



The Advocate

Reclaiming Our College

AFT-Lone Star College has been inspired by the national AFT's "Reclaim the Promise" campaign. The goal of the national campaign is to restore the promise of our nation, particularly focusing on public education, healthcare, and public services, as the "gateway to social and economic justice, the anchors of democracy" (for more information visit: www.aft.org/promise). Membership in our local union helps support these activities at the national level.

For over a year, AFT-Lone Star has run a campaign to reclaim our college. The goal of our campaign has been to take a stand for what we believe in and value as well as to push for reform on all the negative actions taken by the previous administration.

We made much progress this last year and certainly have made more progress in working with Dr. Head since he became Chancellor. The AFT and the administration are working on rebuilding our relationships and moving forward in a collaborative style. We can all feel the change in the air. We in the union are not naïve. We know that there will be issues on which we disagree with the administration. However, both groups have committed to solving disagreements with respect.

There is much work to be done, and we should not let our hopes for this new era mislead us: the future will not be free of conflict, and we will continue to stand up for employees. Some employees have viewed the union as a champion of employee protection, and they are correct. We do stand for employee rights. These employees may incorrectly believe that they will not need this assistance in the future. Since August, conflicts have arisen, and there have been at least two terminations. Issues will have to be addressed.

Even if your job is not in jeopardy, the fact is that your dues help support others who are under fire. However, AFT's role involves far more than providing protection. We believe that employees should have a voice in their professional lives and that voice should be able to create change. We believe that employees should be treated with dignity and respect. We believe that employees should unite and help each other.

AFT has the opportunity to move from fighting a relentless barrage of attacks to focusing on progressive change. We encourage your support of the union as we engage in this more productive approach.

—Alan Hall

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2014 Election

As this issue was going to press, we learned that the bond referendum passed by a landslide (For: 65.27%; Against: 34.73%). AFT-Lone Star is pleased to have endorsed the bond, and to have helped secure an endorsement from the Harris County AFL-CIO. We have no doubt that those endorsements helped pull in votes for the bond and hope that the administration will follow through on its commitment to engage employees in assessing needs on various projects.

We are also pleased to welcome Alton Smith, Art Murillo, and Ken Lloyd as newly elected members of the LSCS Board of Trustees. We look forward to working with these new trustees and wish them well.



Salary Compression Revisited

In the March-May, 2014, edition of *The Advocate* I brought up the issue of salary compression.¹ In that article I wrote about a professor who had taught at Lone Star College for 12 years and was being paid only 4.6% more than she would have been paid if she had just been hired. This article struck a nerve because it exposed a problem that many employees, both faculty and staff, have been frustrated with for some time. The AFT received a number of calls, emails, and visits from other employees who



wanted to share their stories. One 8-year veteran professor reported that her salary was exactly \$2 more than a new hire with the same academic credentials and years of experience. A 5-year veteran was being paid exactly the same amount as a colleague with the same credentials who had only been with us one year. There are other examples, both from faculty and staff, but these three put a human face on an abstract but very real problem within our system.

We believe it is a good time to revisit this issue. At the August meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Cindy Gillam, talked about salary compression as a real issue that Lone Star College needs to address. This problem is on the radar screen of the new administration, and the AFT is glad to have raised the concern.

Where does salary compression come from and how does it affect employees? The issues are essentially the same for both faculty and staff, although it is a bit more complicated for staff. So I will write about this phenomenon and its impact on faculty first and come back to staff a little later.

In the Fall of 2013, Lone Star College reset the initial hire salary schedules for all employees. This was a necessary action. LSCS's starting salaries had remained unchanged for many years and were no longer competitive. The increase in salary scale varied from category to category with academic credentials being one deciding factor. Under the new schedule, a new faculty member with a Master's degree and between 0 and 5 years of teaching experience who accepted a 10 ½ month salary was offered 12.9% more than under the previous schedule. For a new hire with a Bachelor's degree, the increase was 3.8%, and for a Ph.D., 9.2%.

The salary scale used through Fall, 2012, only gave new hires credit for up to 5 years of teaching experience; the new scale grants credit for up to 7. Community colleges are notorious for disincentivizing the hiring of experienced faculty, so this was a step in the right direction. Because of this change, a new faculty member coming in with 7 years of experi-



ence and accepting a 10½ month contract would be paid 8% more than they would have been paid the previous year for a bachelor's degree, 13.6% more for a Ph.D., and 17.5% more for a Master's degree.

When LSCS adopted the new schedule in Fall, 2013, current faculty members whose salary fell below the new scale were raised up to that scale before a cost-of-living increase was added. This was the fair thing to do and was a help to faculty members who were relatively new to the college. Faculty members whose salaries were above the new scale, however, received only the 4% cost-of-living increase. This explains the unusual salary situations I described at the beginning of this article. However, there are factors that make the phenomenon of salary compression even more pronounced.

Adjustments in the new-hire salary placement schedule have been made at various times throughout the 41-year history of the college. Most of those adjustments have been long forgotten. What concerns us is whether these adjustments were handled similarly to this one. If the salary scales for new hires were increased a given percentage but existing faculty did not receive that percentage increase, then the compression phenomenon would have been compounded over and over. We are concerned that this may have been the case and believe this is important history to check. Also, in the fall of 2013, Lone Star College introduced salary caps for full time faculty meaning that senior faculty would no longer receive increases in salary at all. (Alan Hall has written a companion piece on salary caps, "LSCS's Mission", in this edition of *The Advocate*.)

Here's an analogy that makes sense to me. In James Bond movies, 007 frequently gets trapped in a small room in which the floor starts moving upwards. The ceiling stays fixed, however, so Bond gets compressed. The situation for staff is similar. Like faculty, initial hire schedules have been raised over



the years with existing employees probably receiving only the standard salary increase for that year. Salary caps have been in place for staff for many years, so the prospect of reaching a point where one no longer receives salary increases has been a reality



for our staff for a long time. What makes the staff situation even more complicated is the job reclassification process that took place in Fall, 2013. We wrote about job reclassification in the September / October, 2013, November / December, 2013, and January / February, 2014, editions of *The Advocate*.¹

At that time, all of the existing job categories for staff were discarded and replaced by new ones. Some staff members got what appeared to be promotions and others got what looked like demotions. Some saw their salary increase. No one had a decrease in salary, but some found themselves closer to the salary cap under their new category. So, staff are affected by compression, too, but quantifying the exact amount of compression for staff is more complicated.

Returning to our James Bond analogy, if, for faculty, the floor is rising steadily and smoothly towards the ceiling, for staff, it's lurching wildly.

As LSCS's new administration finds its bearings, salary compression is one of several significant personnel issues it faces. AFT is heartened that Dr. Head understands the importance of these issues. He has already committed to a plan to increase the ranks of full time faculty so that 50% of classes will be covered by full-time faculty, and he has acknowledged the problems with both the reclassification of staff and salary compression. He has inherited all of these problems, and some, including salary compression, have roots that go back for decades.



Fixing all of these problems will be time consuming and expensive. The AFT recognizes that solutions may need to be phased in over time. With regards to salary compression, there is a significant amount of forensic accounting that should be done to pinpoint employees who have been left behind as initial-hire salary schedules were raised. We urge that a study of this phenomenon be implemented as soon as possible. A process should be put in place to rectify the discrepancies I described at the beginning of this article. The AFT will fully support Dr. Head's efforts to address this issue and would welcome the opportunity to assist him.

One problem with salary compression can be solved much more easily. Clearly, 007 would not have to worry as much about the rising floor if the ceiling weren't there. Removing salary caps so that experienced employees are appropriately rewarded for their loyalty and experience would be a relatively easy first step in addressing salary compression.

1. For archived copies of previous editions of *The Advocate*, please visit www.aftlonestar.org and select the link for "News."

John Burghduff
Professor of Mathematics, LSCS-CyFair



LSCS's Mission

Before Dr. Head became chancellor, the previous administration capped the salaries of thirty-eight senior faculty. John Burghduff's article on salary compression includes information on how this action contributed to salary compression. However, there are issues beyond compression that should also be explored.

First, instead of raising their base salary this year, senior faculty received a one-time stipend in the amount of the salary increase that they would have received. Because the stipend did not increase their base salary, the salary cap affects their retirement. TRS faculty's retirement payout is calculated on an average of their best three years. Not receiving an actual increase in salary will hold their salary constant every year until they retire, which will have a significant negative impact on their financial future. The retirement payout of faculty who are in ORP instead of TRS is also adversely affected because their contributions and the state's match remain flat until retirement. This hit on retirement will be particularly painful in the face of rising costs in health-care and a host of many other areas.

Sometimes we hear that senior faculty are too expensive, but we should not lose sight of their years of service to the college. There is value in seasoned faculty with an institutional memory. These faculty members bring to the table years of experience and often mentor new faculty who sometimes feel overwhelmed by the job.

Through my research into salary caps, I discovered that senior faculty are not the only ones affected. Indeed, the salaries of eight support and professional staff have also been capped.

Complaints about the expense of senior employees generally come from administrators, a fact that I consider curious. Senior faculty and staff have worked loyally for thirty-five to forty years finally to get a decent salary. When hired, many administrators walk in the door earning substantially more than senior faculty, not to mention additional salary sup-



plements received. The contrast is ironic because the primary mission of the college is to educate students, and faculty and staff have the more contact with students than upper level administrators. Many highly-paid administrators may never work directly with students. A further irony is that upper-administrative salaries were not capped. I have often stated that the AFT does not begrudge upper administrators their salaries because they work hard for their money. Faculty and staff salary caps are forcing me to rethink that position, because faculty and staff also work hard for their money. The cap, simply put, is an injustice because it is disrespectful to senior employees.

When Dr. Head spoke at the Fall 2014 Convocation, he stressed that all employees should be valued and treated with dignity and respect. I understand that the salary caps for senior employees is the work of his predecessor. Dr. Head now has the opportunity to do the right thing by repealing this cap.

—Alan Hall

Adjunct Workload Revisited Again

December 5, 2013, the Lone Star College System Board of Trustees passed a significant policy change that restricted the number of credit hours that an adjunct faculty member can teach to a total of 15 credit hours between Fall and Spring Semesters. This policy was later interpreted to cover the entire period from the beginning of Fall Semester to the end of May Miniterm. Summer workloads, for the most part, have been left unchanged so far.

Prior to this policy change, workloads for adjunct faculty varied from discipline to discipline and was tied to the workload of full-time faculty in those disciplines. In academic departments in which classes are standard 3-credit-hour lecture classes, adjunct instructors could generally teach 18 credit hours between Fall and Spring Semesters. The cut-



back in workload translates to a loss of \$1,908 in income. In science departments, in which most classes include a lab, adjuncts were allowed to teach 16 credit hours. Because the labs increase contact hours, the loss of income for them would be \$3,816. These changes in adjunct workload were made, the Board was told, by the administration in order to bring Lone Star into compliance with changes in state and federal law, particularly in relation to the Affordable Care Act. From the

“All three of our neighboring colleges continue to permit adjuncts to teach 18 credit hours between Fall and Spring (three classes each semester). They have all studied the relevant laws and come to the same conclusions that the AFT has.”

very beginning, based on our study of the law, the AFT has been convinced that cuts in adjunct work hours are not necessary to keep Lone Star in compliance with these laws. We attempted to speak to the Board about this policy before it was voted on, but were not permitted to do so. We wrote extensive explanations of these laws and their relationship to adjunct faculty in the January/February, 2014 and March-May, 2014 editions of *The Advocate*. We invite you to read these articles and the planned speech for the December, 2013 Board Meeting.¹

Although the change in adjunct workload policy was passed almost a year ago, to avoid disruption, full implementation did not go into effect until this school year. The real impact of this policy change will be hitting many of our adjuncts this coming Spring semester. Before they have to take the financial hit, the AFT recommends that we take another hard look at this policy change. We still firmly believe that the arguments we made last year are valid and stand on their own, but we have additional information to share.

We have contacted personnel at three of our neighboring community colleges, Blinn College, Houston Community College and San Jacinto Col-



lege, to find out what policy they have in place for adjunct workload this year. For simplicity, since this was an initial inquiry, we focused on disciplines with standard three-hour courses.

All three of our neighboring colleges continue to permit adjuncts to teach 18 credit hours between Fall and Spring (three classes each semester). They have all studied the relevant laws and come to the same conclusions that the AFT has.

The AFT has shared this information with the new LSCS administration, and we are hopeful that it will take a look at what our sister colleges have concluded. Both state and federal laws are complex and we know the administration needs to study this very carefully. We hope the result will be a change in policy.

Of course, the AFT agrees wholeheartedly with LSCS administration that we must be diligent about complying with the laws. We may not be able to return completely to the workload guidelines we had before December, 2013. In particular, allowing adjuncts to teach a Winter or May Minterm in addition to three classes in each long semester may exceed federal guidelines. This has to be studied carefully. Because enrollment in these terms is very low, the number of adjuncts who teach them is small. The bottom line is that most of our adjunct faculty should be eligible to teach the number of classes they used to teach and we hope this will be the ultimate outcome. Ideally, we hope that the administration will at least grant a stay in implementation to get the college and our adjuncts through the Spring Semester with the old workload guidelines.

The AFT knows that it was not the goal of either the current or previous LSCS administrations to hurt adjunct faculty. Fortunately, we believe they do not have to.

John Burghduff
Professor of Mathematics, LSCS-CyFair

1. For archived copies of previous editions of *The Advocate* and past speeches to the Board of Trustees, please visit www.aftlonestar.org and select the link for "News."

Time and Labor



47 Percent

That is the success rate of the US marketplace in hiring recent college graduates for jobs that require a col-

lege degree, according to a 2012 Associated Press report based on data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This data has the potential to undermine a key premise of the Completion Agenda: that the production of college graduates is lagging behind market demand. According to the report,

In the last year, they were more likely to be employed as waiters, waitresses, bartenders and food-service helpers than as engineers, physicists, chemists and mathematicians combined (100,000 versus 90,000). There were more working in office-related jobs such as receptionist or payroll clerk than in all computer professional jobs (163,000 versus 100,000). More also were employed as cashiers, retail clerks and customer representatives than engineers (125,000 versus 80,000).¹

The mission of the Completion Agenda is to increase the production of college graduates by 50 percent for the purpose of workforce fulfillment. President Obama has made this mission the centerpiece of his education agenda by establishing as a goal that the USA would become the nation-state with the highest percentage of college graduates by 2020 (South Korea leads the way at 58 percent. The USA is currently at #10 with 42 percent.). At LSCS, I think we are doing a great job of focusing on this problem and increasing completion rates. In fact, LSCS is ranked among the top ten for associate degrees conferred for the 2012-2013 academic year, an almost 4 percent increase over the previous year.² Furthermore, Lone Star College continues to be a bargain because of the low cost and high quality of the education that is provided here.



Production of college graduates is strong. Now, for the first time, we now have an opportunity to look at the other side of that equation, the part that relates to workforce fulfillment.

The employment prospects of college graduates, overall, are still better than those of non-graduates. Over a 40-year work career, a college graduate is expected to earn approximately \$550,000 more than a non-graduate, after adjusting for the cost of college. Furthermore, most college graduates consider their college education to have been a good investment.³ However, the key premise of the Completion Agenda is based on a projection of jobs growth that is highly unrealistic. “By 2018, about two-thirds of all employment will require some college education or better.”⁴ However, most of the actual “help wanted” signs are for entry-level jobs as cashiers, clerks, and food-service helpers with low pay, few benefits, and little chance for advancement. We tell students that if they don’t get a college degree, they will have to work at Mac-Donald’s; and then after graduation, we say, “What? Are you too good to work at Mac-Donald’s?” Students are not being told the truth about their employment prospects.

College presidents must navigate this disconnect between reality and illusion carefully. At least half of all community college presidents think Obama’s college completion agenda is unrealistic; yet these presidents must deal with state legislatures, oversight boards, and aggressive lobbyists on the basis of this illusory goal.⁵ The illusion of jobs creation is already bumping against the hard reality of a market that is producing mainly low-end jobs. This is made worse by the illusion of success that is measured on the basis of self-centered materialism. Does anyone think that Socrates taught Plato for the purpose of workforce fulfillment? Who among the sages of old says that we should measure success solely in monetary terms? Where, among the words of Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha or Confucius—where in the *Vedas*, the *Koran*, or the *Holy Bible* are we told that material wealth is the measure of success? Among recent college graduates, 74 percent say that college was very useful in helping them grow intellectually; 69 percent say it was very

useful in helping them grow as a person; only 55 percent say that college was very useful in helping them prepare for a job or career.⁶ Thomas Jefferson and John Adams disagreed vigorously on many aspects of their visions for American freedom; however, on the purpose and value of education, they were in perfect agreement. The public should be educated, they said, *to protect their liberties*.



David Davis
Professor of History LSC-North Harris

1. Hope Yen, “Half of Recent College Grads Underemployed or Jobless, Analysis Says,” *Associated Press*, April 23, 2012. http://www.cleveland.com/business/index.ssf/2012/04/half_of_recent_college_grads_u.html
2. *Community College Week*, “Associate Degree and Certificate Producers 2014.” <http://ccweek.com/article-4107-associate-degree-and-certificate-producers-2014.html>
3. *Pew Research Center*, “Is College Worth It?” May 2011, p. 83. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2011/05/Is-College-Worth-It.pdf>.
4. “Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018,” Andrew P. Carnevale, Nichole Smith, and Jeff Strohl, *Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce*. <http://cew.georgetown.edu/jobs2018>
5. *Pew Research Center*, “Is College Worth It?” p. 65.
6. *Ibid*.





Reclaiming our College

A union of professionals

The promise of a community college is to draw people who live and work in our communities, educate and empower them to serve, and send them out to cultivate a just and vibrant society. In order to reclaim this promise, AFT Lone Star College is committed to:

- Restoring dignity and respect to the workplace
- Ensuring safe working and learning environments
- Promoting a culture of collaboration between faculty, staff and administration
- Putting the community back in the college to make sure the promise is kept

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our effort to reclaim
our college.**



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02/13



AFT-Lone Star College

AFT Local Union # 4518

GOALS

- To promote academic excellence
- To protect academic freedom in higher education
- To preserve and protect the integrity and unique identity of each of the institutions of higher education in Texas
- To protect the dignity and rights of faculty against discrimination
- To ensure that faculty have an effective voice on all matters pertaining to their welfare
- To secure for all members the rights to which they are entitled
- To raise the standards of the profession by establishing professional working conditions
- To encourage democratization of higher education
- To promote the welfare of the citizens of Texas by providing better educational opportunities for all
- To initiate and support state legislation which will benefit the students and faculty of Texas
- To promote and assist the formation and growth of Texas United Faculty chapters throughout Texas
- To maintain and promote the aims of the American Federation of Teachers and other affiliated labor bodies

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Adjunct Faculty & Staff	\$13.28

Membership Eligibility

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American Federation of Teachers -Lone Star College Membership Application

AFT-Lone Star College is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers and the Texas AFT and accepts membership from all non-supervisory employees of the Lonestar College System. Indicate below whether you are a new member or a current member wishing to update your contact information. Membership with AFT-Lone Star College provides each member with an \$8 million Professional Occupational Liability coverage policy, legal defense coverage and access to representation for work-related issues. In addition, AFT-Lone Star College members are entitled to special savings and discounts through our AFT PLUS benefits program. **If you have questions about joining, please call AFT- Lone Star College @ 281-889-1009.** You may also visit our website: www.aftlonestar.org

- 1) Fill out the application below and choose your method of payment
- 2) Remit this application to AFT-Lone Star College President, Alan Hall

By US mail: AFT - Lone Star College P.O. Box 788 Spring, Texas 77383-0788 **OR** Interoffice mail: Alan Hall @ A-217, North Harris



2014-2015 Monthly Membership Dues rates:

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- ☐ Full-time Faculty \$37.04/mo. or \$444.48/yr.
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Choose method of payment: <input type="checkbox"/> Payroll Deduction <i>(Complete the union dues agreement below)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Cash/Check <i>(Two 6 month payments payable to AFT-LSC)</i>					

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I hereby authorize Lone Star College System to deduct each pay period an amount equal to the dues in the amounts fixed in accordance with the Bylaws of AFT including any increase in dues in future years and pay same to said Union in accordance with the terms of the agreement between Lone Star College System and American Federation of Teachers. This agreement will remain in effect until Lone Star College System receives a written notice of cancellation from me, AFT or at the time of my termination, whichever occurs first. This authorization is subject to sufficient wages being available to comply with all other required deductions and existing federal and state laws.

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We invite all employees to send us their opinions, news, questions, and so forth. *The Advocate* is a forum for information and free interchange of ideas. Send your ideas. Send your articles to **Pat Gray**, Editor via e-mail: patsy.gray@lonestar.edu, or submit to any of the following officers.

Alan Hall, President	North Harris	ACAD 217-G	281-618-5544
David Davis	North Harris	ACAD 264-G	281-618-5543
Stephen King	North Harris	ACAD 162-H	281-618-5530
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Rich Almstedt	Kingwood	FTC 100-G	281-312-1656
Laura Codner	Kingwood	CLA 110—D	281-312- 414
Catherine Olson	Tomball	S 153 - H	281-357-3776
Richard Becker	Tomball	E 271-D	281-401-1835
Janet Moore	Tomball	E 210 -E	281-401-1871
Van Piercy	Tomball	S 153-J	281-401-1814
Martina Kusi-Mensah	Montgomery	G 121-J	936-273-7276
Louise Casey-Clukey	Montgomery	B 100-G	936-273-7394
John Burghduff	Cy-Fair	HSC 250-G	281-290-3915
Kathy Hughes	Cy-Fair	FBC 218A	832-782-5063
Earl Brewer	Fairbanks	S - 13	832-782-5029

The union encourages employees to join because they believe that college employees should have a voice in their professional lives. We don't encourage employees to join because they anticipate conflict or are already engaged in a conflict. In fact, if they are already embroiled in a situation, we are unable to help them. It is all too common for someone to approach the AFT and say something like, "I've been an employee for the district for several years, and I've just recognized the importance of joining." Typically, following that comment is, "I'm in trouble and need help." I finally lost track of how many times in the last year I've had to say, "I'm sorry, but member benefits don't cover anything that pre-dates membership." The individuals to whom I had to give this message were invited to join and pro-

vided some advice on how to proceed with their situation, but assistance ended there. Were they members, a host of benefits would have been available.

The AFT provides its members with advice and guidance as well as representation in conflict resolution and grievances. We have our own local attorney and can seek legal advice and counsel for members. We maintain a local legal defense fund. In addition, membership dues include, at no extra charge, \$8 million in professional liability insurance for claims arising out of professional activities.

Most of our members don't join because they believe that they may need the AFT's help in a conflict. They join because they believe in the values

of the AFT— that employees should be treated with dignity and respect, that employees should help each other, that employees should have a voice in their professional lives, that employees deserve fair pay and good working conditions, and that the district needs a system providing checks and balances. They join because they want to support an organization that helps others in so many ways. A nice benefit is that, if they do need help, AFT is there for them.

If you believe in these values and are not a member, now is the perfect time to join. If you believe in our values, take action now and join the AFT.

—Alan Hall