

AFT Address to the LSCS Board of Trustees, September 5, 2013

I am John Burghduff representing the American Federation of Teachers. On Monday, August 19, the system human resources department announced a new compensation structure for full time employees. Included in salaries is a 4% cost of living increase. In addition, employees whose former salaries fell below their new salary bands were raised to the minimum of those bands before the 4% increase was calculated. Both of these measures provide much needed relief for employees. The union thanks the administration and the board for endorsing these increases.

While gratefully acknowledging these decisions, we wish to alert the board to some concerns. Given our short time, we will address staff issues this month and faculty issues next month.

Many of our professional and support staff noticed that the title of their new salary band sounded like a demotion and/or that their level within a job classification band was lowered. After hearing that there were concerns, the chancellor's office sent out an email announcing that titles of bands were negotiable. We hope, however that our human resources office will go beyond renaming categories. Particularly, some employees have been placed into bands in which the maximum possible pay is lower than that of their former category. Therefore, their future earnings potentials have been lowered.

There is also a broader concern. When our consulting firm, Evergreen, first spoke to employees and asked them to fill out surveys about their jobs, we were under the impression that the goal was to look at the duties that employees actually perform rather than just their titles. Many of our staff members were hired under a given job title but their duties have expanded dramatically beyond those titles over time. For years, getting employees' job positions reclassified to match their duties has been next to impossible and we had hoped that this process would correct some of these inequities.

Therefore we were disappointed to see that the recommendations of the consultants seemed to have focused merely on grouping existing job titles into new bands. We were also disappointed to learn from the presentations that no Lone Star officials actually looked at the employee surveys. Employees have been given the opportunity to file classification appeals about all of these issues. In a return email one of our members received, the human resources office stated "many positions will be validated through this process as remaining unchanged." It is the union's earnest hope that these appeals will be considered seriously and very carefully and that the focus will be on equitably classifying and compensating our staff based on the duties they actually perform.

Many departments across the Lone Star System have been understaffed for years. It has been the dedication of our support and professional staff going above and beyond the call of duty that keeps our system functioning. Let us make sure that we value their contributions