The Centre for Work, Organisation and Wellbeing
And the Department of Employment Relations and Human Resources
invite you to a seminar:

“The Ups and Downs of Employee Involvement at Delta Air Lines”
by Professor Bruce Kaufman

When: Wednesday 7th September, 2011 - 12:30pm to 2:00pm
Where: Room 2.02, Building N54 (Bray Centre), Nathan campus
Food: Lunch will be served upon arrival; please RSVP by Friday 2nd September

Abstract: Delta Air Lines probably has the most advanced, broad-based, and formally structured system of nonunion employee involvement and representation (EIR) at any American company. The author was permitted by the company to do a major case study investigation of their EIR program in 2003, subsequently published in *Human Resource Management* (2004). In 2011 the author was allowed to return to the company and conduct a second follow-up case study investigation, to be published as a chapter in a forthcoming book *Voice and Involvement at Work* (eds. Gollan, Kaufman, Taras, Wilkinson; Routledge, 2012). Since 2003 the company has gone through a number of major ups and downs, including huge financial losses and eventual bankruptcy, a hostile take-over attempt, a large-scale merger with another airline with a very adversarial union culture, several new CEOs, a deteriorating culture of trust and partnership, and a number of company-wide union elections. This paper examines how the EIR program has fared over the 2003-2011 period, its "wins" and "losses" for the company and employees, its current status and prospects for the future, and lessons learned about EIR for other companies and workforces. The Delta system of EIR appears to be on the rebound, most importantly because a new management team recommitted to it.

Speaker: Bruce Kaufman is Professor of Economics at Georgia State University and Senior Associate, W.T. Beebe Institute of Personnel and Employment Relations. Kaufman’s research interests include labor markets, human resource management systems, employee representation, history of economic and management thought, labor and employment law, behavioral economics, and institutional economics. Among the numerous scholarly articles and books Bruce has written are “The Origins and Evolution of the Field of Industrial Relations in the United States”; “The Global Evolution of Industrial Relations”; “Nonunion Employee Representation: History Contemporary Practice and Policy” (with Daphne Taras); “What Do Unions Do? A Twenty Year Perspective” (with James Bennett); “The Economics of the Labor Market, 7th ed.” (with Julie Hotchkiss); “Managing the Human Factor: The Early Years of Human Resource Management in American Industry”; and “Hired Hands or Human Resources? Case Studies of HRM Practices and Programs in Early American Industry”. Kaufman is co-editor of the annual research volume Advances in Industrial and Labor Relations; past president of the University Council of Industrial Relations and Human Resource Programs, past president of the Atlanta chapter of the Industrial Relations Research Association, and co-chair of the IR Theory Study Group of the International Industrial Relations Association. In 2009 he received the “Excellence in Teaching” award from the Andrew Young School; he also received the “Alumni Distinguished Professor” award – the highest honor given each year to a GSU faculty member. Kaufman is also Principal Research Fellow with the Department of Employment Relations and Centre for Work, Organization and Wellbeing, Griffith University (Brisbane, AU); Principal Research Fellow with the Work and Employment Research Unit, Business School, University of Hertfordshire (Hatfield, UK), and a Visiting Professor with the Business school, Loughborough University (Leicester, UK).

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