

Moira Dolan

It is never too late to return to school

Did you ever think about going back to school? If you are a union activist, or thinking about becoming an activist, you can consider the possibility of entering into labor education institutions with tuition help from DC 37.

I recently graduated with a master's degree in Labor Relations from CUNY's Joseph S. Murphy Institute for Worker Education at the college's School of Professional Studies. The SPS programs at CUNY are designed for working people giving college or graduate school a second look.

I am so fortunate that DC 37 helped pay for my class credits. The DC 37 Education Fund, which has helped thousands of students like me for more than 40 years, reimburses members up to \$800 per year as long as academic standards are maintained — which is an incentive to work hard and do the research. There is also a labor diversity scholarship program available that is even more gener-

ous than the union reimbursement program.

Because of my work in the DC 37 Research and Negotiations Dept. the Labor Studies program at CUNY was a perfect fit. The classes are held in the evening at the West 43rd St. location, close to all subway lines. The faculty is an excellent mix of union activists and noted labor researchers.

Some of my favorite teachers included Ed Ott, who taught public sector and public policy, and who told many fascinating anecdotes from the past; Ruth Milkman, who taught labor and immigration; Steve Jenkins, from SEIU 32 B-J, who instructed us on corporate research methods, and Josh Freeman, who taught labor history.

As compelling as these educators were, my fellow students were even more interesting. Through them, I got to know what it's like to work

at other unions — or be represented by other unions.

In Milkman's class on labor and immigration, we shared personal stories about how global cultures impact the workplace. In labor history, we did dramatic readings of famous labor speeches, learning the historical context and meaning of the discourse. I met shop stewards, rank-and-file members and officers from multiple unions.

We supported each other in study groups, worked together on small projects and talked about issues in online discussion boards. I worked much harder in this program than I did back in my undergraduate years. My experience in the program has become valuable in my union work as a negotiator and researcher.

The application process for the tuition benefit is not difficult, and in my experience with the Murphy Institute gave me educational choices.

For example, you can begin working toward a certificate in Labor Studies and then choose to move on to a graduate degree. In addition to Labor Studies, the SPS school at CUNY offers career-related programs in Urban Studies, Disability Studies, Health Information Management and others, at various locations in or near midtown Manhattan.

For more information about the DC 37 Education Fund and its college assistance programs, please call 212-815-1700 or go to the benefits section on the DC 37 website. If you want more information about the CUNY Murphy Institute programs, visit its section on the CUNY website.

DC 37 also is home to the College of New Rochelle School of New Resources, where you can earn an undergraduate degree.

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