

UNC Center on Poverty, Work and Opportunity
November 22, 2005
Strategies for Improving the Wages and
Working Conditions of Low-Wage Workers

Moderator – Arne Kalleberg, *UNC, Dept. of Sociology*

Arne L. Kalleberg is a Kenan Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Senior Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He received his B.A. from Brooklyn College in 1971 and his M.S. (1972) and Ph.D. (1975) from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He was a Professor of Sociology at Indiana University—Bloomington before joining the faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill in 1986. He served as Chair of the Department of Sociology from 1990-2000.

He has published over 100 articles and chapters and eight books on topics related to the sociology of work, organizations, occupations and industries, labor markets, and social stratification. He is currently writing a book on changes in work and job quality in the United States and another book on the ways in which jobs and people are “mismatched”. He is also working on projects that study the mobility of workers out of low wage jobs in the United States and the changing nature of employment relations in the United States and Norway. His research has been supported by the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the Japan Foundation, and the Norwegian Research Council.

John Sweeney, *American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations*

Sweeney was first elected president of the AFL-CIO in 1995. At the time of his election, Sweeney was serving as president of the Service Employees International Union, which grew from 625,000 to 1.1 million members during the 15 years of his leadership. He was a vice president of the AFL-CIO and chair of the AFL-CIO Executive Council committees on Health Care and Organizing and Field Services. He was elected SEIU president in 1980.

In May 2000, Sweeney was also elected president of the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC), an international organization with consultative status at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). TUAC’s affiliates represent some 70 million workers and include over 55 national trade union centers in the 29 countries in the OECD. TUAC coordinates worker and union input to the G8 economic summits.

Sweeney’s first job in the labor movement was with the International Ladies’ Garment Workers, which later merged with the Clothing and Textile Workers Union. He joined SEIU Local 32B in New York City in 1961 as a union representative. Sweeney was elected president of Local 32B in 1976 and led two citywide strikes of apartment maintenance workers during the 1970’s.

In 1996 he authored *America Needs A Raise, Fighting for Economic Security and Social Justice*, published by Houghton-Mifflin. He co-authored *Solutions for the New Work Force* in 1989 and co-edited the UNA-USA Economic Policy Council’s *Family and Work: Bridging the Gap* in 1987. He graduated from Iona College in New Rochelle, N.Y. with a degree in economics.

Annette Bernhardt, *New York University School of Law – Brennan Center for Justice*

Dr. Bernhardt is currently the Deputy Director of the Poverty Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law. A leading expert on low-wage labor markets, Dr. Bernhardt provides

policy analysis and research for the Center's work on economic justice issues. Her focus is on helping national and local efforts to develop viable responses to the changing nature of work in this country, with particular emphasis on the low-wage service sector. Dr. Bernhardt has organized several conferences on these topics, presented at numerous sociology and economics meetings, and published in the *American Journal of Sociology*, the *American Sociological Review*, and the *Journal of Labor Economics*, among others.

She was lead author of *Divergent Paths: Economic Mobility in the New American Labor Market*, which documented for the first time the marked deterioration in upward mobility over the past three decades, and which won the Richard A. Lester Prize for the Outstanding Book in Labor Economics and Industrial Relations in 2002. Most recently, she co-edited *Low-Wage America: How Employers are Reshaping Opportunity in the Workplace*. Dr. Bernhardt received her Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago in 1993.

Eduardo Peña, *United Commercial Food Workers*

Eduardo Peña is the International Representative of United Food and Commercial Workers and the Staff Coordinator for the Justice for Smithfield Workers Campaign. He began his career with UFCW in 1998 with the Local 481 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and has been an organizer for the Smithfield Campaign since December of 2002. He oversees the daily work of the campaign in Tarheel, NC.

Melanie Stratton, *UNC-Chapel Hill, Economics and International Studies Undergraduate*

Stratton is a junior at UNC majoring in Economics and International Studies. She is a governing board member of the Workers Rights Consortium, an agency which monitors conduct violations at UNC to ensure that university employees are being afforded their rights. In addition she has also researched working conditions at an export processing zone that produced Carolina baseball hats in the Dominican Republic in 2003. She has served as the International Solidarity Coordinator for United Students Against Sweatshops and she is a member of Student Action with Workers and the university licensing oversight committee.