



The Advocate

A Wall of Silence

In the January/February 2009 edition of *The Advocate*, I wrote an article titled “The Corporatization of the College,” a piece that created a good deal of discussion in the System. Among other issues in the article, I pointed out two concerns. First,

The downside to the corporate model is that it can become an impersonal, sometimes bloated bureaucracy . . . where communication is a problem, and where decisions are unilaterally made, top down, without adequate input from appropriate employees. The AFT believes strongly that LSCS must be mindful to avoid these negative characteristics.

At the time of the article, my concern was that I was seeing trends from the upper administration indicating that top down was exactly the direction the System was taking. My hope was that faculty and staff could still somehow maintain a meaningful dialogue with the administration. The concern remains, and the hope appears only modestly fulfilled.

Faculty and staff continually see top down decision making. We routinely see email announcements regarding new positions that have been created and the name of an individual appointed to fill them. These positions were not posted, and no screening committees made recommendations regarding candi-

dates to fill the positions. A specific example of the silence from the upper administration is an email sent by Shah Ardalan recently in which he referred to UP as LSC-UP and seemed to suggest it was shifting to a separate entity from LSC-Tomball under whose wing it had been operating. He announced there would be “more changes, realignments, and reorganizations.” In addition to his usual title of Vice Chancellor and CIO, LSCS, he put an addendum to his sign off: CEO, LSCS—University Park. This news caught faculty and staff at LSC-Tomball by surprise. Apparently these changes were not discussed openly with the majority of them, and the employees were not asked for, nor were they able to offer, any input.

In the previously referenced article, I also noted:

We hear upper administration . . . talk about the legacy of LSCS established by current and former employees. That admiration is belied when the administration embraces too fully the dark side of the corporate model. The college, after all, is not a corporation. LSCS is an institution of higher learning, founded on the idea of community cooperation, and our focus is the collective education of people. LSCS should never lose sight of that focus.

That focus has diminished. In fact, the administration has advocated adoption of Board Policy that is hos-

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tile to faculty and staff, including policies that severely limited due process rights. As of this writing, moreover, some five weeks from commencement, the upper administration has made no attempt to communicate with the AFT president, campus vice-presidents, nor the editor of *The Advocate*. I mention this failure to communicate with the ironic knowledge that, this time last year, a plan was put forward to meet with us at least once a month in academic year 2010-2011.

In some cases the administration has blatantly disregarded genuine efforts on our part to communicate with them. I get reports from employees that some administrators, including campus presidents, are unwilling to meet with them. A number of these administrators have been willing to participate in meaningful dialogue in the past. It is no secret that AFT communication with upper administration has been negatively affected because we sometimes disagree with them. After a couple of *Advocate* articles taking issue with administrative decisions, Dr. Carpenter suspended meetings with the AFT. In addition, Dr. Carpenter and Dr. Steve Head jointly ended an agreement regarding release time for the AFT president. This release was for two classes per semester, similar to that allotted to Faculty Senate presidents, except for the fact that the union's state affiliate paid for the adjuncts who taught the classes. The agreement had been in place for well over a decade and served the college and employees well. It was suddenly, and summarily, ended by the administration. A consequence of this new corporate administrative approach is that morale among faculty and staff is the lowest I have seen it in all my years with the System, and I've been here since 1974. Employee morale is such an issue that it was raised in Dr. Carpenter's evaluation. The Board reported at the March 2011 meeting that he received a number of fives but was assessed a four regarding employee morale because the Board knows it is an issue.

Ultimately, this new tone is set by the administrative leader at the top of the System. This tone of silent alienation is not productive. The AFT pre-

fers working in a spirit of cooperation. We aren't likely to agree with the administration on all points, but we stand ready to work for better communication. There are many contributions that faculty and staff could make if it were not for this wall of silence that has been created. It is time for this behavior to stop. Dr. Carpenter, tear down this wall.

Alan Hall

Worshipping At The Hind End of A Dead Horse

Recently, I attended a conference in San Francisco focusing on the effects of technology on learning, education, and the brain. Presenters focused on the impact of technology on the current generation's thought processes, cognitive skills, and behavior. I came away with a little bit more empathy for the current generation of students that we teach and some definite concerns for the future of education.

Current technology (email, cell phones, the ability to text, etc.) provides immediate gratification and leads our students to expect immediate results. Such technology causes stimulation of the "pleasure" center in the brain, the same neural pathways stimulated by drugs, gambling, and risk taking. Students, therefore, expect the same level of stimulation from us in the educational process. Research finds that boredom is the leading cause of low achievement and student dropouts. Traditional classroom methods do not supply the same level of stimulation as the current technology popular with younger generations.

Because of young people's focus on their immediate social world (Facebook, Myspace, etc.), they remain connected to a social world but at the same time tend to become self-centered and narcissistic. Research supports the fact that today's young people who are attached to technology often lack the ability to empathize with others, are less capable of planning and prioritizing, are more easily dis-



tracted and therefore less able to remain goal directed. Research has shown that checking Facebook even once while in class or while doing homework is significantly associated with lower grades. It causes “cognitive” derailment, and it is difficult for the student to get back on track. Furthermore, playing one hour of video games a day increases symptoms of ADHD and lowers overall GPA. High technology use is associated with a “staccato” quality of thinking where students find it difficult to focus on one idea or concept. Also, constantly checking technology interferes with working memory. Recall of information becomes more difficult because it is not stored effectively.

Today, a person does not need a formal education to access information. One types the inquiry into Google, Ask.com, or any other search engine, and one immediately has access to hundreds of thousands of pieces of information. Education used to be about the delivery of information, but that is no longer education’s purpose. Tony Wagner, author of *The Global Achievement Gap* states, “‘tests’ tell us nothing about college or world readiness.”

During the U.S. Department of Education Community College Summit, hosted by LSC, one segment shown was an Industry Panel. One participant asked what business and industry need in college graduates and in future employees. A panel member stated that they needed “employees who could think, evaluate information, and come up with an answer that is not in the book.” In other words, we need students who can think critically and can process the information they have accessed. This comment made me wonder why in the world we are measuring course “outcomes” by simply asking for information related to the course content.

Another conference presenter in San Francisco stated that Education Policy makers worship at the hind end of a dead horse. They adhere to outdated models of education that focus only on content and ignore the processes that are critical and central to learning. He also stated that “outcome assessment ignores the processes that occur in the classroom.” Currently, education uses narrow assessments of

“success,” and these are not effective measurements of teaching and education. To quote another participant at the technology conference, “using the wrong metric is worse than using no metric at all.” The current emphasis on outcome testing is misguided and based upon an antiquated model of education.

I’ve participated in several of the LSC committee meetings that attempted to clarify the policies and procedures for measuring outcomes in the classroom. I’ve asked a number of individuals why we are doing this. I’ve not received a single solid answer to this question. Some stated that it was a SACS initiative. Some said that the process was initiated through our System Office. In any event, I think that this attempt does not adequately address the learning that takes place in the classroom. The new 3 C’s of college education are critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. These skills are necessary to be successful in the world of relationships and work. I don’t think it really matters whether the students know who founded the ideas of psychoanalysis or can define “democracy.” However, it does matter if they can critically examine the major assumptions of Freud’s theory or the principles of democracy and then write about the relevance of those ideas to their own lives.

Measuring content “outcomes” as a measure of effective teaching and learning is misguided and based upon an outdated model of education. The horse is dead. Policy makers need to begin to initiate policy based upon brain science and current educational research.

Dr. Don Stanley, Chair
Department of Psychology, LSC-NH





The Importance of Individual Action

I often hear from people a belief that their individual action cannot affect anything. One area in which people think their voices will not matter is the political arena. I want to share two events that suggest that this notion is wrong.

We all know that drastic cuts proposed by the state legislature are devastating to Texas education from K – 12 to higher education. For months, Governor Perry has hammered on a “cuts only” approach to dealing with budget shortfalls. He adamantly refused to consider releasing money from the Rainy Day Fund, a fund that was created to deal with just the sort of economic crisis the state is in. Despite numerous editorials in the newspapers, recommendations from other political leaders, and letters, emails and phone calls from concerned citizens, the governor drew a line in the sand and said absolutely not.

On March 12, my family and I participated in a march on the Capitol in Austin sponsored by an organization called Save Our Schools. That day, 10,000 people marched, protesting draconian cuts and insisting that the governor release money from the Rainy Day Fund. Speakers included teachers, superintendents, students, and political leaders. The crowd was made up primarily of educational employees and their families who were all concerned about the future of public education in Texas. I was proud to be standing in such an energized, focused crowd. To hear so many people shouting in unison, “Save our schools!” and the echoing of those words across the Capitol grounds was powerful.

The following Monday, March 14, AFT Lone Star’s state affiliate, Texas AFT, held a rally on the steps of the Capitol that focused on the same issues. Four of our union members joined 4,000 members from across Texas. They reported the same energy and excitement as my family experienced on the 12th. Both days received extensive news coverage.

The next week brought a change. On Wednesday, March 16, *The Houston Chronicle* reported that

“Gov. Rick Perry agreed Tuesday to spend up to \$3.2 billion from the rainy day fund to help address a deficit this fiscal year [. . .]. The House Appropriations Committee quickly approved the expenditure [. . .] (A-1). The truth is that \$3.2 billion is not enough money to address the state’s budget crisis; the Governor should release more. However, we are in a better situation now than where we were when he drew a line in the sand and adamantly refused to use the Rainy Day Fund.

On Thursday, March 17, *The Houston Chronicle* reported the following: “Hoping to cushion the effects of proposed state budget cuts to public education and health care, Lt. Gov David Dewhurst said Wednesday a special committee will be named Monday to find \$5 billion in ‘non-tax revenue’ for use in the next two-year budget cycle” (A-1).

I certainly would not claim that the protests by Save Our Schools and the Texas AFT alone caused Rick Perry and David Dewhurst to move. I am sure that other forces also came into play. However, it is worth noting that these politicians went from lines in the sand and stonewalling to shifting their focus within two days of these protests.

The truth is that if individuals are willing to get involved, to take a stand on issues important to them, they can effect change.

Alan Hall



A Save our Schools rally participant.



Memories of the Incomparable **Dr. Jones, Our Thelma**

On Saturday, April 2, the family of Thelma Jones and many of her LSC-NH friends and colleagues met in the Gallery of the Library to celebrate her vibrant life and legacy. Although Thelma passed away in January, she wanted her memorial to be at North Harris because, of all the schools she had known and loved, North Harris was “her school.” It, therefore, took a while for her children, all busy professionals, and the school to find the right date to meet together. The gallery was crowded, every seat taken, with old friends looking at pictures and telling personal stories of T.J. long before the program began. To give a modest summary of all that was said and shared, I’ll quote some opinions from people we all know and who knew Thelma well.

Dr. David Sam, former President of LCS-NH, met Dr. Jones some seven years after she had retired. Thelma had come home to us to give the largest gift of money ever donated by a faculty member. She gave \$45,000 for three endowed scholarships for three students of merit, in perpetuity. At the time of their meeting Dr. Sam said:

With steadfastness, Thelma has given her time, her talents, and now her treasure all in the pursuit of an academic mission from which past and now future North Harris College students benefit.... I consider this life span of devotion to teaching a truly personal and priceless gift of time.

Dr. Jennie Harrison, Dean of Communications, got the same kick from Thelma’s intrepid world exploration as did the rest of us.

She was always in search of new experiences, as witnessed by her buying a home in England to use as a base for her travels and her willingness to teach at a Chinese teachers’ preparatory school....She was fearless and resourceful. She would go anywhere, by any means, firmly believing that she could work out any problem or complication that occurred. We were fortun-

nate to have her... both because of her expertise and experience in classroom and her strength of character.

Dr. Wei Li, a native of China, remembers Thelma as a friendly role model who invited him into her classroom.

I had no formal teaching experience in the United States, so when I first started teaching at NHC, I observed Thelma’s class as well as several other colleagues’ classes. I was impressed by her confidence and sense of humor and her students’ love for her. She was such a charismatic teacher!

I have always considered Thelma one of my mentors. A Chinese proverb says, “When you drink the water from a well, never forget who dug it.” I owe much of my good luck to Thelma and many others. I always feel that I can try to learn many things from Thelma, but there’s something that I just can’t imitate—the charisma and unique sense of humor that she radiated!

For many of us she was a role model of character and strength, and I admit I always wanted to be like Thelma when I grew up—a tall order—being like Thelma. Here she is in her own words:

REFLECTION

by Thelma Jones

My mother, my first teacher, sewed at my elbow while giving me instructions in letters and words at the age of ten. Ten years later I graduated from Texas City High School. Naming all the schools I attended and served is useless, but North Harris College and the University of Houston were two. Then, too, there were over four years in China, a learning experience extraordinary.

Why? I loved it! And I learned more through these experiences than any other job, and my learning was diversified: speaking skills, caring, communication,



writing, poverty, differences, solving difficult problems, such as failing students with genuinely concerned parents. And China was so similar, simply under a different sky and hearing a different language (no, I did not learn Chinese—only “How much does it cost?”)

Yes, I miss the experience. But “all good things come to an end”—trite, yes, but true. Cherish your good times, and bite your tongue when the urge to “throw in the towel” arrives.

Our Thelma. It’s so easy to see why we all wanted to grow up to be just like her. And did I mention she was a long time, devoted, charter member of the AFT?

Pat Gray, editor
Professor of English, LSL-NH

Happy Anniversary, AFT!

AFT Lone Star College celebrated its 30th anniversary at Shirley Acres on April 9th. Attendees enjoyed displays of memorabilia dating back to 1980, great music, dancing and food. Following are a few photographs from the event.



AFT Lone Star College President, Alan Hall, toasts the future of the AFT.



Louis Maltaro, Secretary/Treasurer of the Texas AFT, addresses an enthusiastic crowd.



Pat Gray and John Burghduff share Master of Ceremony responsibilities.





The union’s charter with four charter members (left to right) Bob Locander, Allen Vogt, Bertha Parle, and Alan Hall.



Linda Bridges, President of the Texas AFT, shares her vision of the union.



Happy 30th anniversary !



Bruce Machart, AFT Faculty Vice President, LSC—NH, has accepted a position in Massachusetts. Our sentiments were best captured in a notice by Dr. Steve Sansom.

It is with joy and sadness that I announce Bruce Machart will be leaving us this summer for a teaching position in Creative Writing at Bridgewater University in Massachusetts. The joy, like that of a parent seeing his/her child leave for college and a new life, derives from our having been at once invigorated by Bruce’s congeniality, his kindnesses, his intelligence and, most of all, his friendship. Assured that his future holds so many good things, we all wish him well, both personally and professionally. The sadness is explained by our knowing he will never again have to teach freshman comp. What I owe to Bruce’s assiduity, good sense, and cheerful, good temper, I can never forget. And now, as Byron tells us, must be and “hath always been,” the word “farewell.” Thanks for your spirit, your encouragement, your call to high thinking, and your promise. You shall be missed. Good luck, lad. Bring home the Pulitzer.

Steve Sansom
Chair-English, Philosophy,
and Journalism Departments
Lone Star College - North Harris





Campus Updates



No report. Martina Kusi-Mensah is on sabbatical.



We assume our members are looking forward to the end of the semester. Spring is in the air, and summer can't be far away. Construction is progressing, and the campus will definitely have a different look in Fall 2011. Many are excited about moving to new facilities, and others are eagerly looking towards renovations yet to come. Graduation is four weeks away, and we are looking forward to LSC-Kingwood hosting its own ceremony at the Humble Civic Center.

I was contacted by several faculty members regarding an issue with the Catalog Personnel section. When I checked, I found out I had the same issue. Not all of my degrees were listed in the latest Catalog Personnel section. When I questioned how my undergraduate degree, listed for the past 35 years, had disappeared, I was told that they didn't have a copy of my transcript. I can assure you that the transcript was turned in when I was hired, but somehow the System can't find it. They are telling us that if a faculty member wants to have a degree listed, he needs a new transcript sent to HR. Several faculty members asked me if the System expected us to pay for copies of new transcripts to be sent. I didn't have the answer, so I emailed Dr. Persson only to find out that she was having the same problem with her Doctorate Degree. In the future you will find M. Ed. University of Houston under my name. For more information call HR!

Have a great summer, and don't hesitate to contact me with questions, concerns or information on AFT-Lonestar!

Rich Almstedt, AFT Faculty VP



The AFT at CyFair enjoyed another successful informal gathering in April. Next year, I hope to schedule AFT get togethers on a monthly basis. Watch for news in August! Thanks to everyone for a great year for the union on our campus. Please continue to contact me if any concerns come up this summer. New members always welcome!"

John Burghduff, AFT Faculty VP



Ahoy Maties,

We be hed in fer Port Finals agin an tha seas stil be a bit white toppun, but the cabotage be a femmiler one an we shuld mek port inna cuppla weks. Seems tha war teble be gittin thim emty seats fild as the gud ship LSC-Tomball's vice-admiral finaly apperted a Rear-Admiral Nutt az tha head of Instrukchun. Howlsumeivr, rumerz stel be a rullin rount tha water berrels bout hugh meit be a heddin tha Student Success cheir et tha teble.

Ther stel be sum termole rount abowt tha ship regarden jobs an asignmets fer sum a tha petty officers a werkin tha deck werin students cum an go gittin thumselz a redi fer tha nxt roun a klases. Tha hupe be thet thengz wilt venchaly git setteld an tha keelhauln dun ewey wit. Reminz me a tha deys of whin eye be a sailin wit Capt'n Bligh an thir be thes wun seaman, naw, I be tellin thet storey a nether tyme.

Uthern thet, we be kuntuin ta werk ahn tha decks fer fore-liggid critters an ouer acten en sangen crew thet wahnts ta intertane uz. Sew, til next we mete, kepe tha sails in gud kundishun, tha water berrels fule an tha salt porke dri.

Oh, an bi tha wey, we wesh ta giv houerin Intrim Rear-Admiral uf Instrukchun, Cher Brock, a hale und harty sulute fer a job well dun. Whilin we wilcum tha new Rear Admiral Nutt, we gonna be missin tha ole Iron Mistress un we be alla weshin her tha bist on her cabotage to the HCS LSC-North Harris. Fare thee Well Ye Maiden uf tha High Seas, Fare thee Well!

Richard Becker, AFT Faculty VP



AFT - Lone Star College

AFT Local Union # 4518

Strong, Active, Vocal: A Union of Professionals



American Federation of Teachers
Texas AFT
AFL - CIO



Local: www.aftlonestar.org
281-889-1009

State: www.texasaft.org

National: www.aft.org

Monthly AFT Dues

Membership Eligibility

Full-time Faculty	\$33.20
Full-time Professional Staff	\$27.53
Full-time Support Staff	\$23.93
Adjunct Faculty & Staff	\$11.74

Membership in the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) is open to full and part-time faculty and staff up through the dean level. If you would like to join or find out more information about membership, please contact any of the officers listed on page 16 of this newsletter, or check out our online information and application at:

www.aftlonestar.org



AFT-Lone Star College

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 Texas and other affiliated labor bodies

BENEFITS

- \$8,000,000 Occupational Liability Insurance
 - provides security while teaching
 - protection against litigation
 - malpractice protection
- \$25,000 Accidental Death Insurance
- Legal Assistance
 - Free consultation and representation on grievances and job related problems
 - Services of leading labor attorneys
 - Legal Defense Fund protection
- Political Power
 - Texas AFT lobbyists in Austin
 - AFT lobbyists in Washington
 - Representation at the Coordinating Board
 - Support for local electoral work
- Affiliations
 - Affiliated with the Texas AFL-CIO
 - Affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers and Texas AFT
- Staff Services
 - Professional representatives to assist and advise in processing grievances
 - AFT research facilities
 - Leadership Training
- Savings and discounts on goods and services with AFT PLUS Benefits
- Free \$10,000 term life insurance policy for first year of membership

Professional career protection and a united voice at work.

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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 President, Alan Hall @ 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



2010-2011 Monthly Membership Dues rates:
Based on your position with the Lonestar College System, please select your appropriate dues rate.

Full-time Faculty \$33.20/mo. or \$398.40/yr.

Full-time Professional Staff \$27.53/mo. or \$330.36/yr.

Full-time Support Staff \$23.93/mo. or \$287.16/yr.

Adjunct Faculty \$11.74/mo. or \$140.88/yr.

Part-time Staff \$11.74/mo. or \$140.88/yr.



IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Payroll deduction allows members to pay union dues in monthly installments. If you prefer to write a check to pay for your union dues, be advised that AFT requires the full yearly amount in one payment. Exceptions to the rule apply for Part-time Staff and Adjunct Faculty only.

First Name:	<input type="text"/>	Middle Initial:	<input type="text"/>	Last Name:	<input type="text"/>
Home Address:	<input type="text"/>				
City:	<input type="text"/>	State:	<input type="text"/>	Zip code:	<input type="text"/>
Home Phone:	<input type="text"/>	Email Address:	<input type="text"/>		
Employee ID #:	<input type="text"/>	Campus:	<input type="text"/>		
Position:	<input type="text"/>	Room #:	<input type="text"/>	Referred by:	<input type="text"/>
I am paid: <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-monthly		Paid over: <input type="checkbox"/> 9 months <input type="checkbox"/> 9.5 months <input type="checkbox"/> 12 months			
Are you a current or new member? <input type="checkbox"/> Current member <small>(Updating information and/or payment method)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> New Member					
Choose method of payment: <input type="checkbox"/> Payroll Deduction <small>(Complete the union dues agreement below)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> Cash/Check <small>(Make full yearly payment payable to AFT-LSC)</small>					

Union Dues Deduction Agreement

"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."

Signature: (Print this form and sign here) **Date** [Click here to print form](#)

For AFT-Lone Star College office use only. Do not write in this box.

Position verified: YES NO (Initials) _____ NOTES: _____

Dues Class: FTF AF FTFS FTSS PTS C _____



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CALL FOR ARTICLES

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 articles to **Pat Gray, Editor**, LSC NH A 217, or e-mail patsy.gray@lonestar.edu, or submit to any of the other following officers:

Alan Hall, President	North Harris College	ACAD 217-G	281-618-5544
Linda Dirzanowski	North Harris College	WNPS 180	281-765-7760
Bruce Machart	North Harris College	ACAD 217-A	281-618- 5542
Bob Locander	North Harris College	ACAD 270	281-618-5592
Allen Vogt	North Harris College	ACAD 264-C	281-618-5583
Rich Almstedt	Kingwood College	FTC 100-G	281-312-1656
Laura Codner	Kingwood College	CLA 110	281-312- 1414
Catherine Olson	Tomball College	S 153 - H	281-357- 3776
Richard Becker	Tomball College	E 271-D	281-401- 1835
Janet Moore	Tomball College	E 210 -E	281-401-1871
Martina Kusi-Mensa	Montgomery College	SSC-209 J	936-273- 7276
John Burghduff	Cy-Fair College	HSC 117-R	281-290-3915
Brenda Rivera	Fairbanks Center	119	832-782-5068
Earl Brewer	Fairbanks center	S - 13	832-782-5029

Membership Has Its Benefits

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 provided 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, it's there for them.

If you believe in these values and are not a member, now is the perfect time to join. The AFT advocated effectively for the raise employees received this year. The annual membership dues are a small percentage of the raise. If you believe in our values, take action now and join the AFT.

Alan Hall