

Economic Democracy Learning Center  
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Economic Democracy Educators Info Session

November 2nd 2021

## Today's Flow

1. Who are We / Who Is Here Today
2. What Does it Mean to Educate for Economic Democracy?
3. What Have We Been / What Are We Up To?
4. Next Steps
5. Questions

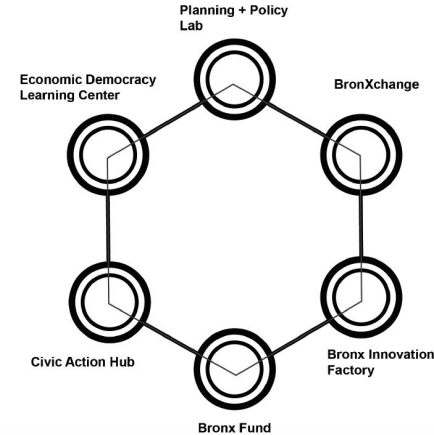
Who We Are



## WHO WE ARE

The **Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative (BCDI)** is a community-led planning and economic development organization. We are a network of community and labor organizations, anchor institutions, and small businesses advancing economic democracy for shared wealth and ownership in the Bronx.

**Grounded in a movement building approach to economic transformation, and a community enterprise network model,** we create people-centered planning and development processes; generate community solutions through innovation and digital fabrication technology; develop, grow, and connect local Bronx businesses to new opportunities; and train leaders from across sectors to advance a more democratic Bronx economy.



# The Learning Center

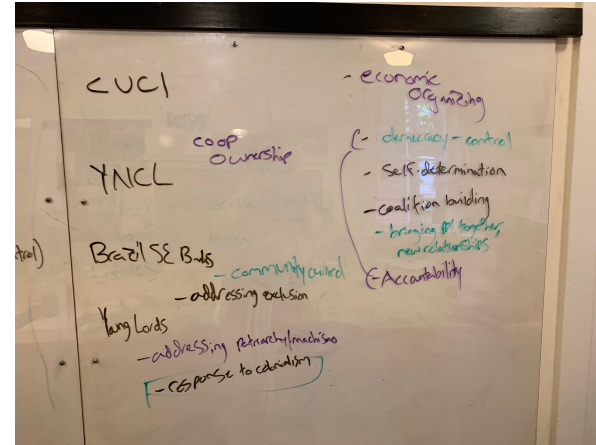
We envision the Learning Center as the Bronx's home for movement building and learning and study for economic democracy and liberation. The Learning Center belongs to all Bronxites who believe in, and are working towards, Black liberation and economic democracy.

Our mission is to train leaders from across the borough, develop political analysis and study of social conditions in the Bronx, and support the development of all educational institutions to apply principles of deep democracy and cooperation across their classrooms and in their communities.



# What Does a Bronx Economic Democracy Learning Center Look Like?

1. Political education, guest speakers, community space, study groups, books/media library
2. Cohort trainings and workshops for Bronx residents and community members to develop shared analysis of economic democracy
3. **Pedagogy and curriculum development with educational institutions**



# Who Is Here? What Brings You Here Today?

- Small Group Shares:
  - Who you are / where you teach?
  - What brought you here today?
  - What excites you about economic democracy, cooperative economics, and solidarity economies?
  - What do you want to learn more about them?
  - What kind of support would you need to integrate these concepts into your classrooms or extracurricular programs and activities?

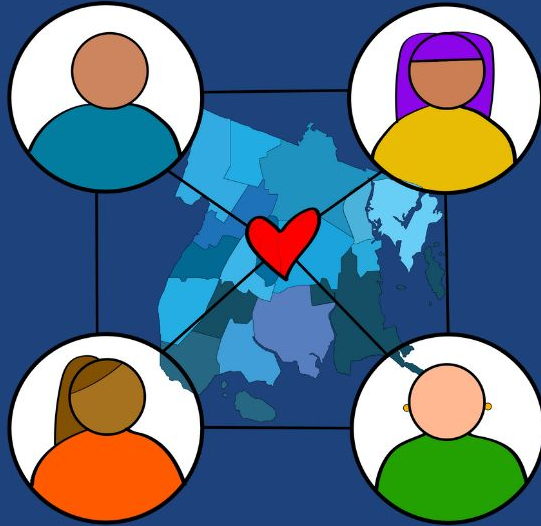


# What Does It Mean to Educate for Economic Democracy?



# What is Economic Democracy?

We can create an economy where we work together, own together, innovate together, share decision-making and control cooperatively and democratically. We can own and control our homes, our workplaces, our food system, our energy, our schools. An economy where we share the responsibility, the benefits, and the power cooperatively. An economy and society that is more like our community than a pyramid. We call this economic democracy.



Economic democracy is a framework for shifting our economy from one of private and unequal wealth to one where **we share in co-owning and governing the major assets in our community.** From relations of domination to shared authority:

- Landlord/tenant -> co-owners
- Boss/worker -> worker-owners
- leader/follower -> co-governance

# Examples of Economic Democracy and Solidarity Economies

*From an economy where one dollar = one vote → one person, one vote.*

Economic practices or organizations/institutions that embody principles of cooperation, democracy, and mutualism, **sharing of ownership and control, ownership for stewardship not for speculation or extraction.**

- Cooperative enterprises (housing, money, work, food)
- Participatory budgeting and planning processes
- Shared ownership developments (Market Creek Plaza)
- Emergency or non-emergency mutual aid, organized labor actions
- Public options for basic needs: healthcare, housing, internet, financial services



# Educating for Economic and Civic Life

- *Schools may teach **\*about\*** democracy but rarely practice it -*

- Need for education that contextualizes power, inequality, and the economy.
- Need for **economic literacy+competency**. Not just learning about concepts but practicing engaged economic action.
- Need for **democratic literacy and competency**. Not just learning about democracy, but actually practicing it too.



# Meeting the Need: Education for Cooperation and Economic Democracy

*It has been said that cooperativism is an economic movement that is also educational. We might say the reverse as well: that cooperativism is an educational movement that utilizes economic action.*

— Fr. Jose Maria Arizmendiarieta, founder of the Mondragón cooperatives

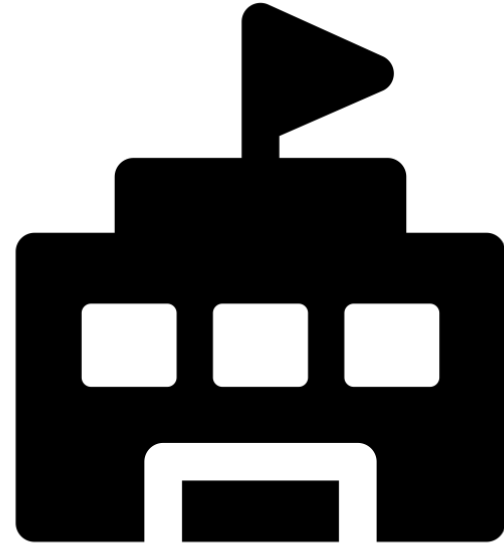


# The Long View: The Cooperative and Economic Democracy Pathway

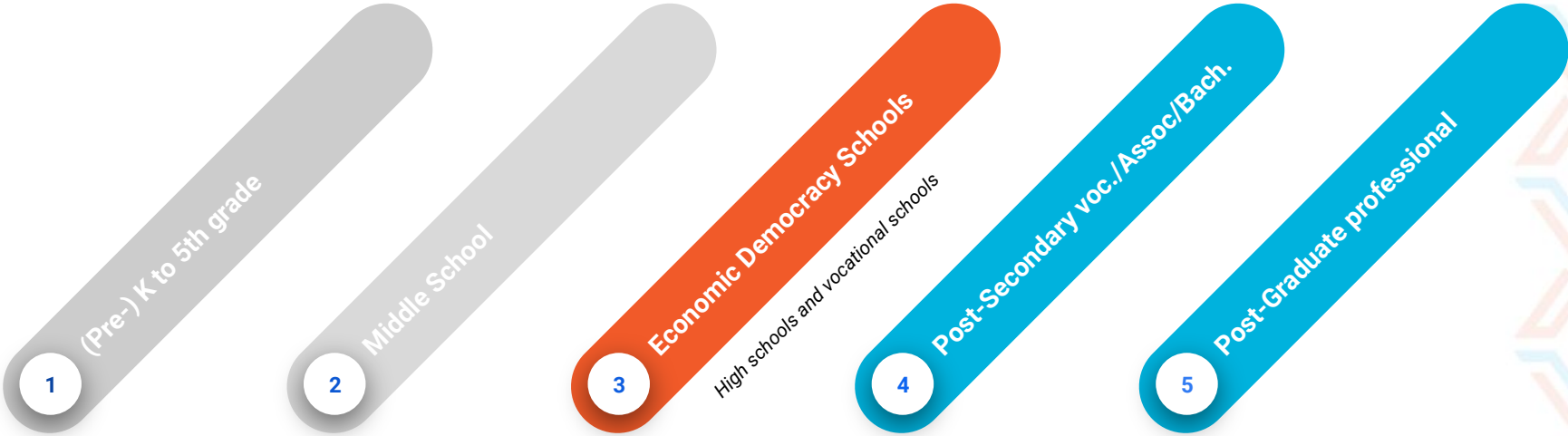
## Long Term Outcome:

A student in the Bronx can receive a high quality education that is underpinned by values and skills of cooperation and economic democracy from Kindergarten through post-secondary education

Partners would co-create and sustain an adaptable framework for schools that train for economic cooperation and democracy, which are necessary foundations for a democratic economy and society.



# Snapshot of Pathways Concept



↑  
We want and need to go here as well with the right partnerships

↑  
We are starting here

↑  
We are collaborating with CUNY & others here



# The Long View: Cooperative and Economic Democracy Education Pathway

- Modeled on Freedom and Liberation Schools of SNCC, Black Panther Party, American Indian Movement, combined with cooperative pedagogies from cooperative economies like Mondragón and Emilia Romagna
- Building on legacy and current work of Bronx community organizing with parents, youth for equity and justice.
- One coherent continuum for economic democracy in culture and community, focused on spaces of formal education from pre-schools through university level.
- Beyond the classroom: remaking school culture, school curriculum, school governing structures.



# Economic Democracy Joins What Has Been Separated

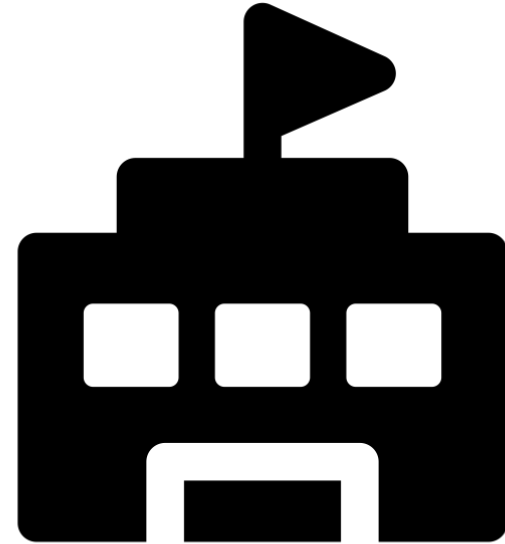
- Training for cooperation and economic democracy brings together real world knowledge and skills that joins economics and civics together.
- There are extremely few places so well situated to lead on this kind of work as the Bronx.
- Bronx has a long history of community organizing, community-led planning, building cooperative institutions. **High Schools schools are not optimally utilizing these assets and opportunities.**





# Why Is Economic Democracy a Powerful Framework for Schools?

1. **It's an approach to developing student-centered, culturally-relevant pedagogy and curriculum**
2. **Real world stakes in real world environments**
3. **Enhances student voice and co-governance**
4. **It can foster post-secondary skills and learning opportunities through partnerships and leadership opportunities:**
  - a. Creative/Innovative/Entrepreneurial skills
  - b. Planning/Research/Analytic skills
  - c. Community/Coalition Building, Organizing skills



# What We Heard in the Spring Focus Groups From Teachers

## Community-School Partnerships

*our students are taught that the Bronx isn't something to be proud of but they know it is a place with power and community so working locally with the orgs like yours and other CBOs helps us do that*

-Asst. Principal, Bronx HS

## Enhancing Project-Based Learning

*we have a teacher who developed a unit on environmental racism and captured the students attention on the South Bronx in particular. Learning about environmental racism through the Bronx and then connecting it to these kinds of concepts as solutions would be great*

-Asst Principal, Bronx HS

## Teacher Training and CRSE Support

In our school we are working on level 4 of CRSE, the social action approach. We need to train the teachers! It's a huge task, have to help them think about how to build social connection to the neighborhoods.

-Principal, Bronx HS

What Is Happening Now?

# Examples: Curricular Resources and Teacher Ed Projects

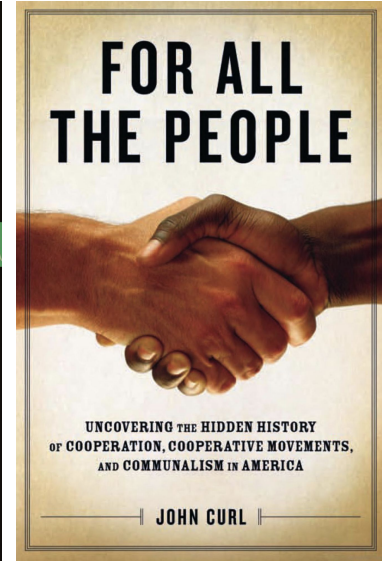
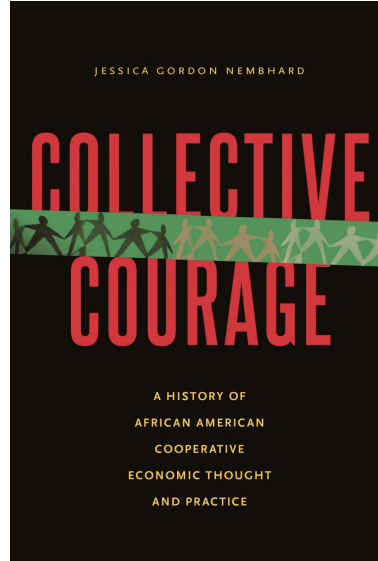
- [Generation Citizen](#)
- [Teaching for Black Lives](#) (Rethinking Schools)
- [Zinn Education Project](#)
- [Teaching for Change](#)
- Abolition Teaching Network and [Grants](#)

Our goal is to bring awareness of economic democracy theory and practice into existing spaces where educators seek to learn and share.



# Co-Creating Social Studies Materials for Grades 9-12

- We're surfacing resources and relevant global, national, and local histories of cooperation and economic democracy and mapping them to the NYS Scope and Sequence for Social Studies Grades 9-12. Creation of content to fit existing curriculum, matched to topics that are in S&S.
- This will include a collection of “Teachable Moments”, or case Studies from historical and contemporary projects, initiatives, movements for economic democracy to illustrate core concepts of shared ownership and democratic governance in a wide variety of **culturally relevant** contexts.

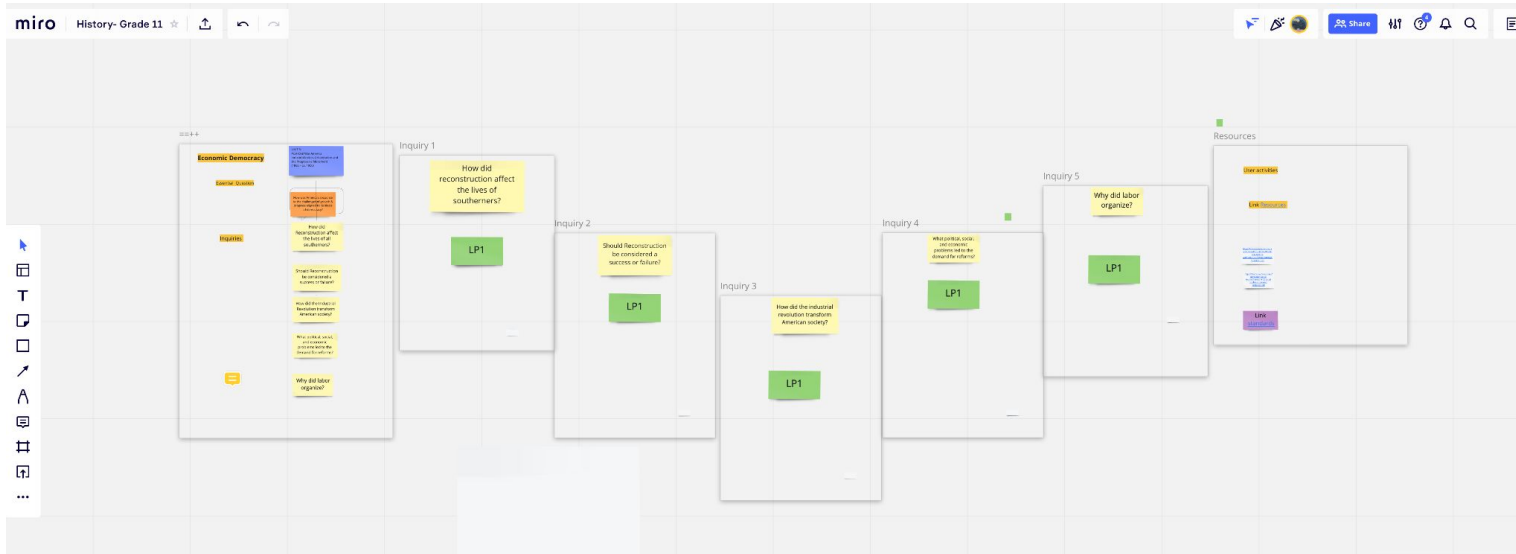


# Scope and Sequence 9-12 Grade Social Studies

Grade 11: Social Studies US History and Government						
UNIT 1: Forming a Union: Colonial and Constitutional Foundations (1607 – ca. 1800)	UNIT 2: Expansion, Nationalism, and Sectionalism (1800 – 1865)	UNIT 3: Post-Civil War America Industrialization, Urbanization and the Progressive Movement (1865 – ca. 1900)	UNIT 4: Prosperity and Depression: At Home and Abroad (ca. 1890 – 1941)	UNIT 5: World War II and the Cold War (1935 – 1990)	UNIT 6: Social and Economic Change: Domestic Issues (1945 – present)	UNIT 7: The United States and Globalization (1990 – present)
<b>Essential Questions</b>						
What are American foundations for liberty and freedom?	Was the Civil War inevitable?	How was America's response to the challenges of growth & progress aligned to its ideals of democracy?	How does a nation balance its own needs and interests with that of other nations?	Essential Question: To what extent have America's responses to foreign policy challenges been successful?	Is there one America or many?	Is the United States moving toward or away from its foundational ideals?
<b>Inquiries</b>						
2. How did the geographic location of colonial cities influence their development?	3. Was the treatment of Native Americans by the U.S. government inconsistent with fundamental American values?	.How did Reconstruction affect the lives of all southerners?	.What were the economic, political and social causes of American imperialism?	Foreign Policy 11.9c	4. Has America lived up to the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?	1. What is globalization and why does it matter? 2. How did the strength
5. Was the Declaration of Independence a revolutionary document?	4. In what ways was the United States becoming a nation of two economic systems during 1800-1861?	Should Reconstruction be considered a success or failure?	4. What important social changes took place in America during and after WWI?	■ The U.S. and the Middle East during the Cold War	5. What were the actions and values of the American counterculture and New Left in the 1960s?	2. How did the strengths and weakness of the U.S. economy shape foreign and domestic policy?
6. What role did compromise play in creating the U.S. Constitution?		.How did the Industrial Revolution transform American society?	6. Which groups suffered the most from the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression? Why? Did the New Deal alleviate their suffering?	■ The U.S. after Vietnam	6. How do Federal, state and local legislation affect de jure and de facto discrimination?	3. How did Clinton's foreign policy differ from the policies of Reagan/Bush?
7. To what extent was the U.S. Constitution an imperfect document? Do the Bill of Rights and other amendments address those imperfections?		.What political, social, and economic problems led to the demand for reforms?	7. Was the New Deal a success?	■ Embargo against Cuba	7. Why is it often difficult for elected leaders to campaign for stronger environmental protection policies?	4. What led to the invasion of Afghanistan and the 2nd Iraq War? What were the consequences? How does the War on Terror compare to earlier U.S. military operations in Panama, Vietnam, and/or Korea?
	7. Why did labor organize?			■ Fall of South Vietnam		5. Are we a nation of haves and have-nots? Why is it so difficult to discuss class in the U.S.?
				■ U.S. support for the State of Israel		6. In the early 21st century, has the U.S. lived up to the ideals set forth in the preamble to the U.S. Constitution?
				■ Camp David Accords		
				■ Oil crisis		
				■ Middle East mediation		
				■ The Afghanistan invasion by Russia		
				■ U.S. boycotts Ovmskoia and		



# Scope and Sequence 9-12 Grade Social Studies



## What Else Is BCDI Doing?

- Updating our “what is economic democracy?” page on our website to provide more resources, information, and ways to stay connected and involved.
- Creation of “Community Wealth and Financial Literacy” curriculum as an antidote to individualistic “financial literacy” curricula. Combination of information and basic skills with larger context of financial and economic system challenges. Tools for individual and collective economic action.





Next Steps / What Now?

## Next Steps in Our Work Together

### **Invite your peers!**

Stay tuned for a sign up form for any educator who wants to be kept in the loop going forward after these sessions. Starting in 2022 we will share opportunities for professional development and collaboration including:

- Workshops on theory and practice of economic democracy
- Opportunities to co-create classroom activities that bring these concepts and examples into the classroom
- Our Bronx Schools Fellowship Info Session on November 10



# Deadline: Grants from ATN

Opportunity (Due November 15th) for Educators and Youth in and outside of schools to apply for grants from ATN. **We are happy to support youth and educators to apply who want to develop materials on economic democracy and solidarity economies!**

EDUCATORS | EARLY CARE EDUCATORS  
EDUCATORS WORKING FOR DISABILITY JUSTICE

## GRANTS FOR: EDUCATORS

ABOLITIONIST TEACHING NETWORK  
APPLY! OCTOBER 29 - NOVEMBER 15

[ABOLITIONISTTEACHINGNETWORK.ORG/GRANTS](https://abolitionistteachingnetwork.org/grants)



# Support the Bronxwide Plan / Get Involved!

Learn more about our Bronxwide coalition work at [linktr.ee/bxpower](https://linktr.ee/bxpower)

- Get your school involved, bring our coalition to speak about our boroughwide-wide planning process



VIDEOS

Watch our video on the Bronx-wide Platform and Plan

INFO

What is Economic Democracy?

Get involved with the Bronx People's Platform and Planning Process!

Learn more about the Bronx-wide Planning Process

Learn more about the Bronx People's Platform and our Coalition

# Professional Development: CUNY Grad Certificate

## Graduate Certificate from CUNY in Workplace Democracy and Community Ownership

### Advanced Certificate in Workplace Democracy and Community Ownership

The Department  
Faculty  
Undergraduate Programs  
Graduate Programs  
Master of Arts in Urban Studies  
Advanced Certificate in Community  
Leadership  
Advanced Certificate in Leading Change in  
Healthcare Systems  
Advanced Certificate in Public  
Administration and Public Policy  
Advanced Certificate in Workplace  
Democracy and Community Ownership  
Community Semester  
Community Partnerships  
Urban Academy

REQUEST MORE  
INFORMATION

#### CONTACT

SLU Admissions Office  
[admissions@slu.cuny.edu](mailto:admissions@slu.cuny.edu)



The **Advanced (Graduate) Certificate in Workplace Democracy and Community Ownership** offers students theoretical and practical skills necessary for effective democratic engagement in our economy, at work and in our communities. The program allows students to explore the details of how democratic management and cooperative ownership can function. Knowledge, skills and values for cooperation will be applied to solutions for democratic community economic development, such as worker owned co-ops, community land trusts, consumer and purchasing cooperatives, community development financial institutions (CDFI) and housing co-ops. Using New York City and its environment as a laboratory, students will have opportunities to engage with local projects and develop leadership and facilitation skills for Economic Democracy.

#### CAREER & ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT

Graduates will be prepared to combine their principles for equity and justice with the skills required for positions in firms where cooperative ownership and control is desired. Graduates will possess leadership attributes that analyze, evaluate and apply best practices in management with historical, financial, and human approaches for worker-ownership, consumer co-ops, community land trusts and any worker self-directed enterprises.

Questions?

