Dat Phan | Binh Nguyen | Angella Tai

February 20, 2013

Group Project Synopsis: Latino and Asian Pacific Islander Representation in Labor Unions in Silicon Valley

Background: Union membership has been on a decline in the last 50 years despite the growing needs for working families to organize in a post-industrial society. In particular, the growing ethnic and linguistic diversity throughout the nation, and especially in California, has made it particularly difficult to organize workers for wages, working conditions, etc. In Silicon Valley, the hub of innovation and the technological highway, there are many issues of labor inequality through the various electronic, manufacturing, etc. plants that employ workers with entry level skills. We want to explore the combination of union outreach and involvement in the Latino and API communities as well as the growth and engagement of Latino and API community union organizers and leaders.

Research Question: First we will begin by reviewing the history of labor unions in the last fifty years in the United States and then the history of labor unions in Silicon Valley. Recognizing the importance of labor unions that fight for the rights of working families, we are interested in exploring the growth of Latino and API union leaders and representation in labor unions here in Silicon Valley. By studying the importance of Latino and API historical and contemporary involvement in labor unions in Silicon Valley, we hope to identify ways to foster the growth of labor involvement in the Latino and API working communities. We seek to develop recommendations that will allow the growth of young Latino and API community leaders in the labor movement.

Research Method: We hope to identify strategies for increasing Latino and API representation in leadership by reviewing the body of literature that discusses Latinos and APIs in labor, organizing tech workers in Silicon Valley and interviewing important minority and non-minority union leaders and organizers about these issues.