



The Advocate

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AFT-Lone Star College



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- ☒ If you believe in the value of employees helping out each other, you should join.
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<http://join.aft.org>

*More details on membership benefits
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AFT-Lone Star College wants your input on how we are perceived by different generations of Faculty and Staff at LSC. It is our goal to learn from you how we can improve our visibility at Lone Star College for all generations of employees. Take the survey. It only takes a few minutes and your input is important to us.

**Your Opinion
COUNTS**

**Find the survey at:
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Questions?

**Call AFT Lone Star
281-889-1009**



AFT-Lone Star College

AFT Local Union # 4518

GOALS

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

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professional career
protection and a united
voice at work.

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Full-time Faculty	\$42.80
Full-time Professional Staff	\$31.25
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Part-time Staff	\$16.57

Membership Eligibility

Membership in the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) is open to full-time 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 the back of this newsletter, or check out our online information and application at:

www.aftlonestar.org



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American Federation of Teachers

Lone Star College



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Here's the best way to sign up:

1. Go to <https://join.aft.org>. From the pull-down menu in the box under "FIND A LOCAL," choose "Texas." Click "search" and then scroll down to find "AFT Lone Star College, Local 4518."
2. Fill out your information in the boxes.
3. You're then asked to identify your membership category: Full-time faculty, Full-time professional staff, etc.
4. You're then asked to provide your bank name, routing number and account number, check boxes authorizing the semi-monthly deductions for dues, and type your name. Then, press "SUBMIT." YOU'RE DONE! (in minutes!)

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If you are interested in membership, benefits, or would like to discuss a work-related issue, our AFT Faculty and Staff Vice-Presidents are here to assist. Please don't hesitate to contact them. See the back page of this publication for contact information.

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Hitting the Curve-Ball: Do Grade Distributions Measure Instructor Effectiveness?

Trying to play baseball as a kid, I never got any good at hitting a curve ball—which is not a particularly big surprise since I never got any good at hitting anything. Last year in my teaching, I felt like five pitchers were throwing curve balls at me all at the same time. You see, it was my first year of teaching mathematics in the new corequisite model. This is the state-mandated model that requires students who are not college ready in reading, writing, or mathematics to be put directly into a college-level course anyway, with a developmental support class alongside.

In this article, I am not going to talk about the model itself (although that is an important discussion that will probably find its way into these pages over time). Instead, I want to focus on how teaching a coreq and other experiences this year made me think about the juxtaposition of student success and the quality of my teaching.

The State of Texas measures student success as the percentage of students who pass their classes with grades of C or better. Based on that definition, in Fall 2018 only 30% of the students in my College Algebra corequisite class were successful. This was a big shock since 63% of my students passed with Cs or better the last time I taught College Algebra as a stand-alone class. After a complete revision of the course based on the advice and counsel of many seasoned instructors both within Lone Star and around the Houston area, my success rate fell even farther to 27% in Spring 2019. Even though I could rationally point out to myself all of the logical reasons for these low rates, there was a part of me that kept wondering “Is it me? Have I lost my touch? Is the quality of my teaching in decline? Are the three NISOD awards hanging on my office wall all a lie?”

Then, in Summer 2019 I taught a class entitled Mathematics for Teachers. This course is designed for students who ultimately plan to teach in elementary or middle schools. It focuses on the math they

actually will need to teach in their own classes and some techniques for teaching those concepts. Knowing that their future careers are directly dependent on mastering the content of this course, students in Mathematics for Teachers are often highly motivated and focused. Based on the state’s definition of success, 100% of the students in this class were successful—and all but one student made As and Bs.

So what does that say about me? Does this mean that I went from horrible teaching to phenomenal teaching in the space of a few weeks? Or is my self-satisfaction with my summer class as illogical as my self-doubt with my fall and spring classes?

There are two logical flaws we have to consider as we look at these curve balls.

First, the state’s definition of student success is inherently flawed. *The Advocate* has published articles focusing on the shortcomings of this definition in the past. I especially invite you to review back copies of our newsletter that are archived online and search for the following articles.¹

Steep Grade Ahead, April/May, 2010

What Student Success is Not, January-March 2011

Student Success Revisited, January/February 2015

Even the great pioneers of the previous generation of community college leadership object to conflating student success with grades. In *Student Success Revisited*, we reference John Roueche, Robert McCabe, Byron McClenney, and Kay McClenney who, in a special analysis of the Lone Star College (then NHMCCD) developmental program in 2001, sharply criticized our college for over-reliance on grades as a measure of success.²

For all the reasons outlined in those articles—which I will leave to you, dear reader, as homework—from this point on I will substitute the phrase “grade distributions” for “student success.” Even though the latter is a state-mandated term, the former is a more precise and honest description of what we are actually looking at.



With that change in terminology, I want to turn my attention to the second logical flaw in our discussion of curve balls, namely that grade distributions are a good (or even the best) measure of whether a faculty member is an effective teacher.

To a layman outside of education, the argument may seem plausible. If Professor X is not passing a lot of students, Professor X must not be a good teacher. However, this argument overlooks all the complicated variables that impact the grades students make in a class. My own story illustrates a couple of those.

First, there are some specialized courses, like “Mathematics for Teachers,” that target students who are highly motivated and focused on the content of the course. There are others, including many core courses, that students take because they have to, but they would really rather not be there.

Second, between the corequisite mandate and state placement instruments that many faculty believe are not terribly reliable, some courses draw large numbers of students who are not very well prepared for the class. These students start out with a huge disadvantage.

There are many other variables at play, as well. We well know that the issues of poverty that many of our students face place great stressors on their ability to focus on their classes. Whether those issues are food insecurity, lack of reliable transportation, unstable living arrangements, unreliable child care, or the need to work multiple jobs to make ends meet, students in need face much higher obstacles to success than students who are better off.

First-generation college students (students who are the first in their family to go to college) lack mentors to help them understand how to do well in college. Their friends and family sometimes inadvertently place additional obstacles in the way of these

students. For example, one of my students last year often had to take his siblings to appointments when he was supposed to be in class because his other relatives were working and he was “just” going to school. Both poverty and the special needs of first-generation students disproportionately impact students of color, including this student of mine.

Progressive colleges work to provide the wrap-around services and the counseling and mentoring that help improve the odds for students in poverty and first-generation students. However, in the meantime, grade distributions are likely to be lower

in classes that have many of these students compared to classes that do not. Just as it would be both unfair and unproductive to blame the students for their struggles, it is likewise unfair and unproductive to blame the instructors.

“...it makes faculty wonder if they need to throw a different kind of curve ball (namely a grade curve) to make themselves look better.”

Zeph Capo, former president of the Houston Federation of Teachers and current president of Texas AFT, summarized this point rather well. He was thinking of younger students but the issues are the same. “Kids don’t come to school in vacuums. Life happens whether it is a disruption of the family environment or whether it’s a natural disaster like Harvey.”³

These are not the only variables that can impact grade distributions. Classes at popular times that fill quickly are often populated by self-disciplined students who know they should register early. Classes at less popular times may be populated with students who procrastinated in registering and are likely to procrastinate on their work.

The content of some courses is just plain hard.

One might argue that, although it would be unfair to judge an instructor based on one or two semesters, surely a professor whose grade distributions are consistently below average year after year must definitely be doing something wrong. That could be true, but it is likely true that the instructor is



being scheduled with basically the same courses with students coming from the same community over and over.

Part of the job of community college leaders (and all educational leaders for that matter) is to explain these variables to the community in general, and to government officials in particular, so we can argue for the resources that are needed to level the playing field for all of our students.

It is sad, therefore, when school administrators buy into the same logical flaw I have been describing about grade distributions and teacher effectiveness. A nearby example of this occurred in the Houston Independent School District.

A few years ago, HISD bought a program called EVAAS that purported to judge the effectiveness of teachers by a complicated analysis of their students' standardized test scores. Teachers' evaluations and, ultimately, their jobs were dependent on this system, but it was rife with inconsistencies. Ultimately, the Houston Federation of Teachers, our sister local in the American Federation of Teachers for HISD, sued the school district over the unfairness of the system. After considerable cost to both sides, HISD scrapped the program.³

We at Lone Star College are greatly blessed that, by and large, our administration through the years have not fallen for the logically-flawed assumption that grade distributions are a good (or possibly the best) way to measure the effectiveness of faculty.

From time to time over the years, some of our colleges have sent reports to faculty showing how their grade distributions compare with other faculty in the same department and across the system. Although this data has not been used to evaluate faculty, it has often been presented with no context and no discussion, leaving faculty to wonder if some hidden message was implied. Even this can be dangerous because it makes faculty wonder if they need to throw a different kind of curve ball (namely a grade curve) to make themselves look better.

Am I saying that grade distributions can never indicate a problem with instruction? Not at all. What Lone Star needs to do for ALL faculty is simply what should be done anyway: before making any assumptions based on grades or any other criteria, a supervisor needs to observe instructors teaching and look at their tests and assignments to see if any of the instructors' practices and behaviors are not what they should be. If the instructors are doing fine, their grades are simply a reflection of all the myriad variables that go into student learning. If not, then we need to do exactly what a school is designed to do. We provide support, training, resources, and mentoring to help those instructors reach their full potential.

In my 44 years of teaching so far, I do not believe I have ever met a teacher (whether at the high school, community college, or university level) who actively wanted students not to be successful (although I am suspicious of my first Differential Equations professor). We are all going to be thrown curve balls in our teaching, like I was this last year, and some classes will have low grade distributions. Let us all commit to making sure that all of our faculty members feel valued and supported so that they can focus on serving their students. Teachers who feel confident that their school "has their back" will have the courage to explore new and better ways to reach their students. The end result will be true student success.

References:

1. Back issues of *The Advocate* are available at www.aftlonestar.org. Select the News drop down menu and select Archives of *The Advocate*.
2. 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)
3. *Federal Lawsuit Settled between Houston's Teacher Union and HISD*, Houston Public Media News, October 10, 2017, <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2017/10/10/241724/federal-lawsuit-settled-between-houstons-teacher-union-and-hisd/>

John Burghduff, AFT-Lone Star College
Vice President for Faculty at CyFair



Note from AFT Officers:

AFT-Lone Star College welcomes contributions to The Advocate from employees who have a message to share that we all need to hear. Often, the first step towards growth and healing is to bring a painful problem that has been relegated to the shadows out into the light. The following article does precisely that.

In it, a Lone Star faculty member describes a situation in which, over an extended period of time, Lone Star College administration and police reacted to a threatening student situation in a way that left the faculty member feeling exposed, vulnerable, and unprotected. As union leaders, sadly, this is far from the first time we have heard stories like this. Some of the stories happened years ago but were never resolved. Others have happened within the last few months. This professor is very courageous to want to tell her story in public and we urge you to read it carefully and thoughtfully.

This could well be a kind of #MeToo moment for the college: If this article strikes a nerve with you, and you feel led to share your story, please know that the union is a safe venue for doing so. As is happening at institutions of all kinds all over the country, people speak up, not to tear down but to start an honest and compassionate conversation that leads to real, systemic changes that build us all up.

When all is said and done, it must be the case that no professor, staff, employee, or student should ever have to feel this alone again.

*Alan Hall and
John Burghduff*

(You may reach a union representative on your campus at the phone numbers listed on the last page of this newsletter.)

**WHENEVER
ONE PERSON
STANDS UP AND SAYS,
"WAIT A MINUTE,
THIS IS WRONG,"
IT HELPS OTHER
PEOPLE TO DO THE
SAME.**

GLORIA STEINEM

If You See Something, Say Something

The first time I saw the "If You See Something, Say Something" banner across the top of the Lone Star College homepage I thought, "Is this a joke?" What protections are in place to prevent our identities from being revealed when we report issues with students? Will administration remove students from our sections immediately, or will we have to continue to endure terroristic threats for the duration of our semester with them, or for years if they stalk us?

Because the administrators and police captain in question have all left Lone Star College-CyFair, I'll talk about a series of incidents with a particular student which began in 2014. This student informed me he'd amassed an arsenal at home containing at least 60 guns, some of which were modified semi-automatic rifles which could fire like automatic weapons, and that he'd just ordered a silencer. The student showed me a one-gallon ziplock full of psychiatric medications he proudly told me he wasn't taking. He told me he enjoyed scaring people. He wrote suicidal poetry. As a precaution, and because he told me he kept a gun in his car on campus, I let my dean at the time—that dean no longer works for the system—know about the student. He insisted the three of us meet, thereby letting the student know I'd reported he kept a gun in his car. That was the first time an administrator sacrificed my safety over a gun-related issue pertaining to this student. I believe it goes without saying, but our identities must be protected when we express concerns about unstable students' possession of firearms.

The second time was the day I saw the student make a Facebook post complaining about the noise level in the Honors College office and saying if he were still in combat these students would be dead. I emailed a screenshot of the Facebook post to my instructional dean. This time, the Dean of Student Services and the Captain of Police on my campus—all gone from my campus now—spoke with the student and then reported back to me that *the student understood why I reported him*. I wonder what guarantee we have our own superiors won't offer us to dangerous types to protect themselves. This was retaliation for making the report. The police captain told me he couldn't do more, that there wasn't enough to take the student to the district attorney because he didn't make a direct



threat. True, the student said in the post that he had too much to lose to shoot up the Honors College, but in the post he expressed a desire to do so. Given his emotional instability and his arsenal, he should have been barred from returning to campus until a psychiatrist assured us he'd addressed the violent turn of his thoughts. After all, why amass an arsenal? The student spoke to me of his intent to use it if pushed. He wanted an excuse.

Instead, the student reported to me he'd developed a good rapport with the police on campus and frequently palled around with them. I did sometimes see him on sidewalks in conversation with officers, smiling and laughing together. Secure in the knowledge no one intended to remove him from campus, the student showed up at my office so frequently that colleagues in my office suite wondered aloud if he was stalking me. Even as recently as the 2016-2017 school year, the student approached me to let me know he knew what car I drove—in fact, that I'd stopped driving my old car and that I'd purchased a new one. He also made certain his wife enrolled in one of my sections when he no longer attended Lone Star. He kept an eye on me for a long time.

I'm not the only faculty member on my campus to receive the "there's nothing we can do" treatment. Contrast this with my experience teaching at one of the Big 12 schools, where students merely felt uncomfortable while workshopping another student's writing which spoke admiringly of Dylan Kliebold and Eric Harris, the Columbine shooters. The university removed the student from class, met with his classmates, met with me, sat him down for counseling, and then removed him from campus until such time they deemed it would be safe for him to re-enroll. They prohibited him from re-enrolling for at least one year, and made certain he would have to jump through many hoops before returning. The investigative process took one day. Campus administrators recognized the indirect threat. I remember no mention of the student owning guns. He expressed admiration for the mass shooting at Columbine one class period, and then

we didn't see him for the rest of the semester because our safety, not fear the student would sue the university, was the administration's priority.

In conversation with presidents and upper-administration of a major Texas university last year—this was a conversation at a wedding, not an interview, so I'm not at liberty to reveal identities—these college leaders expressed to me their own fears about students arriving to their offices armed and ready to shoot. One university president said, "They could shoot *me!*" I thought, "Welcome

"I'm not the only faculty member on my campus to receive the 'there's nothing we can do' treatment."

to my life. That's what faculty members face every day under campus concealed carry." If faculty wonder about inaction on security, this is another reason. Admin understand that dangerous students barred from returning to class may go to their offices next. Admin worry as much about being shot as we

do, so it's no surprise they're reticent to act on our behalf. But that's the job. If they wish to move up and accept those much higher salaries, then part of their remit is to keep the rest of us safe, just as our remit is to keep our students safe. They're obliged to have students making terroristic threats removed from campus, not to allow them to enroll in class after class or to remain in classes all semester after demonstrating they're a danger to all. But administrators shouldn't have to face dangerous students, either. None of us should. Armed officers should escort them off campus. I'd love to see a push, at the highest levels and within their own administrative ranks, against institutional cowardice. We faculty aren't cowards. We face our gun-toting Texan students every day, even those who continuously stalk and threaten us. The moment administrators are told of a threat, the first move they should make is to remove the student from classes until completion of an investigation, not leave him or her in classes until a lengthy investigative process is completed.

In case admin need a little help moving out of the "but we could be sued!!!!!" mindset, I'll point out this is a #me-too, Title IX issue. When female faculty report our stalkers, our harassers, our terrorists, and when admin retaliate by throwing us under the



bus or insinuating—as I’ve seen happen to another colleague on campus—that we’re “crazy,” thereby damaging hard-won reputations, Title IX training tells us they’re breaking the law. Yes, they could be sued—by us.

Believe faculty.

Believe women.

Act.

Administration should give credence to indirect threats as well as direct threats. In my specific case, they should have recognized an unstable student with an arsenal who refused to take medication prescribed by his psychiatrist as dangerous. They should have immediately removed him from campus rather than deciding—since the district attorney wouldn’t press charges—that they would do nothing more than offer his professor up as a sacrificial lamb should the student decide he needed someone to kill. The district attorney doesn’t run our college. Our own administrators have the authority to remove dangerous students from classes and from campus. This issue is not the Gordian knot they’ve made it. To be clear, I’m not asking for anyone’s firing. I don’t seek to get anyone in trouble. I’m asking that administration institute the university model I cited above—especially the one-year suspension during which time students are responsible for providing evidence they’re addressing their violent tendencies. It’s simple, reasonable, and only they—admin and students—may take this action.

Michelle Brown, Professor of English
Lone Star College-CyFair



AFT-Lone Star College Speaks Up for Adjunct Faculty

Editor’s Note: Over a period of almost 40 years, AFT-Lone Star College has spoken up constantly for the well being of college employees. We have written numerous articles in The Advocate about employee rights, benefits, and pay on the premise that when a college treats its employees fairly, it is not only doing the right thing, it is creating a positive culture in which students are best served.

One group of employees that has had less of a voice than almost anyone else is our adjunct faculty. Adjuncts teach the majority of our classes for low pay, no benefits, and little job security. In particular, while other employees almost always receive cost-of-living salary increases every year, adjuncts had not received a salary increase in three years.

At the meeting of the Board of Trustees on May 2, 2019, AFT-Lone Star Vice President John Burghduff spoke to the Board about the plight of adjunct faculty and their stagnant salaries, appealing for relief in the budget for the 2019-2020 school year. The text of his speech is provided below, in “Adjunct Issues, May, 2019.”

We are very pleased to report that, at the August 1, 2019 meeting, the Board of Trustees voted to give adjunct faculty a 4.8% raise, an important step towards a more meaningful livable wage. At the same meeting, the Board voted to give all other employees a 3% raise—the largest in several years—in spite of cuts in state investment in the college.

Adjunct Issues, May, 2019

I am John Burghduff, representing the American Federation of Teachers.

Over this coming summer, the Administration and Board of Trustees will be completing the budget for Lone Star College for Fiscal Year 2020. With



the financial setbacks the college has faced due to Hurricane Harvey and the corresponding flattening of enrollment growth and with the uncertainty of state appropriations, we know that this will be a challenging task. Under these circumstances, we understand the gravity of any budget ask that the union or anyone else makes of you.

Keeping the challenges you face as you build the budget firmly in mind, we would like to ask you to consider the status of one particular group of Lone Star employees—our adjunct faculty. Tonight we'd like to advocate for a salary raise for adjuncts and a recommitment to faculty hiring to improve the percentage of our classes taught by full-time faculty.

First, we would like to address salary.

Adjuncts have not had a cost-of-living increase in three years while, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the consumer price index increased between February 2016 and February 2019 by approximately 6.5%. The Texas Community College Teachers Association (TCCTA) reports data on adjuncts every two years for the 50 community college systems in the state of Texas. Based on their data, Lone Star adjuncts dropped from 12th in the state in salary to 18th between 2014 and 2018. Our current adjunct pay is lowest among the large multi-campus community college systems in the five largest metropolitan areas in Texas. Among the ten community colleges serving Harris and surrounding counties, only Alvin, Lee and Brazosport Colleges pay less than we do.

We currently pay our adjuncts at a rate of \$41.75 per hour, but this is calculated only based on hours actually in the classroom. Accounting for time spent grading and preparing for class, using workload measures suggested by the IRS, adjunct instructor pay is under \$19 per hour—about what a manager at the convenience store Buc-ees makes.

A worthy goal of a college of our stature would be to strive to offer the highest pay in the state, but that would require a rate of over \$65 per hour. The AFT recognizes that there is no way Lone Star can afford that all at once.

A good first step would be to simply increase adjunct pay by 6.5% to at least account for inflation. That would bring us to \$44.50 per hour. This raise would bring us back up to 12th in the state, and ahead of the other community colleges in the greater Houston area, but still below our other large urban peers.

The second issue we'd like to address is a close companion of the first: the percentage of classes taught by adjunct faculty. According to the TCC-TA, in 2014, 59% of all course sections offered at Lone Star were taught by adjunct faculty. Unfortunately, in spite of efforts the college has made to add full-time faculty, by 2018 that percentage had ticked upwards to 60% of all classes taught by adjunct faculty. This gives Lone Star the dubious distinction of being in last place among the 50 community colleges in Texas in percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty.

Lone Star College has many distinctions of which we can all be proud. This is not one of them. Over-reliance on adjunct faculty and low adjunct pay have a negative impact on our college. For adjunct faculty, a livable salary requires teaching an enormous load across several college systems. For full-time faculty, with fewer professors to share the load, college service—such as committee work, mentoring and tutoring students, sponsoring student organizations, etc.—is a heavier burden, taking time away from teaching. For students, although our adjunct faculty members are incredible teachers, they cannot be as available to students for outside help as full-time faculty can.

We understand that this year's budget presents challenges, but—in the midst of addressing those challenges—we ask you to see what you can do for our adjuncts. We hope you can find a way to give a significant cost-of-living increase to the one group of employees that has not seen a raise in three years, and we hope that you can refocus the college's commitment to create more full-time positions.

Thank you for your consideration.



Editor's note: Here is the follow-up speech.

Budget Reflection, August, 2019

I am John Burghduff, representing the American Federation of Teachers.

Members of the Board, Board Counsel, Dr. Head, fellow Lone Star employees and guests here tonight, it is good to see you all after the July break. Even though there has been no Board meeting since June, we have all been plenty busy. We especially want to acknowledge the hard work on the part of many of you that has gone into preparing the Budget that will be presented tonight for Fiscal Year 2020.

As we said in our AFT presentation to the Board in May, we recognize that this has not been an easy budget year. We are still struggling with the losses from Hurricane Harvey. Although the Texas Legislature was helpful to us in dealing with those losses, they were not so generous with funding for community colleges in general.

In light of these challenges, we in the AFT wish to especially acknowledge the attention to employee pay reflected in tonight's proposed budget. As a union, compensation of college faculty and staff is obviously a matter of great concern to us, and we have appealed on behalf of our brother and sister employees on a number of occasions. The 3% cost of living increase proposed in tonight's budget for most employees is right in line with increases in the Consumer Price Index over the last year. This budget keeps college employees caught up with inflation. We are also appreciative that the new budget allows the College to continue to deal with pay inequities related to salary compression.

We especially appreciate the 4.8% pay increase proposed for adjunct faculty. As you know, we spoke with you at the May meeting about our concerns that adjunct pay had been stagnant for three

years while inflation had increased by 6.5% over that time frame. The pay increase proposed tonight will go a long way towards helping our adjunct faculty catch up. Thank you for taking the concerns we have raised to heart and for stepping up with significant relief for some of our most at risk employees.

Looking ahead to future budget years, to use a favorite phrase of Chairman Dr. Alton Smith, we urge the Board to maintain the momentum. AFT advocates routinely using the Consumer Price In-

dex as a floor for annual salary increases, with as much generosity as the College can responsibly afford above that floor to help employees to get ahead and not just keep up.

We also advocate for salary increases for adjunct faculty

each year. For the next few years, we urge that their salary increases be a percentage point or two above CPI to help them catch up from three years without a raise. As one of the premier two-year institutions in the state, perhaps a good goal would be to raise our adjunct salary up into the top 10 among Texas community colleges.

That is all for future consideration. For tonight, however, we in the AFT wish to simply say thank you for prioritizing the financial well-being of Lone Star College faculty and staff in this year's budget and we express our support for Action Item 1, the budget for FY 2020.

Thank you for your consideration.

Editor's note: As John Burghduff says, let us maintain the momentum and continue to improve the well-being of all employees, especially adjunct faculty, in the years to come.

“We especially appreciate the 4.8% pay increase proposed for adjunct faculty.”



Counseling Crisis Could Be Impacting Our Students' Success

As a counselor for Lone Star College, now for 18 years, I have been around long enough to be under the leadership of three chancellors. Dr. Pickelman was the chancellor leading our system when I was hired in 2001. It was his decision in 2002 to give the title, Counselor, to professionals who were doing the work of counselors but were then identified as assistant deans. He recognized and appreciated their specialized education and the function of support they provided to our students. He also recognized, like teaching faculty, they must have a master's in a single subject area that qualifies them to be considered an expert in their field.

In recent years the Counseling Board has ruled more training, both in education and the number of hours of supervision, is needed to become licensed. To be skilled and effective is critical since we all know mental illness that is not identified and treated can be detrimental in any setting.

Another critical factor in effective intervention is the relationship between the counselor and the student. The relationship must be authentic and student-focused. It cannot be focused on meeting a required case load or promoting a personal purpose. It must also be stable and accessible so the same counselor a student met with is available in the future. A consistent staff is necessary to achieve this. Unfortunately for our students, we have noticed a frequency in turnover with the contracted resource. On the Cy-Fair campus, this resource was brought on campus post Harvey; after 1.5 years, neither of the original counselors is here.

Counseling, on many campuses, when provided by contracted counselors, can no longer build long-term relationships with students. Their case load must change each semester; in other words, the students served in the fall cannot be carried as part of

their caseload in the spring. Personally, there are students I have worked with during a crisis period who continued to use me as a resource of support and guidance until completion. This relationship did not develop as part of a specific campus program or initiative. It developed because Counseling Services on our campus has always been about giving a student a safe, non-judgmental setting to be listened to. It was, and continues to be, a relationship built on trust and focused on completion. Some of my relationships lasted over 5 years; this was especially true when working with a student with a disability.

I can only speak on behalf of the LSC counselors at the Cy-Fair campus when I say all our interventions are made from the perspective of academia. I

“Counseling, on many campuses, when provided by contracted counselors, can no longer build long-term relationships with students.”

can say this with confidence because I know all the counselors personally and we consult continuously when we are uncertain on how to best support a student. There is no greater joy for any of us in our work than when we get to hug a student in the

line at graduation and see them walk across that stage. Our intervention, although it is therapeutic, is not therapy. Students in need of therapy are always referred to outside resources.

As LSC counselors, we also always consult with our supervisor when we recognize the unpredictability of a student we have met with. We abide by confidentiality except when we have concerns of students becoming a danger to themselves or others. In those instances, when we are uncertain of the stability of a student, our supervisor is notified; she can address the issue in a way she deems necessary.

Since the supervisor of a contracted counselor is not on campus, it can slow down the process of making certain an issue of concern is proactively addressed. My understanding is contracted counselors must notify their supervisor who then directs them on what to do next. In my opinion, being on the same team, the LSC team, is much more effective.



tive at keeping our campuses safe for our students, faculty, and staff. During these current times, that should never be compromised.

A negative correlation has existed between the growth of our student body and LSC counselors. In 2003 the Cy-Fair campus became the 5th college in our system and opened with 6 full-time counselors; we now have 3. System-wide, at that time, there were 34 counselors. As the number of LSC counselors has diminished—we are now at 19 system-wide—there is unequivocally a need for help. The contracted resource now on our campuses does offer our students resources they need. We appreciate their model, dependent upon community resources, that can provide basic needs to our students. However, prior to the presence of our contracted resource, LSC counselors were already providing services related to social services. I cannot recall an instance when a student was turned away due to our lack of knowledge or connection with community resources. We are very familiar and connected with what resources exist in the community we work and live in.

As an original LSC counselor on the Cy-Fair campus, I am thankful to have long-term relationships with many faculty and some deans. Just as the importance of long-term relationships is critical when working with students, the same is true when functioning as a team with different entities on campus. A strong team is often necessary in retaining students, removing barriers, and safeguarding our campus community.

The position of LSC Counselor has been under scrutiny now for countless years. It is my hope our efforts, which are invested in students, will one day be appreciated. We are all here to contribute to student success. A cohesive team, where no employee is made to feel disparaged in any way, is my hope for the future. LSC 20/20 Vision is an amazing philosophy that I fully agree with especially on this point: “I develop meaningful relationships and collaborate for mutual success.”

Angelica Sutton
Faculty Counselor/Professor, LSC-CyFair
Last June, the Texas AFT Convention was held in

Tales from the Unionside

Houston, and union delegates elected Zeph Capo as the new state president. Capo, the head of the Houston Federation of Teachers (HFT), defeated incumbent Louis Malfaro, who had held the Texas AFT top post since 2013. Prior to the Houston convention, the AFT-Lone Star Executive Board had voted to endorse Malfaro over Capo in the election. This choice was a tough call, as many of us know Zeph well and have worked with him in the past on local education matters.

The Malfaro or Capo choice for us was reminiscent of the 2008 Democratic Party primary faceoff between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, where Democratic voters had to choose between two strong party candidates. The good news about the Zeph Capo victory is that the new state AFT chief executive is well-versed and experienced in Texas community college issues. Zeph has served as an elected trustee and chair of the Houston Community College Board. We look forward to a bright union future with President Capo leading the American Federation of Teachers organization in the Lone Star State.

The Texas AFT has a new president; AFT-Lone Star will also be getting a new president in 2020, as Alan Hall announced to the Executive Board last May that he would not be seeking re-election next year. Taking over from Kevin Bailey in the mid-1980's, Alan has led our local's growth from a few dozen members to some 500 strong. His intention is to continue teaching English classes at North Harris and to remain active in Local 4518. As Malfaro and Hall leave their offices, there is an exciting arrival to AFT-LSC for the coming academic year with Richard Shaw joining our union staff as an advisor and representative. The Executive Board approved adding Richard to the staff for 2019-2020.

Who is Richard Shaw? For over 43 years, Shaw was active in the Texas labor movement. He retired from his office as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Harris County AFL-CIO Council in 2016. Before his 1995 election to the county labor council, Richard had been the president of the Houston



Federation of Teachers. After leaving HFT, Richard Shaw held union positions with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) as the Local 1550 business manager and then its executive director. During his labor career, Shaw also served as a vice-president on the Texas AFL-CIO Council.

I am excited and pleased to have Richard on our staff, as his diplomatic skills and his knowledge of education practices and law are top-notch. These skills and knowledge have been on display in a long union career in working with education administrators, school board members, Houston City Council members, and Texas state legislators. Shaw has earned the respect and trust of those he has worked with—whether or not they agreed with his positions. For years, I watched him in action during his days as Harris County labor chief.

One of Richard's primary jobs will be to assist the Executive Board in the rebuilding of the AFT infrastructure at Lone Star. Under the Local 4518 Constitution, there are three at-large elected offices: president, treasurer, and secretary. Each of the now seven LSC campuses has two elected offices: faculty vice-president and staff vice-president. Union elections are scheduled every two years in November of even-numbered years. Should only one candidate file for an office, the election will not be held. Over the past 15 years, we have had few competitive races, and vacancies occurring between elections for these 17 union offices can be filled by executive board appointment. I have seen a number of great board members leave office due to retirements from LSC, the full-time pursuit of a Ph.D., and the acceptance of a college job at another institution.

Along with the 17 elected board members, the constitution provides for a number of appointed board spots: *The Advocate* editor, COPE director, political program head, and labor delegate to county AFL-

CIO councils. What all this means is that there is plenty of room at the top for AFT-LSC members to step up and become more active in the union. Having held a number of these union posts, I would be happy to meet and to talk with any union member on what to expect as an officer or campus representative. Most of these posts do not require a lot of time and bring a great deal of satisfaction in knowing that you are representing and helping people. With that said, all organizations live and die by their dues-paying members. We in the AFT know how important and special all our members are and how their financial support keeps the union vital and strong.

"Tales from the Unionside" is a political column with a focus on local, state, and national politics from a labor and personal perspective. I thought I would end my first column of the new academic year with a passing reference to the 2020 presidential race. I am a democrat and not a Democrat. With that

said, I will not be voting for the anti-democrats running in the 2020 presidential contest.

At my son's suggestion, we went to see Joe Biden speak at the HFT-hosted event on May 28th in Houston. We watched the former vice-president speak and take questions from the invitation-only gathering of union teachers. It was a good night for AFT President Randi Weingarten and HFT President Zeph Capo, as they were in fine form, but it was a bad night for Biden as he appeared unprepared and confused before a friendly audience. On this night the former VP was truly "Clueless" Joe whose time has passed. Despite my impression, I did send the Biden campaign a check and gave the "JOE" tee-shirt to my son who is rock solid for JB.

In 2016, the American Federation of Teachers jumped in the presidential race early with a Hillary

"...there is plenty of room at the top for AFT-LSC members to step up and become more active in the union."



Clinton endorsement, but the AFT is more cautious this time around. Such has not be the case with the International Association of Fire Fighters/(IAFF) which became the first major labor union to endorse a 2020 presidential candidate. The IAFF announced its backing of Joe Biden on April 29th, setting off a Trump Twitter storm. The President's reaction was classic Trump as he wrote, "I'll never get the support of Dues Crazy union leadership, those people who rip-off their membership with ridiculously high dues, medical and other expenses, while being paid a fortune. But the members love Trump."

If Trump were not so ignorant of political history, he might know that the fire-fighters union made no official 2016 political endorsement. Its overwhelming white, male membership probably voted for Trump over Clinton, but this is another race and insults may not play so well in 2020. If I were the Twitter sort, my response to his tweet would be, "The American presidency is an honorable office occupied today by a dishonorable man."

Bob Locander
Professor of Political Science, LSC-North Harris

Editor's Note: Locander is a regular political columnist for The Advocate.



Meet our AFT-Lone Star Organizers!

Daler Wade

Daler has been on staff with us as a part-time organizer since January 2019. The campuses which she covers are:

- Cy-Fair College
- Fairbanks Center
- Victory Center
- University Park
- Montgomery College



Contact Information:

Phone: 832-510-4351

Email: dalerbwade@gmail.com

Karina Nistal

Karina has been on staff with us as a part-time organizer since August 2019. The campuses which she covers are:

- North Harris College
- Tomball College
- Kingwood College
- Greenspoint Center
- East Aldine Center



Contact Information:

Phone: 832-377-5165

Email: karinanistal@gmail.com

Daler and Karina will be helping to keep AFT strong at LSC by reaching out to members and employees and working to improve AFT visibility at all the campuses and centers.

We are asking our members and readers to give them a warm welcome and help them to establish the AFT presence on your campus!



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Stephen King	North Harris	ACAD 162-H	281-618-5530
Chris Phlegar	North Harris	ACAD 270-H	281-618-5583
Rich Almstedt	Kingwood	FTC 100-G	281-312-1656
Richard Becker	Tomball	E 271-D	281-401-1835
Janet Moore	Tomball	E 210 -E	281-401-1871
Van Piercy	Tomball	S 153-J	281-401-1814
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Louise Casey-Clukey	Montgomery	B 100-G	936-273-7394
John Burghduff	Cy-Fair	HSC 250-G	281-290-3915
Cindy Hoffart-Watson	Cy-Fair	LRNC 101-C	281-290-3265
Dr. Stephen Washington	Victory Center	Faculty Office	832-810-5612
Dr. Adrienne Patton	Fairbanks Center	Faculty Office	832-782-5086

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

ended there. Were they members, a host of benefits would have been available.

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

Most of our members don't join because they believe that they may need the AFT's help in a conflict. They join because they believe in the values of the AFT—that employees should be treated with dignity and respect, that employees should help each other, that employees should have a voice in

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

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

—Alan Hall

