step outside my comfort zone" so as to challenge myself and my abilities to communicate and outreach to different types of people.

In my committee, I helped each of my classmates develop their new leadership skills by encouraging them to consider making public speaking appearances (since a number of the members of the picket committee indicated that they wanted to develop their public speaking skills).

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: Pilipino American Graduate Students Association and Activist Librarians and Educators. I gained the endorsement of the following groups: Pilipino American Graduate Students Association and Activist Librarians and Educators. Additionally, as a TA for the course Asian American Studies 20: Contemporary Asian American Communities, I encouraged my students to attend the educational forum and the picket/rally as a way to earn extra credit.