



The Advocate

AFT Meeting with Dr. Carpenter

The AFT Lone Star Executive Board met with Dr. Carpenter on Saturday, February 4. In order to provide due credit, I want to point out that he requested the meeting, the purpose of which was to discuss moving forward after the last couple of years during which the AFT and he have had a relationship that was not as productive as it might have been. The AFT discussed several concerns that we have, including but not limited to communication with administration, representation of members, and the grievance policy. Dr. Carpenter also expressed concerns about communication. Everyone agreed that, moving forward, mutual respect is the key to a successful relationship, and we are all committed to that effort to regain a positive working relationship. Dr. Carpenter indicated that there is room for improvement on the issues we raised, and he committed to working with us to create a grievance policy that reflects "openness, fairness, and consistency." The union also committed to supporting state funding issues that he is concerned about as we approach the next session of the Texas Legislature.

Of particular note, we discussed a situation involving a faculty member and a SACS review of credentials that could have been handled in a manner that would have had a less negative impact on the faculty mem-

ber and students. Dr. Carpenter was already aware of the situation and committed to righting it as quickly as is reasonable.

Alan Hall

The Life and Times of Adjunct Instructors

"I love to teach, I love the subject that I teach, and I love my students, but my position as an adjunct will never support my family. My wife and I are hoping to start a family in the near future and very soon I will have to find a way to better support that family." (Quote from a Lone Star College System adjunct instructor.)

Few, indeed, are the nations that stake their very existence on self-evident truths "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."¹ Those ideals have never been easy to live up to. Somehow, in the human soul, there is a flaw that permits us, while we celebrate these ideals, to blindly withhold them from the least of our brothers and sisters. We look back in wonder that our ancestors could deny life and liberty to African slaves and Native Americans, could fail to notice that all women are also created equal and could countenance that adults and children toiling 18 hours a day in dangerous mines and sweatshops were not getting much of

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a chance to pursue happiness.

I find myself thinking, often, of the injustices we glibly tolerate now that will cause future generations to wonder at our blindness just as we wonder about the blindness of our ancestors. The Great Recession is calling one of those injustices to the forefront—the demise of opportunity. For three decades or so, justified by the utopian promises of globalization, deregulation, and supply-side economics, corporate America has been allowed to down-size, out-source and off-shore its way to phenomenal wealth while the Middle Class has faded away. Whereas our parents and grandparents could count on well-paying full-time jobs with reliable pensions and (in recent decades) medical coverage, many in our time have to cobble together an existence with a collection of low-paying part-time jobs with no benefits. The pursuit of happiness is replaced by the struggle for survival.

“I am trying to find a full-time faculty position and am trying to make do with adjunct work until this happens. However, I may not be able to continue this because of the low pay and lack of health insurance. Next year, after I finish my dissertation, I may be forced to find a different line of work. This would be truly sad.” (LSCS Adjunct)

This trend from full-time work to part-time work is starkly true in higher education. When I was offered my first community college teaching position at San Jacinto College-South in 1982, I was one of two applicants for the job, and going directly from graduate school into a full-time job was not out of the ordinary. For a college of about 3,000 students by the time I left in 1988, we had 7 full-time math instructors. We taught the vast majority of the classes. The typical adjunct instructor had a full-time job elsewhere and picked up a class or two at night for the love of teaching. A few were graduate students wanting to pick up some experience before hitting the job market. Pay and benefits were not significant issues to most of the people in these categories so the former was low and the latter didn't exist.

Fast forward through three decades of draconian budget cuts suffered as collateral damage to the-government-is-the-problem tax cuts. Well over half of all classes at nearly all community colleges are taught by adjunct faculty. In my own Department of Mathematics at LSC-Cy-Fair, 69% of all classes this semester are taught by adjunct faculty—actually a slight decrease compared to past semesters. If we were to have the same percentage of classes covered by full-time faculty as we had at San Jacinto College-South all those years ago, given that LSC-Cy-Fair is much bigger, we would need to have at least 42 full-time faculty members. We have 22 (transitional math and credit-level math combined including Fairbanks Center).

“This semester I am teaching 9 classes, including 5 different courses at 3 different campuses across town from each other. I teach because I love it, but the living in poverty part of it is not fun.” (LSCS Adjunct)

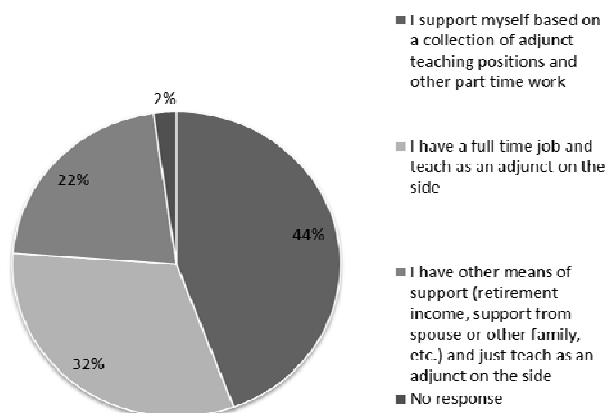
The image of the adjunct instructor as the full-time professional bringing his or her real life expertise into classes taught strictly for the love of teaching persists, especially in the advertising of for-profit universities who use adjuncts exclusively. Those of us in the trenches of day to day community college life know that this image doesn't give the full picture any longer. AFT-Lone Star College decided that this is a good time to focus on our part time colleagues and to bring their situation into the light of day. To this end, we selected four academic departments scattered across three Lone Star campuses and invited the adjunct faculty in those departments to participate in a short survey conducted on the AFT server. We asked four questions and also gave space for the participants to add comments of their own anonymously. The quotations you see throughout this article are taken from those responses. We received 88 responses total from our sample, and we believe the results we received are representative.

First, we asked our respondents to describe their employment status (Figure 1). Only 22% of the adjuncts who reported fit the traditional image of



Figure 1

Which of the following most accurately describes your employment situation?



the full-time professional teaching on the side. An additional 32% indicated that they have a different source of income such as retirement income or the support of spouse or other family member and teach on the side. However, 44% of the adjuncts support themselves strictly on an amalgamation of adjunct teaching and other part time work. These colleagues juggle schedules at several worksites across the city, commute many miles a day, and have no office facilities at their places of work. I'll discuss pay rates in more detail later, but, if all the colleges at which these adjuncts taught paid ap-

Figure 2

On average, how many classes do you teach...

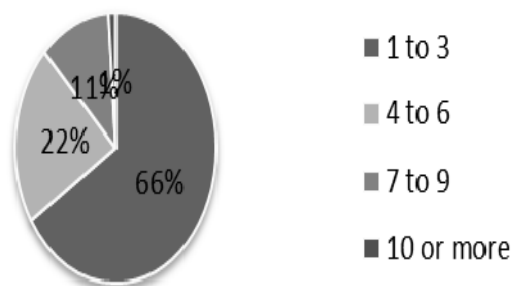
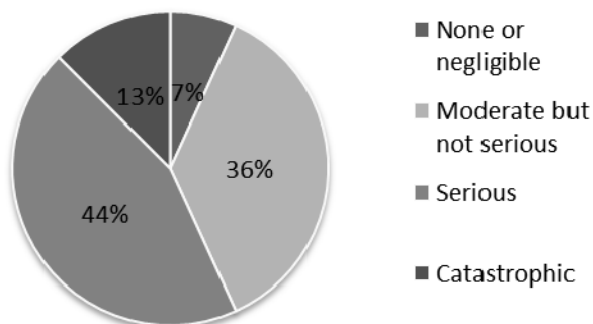


Figure 3

If you were unable to teach as an adjunct at LSCS, which of the following best describes...



proximately what Lone Star pays (\$37.80 per contact hour) and they taught the contact hours of a fulltime faculty member (say, five 48 hour classes during each long semester and two in the summer), their annual gross income would be \$21,772.80. This amount is below the federal poverty level for a family of four (\$22,350)² and, of course, there are no benefits.

We also asked all respondents to report how many total classes they teach per semester (Figure 2). The preponderance of responses of 1 – 3 classes indicates that, at least for some, additional work must be in fields other than teaching. Some of them, however, teach a very large number of courses per semester.

"I have a full-time teaching job but my salary has decreased in value. We do not get raises that even keep us level with inflation. My adjunct pay is absolutely necessary to take care of medical needs and to allow me to live alone in a lower class but safe neighborhood. Without my adjunct pay I would have to move to an unsafe apartment complex." (LSCS Adjunct)

The responses to one question we asked took me a bit by surprise. When asked what the financial im-



pact would be to themselves and their families if they were suddenly unable to teach at Lone Star, 57% of all respondents said that the impact would be serious to catastrophic. I expected this to be the case for our adjuncts relying strictly on part time work, but this percentage includes some who have full-time jobs or other support. With stagnancy in pay throughout the economy, holes in the social safety net and the various life situations we find ourselves in, a significant majority of our adjunct faculty are in a precarious financial situation at best. Mirroring trends across the economy, too many rely on part-time work, and even many of those with full-time jobs struggle to stay at the same level. The data is compelling; the quotations give a glimpse into the daily reality.

"I make less than \$30,000 a year. I'm never sure from semester to semester how much I will be making and I have trouble keeping up with my bills and cannot pay back student loans because I'm always so behind on everything. I love my job but sometimes I think it's not worth it." (LSCS Adjunct)

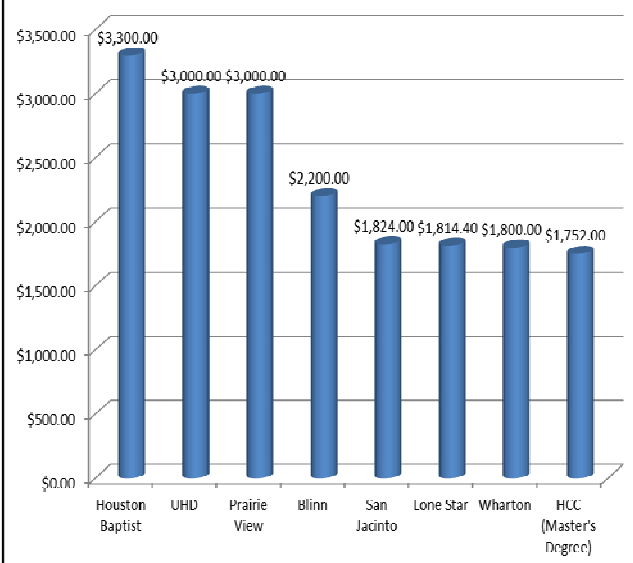
Digging a little deeper, what is the dollars and cents reality of adjunct pay behind the human data we've seen so far? AFT-Lone Star College did some research to compare adjunct pay within our system with that at other institutions in our area. Traditionally, when community college administrators consider pay rates for adjuncts they compare themselves with other community colleges. Figure 4 below shows the total adjunct pay for a semester for an instructor teaching one 48 hour class. Our pay rates are in line with some of our largest neighboring community college systems but towards the lower end and are significantly lower than Blinn College, for example.

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Adjunct Pay for One 48 Hour Class



However, looking at only community colleges does not give the full picture. A number of other institutions of higher learning in the area also employ a significant number of adjuncts. We compete for adjuncts with and do not compare favorably with these colleges. For example, notice that our rates are dramatically lower than those at Prairie View A&M, University of Houston-Downtown, and Houston Baptist University.

Looking at adjunct pay within our system over time is also informative. Figure 5 shows the adjunct pay rate per contact hour within the North Harris Montgomery Community College District / Lone Star College System since 1995.



"Where free unions and collective bargaining are forbidden, freedom is lost."

Ronald Reagan, Sep. 1, 1980



Figure 5 ³	
Year	Adjunct Rate/Contact Hour
1995-1996	25
1996-1997	25
1997-1998	25
1998-1999	25
1999-2000	27
2000-2001	29
2001-2002	31
2002-2003	34
2003-2004	34
2004-2005	34
2005-2006	34
2006-2007	36
2007-2008	37.8
2008-2009	37.8
2009-2010	37.8
2010-2011	37.8
2011-2012	37.8

Over the past decade (2002 – 2011), the adjunct pay rate in our system has increased by 11.2%. By comparison, the cumulative Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) over the same period of time from the Social Security Administration has been 25.3%⁴. So adjuncts have good reason to feel that they are falling behind. Significantly, note that the adjunct pay rate in our system has been stagnant since 2007. Perhaps if the “old” paradigm of adjuncts as full-time professionals picking up a class for the love of teaching were still true, this would not be much of an issue. However, our research has clearly established that the paradigm has shifted.

“Not giving adjuncts a pay raise when all full-time employees got one last year was both offensive and patently unfair. Adjuncts teach over half the classes; not including them in the raise manifests an odd set of priorities on the part of the powers that be.” (LSCS Adjunct)

The situation we find ourselves in was not caused by either the administration or the board of trustees of the Lone Star College System and it would be unfair to blame them for it. Clearly, creating enough new full-time positions to get us back to full-time/part-time ratios like we saw in the 1980s and raising pay rates for the remaining adjuncts to levels similar to our neighboring universities would provide the relief our adjunct faculty need. However, given the severe cut backs in state funding that have been reported in previous issues of this newsletter, together with sluggish property values and other effects of the Great Recession, we all know that this is not a problem we can solve immediately.

Ultimately, like the Abolitionists, Feminists and Populists who organized against the inequities of the past, it will take a significant portion of the population to stand up and declare that correcting the decline of opportunity across the entire economy, and thus the decline of the Middle Class, is a moral imperative. Perhaps we are seeing the first stirrings of such a movement.

In the meantime, is there anything that one administration, one chancellor, one board of trustees can do to help? I believe that awareness is a first step, and we in the AFT hope that this article will help bring the situation of our largest group of faculty into sharp focus for all decision makers in our system. Although the problem cannot be fixed overnight, we urge the administration and board to develop a long term plan to improve the situation for adjunct faculty. As a starting point for discussion, realizing that harsh realities have to be considered, I might suggest two ambitious goals:

- A 10 year hiring plan to bring the percentage of classes taught by full-time faculty on each campus to 60%, a percentage that was long advocated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Of the adjuncts surveyed, 77% indicated a desire to work for the system full-time, so the hiring pool is there. (That was our fourth question.)
- A 4% increase in the adjunct pay rate per year for each of the next 5 years to bring Lone Star adjunct pay up to the level of Blinn College adjunct pay. This would leave us considerably



below some of our neighboring institutions but at the forefront among community colleges. Considering the short run, it is clear that five academic years with the same adjunct pay rate is too long. The AFT believes that rates must change this year in spite of all challenges and urges the most generous pay raise possible for the upcoming budget cycle. We know that other important priorities will be competing for scarce funds. Buildings, equipment and, yes, administration, are critical elements in the life of the school. However, none of those teach students; teachers do. We urge that each budget item considered be weighed carefully against the priority of adjunct pay and increasing the number of full-time positions.

Everything we have learned about adjunct faculty has a corollary among our part-time staff—that can be a future study and a future article.

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness must not be quaint old slogans. Society as a whole must commit itself to these ideals and Lone Star College can lead the way, as we so often do.

1. U.S. Declaration of Independence, 1776
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/11fedreg.shtml>
3. Courtesy of Dr. Richard Carpenter, Chancellor, Lone Star College System, December 2, 2011
4. Social Security Administration website: www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/colaseries.htm

John Burghdoff, Professor of Math, LSCS-CF

EEOC Training

On Saturday, January 28, AFT Lone Star officers participated in training on Work Place Bullying offered by Joe Bontke with the EEOC Houston District Office. Our interest in the training was driven by reports from employees regarding treatment by supervisors that included threats, intimidation, and even yelling. These behaviors create a

hostile work environment that employees do not have to tolerate. The union provides the following information for the benefit of all employees.

Workplace Bullying Defined: Repeated and unwanted actions by an individual or group intending to intimidate, harass, degrade or offend.

Workplace bullying is abuse or misuse of power defined by Joe Botkne as “psychological violence.” Bullying creates a hostile work environment and may:

- be an unwelcome act that may include physical or verbal behavior
- be based on employee’s protected status
- be sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile, offensive or abusive work environment

Specific examples of experiencing bullying include:

- being shouted at or humiliated
- being the target of practical jokes
- being blamed without justification
- being excluded or socially isolated
- being physically intimidated
- being excessively micro-managed

Of course, EEOC laws also apply to any discrimination based on race, national origin, color, disability, genetics, religion, sex, or age.

If you believe yourself to be the target of any of these behaviors, please contact your local AFT representative or an appropriate System employee.

Time and Labor

Waiting for Privatization

Union bashing is fashionable, these days. Even sensible, pro-education reformers have lately bought into the line that teachers’ unions stand in the way of education reform. A recent film, *Waiting for Superman*, begins with the common-sense observation that the cost of incarcerating a prisoner



for four years is greater than the cost of sending a child through private school for twelve years. This is a clever twist on one of the oldest arguments for universal public education—that schools are cheaper than prisons. The twist is the implication that our tax dollars are better spent on private schools rather than on public schools. Why not spend that money on public schools to make them better? Because, detractors say, public schools are unionized; unions oppose reform, and they also protect bad teachers from being fired.

This is the same argument for privatization that was made by conservative economist Milton Friedman in “Public Schools, Make them Private,” published in *The Washington Post* in 1995. Friedman argued that U.S. schools, especially in low-income urban neighborhoods, were performing poorly, and that this put U.S. workers and corporations at a disadvantage in the world market. Technological change and globalization, he warned, made reform an imperative. Public education, he charged, had been corrupted by the contending fiefdoms of entrenched bureaucracy and the teachers’ unions. Friedman believed that schools needed to be privatized—using vouchers and charter schools—so that they could benefit from competition and also hire more non-union personnel. The problem with unions, he said, was that we used our legislative clout to oppose reform and that we protected bad teachers from being fired.¹ Fifteen years later, privatization schemes, such as vouchers and charter schools, have not improved school performance, despite widespread implementation with generous support from private philanthropies, along with state and federal governments. However, Friedman’s argument has become widely accepted in reform circles, and it continues to steer education policy at the highest levels. Why?

In the 1980s, the Bradley Foundation spent over half a million dollars promoting, and then defending in court, a school voucher campaign in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It called for parents to be issued vouchers that enabled them to spend public funds on the private school of their choice. Privatization was being marketed as “school choice.” Later, the Bradley

Foundation gave \$375,000 to John Chubb and Terry Moe to write, and then to market *politics, Markets and America’s Schools*, a book that used empirical data to support Milton Friedman’s case for privatization.² The Bradley Foundation and other like-minded foundations created think tanks that produced a cadre of privatization-oriented bureaucrats and scholars who circulated through the revolving doors of state and federal education departments. Their indictment of teachers and unions was then picked up by The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation. The enormous size of the Gates’ gifts, together with their media partnerships with PBS, Viacom, and others, has made the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation the dominant voice in education reform.³ *Waiting for Superman* sums up their message neatly: the problem with public schools is the teachers and the unions that protect them. The solution, taken by the Bush administration (No Child Left Behind) and the Obama administration (Race to the Top), is privatization through vouchers, tax credits, and charter schools, driven by high-stakes standardized testing.

This is the wrong solution to the wrong problem. The voucher system is basically a shell game.

There simply isn’t enough money in state treasuries to send all the students to expensive private schools. Charter schools (schools that are funded publicly but managed privately) do not produce higher performing students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, there is no significant difference between student performance in charter schools over public schools.⁴ Furthermore, the standardized tests used to determine the success or failure of schools and teachers are notoriously unreliable.⁵ The most significant factor in determining school performance is poverty.⁶ U.S. schools that serve neighborhoods with less than 10 percent poverty rank at the top internationally in Math and Science. Schools with about 50 percent poverty still outscore their international peers. However, U.S. schools serving neighborhoods with over 75 percent poverty score below average internationally.⁷



If you aren't poor; notes get taken; tests get studied for; parent phone calls get answered, parent conferences are actually attended; commitments are made by parents and followed-through-on; online grades are checked; parent-initiated phone calls are received; questions about grades get asked; supplies are provided from home and not from the teacher's mug of cruddy free pencils.⁸

The problem is poverty, and it is getting worse. Twenty percent of U.S. public elementary schools serve high-poverty neighborhoods (service communities where the poverty rate is over 75 percent).⁹ However, many reformers refuse to consider poverty as an indicator because it is an "outside the school" factor.

Teachers are the most important "inside the school" factor in determining student achievement. However, no amount of teacher accountability will make high performers out of impoverished and under-resourced neighborhood schools.

This nation is in denial over the extent of poverty among our children and the consequences of that. Under-resourced schools in neighborhoods with poverty rates over 75 percent will seldom perform well academically. Teachers are being scapegoated for problems they can't control, even while the state is cutting back on desperately needed classroom resources. The alternative we are offered is privatization, and the media is ginning up a phony sense of crisis to help rush these measures through. Far from being opposed to reform, teachers' unions are actually leaders in education reform with a solid and practical reform agenda that is based on a mix of accountability, cooperation, and investment.¹⁰ Teachers' unions are not interested in protecting bad teachers; however, we do insist that all teachers receive the due process to which we are properly entitled. So, why are the teachers' unions in the crosshairs of so many government bureaucrats and panicked reformers? We are the single greatest impediment to privatizing public schools.

David Davis Professor of History,
LSCS - NH



1. Milton Friedman, "Public Schools, Make them Private," *The Cato Institute*, Briefing Paper #23, June 23, 1995.
2. John M. Miller, "The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation," *Strategic Investment in Ideas: How Two Foundations Reshaped America* (The Philanthropy Roundtable, Washington, D.C., 2003) 21-22.
3. Joanne Barkan, "Got Dough—How Billionaires Rule our Schools," *Dissent Magazine* (Winter 2011) <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=3781>.
4. "The Evaluation of Charter School Impacts: Final Report," National Center for Education Assessment and Regional Assistance. <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20104029/>. The 20 percent success claim comes from *Waiting for Superman*.
5. Linda McNeil, *Contradictions of School Reform—Educational Costs of Standardized Testing* (Routledge 2000); Dianne Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education* (Basic Books 2010). There are many others. Linda McNeil is the director of Rice University's Center for Education. Dianne Ravitch has served in the federal education department of Democratic and Republican administrations and was once a champion of No Child Left Behind.
6. "The Reading Literacy of U.S. Fourth-Grade Students in an International Context: Results From the 2001 and 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)," U.S. Department of Education, November 2007: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubinfo.asp?pubid=2008017>
7. "Closer Look: 2009 U. S. Performance across International Assessments of Student Achievement —How Much Does Performance within the United States vary by School Poverty?" National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Education, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/analysis/2009-sb3.asp>.
8. John Kuhn, "America, Stop Making Excuses for Poverty," *Education Week* (February 2012) http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/living-in-dialogue/2012/02/john_kuhn_america_stop_making.html?intc=mvs.
9. "Special Section on High Poverty Schools," *The Condition of Education 2010*, U.S. Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, American Institutes for Research, p.5.
10. Randi Weingarten, "A New Path Forward: Four approaches to Quality Teaching and Better Schools," *American Educator* (Spring 2012), <http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/spring/2010/index.cfm>



Free Speech in the Lone Star College System

The AFT believes the LSCS community should formally re-examine its free speech policies because of several recent incidents, as well as a recent U.S. District Court decision. As we seek to educate citizens, whose education enables them to disagree in a civil and productive manner crucial to participatory democracy, we believe it is particularly important that our institution of higher education strive to uphold the highest standards of civil liberties. Moreover, because LSCS is a local governing body according to Texas law, we believe that the college system must honor and abide by the U.S. Constitution. The following account of events is intended to highlight the problem.

Many employees may remember when the “Richard Carpenter Watch” blog was blocked by the System Office from Lone Star College computers on October 4, 2007. Within two weeks, a resident of Oak Ridge North filed suit against LSCS in a Montgomery County district court and claimed that blocking the website violated the First Amendment right to free speech. In response to that suit, the LSCS board called an emergency session on October 18, 2007, and voted to remove the block.¹ The AFT applauds the board’s quick action on that issue. Although the blog might be dismissed as an offensive rant, blocking it not only increased traffic to the website, but also seems problematic on First Amendment grounds.

Last fall, a Kingwood College student decided to protest the way his financial aid was handled by picketing the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Student-Conference Center. When he requested permission to protest, he was told that his protest would be limited to a free speech zone on the far side of the Kingwood campus from the Student-Conference Center during a specific time that would not coincide with the ceremony. These events occasioned discussion about free speech in the Kingwood College faculty senate. Many faculty concluded that this was an abuse of the concept of free speech zones that can be avoided only by protesting without first asking permission to do so.

Although free speech zones have been controversial for many years, the traditional rationale for their use is to protect the safety of the protesters or of the spectators. Critics of free speech zones on both the right and left have described them as disturbing examples of Orwellian double speak. Rather than protecting the safety of spectators and protesters, authorities use the zones to limit freedom of speech by putting protesters out of sight of the media and dignitaries such as those who attended the opening of the Kingwood Student-Conference Center. Some critics have argued that the very concept of free speech zones is an affront to the First Amendment, which should be understood to make the entire nation a free speech zone.²

As these events were unfolding at Kingwood, Paul Blakelock, a Kingwood professor of government, wanted to bring balance to the active speaking program at that college by inviting a well-known conservative to campus. Two weeks after the previously mentioned student protest controversy, Blakelock invited Adam Kissel, Vice President of Programs for the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). Although conservatives founded FIRE, the organization has a record of standing up for people’s free speech rights, regardless of their political leanings. The college offered Kissel a \$1,000 honorarium, but then received word from the System Office that the administration would not allow the use of LSCS funds for the honorarium because FIRE had been involved in a free speech controversy at Tomball College in the fall of 2008. In fact, there is an account of the 2008 controversy on the FIRE website:

The Young Conservatives of Texas (YCT) were among a variety of student organizations distributing flyers at Lone Star College-Tomball during an event for student groups to recruit new members. YCT’s flyer included a satirical list of “Top Ten Gun Safety Tips” including, “If your gun misfires, never look down the barrel to inspect it.” Program Manager for Student Activities Shannon Marino reportedly told the YCT



Chairman that the flyer was inappropriate and confiscated the flyers. Comer appealed to Dean of Student Development E. Edward Albracht, but Albracht also said the flyer was inappropriate and invoked the prior year's shootings at Virginia Tech. Marino informed Comer that the school's legal department would be reviewing YCT's flyers and that afterward the school might disband YCT or put the group on probation for the year. FIRE contacted the Lone Star administration about its violations of YCT's rights. Brian S. Nelson, General Counsel for the Lone Star College System, replied that any "mention of firearms and weapons" is inherently a "material interference with the operation of the school or the rights of others" because such language "brings fear and concern to students, faculty and staff." Nevertheless, YCT was allowed to remain a student organization without any disciplinary consequences.

In addition to the quotation above, YCT's top ten list included the perhaps more inflammatory statement: "Always keep your gun pointed in a safe direction, such as at a Hippy or a Communist." Nelson was right to note the larger national context when he wrote that "the tragedy of Virginia Tech cannot be underestimated when it comes to speech relating to firearms—however 'satirical and humorous' the speech may be perceived by some." However, it seems he meant to say that the tragedy of Virginia Tech cannot be overestimated or that it should not be underestimated.

Regardless, FIRE has given LSCS a red rating for having "at least one policy that both clearly and substantially restricts freedom of speech." Red is the worst rating from among green, yellow, and red. FIRE's point is that it is far too sweeping to claim that *any* mention of firearms on campus is a "material interference with the operation of the school or the rights of others." In fact, it does seem it would be difficult for the Police Academy or our Criminal Justice professors to teach their subjects without mentioning firearms.

Kissel did ultimately speak at Kingwood College on the evening of October 20, 2011. Because System Office Administration would not allow the college to use LSCS money for an honorarium, a group of Kingwood College faculty sent Kissel \$500 of their own money to cover his airfare. Those who attended the event estimate that there were 300 students in the audience and report that Kissel was a very engaging speaker. Much to her credit, Katherine Persson, President of Kingwood College, also attended the event. Kissel reportedly told students that if they are never offended while they are in college, they should demand a refund of their tuition.

In recent years, many universities and colleges have backed away from their previously restrictive free speech policies. Some schools have eliminated their free speech zones entirely, in part because of recent court rulings.³ In 2003, a Texas Tech University law student, Jason W. Roberts, sought to deliver a speech and distribute literature on the immorality of homosexuality. Rather than confine these activities to the university's designated free speech zone, Roberts requested permission to speak in front of the student union building. When university officials denied his request to speak in that location, Roberts filed a complaint against Donald R. Haragan, then Tech's president, and the school's board of regents in U.S. District Court. In September 2004, Judge Sam R. Cummings ruled that Texas Tech University could not require students to stay in designated free speech zones while making political speeches or passing out literature and that the university could not require students to seek permission before expressing their political views on campus. In his ruling, Cummings wrote: "To the extent the campus has park areas, sidewalks, streets, or other similar common areas, these are public forums . . . irrespective of whether the university has so designated them or not."⁴

We believe that, in the light of the Roberts v. Haragan decision, there are problematic passages in the LSCS Student Handbook. As one example, the handbook states "LSCS may limit





student expression in manner, place, or time by means of reasonable and uniformly applied regulations.”⁵ It would be prudent to conform to legal precedent before incurring legal fees and punitive judgments and thereby burdening taxpayers and students with wholly avoidable costs.

The last incident we would like to mention concerns the LSCS Board’s enactment in November 2011 of a new policy on the use of social media websites such as Facebook. According to the new policy, all LSCS students and employees are required to “identify all personal opinions and commentary on personal social media sites as NOT representing LSCS policies or practices, and must clearly state that they are not expressing the official views and opinions of LSCS.” A careful reading of the policy, which is available in the online LSCS Board Policy Manual, demonstrates that it applies to students and employees regardless of where they are when they post on Facebook and regardless of what electronic device they use. In other words, if students or employees post anything on Facebook from the privacy of their own home, on their own time, and on their personally owned computer, they are required to include the disclaimer mentioned above. The policy does not even distinguish what the post is about. If students or employees say to a friend on Facebook that they enjoyed dinner the night before, with no mention whatsoever of LSCS, they are required to include the disclaimer. Despite the manifest absurdity of the policy, it threatens employees with termination and students with expulsion for violating it (see Section 2.08).

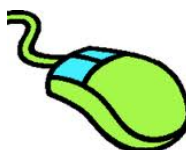
The outcry against the policy was so quick and so loud that Dr. Carpenter immediately asked the faculty senate presidents to begin work on a revision. As a backdrop to these developments, on August 18, 2011, the National Labor Relations Board issued a memorandum that warned employers against enacting restrictive social media policies.⁶ The

NLRB memo may indicate that the current LSCS social media policy exposes the system to unnecessary litigation costs, something we are sure the board would prefer to avoid.

In closing, the AFT recommends that the LSCS administration convene a free speech task force, composed of students, staff, faculty, and concerned citizens, to examine the free speech policy articulated in both the Student Handbook and the LSCS Board Policy Manual. As mentioned above, because LSCS is a local governing body, we believe that it is required to honor and abide by the First Amendment. We also believe that such a re-examination of our free speech policies will help us educate the LSCS community beyond the traditional boundaries of the classroom as we practice the sort of civil discourse about hot-button issues that we encourage in the classroom.

—Staff

1. Scott [Jaschik](#), “Access to Critical Blog Blocked,” *Inside Higher Ed*, October 22, 2007; Ruth Rendon and Kimberly Stauffer, “Blog ban lifted at North Harris campus after suit,” *Houston Chronicle*, October 18, 2007.
2. James Bovard, “Free-Speech [Zone](#) - [The](#) administration [quarantines](#) dissent,” *The American Conservative*, December 15, 2003; and Jonathan Katz, “[Thou Dost Protest Too Much](#),” *Slate Magazine*, September 21, 2004.
3. Meghann Lora, “Texas Tech coming closer to new free speech policy,” [The University Daily](#), January 12, 2005.
4. *Roberts v. Haragan*, 346 F. Supp. 2d 853 - Dist. Court, ND Texas 2004.
5. The student handbook can be conveniently accessed online: <http://www.lonestar.edu/student-welfare-rights.htm>
6. See <https://www.nlr.gov/news/acting-general-counsel-releases-report-social-media-cases>



Email us at:
aftlonestar@yahoo.com



Campus Updates



The AFT at North Harris would like to announce the return of Union Fridays at La Cabaña, on 1960 just a short distance east of Aldine-Westfield (The restaurant will be on your right.) We'll meet Friday, February 10 at noon, and Friday, February 17 at 4:30. Bring a friend and hear all about the union's recent meeting with Dr. Carpenter. Hope to see you there!

Steve King,
Professor of Developmental Studies



Ahoy Maties,

Well, the new sailin season has be got under way an tha HCS LSC-Tomball has loosed a full canvas spread and seems ta have caught a good West wind and we be a steadily heded fer Port Spring Break. Tha ship be lukin nice now with all of the dry dock wurk finished an made sea worthy. The new Vet section fer all our big animals and the Performin Artz section fer those singin and dancing and thespins thet entertaine us are a nice addicion to tha ship and our crusin.

Tha turmoil around the ship seems ta have lessend sumwhat due to our new Rear-Admirals (thet be ourin VPs fer you land-lubbers) acktully givin ear to our grievances an then doin sumpin about them. So cuddos ta them fer bein concerned bout their sailors.

An issue thet has rared its head an be sumwhat worrisum is cummin from HR Central. Seems thet tha iStar fancy dancy know everthin bout everbody system had problems early on bout keppin correct hours on our sailors, Master Chiefs and below, (meanin DOMs and others) regardin sick, comp and vacation hours and now HR Central be tellin several of them thet they don't be havin as much sick, comp, or vacation hours as they thought they be havin, and fer sum, HR Central be a tellin them thet they owe hours. When asked bout the difference in tally, HR Central be sayin thet they had it looked at from the outside and were tolt thet they now had it right, even though our Petty Chiefs try to point out the discrepancies in tally sheets. It be a worrisum situacion and we hope HR Central is not turnin a def ear to our crews concern.

While ther always be otherin smaller concerns, tha sailin season has begun an I will let ya know how it be a goin in tha next report. Til then keep your socks dry, your holystones a pol-ishin, yer citrus free from tha salt water, an tha water barrels full.

Richard Becker



In bittersweet news, AFT – Lone Star College bids farewell to CyFair staff vice president, Kerry Madole. Kerry left CyFair in January to pursue exciting new opportunities in the library at University of Houston-Downtown. We wish her all the best but we miss her already.

Kerry's departure leaves the position of AFT staff vice president for CyFair open. If you are a staff member on our campus and would like to explore the possibility of serving your union in this capacity, please contact Alan Hall, AFT president or John Burghduff, AFT faculty vice president for CyFair. We'll be glad to answer your questions.

AFT Happy Hours are returning for spring semester. We meet the second Thursday of every month from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM at Husky's on West Road just east of Telge Road, a short drive from campus. Please come and meet your fellow union members, discuss workplace issues of importance to you and have some fun, too. Appetizers and (nonalcoholic) beverages are provided. Stay a short time or a long time as your schedule permits. Nonmembers are especially invited. This is a great opportunity to find out what the union does for you and what you can do for your union!

John Burghduff, Faculty VP



With classes underway and the opening week frenzy behind us, things are back to normal and business as usual at LSC-Montgomery.

We are pleased to report that our college administration has given the "green light" to go ahead and revive the student newspaper, *The Voice*, as an electronic/online-only publication. We appreciated the concession.

We resume our monthly after-work socials at the Wings 'N More restaurant in the Walmart Shopping Center Plaza on Friday, February 10, from 4:30 to 6:30, and we'll meet every second Friday of the month after that. Please join us at these monthly socials and bring a friend.

Respectively submitted by

Martina Kusi-Mensah

Kingwood no report
at this time





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	\$33.75
Full-time Professional Staff	\$27.81
Full-time Support Staff	\$23.21
Adjunct Faculty & Staff	\$11.88

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 \$12,000 term life insurance policy for first year of membership

Professional career protection and a
united voice at work

www.aftlonestar.org

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



2011-2012 Monthly Membership Dues rates:

Based on your position with the LoneStar College System, please select your appropriate dues rate.

- ☐ Full-time Faculty \$33.75/mo. or \$405.00/yr.
☐ Full-time Professional Staff \$27.81/mo. or \$333.72/yr.
☐ Full-time Support Staff \$24.21/mo. or \$290.52/yr.
☐ Adjunct Faculty \$11.88/mo. or \$142.56/yr.
☐ Part-time Staff \$11.88/mo. or \$142.56/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 payable in 2 six-month installments. 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 (Updating information and/or payment method) <input type="checkbox"/> New Member					
Choose method of payment: <input type="checkbox"/> Payroll Deduction (Complete the union dues agreement below) <input type="checkbox"/> Cash/Check (Two 6 month payments payable to AFT-LSC)					

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 _____



P.O. Box 788 Spring, Texas 77383-0788

We're on the Web!
www.aftlonestar.org



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 ideas. Send your articles to **Pat Gray**, Editor LSCS-NH A217, or email patsy.gray@lonestar.edu, or submit to any of the following officers.

Alan Hall, President	North Harris	ACAD 217-G	281-618-5544
Linda Dirzanowski	North Harris	Health Professions Red Oak	281-943-6819
Stephen King	North Harris	ACAD 162-H	281-618- 5530
Bob Locander	North Harris	ACAD 270	281-618-5592
Allen Vogt	North Harris	ACAD 264-C	281-618-5583
Rich Almstedt	Kingwood	FTC 100-G	281-312-1656
Laura Codner	Kingwood	CLA 110—D	281-312- 1414
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
Martina Kusi-Mensah	Montgomery	G 121—J	936-273- 7276
John Burghduff	Cy-Fair	HSC 117-R	281-290-3915
Brenda Rivera	Fairbanks	119	832-782-5068
Earl Brewer	Fairbanks	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 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, 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