



DPE President's Report

June 1, 2018 – May 31, 2019

Driven by DPE's central purpose – to bring unions of professionals together – this year was approached with a focus on organizing and member engagement. As the number of professionals joining unions continues to rise and support for unions grows, DPE charges forward with a sense of urgency to help affiliates grow the number of union professionals and strengthen the commitment current members have to their union.

To harness organizing potential, DPE continued to share its organizing resources and guides at affiliate meetings, conventions, and in response to individual requests. We continued to advance the work begun last year to help affiliates reach the unorganized utilizing targeted advertising campaigns. Reaching nonunion professionals with messages that demonstrate the value of being a union member will likely guide DPE's work for years to come.

Effective member engagement is foundational to union strength. The pathways to member engagement are as diverse as professionals themselves, making the sharing of varied experiences invaluable. While DPE provided individual assistance to affiliates seeking to strengthen member engagement, it also hosted a roundtable attended by 14 affiliates to share strategies and challenges. These gatherings strengthen DPE's affiliate unions and create a stronger labor movement.

Organizing and member engagement were by no means the exclusive focus of DPE's work this year. DPE worked tirelessly throughout the year to demonstrate to each of its affiliates the value derived from their membership. DPE proactively seeks to understand the needs of its affiliates and to keep affiliates informed about how their trade department is working to advance their interests. To achieve this, I met individually with many affiliates and made presentations at three affiliate board meetings. To keep affiliates apprised of DPE's activities, I distribute monthly activity reports to the DPE General Board and key staff and leaders.

DPE's work this past year is discussed in more detail under these headings:

- » Transitions
- » Support for Affiliate Organizing
- » Communications and Organizing Campaigns
- » Arts, Entertainment, and Media Industries
- » Legislation and Policy

- » Programs
- » Communications
- » Research
- » In Memoriam

TRANSITIONS

The DPE Executive Committee unanimously elected American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Secretary-Treasurer Lorretta Johnson to be DPE's treasurer on March 28, 2019. The treasurer position became vacant when Mary Cathryn Ricker resigned as DPE's treasurer upon her nomination to be Minnesota's commissioner of education. Ms. Johnson was elected as AFT's secretary-treasurer in July 2011, and previously served as AFT Executive Vice President. She has been a union leader throughout her 30-plus year career in public education.

DPE thanks Mary Cathryn Ricker for her service to our department, and wishes her the best of luck in her new role.

SUPPORT FOR AFFILIATE ORGANIZING

DPE remains focused on helping our affiliates grow in number and strength. The department offers its affiliates a suite of organizing resources that cover organizing professionals, internal organizing, new hire orientations, and survey data on the attitudes of professionals toward unions. DPE also conducts customizable trainings and workshops at affiliates' conventions, conferences, and meetings that draw from these resources. Since the last DPE General Board meeting, DPE made presentations at three affiliates' gatherings.

In June 2018, DPE Assistant to the President Michael Wasser traveled to the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers' (IFPTE) 59th Constitutional Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Wasser led a training for IFPTE's convention delegates about how continuous member engagement can build stronger local unions. As part of the training, Wasser also moderated a panel discussion with IFPTE local leaders on effective member engagement strategies.

In July 2018, DPE joined the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) at its leadership conference in New York, New York, where Wasser presented best practices for engaging professionals and advised AGMA's leaders on how they could adapt member engagement strategies for their unique membership. Subsequently, DPE worked with AGMA leaders and staff to develop materials for new membership orientations and other member engagement needs.

In August 2018, DPE traveled to Las Vegas, Nevada, to participate in the American Federation of Government Employees' 41st National Convention. There, Wasser maintained a booth that offered DPE organizing materials geared toward professionals in the federal sector.



COMMUNICATIONS AND ORGANIZING CAMPAIGNS

DPE's 2016 attitudinal survey of nonunion professionals revealed high levels of support for unions. Despite this high level of support, nonunion professionals were not reaching out to unions at rates that matched their stated levels of interest. In early 2018, DPE sought a way to actively reach nonunion professionals with positive union messages by advertising on various social media channels and Google.

DPE's first campaign, launched in February 2018, saw DPE partner with the Nonprofit Professional Employees Union (NPEU), formerly IFPTE Local 70, a small union of nonprofit professionals, mostly in Washington, D.C. As part of the campaign, DPE worked with NPEU on a rebranding effort, including a new name, logo, and website so nonprofit professionals could see themselves in the union. DPE also worked with NPEU throughout the campaign to raise the union's profile via press hits by reaching out to the media, writing blog posts about contract gains for current NPEU members, posting graphics and other content to NPEU's social media accounts, and paying for advertising on social media platforms to get content in front of potential members.

Over the course of the campaign, which ran through September 2018, NPEU garnered approximately 70 organizing leads at a cost of \$2,566. Prior to DPE collaborating with NPEU on the communications and organizing campaign, NPEU was receiving about one organizing lead every two months. Two leads generated during the campaign resulted in voluntary recognition.

Since the conclusion of the paid advertising portion of the campaign, NPEU has continued to receive at least 10 quality organizing leads every month, reaching well over 200 leads from February 2018 through May 2019.

DPE is now applying the lessons learned from its initial communications and organizing campaign to assist other affiliates in generating organizing leads using similar communications tactics.

Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA)

In December 2018, DPE began assisting UWUA with its ongoing campaign to organize energy/pipeline inspectors. Similar to the NPEU campaign, DPE worked with UWUA to rebrand the campaign as Energy/Pipeline Inspectors United and created a new logo. DPE also produced campaign messaging, built an organizing-focused website, developed a survey tool, created digital ads to run on social media platforms, and drafted blog posts describing the union difference for energy/pipeline inspectors. From January 2019 through May 2019, the new Energy/Pipeline Inspectors United website had 2,879 unique visitors. During this same time, UWUA received 132 website inquiries, of which 81 were quality organizing leads and 45 came from within the states (Ohio and Texas) that UWUA targeted with Facebook and Google Search Network ads. DPE continues to partner with UWUA on its energy/pipeline inspector organizing campaign.



Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU)

In February 2019, DPE began strategizing with OPEIU on its organizing campaign of direct service nonprofit professionals. This campaign, publicly launched in April 2019, aims to attract nonprofit professionals in targeted cities to existing OPEIU locals through a project called Nonprofit Employees United. DPE is supporting OPEIU by creating social media content, developing advertising for Facebook and Google, and engaging current OPEIU nonprofit professionals in the campaign.

United Steelworkers (USW)

In March 2019, DPE started working with USW to plan for an online communications-focused campaign to generate organizing leads among the professionals in Pittsburgh's technology industry. Pittsburgh's tech industry currently employs over 50,000 professionals and has experienced significant growth over the last five years. This campaign launched on May 21st and is expected to run with paid advertising for six months.



ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, AND MEDIA INDUSTRIES

The Arts, Entertainment, and Media Industry Coordinating Committee (AEMI) is one facet of DPE's role to connect affiliates. The AEMI is a forum for collaboration among 12 DPE affiliate unions with members who work in the arts, entertainment, and media industries. Through the AEMI, these 12 unions coordinate and connect on issues pertaining to public policy, bargaining with common employers, and workplace improvement.

Joint Action on Workplace Harassment

At the December 2018 AEMI meeting, unions committed to taking joint action to combat workplace harassment. DPE is helping to coordinate this joint action, which has included sharing training resources, codes of conduct, and best practices. The joint action strengthens the individual efforts that each AEMI union is already doing to continue improving their industries. DPE commemorated the December 2018 meeting in a press statement that was picked up by numerous and varied media outlets, ranging from *DEADLINE* to *Rolling Stone*. DPE and the AEMI unions are making joint action on workplace harassment a prominent agenda item at subsequent AEMI meetings to ensure continued progress.

Trade

DPE regularly works with affected affiliates in the arts and entertainment industries to educate policy makers and the public on the importance of intellectual property protections for ensuring creative professionals can earn fair wages and benefits. In September 2018, DPE and four AEMI unions met with staff from the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to advocate for strong intellectual property protections for creative professionals in any renegotiated North

American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). While DPE viewed the meeting as a productive conversation, the Trump administration agreed to a new NAFTA (also known as the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement) that includes inadequate safe harbor provisions in the intellectual property chapter. DPE will continue to coordinate with interested AEMI unions on advocating for improvements to the new NAFTA's intellectual property provisions as the trade agreement comes before Congress for ratification.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

DPE monitors federal policy developments and coordinates activities in order to advance the interests of affiliates and professionals. Immigration and arts funding remained active policy fronts for DPE in the last year. DPE also contributed to efforts to improve intellectual property protections for creative professionals and pass legislation that would provide permanent protections for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries. DPE regularly participated in the AFL-CIO's legislative directors meetings and was involved in strategic coalition spaces, serving as extra eyes and ears for its affiliates, particularly those based outside Washington, D.C.

O and P Visas

In the last year, DPE saw positive results from its continued advocacy to reform the O and P visa adjudication process. DPE affiliates in the arts and entertainment industries serve as advisors in the O and P visa adjudication process, and they have long sought reforms that address fraud, abuse, and misuse of the labor union consultation process required of O and P visa petitioners. In September 2018, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that labor unions can directly send consultation letters to USCIS in instances when unions are not providing a letter that is favorable to an O-1 or O-2 nonimmigrant visa petitioner. USCIS extended this policy to the P visa program in February 2019.

This improvement to the O and P visa adjudication process stems from the March 2018 meeting that DPE convened with then USCIS Director Francis Cissna and affected DPE affiliates. DPE continues to advocate for further reforms that more fully address misuse of the adjudication process.

H-1B and Other High-Skilled Visas

The last year saw the Trump administration propose administrative changes to the selection process for H-1B guest worker visa petitions subject to the yearly cap. Specifically, the administration established an electronic pre-registration process for employers who want to hire H-1B beneficiaries, and changed the order of selecting H-1B visas in a way that increases the odds that more H-1B visas will go to people who graduated from U.S. institutions of higher education with advanced degrees. DPE developed an analysis of the Department of Homeland Security rule for its affiliates and worked with staff of AFT, IFPTE, and USW to understand how



the proposed rule could affect their members who interact with the H-1B program, either as H-1B beneficiaries or professionals in high use industries.

DPE also has been meeting with congressional champions of H-1B and L-1 reform to enhance legislative solutions so that these visa programs work for U.S. professionals and people working on these visas, and not just employers. DPE has also regularly met with members of Congress, particularly freshmen, to educate them on the need for reforms to the high-skilled guest worker visa programs.

Federal Arts Funding

For the second consecutive year, DPE coordinated participation by arts and entertainment unions in Americans for the Arts' Arts Advocacy Day in March 2019. DPE and leaders, members, and staff from seven AEMI unions met with six Senate offices and five House offices, both Democrats and Republicans. In these meetings, DPE and the AEMI union representatives advocated for full federal arts funding, and also made the case for strong intellectual property protections for creative professionals and updating the qualified performing artist tax deduction. The day included direct meetings with Rep. Chellie Pingree, co-chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus; Rep. Judy Chu, co-chair of the Creative Caucus; and Sen. Ben Cardin. DPE also distributed its updated Federal Arts Funding Communications and Advocacy Toolkit, which affiliates are using with their own members.

DPE's coordinated advocacy for full federal arts funding came as the Trump administration once again proposed elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). As of this writing, the U.S. House Appropriations Committee has approved \$167.5 million each for the NEA and NEH in FY 2020, a \$12.5 million increase over the agencies' current funding levels. The House Appropriations Committee also approved \$495 million in advance appropriations for the CPB, which is a \$50 million increase over current funding levels.

PROGRAMS

DPE continued to organize programs on topics important to affiliates. As a follow-up to the April 2018 program on strategies for effective member engagement, DPE brought affiliates together on May 21, 2019 for a roundtable discussion among people who lead or implement member engagement efforts for their unions. This program drew 26 people from 14 DPE affiliate unions. DPE also organized a similar roundtable discussion for the AEMI unions on September 14, 2018. The September 14th roundtable, geared toward the unique circumstances of the industries in which AEMI unions' members' work, drew 15 attendees from eight AEMI unions.



September 14th roundtable attendees

Both the May 21st and September 14th meetings allowed affiliates to share information and resources so they are best equipped to cultivate committed members. The discussion guide created for the programs were developed from conversations with affiliates' staff about the successes and challenges they are having with member engagement. At the request of affiliates, DPE plans to organize future roundtable discussions on member engagement so affiliates can continue learning from each other's experiences, and to workshop engagement approaches with each other.

COMMUNICATIONS

DPE's communications work aims to promote DPE affiliates, their members, and campaigns; reach nonunion professionals in order to communicate the effectiveness of joining together in union; and spread the word about DPE and its work. DPE strives to accomplish these goals by promoting affiliates' work and members, DPE materials, and news stories that feature the organizing and bargaining success of unions of professionals.

Affiliate Website and Social Media Support

In the past year, the DPE communications team has helped affiliates to modernize their approach to communications for organizing and member engagement. As part of this effort, DPE has assisted affiliates and their locals with building websites on the SquareSpace platform. In the past year, DPE worked with the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001 to revamp its website for its Friend of SPEEA network, which allows former members and nonunion aerospace professionals to stay connected with SPEEA. The new Friend of SPEEA website has helped SPEEA in its latest organizing campaign and served to gain more Friend of SPEEA members. DPE also worked with SPEEA to create Friend of SPEEA social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Along the way, DPE trained SPEEA staff on updating the website, using social media, and developing social media strategy.

DPE also worked with American Federation of School Administrators' Oakland local, United Administrators of Oakland Schools (UAOS), to create a website in the past year. The local previously did not have a website, so DPE started from scratch, working with UAOS leadership to develop content for the site. The UAOS website was completed by the time of the Oakland teacher strike, ensuring the local could use it as a tool to communicate with members. DPE also trained UAOS leadership on how to update the website.

Social Media

The @DPEaflcio Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts, and the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO LinkedIn account are essential tools for achieving the department's communications goals. DPE aims to reach the different audiences that use each of these social media platforms to maximize the number of people hearing about DPE and its affiliates.



Highlights of DPE’s social media use in the last year includes promoting the department’s recap of affiliates’ professional organizing victories in 2018, showing support for union professionals during the government shutdown, and publicizing the department’s union-made Super Bowl graphic (pictured right). DPE also helped spread the word about the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Awards ceremony and coordinated 10 affiliates’ promotion of the SAG Awards ceremony on social media.



From June 2018 through May 2019, DPE’s Twitter following grew to 1,117 followers – an increase of about 400 followers from last year. DPE’s tweets made close to 1.14 million impressions, meaning DPE’s tweets were seen over a million times by users on Twitter in the past year. This is an increase of almost 200,000 from last year. The Twitter account is averaging close to 100,000 impressions per month.

DPE’s presence on Facebook also continues to grow. The department’s Facebook page has 273 likes and 307 follows, up from 183 likes and 214 follows about this time last year. DPE’s Instagram account has 179 followers, up from 57 followers last year. DPE’s LinkedIn account has 26 followers.

DPE Website

DPE’s website contains fact sheets on professional union members, information on DPE’s materials and resources, DPE press releases, and other information about unions for professionals and the department. In the past year, DPE’s website saw 354,902 unique page views, an increase from last year’s 295,156 unique page views. DPE’s top performing webpages include DPE’s fact sheets on the safe staffing for nurses (30,043 page views), the benefits of collective bargaining for professionals (6,613 page views), library workers facts and figures (6,137) and recourse for misclassified employees (12,924 page views).

The quantity of web traffic to DPE’s site is not the only thing to highlight—the amount of time spent on the website is also notable. Visitors continue to stay on DPE’s website for relatively long periods of time to read the department’s content. The average time spent on a DPE’s webpage is 4:43 minutes, and visitors spend even more time on a number of the fact sheets.

DPE hosts its blog on Medium.com, and, in the past year, the department’s blog posts have been read over 380 times and viewed even more. The top read DPE blog posts include, “What Today’s Unions Are Doing for Professionals,” which focuses on what professionals have achieved through their union contracts, and “Reaching the Unorganized” about the department’s NPEU campaign.

Media Relations

DPE continues to use traditional media to reach the public with positive stories about unions for professionals. As part of this strategy, DPE develops relationships with reporters, publishes press releases, and pitches news stories to journalists covering relevant beats. DPE issued nine press releases in the past year. In addition, DPE staff are a resource to provide background and other information to reporters writing stories related to unions of professionals and workplace issues affecting professionals. DPE earned 10 press hits in the past year:

- » *DEADLINE*, July 17, 2018, “[Hollywood Unions Oppose Bill That Would Slash Arts & Humanities Funding](#)”
- » *Broadway World*, July 17, 2018, “[Arts And Entertainment Unions Urge House To Oppose Effort To Slash Federal Arts Funding](#)”
- » *Variety*, July 18, 2018, “[House Rejects Proposal to Cut NEA Funding by 15%](#)”
- » *PAPER*, July 18, 2018, “[Congress Votes Against Cutting Arts Budgets](#)”
- » *DEADLINE*, July 18, 2018, “[House Rejects Bill To Slash Funding For Arts & Humanities](#)”
- » *Broadway World*, December 20, 2018, “[Arts, Entertainment, And Media Unions Take Joint Action On Workplace Harassment](#)”
- » *Rolling Stone*, December 20, 2018, “[Entertainment Unions Team to Combat Sexual Harassment](#)”
- » *Variety*, December 20, 2018, “[SAG-AFTRA, DGA, WGA and Other Hollywood Unions Team Up to Fight Sexual Harassment](#)”
- » *DEADLINE*, December 20, 2018, “[Industry Unions Pledge To Share Resources To Combat Sexual Harassment](#)”
- » *Slate*, April 12, 2019, “[The Future of Unions Is White-Collar](#)”

RESEARCH

DPE hired Ethan Miller in October 2018 to work as research and outreach manager. Research projects in the last year were focused on helping affiliates understand emerging new technologies and work structures to prepare for organizing the workplace of the future, and upgrading existing DPE resources.

AFL-CIO Commission on the Future of Work and Unions

At the 2017 AFL-CIO convention, delegates adopted Resolution 5: Commission on the Future of Work and Unions, which established a committee to study the changing nature of work and assess how labor unions should adapt to meet these changes. DPE has been an active participant within the AFL-CIO’s Commission on the Future of Work and Unions, and within the professional sector committee specifically. Ethan Miller played a key role in the professional sector report drafting team, which is now complete and pending final approval from committee members. As part of the commission process, DPE engaged in discussions with key staff from affiliate unions on the impact that changing work environments and technology have on unions



and identified potential initiatives to address these changes head-on. The commission is expected to publish its findings later in 2019.

Presentations

In April 2019, DPE participated in the AFT Nurses and Health Professionals' Professional Issues Conference in Washington, D.C., where DPE's latest research on the importance of safe staffing standards was presented. Alongside Denise Duncan, president of United Nurses Association of California / Union of Health Care Professionals and Julie Pinkham, executive director of the Massachusetts Nurses Association, DPE's presentation underlined the importance of state, local, and worksite campaigns for stronger staffing standards for patients, nurses, and the healthcare system as a whole.



Ethan Miller, DPE; photo courtesy of AFT

Fact Sheets

DPE continues to regularly update its nearly 40 publications that are designed to educate readers about the professional and technical workforce. Recently updated fact sheets include *Intellectual Property Theft: A Threat to Working People and the Economy*, *Safe Staffing: Critical for Patients and Nurses*, and *The Union Difference for Professionals*. Fact sheets are available on the DPE website.

IN MEMORIAM

The last year saw the passing of a labor leader in the DPE family who served his union, profession, and the labor movement with great distinction – Edwin Hill.

Edwin (“Ed”) Hill – President Emeritus of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Hill was a forward-thinking leader who championed programs that allowed IBEW to overcome challenging times and become a stronger union. President Emeritus Hill's decades-long dedication to the labor movement improved the lives of working people.