

IRRA Changes Its Name

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Originally Posted: November 30, 2005

More than 50 years after its inception, the Industrial Relations Research Association (IRRA) is changing its name. The organization's members voted last year to change the name to the Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA). IRRA was founded in 1947 as a research and education organization for professionals in the fields of labor relations and human resources management. A news release about the name change, posted on the organization's website (<http://www.lera.uiuc.edu/news/namechange.html>), quotes the incoming president of LERA as saying that the organization's mission is to provide a forum for "practitioners and scholars of labor and workplace relations to meet, discuss, and debate critical issues."

Due to the increasingly narrow meaning of the term "industrial relations," discussion about a possible name change had taken place within the organization for nearly a decade. John Burton, chair of the Special Strategic Membership Committee, charged with developing a new name for IRRA, said, "The vote of the members to change our name to the Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) is an important confirmation of the organization's relevance and vitality in the 21st century. The new name best conveys our long-standing commitment to all aspects of labor, employment, and the workplace."

Despite widespread agreement within the organization on the need for a new name, finding one that the members could agree on proved difficult. Readers of *CWC Online* may recall a short piece published here in November 2003 that reported the IRRA was "considering a name change to reflect its broader interest in research, practice, theory, and public policy in the fields of labor, employment, and the workplace." IRRA's Executive Board had agreed in June 2003 to change the name to the Labor and Employment Relations Association. After soliciting comments from members, the board decided to submit the proposed name change to the entire membership for a vote in 2004. The members voted to approve the new name by a margin of more than 3 to 1. LERA's mission remains the same as it had been under the former name. Although local chapters of the organization are not required to change their names, they are encouraged to do so. Implementation of the new name began earlier this year.

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