



The Advocate

Steep Grade Ahead

On using student grade distributions to measure faculty effectiveness

Teachers care about their students' success. They, therefore, work many hours (usually more than they're actually paid for) to plan lessons and provide support and feedback that will help their students be successful.

At all levels the challenges facing education in America are many and complex. Although thousands upon thousands of faculty, staff, administrators, academics, public officials, and ordinary citizens are devoting their lives to solving those challenges, there is a tendency for many others to want simplistic answers to complex problems. If the simplistic answer from many quarters for the first decade of the 21st century was to give lots of standardized tests, it appears that the simplistic mantra for the current decade may be "fire the bad teachers." The assumption one seems to get listening to pundits on today's news shows and some public officials is that the schools are full of lazy teachers who don't care about their students and are just collecting a paycheck.

My first thought always is that there are lots of easier ways to collect much bigger paychecks. That aside, my second thought is that, having served over 34 years in education, the number of those "bad teachers" I

have met personally is really, really small. Although I have met hundreds of teachers representing an incredible diversity of philosophies, methodologies, and personalities, the overwhelming majority of them care a great deal about their students and work their hearts out to try to help them succeed. (I will add that I have met some exhausted ones, teaching incredible loads just to make ends meet, and some discouraged ones, tired from the lack of support from school administrators, parents, and public officials.)

If we truly care about trying to help the greatest possible number of students reach the greatest possible level of success, we must be mature enough to reject simplistic answers and take a hard look at all the complex issues facing our schools and our students. Two major points rarely seem to be mentioned when people examine the status of education in America. The first is that we are one of the few societies in the world (maybe really the only one) that believes that all of its citizens have a right to an education. Clearly, the American comprehensive community college and its commitment to the open door is one of the most important components demonstrating that belief. When one sees evidence of higher performance

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in other countries, while not brushing off the problems we face here, one must remember that most of those countries only try to educate the “best and the brightest,” the top 10 to 15% of their students, especially at the collegiate level. Young people with special problems or “late bloomers” are pretty much out of luck in other countries. One of my favorite characteristics of the American persona is that we believe in second chances, and few institutions do more to offer second chances than community colleges. In doing so, however, we’re not just taking the “easy” cases. We are taking everyone at whatever level of preparedness, and therein lies the multitude of challenges.

The second point sometimes forgotten is that students are not like pieces of steel being sent through an assembly line. Students are people with unique challenges and issues of their own and can’t be forced passively to become identical “cars” or “toasters.” Most significantly, although the importance of schools and teachers in promoting success can never be overstated, the ultimate responsibility for learning has to lie with the learner. Analogously, I could build a beautiful fitness center with highly trained and motivational staff and state of the art equipment, and I could attract many members through affordable dues and convenient hours, but if they don’t actually get on the treadmills themselves and start walking, they won’t get in shape.

Clearly, in this complex setting, the challenge to find out how to help more students be more successful is of critical importance, and simplistic mantras will only hurt us. If simplistic solutions (like “fire the bad teachers”) beg certain questions (e.g. “how do you tell who the bad teachers are?”) that are also answered simplistically, we get further and further away from helping the students. In what ways, therefore, is the question of measuring bad teaching handled simplistically? There are several methods, but they tend to involve gathering data and interpreting it without considering the socio-cultural or economic context of the issue.

Unfortunately, recent discussions fostered by some in leadership of the Lone Star College System

cause me worry that we are heading towards such a simplistic analysis that could ultimately put our students’ success in more serious danger.

This semester we are beginning to hear lots of talk from the chancellor down through the ranks of administration about examining the grade distributions in teachers’ classes. At Cy-Fair, for example, all full time faculty have been e-mailed their grade distributions aggregated over all the courses they have taught for a school year together with the overall aggregated grade distribution for their department. In particular, faculty members are being shown, both for their own classes and for their departments, what percentage of the students enrolled at the end of the semester pass the course with grades of A, B or C. For the purposes of this article, I will refer to this statistic as the “pass rate.” Apparently, these data will also be distributed at the other colleges over time. The chancellor has said that these data are being supplied to faculty to be “informative,” not “evaluative.” On the other hand, he has also said that we should take a hard look at faculty members whose pass rates are either very low or very high. If so, then these data are, indeed, evaluative, and the conversation is subtly shifting from student success to teacher effectiveness, i.e. identifying the “bad teachers.” This idea presupposes that a teacher with a large number of failures is “a bad teacher.” I contend that grade data fundamentally cannot be evaluative (of either student success or teacher effectiveness) because they are, in fact, not informative unless examined critically in a larger context.

What do I mean when I say that grade distributions have to be seen in a larger context? Here are several points to consider.

Nationwide, pass rates vary by course. In general, for example, most developmental courses and most “gateway” courses have lower pass rates than some elective courses or courses mostly populated by majors in the field. So one must know what those national numbers look like to have any sense of how one’s class compares. Of course, we all want students to succeed at rates higher than some of those national benchmarks indicate, and we want



to explore every possible innovation we think would help. But the truth of the matter is, if the solutions were easy to find, someone probably would have already found them. Therefore, to presume that all courses across all disciplines should be able to achieve some uniform target pass rate is both naïve and misleading.

Pass rates vary by modality. It is quite well documented that success rates in distance education courses are lower than those in face-to-face classes. Again, it would be unrealistic to expect to learn anything meaningful at all unless one knew national averages disaggregated by modality. Pass rates can vary because of variations among recognized and accepted evaluation standards between disciplines. In some disciplines performance to an absolute standard is expected nationwide; in others, individual effort and personal improvement are the norm. (If my freshman archery class had not been graded that way, I'd still be an undergraduate!) One must inquire into these standards if pass rates are to be understood.

Teachers know from personal experience that a multitude of other factors beyond the control of the teacher can cause natural variations among classes. For example, students may have persistent attendance problems in classes that meet very early in the morning. Evening classes may be more heavily populated by more mature students who have a clearer picture of why they want to go to college and who have learned life skills that give them an advantage over younger students. Second start classes may have a disproportionate percentage of students who either have motivational issues or socioeconomic distractions that kept them from registering on time.

In fact, an individual class represents such a small sample space that variations from any type of normal distribution should be expected. One or two highly motivated, well-prepared students (or highly unmotivated or underprepared students) can vastly change the entire complexion of the class. One could say that these differences would even out if one looked at grade distributions over several semesters, but if a teacher is consistently given

schedules of the same courses at the same time of day, these anomalies could be compounded instead.

Without studying and understanding these contextual issues, one cannot in any way begin to say that one pass rate is bad and another is good. One cannot, when these data are given out of context, conclude that a teacher with a low pass rate is bad because s/he is clearly ineffective or that a teacher with a high pass rate is bad because s/he is obviously a grade inflator.

The administration's current interest in pass rates would probably not worry faculty very much except that we have seen examples of how these data have been abused in other schools. There are independent school districts in this area that impose policies to manipulate these rates. Some, for example, set a maximum percentage of students who can be given grades of F. Students in those school systems know that, no matter what they do or fail to do, as long as they avoid the very bottom, their teachers have to pass them. There are others that do not allow teachers to give grades below 50. Students in those schools can potentially pass courses even though numerous objectives have not been mastered. They go out into the working world without the skills necessary for success. Teachers in these schools know that failing to abide by these practices will impact their evaluations. Although the pressure is usually more subtle, there are colleges, too, where faculty gets the message that it's effectiveness as teachers will be judged on whether their pass rate is high enough.

I am very concerned that if the current emphasis on grade distributions intensifies, even if the administration insists that they just want to be "informative," instructors will feel that, to keep their jobs safe, they'd better do whatever it takes to get their pass rates up (or down!) to some accepted norm. In this environment, grade inflation is a real concern. Historically, the Lone Star Colleges have a strong reputation that the grades we give guarantee that students have achieved high academic standards. If that reputation falls, it is the students who will suffer the most. A LSCS diploma could be



come just another piece of worthless paper.

I am not the only one who has this concern.

In 2001, as part of our last SACS accreditation visit, our college system participated in an alternate accreditation option that involved an extensive research project on student success in developmental classes. This alternate accreditation option was the precursor of the quality enhancement project that is now a requirement for SACS accreditation. Since we were one of the first colleges to choose this option, we attracted a truly blue ribbon panel of evaluators to examine our work. This visiting team included Dr. John Roueche, Sid W. Richardson, Regents Chair and Director of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas; Dr. Robert H. McCabe, Chancellor Emeritus of the Miami-Dade Community College District and Senior Fellow of the League for Innovation in the Community College; Dr. Byron McClenney, President of Kingsborough Community College, City University of New York; and Dr. Kay McClenney, Director of the Center for Community College Student Engagement in the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas.

The team’s final report on our project was not flattering. One item that they were particularly critical of was our lack of useful and appropriate performance indicators to measure student success.

So what measure of student success in our developmental program had we employed to which these highly respected leaders had so strongly objected?

We had tracked pass rates.

I would like to quote a section from the recommendations part of their report, partly to footnote my main point. I also want to highlight that they felt some different measures would have been more appropriate. I would like to turn the remainder of this article in a more positive direction. We can extrapolate from their report that, if our concern truly is to improve student success and we’re willing to move beyond simplistic answers, there is valid data that we can seek and analyze that would really help us. [This

section is printed as it was given to us.]

“7. Establish clear performance indicators for developmental education and success of underprepared students.

7a. Within the developmental education experience, monitor performance on indicators such as:

Successful course completion (i.e. documented achievement of defined learning outcomes, **not course grades** [JB: emphasis mine])

Successful completion of the developmental education course sequence

7b. Beyond developmental education, achieve parity between developmental and non-developmental students on indicators such as the following:

TASP pass rate [JB: a state achievement test that is no longer in use]

Performance in subsequent college-level courses

Completion / graduation rates

7c. Disaggregate performance data by campus, program, and student age/gender/ethnicity; and adopt the value that a college is only as good as its lowest performing group.”¹

In the years since this report, the various developmental programs, with strong administrative support from the previous district administration, have developed very creative methods of objectively documenting achievement of learning outcomes that are faculty driven, respectful of academic freedom, sensitive to diversity of teaching philosophy across the system, and largely avoided the “teach to the test” pressures that often follow a knee-jerk standardized test approach. If needed, I am confident that other faculty groups can also creatively address methodologies to monitor and document that students have achieved established learning outcomes in their disciplines.

Although the visiting team was focused on developmental education, we can extrapolate their other recommendations in many ways. For example, it would be truly useful to track whether a student who suc-



cessfully completes a given course can be successful in a subsequent course with the same or higher degree of success; whether students who complete a course can perform in subsequent courses in parity with students who did not need the prerequisite course; whether students who transfer to the primary universities we serve perform at a level in parity with the students who had started at those universities; and whether students who pass our workforce classes successfully complete their programs, pass any accrediting exams that are required, and are successfully placed in an initial job.

Although it is hard work, we must disaggregate any success data we gather, not only by age, gender, and ethnicity but also across all the variables I outlined above when I wrote about the context of grades (time of day, modality of course, etc.).

Lone Star College faculty has been at the forefront of a long sequence of initiatives over the years focused on student success. Some of the major initiatives that have happened since I joined the district include Success by Design (1998), the SACS self study (2001), a Perkins research grant on student success in developmental education (2002), the Student Success Initiative (2004), and, recently, Achieving the Dream. In all of these initiatives, data and research have been the foundation. Many recommendations were made. Some have been instituted. Others have been forgotten. It would be worthwhile for us as a system to review that entire body of faculty driven work to provide the context and insight we need going forward.

Many of those studies identified a key statistic that we don't have that is crucial to defining and studying student success. As a system, we have no way to document what students' goals are for their time with the college. We know that some students want to be graduated with a degree or certificate, but many more want to take a specific set of courses to prepare to transfer to a university, to better their job situation or, simply, because they're interested. If we don't capture those goals and update them as the students evolve in their goals, we really have no way of knowing whether

students are successful according to their own definitions. This set of data was requested most recently by the Achieving the Dream data team, but it has always been determined that our college data system could not handle this.

Student engagement is another indicator of student success. Data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) are important as well as information about student participation in campus activities, service learning, international education, etc. Also, study of student grades can be valid if we are sensitive to the context.

All of that research has been and would be hard work. The research, moreover, will be misinterpreted if we forget that teachers are not the only variable in student success – particularly if we forget that students must take ownership of the learning process for themselves. As students are complex (they're not toasters!), student success is complex. If we really mean it when we say we are dedicated to student success and to a "culture of evidence," we'll have to commit to that work over a long time. Let us not fall into the trap of settling for simplistic measures that fail to inform and can't legitimately support evaluation, that ignore context, that (subtly or otherwise) pressure faculty to inflate (or deflate) grades, that jeopardize our reputation for high standards, and that, ultimately, feed the quest for simplistic answers (like "fire the bad teachers") for serious, complex issues.

FOOTNOTE:

1. Roueche, John, McCabe, Robert, McClenney, Byron, McClenney, Kay, *Highlights of the SACS Consulting Team Report* (for the NHMCCD accreditation visit special project on Student Success in Developmental Education), Spring 2001

Dr. John Burghduff



LSCS Board of Trustees Election 2010

WHAT:

The Lone Star College System Board consists of nine trustees elected for a six-year term and uses an at-large voting system. No term limits exist for board members. With three incumbents and eight challengers on the May 8 ballot, voters will have some sorting out to do before casting their votes. The incumbents running for reelection are Bob Wolfe (position 6), Dr. Richard Campbell (position 7), and David Vogt (position 5) running for a third term.

The eight challengers comprise an intriguing group of candidates with varied ties to the college system and area communities. Here is what we know at press time.

Position 5:

Gail Stanart ran an impressive campaign in 2008 but was defeated in that race.
 Dr. David Branham began his higher education at Lone Star-North Harris.
 Dr. Glenn Ware is a retired Lone Star-North Harris Professor of Criminal Justice.

Position 6:

Rick Diaz has taken LSCS courses.
 Dr. Elizabeth Jensen is a graduate of Spring High School.
 Maraget Cox is a Lone Star-North Harris graduate.

Position 7:

Linda Good is a past chair of the North Harris College Para-Legal Advisory Committee, and her husband is a history professor in LSCS.
 Vernon Reed has run for the Humble School Board.

WHERE:

At press time no incumbents have political campaign websites, but Bob Wolfe is on Facebook. The incumbents—David Vogt, Bob Wolf, and Richard Campbell—appear to be running as a team with a political action committee. “Friends of Lone Star College Trustees” has been created to raise funds on their behalf. Five challengers— Branham, Diaz, Jensen, Cox, and Good— have websites for voters to visit and examine. Running under the campaign slogan, “Better College Governance,” David Branham, Margaret Cox, and Linda Good have paid for a joint campaign card. The other challenging candidates—Gail Stanart, Glenn Ware, Rich Diaz, Elizabeth Jensen, and Vernon Reed—do not appear to have any formal ties to each other.

WHEN:

EARLY VOTING: April 26 to May 4.

ELECTION DAY: May 8, 2010

As always the AFT hopes for a good turnout in early voting and election day on May 8. We urge voters to find out about all eleven candidates and make informed choices.

Please see sample ballot on the following page.

Staff



The Lone Star College System will soon hold an election for three positions on the System's Board of Trustees.

Early voting is April 26th - May 4th.

The regular election will be on May 8th .



The AFT encourages all employees to vote.

Lone Star College System

Trustees Election

May 8, 2010

Official Ballot :

TRUSTEE POSITION 5

Gail Stanart

David Vogt (I)

David Branham

Glenn Ware

TRUSTEE POSITION 6

Bob Wolfe (I)

Rick Diaz

Elizabeth "Liz" Jensen

Margaret L. Cox

TRUSTEE POSITION 7

Linda S. Good

Richard Campbell (I)

Vernon Reed





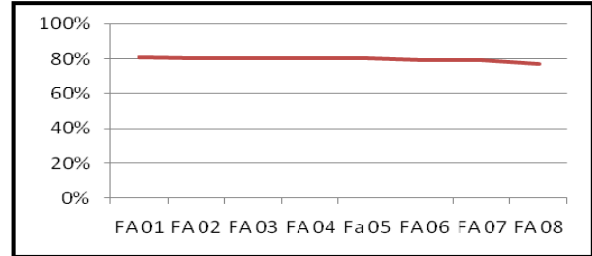
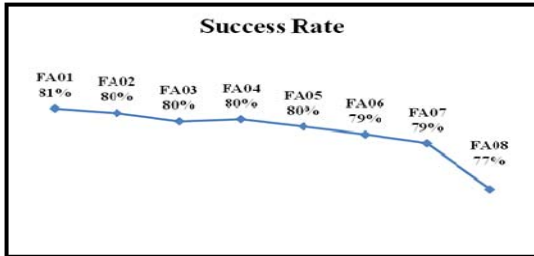
Statistics 101: A brief lesson on the appropriate representation of graphical data

That the Lone Star College System has embraced the “culture of evidence” is a good thing. Much of what happens in the business of teaching is hard to measure and hard to document. Therefore, historically, many decisions in education have been made based on theory and anecdotes rather than scientific data. The commitment to use appropriate data in appropriate ways when making decisions is a noble one. But if data is represented in a misleading format, decisions based on that data may be compromised.

During the opening convocation for the school year in August, our chancellor presented a number of graphs showing some trends in percentages on an array of measures over several years. These graphs and others are now housed on the Institutional Research and Effectiveness pages on the college Intranet. Generally accepted practice among statisticians and other researchers for representing such data is to note the percentages on the vertical axis marked from 0% to 100%. The vertical axes on the system’s graphs are truncated to a limited range. Below I show two examples. On the left, I show the graph copied from the system intranet. On the right I show the same data in a graph reformatted to usual standards.

The first example shows the system success rate, the percentage of all students on official day rosters of all courses across the system who complete those courses with grades of A, B or C.

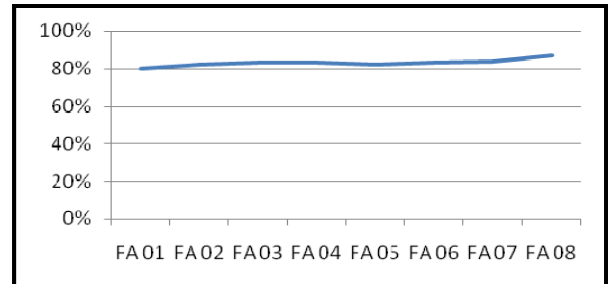
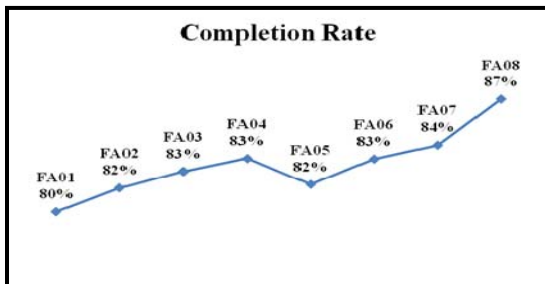
Success Rate By Semester



Notice that, on casual observation, the graph on the left looks like a precipitous drop in student success. But in fact, the drop is four percentage points over the eight year period. When reformatted, it is clear that the success rate is nearly constant with a slight drop.

The second example shows completion rates, the percentage of all students on official day rosters who don’t drop.

Completion Rate By Semester



In this example, the graph on the left appears to show a substantial increase whereas the graph on the right shows that the increase is less dramatic.¹

None of the data in the system graphs is incorrect. The representation, however, may illicit an exaggerated interpretation of that data. The American Statistical Association posts a statement on Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice on their website. The Association identifies the following as a shared value. “All statistical practitioners are obliged to conduct their professional activities with responsible attention to . . . the avoidance of any tendency to slant statistical work toward predetermined outcomes.”² We urge system administrators to use caution to avoid graphical representations of data that do not conform to usual practice so that there can be no hint of deficiency in keeping this value.

FOOTNOTES:

Note that in both charts, the largest change occurred in Fall 08 which was the semester interrupted by Hurricane Ike.

One would have to take that under consideration before drawing conclusions about that semester.

American Statistical Society website. <http://amstat.org/about/ethicalguidelines.htm>



Visioning Takes a Big Person

Like our sister campuses, LSC-North Harris recently completed a “Visioning Process” during which employees had the opportunity to express their views concerning how the college is perceived and how they want the college to be viewed in the future. In a summary sent to employees, Dr. Head committed to “act on the concerns garnered through all of this hard work.” He then followed up with an email on March 10 in which he states, “From a personal standpoint, there are a number of issues that we need to address that I had not considered and others that have caused me to examine my perceptions versus reality.”

The AFT was gratified and delighted to see this recognition on Dr. Head’s part, especially considering some of the items included in the report. Under the heading, “How We See Lone Star College – North Harris Today,” these points are included:

Arbitrary uninformed decisions are made at the system level . . . which adversely affect programs & services at the campus level.

With an increase in 1st generation college students, there is a greater need for student advising and financial information and assistance.

5. Many students are not adequately prepared.

6. Diverse student body but [college] lacks diverse faculty and staff/administration and faculty make-up [is] not reflective of student body.

12. Not committed to developing cultural competency of students—language lab, outreach to students, of different cultures.

There were many excellent ideas and comments in the report, but AFT is particularly glad to see the comments as they reflect points the union

has been making for some time. Taken collectively, the thematic thrusts in the report focus primarily on the adverse effects of top down decision making, the complex problems of underprepared students, and the need for faculty, staff, and administrative diversity which reflects that of our student population. At least metaphorically, the report shows separate efforts taking place within the system but not our pulling together, a process that generally leads to success. This metaphor can be seen as horses in a circle, all facing in different directions and pulling against each other as opposed to horses headed in the same direction and harnessed together as a team.

Often individuals in administrative positions isolate themselves and assume that their version of reality is the only correct one. It takes a big person to acknowledge that there are other reliable perspectives and points of view. Dr. Head is to be commended for that kind of inclusive thinking. We hope that this type of thinking spreads quickly throughout the System.

Alan Hall





Salaries: Shifting Chess Pieces

Adjustments to employee salaries have been a mixed bag in recent years. Regular Advocate readers know the history. In 2007/08, the Board of Trustees made adjustments to salaries for upper administrative positions ranging from 14.4 to 29.5%. Mid-level administrators received adjustments from 6 to 6.67%. The minimum salary was raised by 11% to \$20,794. Everyone else, with the exception of employees who had topped out, received 5%.

I spoke to Dr. Carpenter in 2007 about potential morale problems when faculty and staff could see such a gap between their salary increase and the 14.4 – 29.5% for administration. He acknowledged the concern and committed to address it in 2008/09. He requested that the AFT refrain from criticizing the Full Time/Part Time faculty ratio because he could not address that ratio at that point and the concern we had raised. The union agreed not to press the ratio issue in the near term.

However, when 2008/09 salary adjustments were made, the chancellor's commitment was not honored. Significant adjustments were made only to entry level faculty salaries while everyone else received 4%. While AFT agreed with that adjustment for entry level faculty, we pointed out again that there still remained a large block of employees who had been left out of the significant adjustment others had experienced in 2007/08 and now again in 2008/09. It was in that later discussion that Dr. Carpenter noted that adjusting salaries significantly could not come all at once and used his chess analogy: "You can't move all the chess pieces at one time." He committed again to addressing that large block of employees the next year, 2009/10.

However, this year, again other chess pieces were moved instead. Some adjunct faculty and part-time advisor salaries were increased (some up to 14%) based on market studies. Police officers received a well-deserved and long overdue increase of 18 to

21%. The remainder of employees received 4% with a \$1,200 minimum. The good news was that the 4% was the first time in recent memory that college employees experienced an actual increase in purchasing power. The inflation rate was -.6%, so we actually gained 4.4% in purchasing power. That large block of employees, however, continued to be ignored. The AFT is now uncertain if the chancellor will ever move that particular chess piece as promised.

These are still uncertain times as evidenced by reports in the April 9, 2010 Houston Chronicle (B-1), and we are grateful that we are not forced to take furloughs and other budget cutting measures as do some Texas state colleges and universities. However, the AFT is hopeful that the administration and Board of Trustees who follow the administration's lead will do the best they can for the economic wellbeing of the System's employees as they consider salary adjustments for 2010/11. There have been some administrative suggestions that there may, in fact, be no salary increase next year. If this is the recommendation, it will be made to the Board of Trustees by administrators making over \$200,000 annually, a group for whom no salary increase is more palatable than for many other employees.

In the meantime, the Full-time/Part-time faculty ration is 42% Full-time/58% Part-Time, the worst in the state among public community colleges <http://www.tccta.org/news/salarysurvey09/2009SalaryStudy.html>

It is time to move that chess piece as well.



Alan Hall



You are invited!

AFT Spring Celebration

Everyone is invited to celebrate the end of another successful semester with good friends and good food.

Food and one beverage will be provided.

DATE: April 30, 2010

TIME: 4:00-7:00pm

LOCATION: Bill's Cafe

22845 Texas 494 Loop Kingwood, TX 77339



We hope to see you there!



Monthly AFT Dues

Full-time Faculty	\$31.30
Full-time Professional Staff	\$26.75
Full-time Support Staff	\$23.15
Adjunct Faculty & Staff	\$11.25

Membership Eligibility

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



Campus Updates

NORTH HARRIS COLLEGE

Here at LSC—North Harris, last week's campus meeting for members provided Bob Locander the opportunity to share some knowledge about grass-roots organizing that he had acquired in recent training sessions. We continue to work with staff members and part-time faculty alike who have growing concerns about the treatment of non-contractual employees on this campus. It seems to me (and perhaps this is *only* my perception) that there have been more terminations of non-contractual employees this semester than in times past, and it's particularly worrisome that in some cases these terminated employees were given neither "causes" for their terminations nor 90-day action plans to improve performance (assuming that the terminations had anything to do with performance). We continue to strive toward better and more open communication with the administration in the hopes of improving the campus climate and serving our members and the college community as a whole.

Bruce Machart, AFT Faculty VP

KINGWOOD COLLEGE

I don't usually include personal notes in my report, but allow me to indulge this time. I've just returned to campus from the Kennedy Space Center and the Launch of Discovery STS 131. Astronaut Clayton Anderson (MS-5) on this mission is a close friend and former CE student at Lone Star College – North Harris and Kingwood. Ten minutes prior to the launch the International Space Station passed over the Kennedy Space Center and Launch Pad 39-B where Discovery was poised to launch and rendezvous with the station. There are not enough adjectives to describe the last night time launch of the Shuttle.

This was my second time to watch Clay go into space, and both times my thoughts were about how proud I am to be an American and how lucky I am to live in the USA. This time my thoughts also turned to the responsibility we have as Americans to participate in the elections process. Many people get excited about the national elections but pay very little attention to the local elections that quite often have much more bearing on our daily lives. We have one of those important elections taking place on May 8th. We will be electing three new members to the Lone Star System Board. I encourage everyone to study the issues and candidates and let your voices be heard!

Don't forget that LSC-Kingwood will be hosting the AFT Spring Celebration on Friday April 30th (4:00-7:00 pm) at Bill's Café!

Rich Almstedt, AFT Faculty VP

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

No report at press time.

Julie Alber, AFT Faculty VP

Cheri Barlow, AFT Staff VP

TOMBALL COLLEGE

Ahoy Maties,
Port Finals is visible on the horizon as we hold steady on a course of 270. Thar stil be some empty seats round the war table, but rumer haz it thet the ship's admiral be sendin out the small boats ta bring in potential commanders ta be. Weal see what floats aboard an who it be thet wijds up a settin with the high command. With thins bein stil a bit unsettled, the scuttlebutt tis runnin a bit on the unshur side whilst watin fur wurd a who be nex ta be whistled aboard. Thar stil be sum strife below decks wit sum senior petty officers figerin out on how ta tret them that be wurkin fer em. The hope be thet they git it figgered out afore everone gits fed up. We do be keepin a eye on thins and will letcha nowe ifin innythin need be dun.

Til next report, watch fer flyin fish an dancing mermaids,

Richard Becker, AFT Faculty VP

CY-FAIR COLLEGE

"Reminder: There will be an AFT information meeting on Friday April 23 from 1:30 - 3:00 PM in CENT 151. All LSC CyFair faculty and staff, members and nonmembers alike, are invited. Come learn what your union can do for you, what you can do for your union, and what we can all do together to make this a great place to work and learn."

John Burghduff, 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



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State:

www.texasaft.org

National:

www.aft.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 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



A Union of Professionals

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

Full-time Faculty \$31.30/mo. or \$373.60/yr.

Full-time Professional Staff \$26.75/mo. or \$320.50/y.r

Full-time Support Staff \$23.15/mo. or \$277.30/yr.

Adjunct Faculty \$11.25/mo. or \$134.50/yr.

Part-time Staff \$11.25/mo. or \$134.50/yr.



A Union of Professionals

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 <i>(Updating information and/or payment method)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> New Member					
Choose method of payment: <input type="checkbox"/> Payroll Deduction <i>(Complete the union dues agreement below)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Cash/Check <i>(Make full yearly payment payable to AFT-LSC)</i>					

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 articles to **Pat Gray, Editor**, NHC, ext. 5545 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	WNSP 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
Magali Reyes	North Harris College	CE 102	281-260-3157
Rich Almstedt	Kingwood College	FTC 100-G	281-312-1656
Laura Codner	Kingwood College	CLA 110-D	281-312- 1414
Catherine Olson	Tomball College	S 153 - H	281-357- 3776
Richard Becker	Tomball College	E 271-D	281-401- 1835
Julie Alber	Montgomery College	E 205- E	936-273- 7241
Cheri Barlow	Montgomery College	C 100-C	936-273- 7370
John Burghduff	Cy-Fair College	HSC 117-R	832-290-3915
Brenda Rivera	Fairbanks Center	119	281-782-5068
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 say that 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.

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

They join because they believe in the values of the AFT— that employees