



The Advocate

Big Plans for 2022 - 2023

Welcome to the first edition of The Advocate for the 2022 – 2023 school year. We, at the American Federation of Teachers, hope that everyone is off to a great start for what we hope will be a productive, “semi-normal” year with no ugly surprises (hurricanes, freezes, Covid resurgences, etc.)

Now that the fall semester has started, I want to share with you a project that our union plans to work on this year.

Over the last couple of years, we have noted an increase in the number of employees coming to us with concerns about their individual work situations. From one point of view, this is a good thing. AFT and Lone Star administration have built a positive track record of resolving problems together and a growing number of employees are learning they can trust this process.

However, we are hearing many of the same themes repeatedly and that leads us to believe we should also take a broader approach. Employees often tell us that they feel their contributions are not understood and that some groups of employees are treated differently than others. There is no doubt that the stress and isolation we have all endured throughout the pandemic contributes to this sense.

AFT’s major priority for the year is to foster communication and positive interaction between the three main categories of Lone Star College employees: faculty, staff, and administrators. Our goal is to build greater understand-

ing and trust in order to further mitigate problems before they get out of hand.

In order to know how to help, we first need to understand what employees are feeling about their own work situations and their interactions with others. We believe we are in a unique situation to study this because we operate outside of official Lone Star College structures and we hope that will encourage our colleagues to be candid.

You should already have in your email inboxes a copy of what we are calling our climate survey. If you have not yet seen it, be sure to check your spam folder and allow emails from:
info@aftlonestar.org



Scan the QR code to take the survey, or go to: <https://bit.ly/AFTLONESTAR-SURVEY1>

We are asking folks to share with us both their positive experiences and their concerns about their jobs. Both full time and part time employees are included. Our survey last year about returning to work after Covid garnered over 1000 responses. We are hoping we can get that many or more this year. If you

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aftlonestar@yahoo.com





haven't done so already, please locate our survey and fill it out. It should only take a matter of minutes depending on how much you would like to say in our free response sections.

Our plan is to follow up with some focus group discussions to explore whatever trends may come up in a deeper fashion. Our survey will not ask employees to identify themselves and will be run through a server that neither Lone Star College nor the AFT controls. We will guarantee strict anonymity of everyone's responses, but we will report to the college community any trends that come up that need attention. So, keep your eyes open for future editions of The Advocate.

This process will take us into the spring, and we will use what we learn to both instruct us on community building activities we can promote and potential concerns that could be addressed with college procedures and policies. We want the data to drive the decisions, so we are going into this project with no preconceived notions.

Most importantly, this process is about making life better for all of us at Lone Star, not finding fault and casting blame. Ultimately, this is a journey all of us across the system must travel together. With the college's 50th anniversary at hand and with all of us figuring out what the new normal for higher education will look like, we believe the timing is both auspicious and critical.

Wishing all of us a fantastic school year, thank you for your kind attention.

John Burghduff, President
AFT-Lone Star college



Please mark your calendar for a systemwide official meeting of the union on Zoom scheduled for the evening of Thursday, November 10. All are welcome! We promise it will be fun. Please watch your email for more information to come later.

AFT Welcomes Two New Organizers

AFT – Lone Star College is thrilled to introduce to you two new part time organizers who joined our staff on September 1. Ide Uwagbale and Dee Williams are already doing fantastic work making visits to college campuses and facilities, calling AFT members on the phone, and reaching out by text. As the school year continues, you'll be hearing more from Ide and Dee. They will be helping us with union activities, reaching out to employees to tell them about the union and its benefits, and relaying information they hear from you back to union leadership so we can advocate for your needs and concerns more effectively.

We believe you will love Ide and Dee as much as we do. Please read the following introductions and say hi when you see them on your campus or worksite.

Meet Dee Williams:

D. Garibaldi Williams joined the AFT Lone Star College as a Part Time Organizer in September 2022



"I am so happy to be a part of the American Federation of Teachers and I look forward to working for/with you."

In 1990, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from Xavier University of Louisiana. In that same year, she began her Computer Programming career as an Associate Computer Systems Designer at Lockheed Martin, formerly Martin Marietta Manned Space Systems, at the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans, Louisiana.

In 1992, she continued to test the waters in the field of Computer Science and landed a job as a Computer Specialist at the federal agency of the United States Department of Agriculture at the Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans. While working as a Computer Specialist, she first recognized her calling to "serve and help others". Thus, this revelation gave her insight to finding her passion for "serving and helping others". In 1992, she enrolled in a Graduate Mathematics Education teacher certification program. In 1995, she received a Master of Arts in Teaching Mathematics. In 1996, she stepped out on faith and began her career as a Computer Science teacher.



During the 1996 – 1997 school year, she joined the American Federation of Teachers. Thus, she is not a stranger to the American Federation of Teachers. She remained a member of the American Federation of Teachers for approximately 20 years in both Louisiana and Texas. Her parents and other family members also were members of the American Federation of Teachers of Louisiana. For the majority of her educational career, she has fulfilled her passion “to help and serve others”. Most importantly, not only has she fulfilled her passion to help and serve others, but her focus of her career has been in the area of educating “at-risk” individuals.

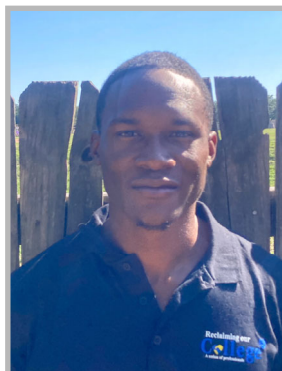
To highlight some of her “at risk” experiences, she has taught job skills to students in the Jobs for America’s Graduates school-based organization, taught high school math at an alternative school in a Houston suburb, and taught math to middle school students classified as needing special educational services.

Presently, she has continued to fulfill her passion to “help and serve others”. She recently joined the my-CancerConnection network at MD Anderson as a cancer mentor. As a 1990 cancer survivor, she aims to support individuals who are going through cancer treatments and/or surgery, to encourage, share memories, and cheer patients on to survivorship.

Meet Ide Uwagbale:

Idemudia Uwagbale joined AFT-Lone Star as a part time organizer in September 2022.

In 2017 He earned a bachelors degree in sociology from Texas Tech University. After graduation, Ide began volunteering with the Texas Organizing Project (T.O.P). While with T.O.P., he focused his organizing efforts on issues affecting people of color in the housing system and US criminal Justice system.



“I have many friends and family members who work in education. I am very excited to work with AFT and learn more about organizing to help educators.”

Ide also has experience working as a campaign coordinator, as he worked for a candidate running for Fort Bend County Judge. In this role he traveled across Fort Bend to connect with voters on their issues and ensure voter turnout.

LSC Offers Generous Compensation Increases for All Employees, Takes AFT Concerns into Account

2022 – 2023 has begun on a high note with Lone Star College offering the most generous pay increases we have heard of among all the community colleges in Texas. AFT – Lone Star College was privileged to play a role in these pay increases. Original plans announced in the spring called for a lower salary increase for staff than for faculty. Although the initial plan already exceeded what other Texas community colleges were considering, the union believed that all employees should be rewarded equally, especially in light of the countless sacrifices all employees made to get Lone Star College through the pandemic. As LSC Chancellor Dr. Steve Head acknowledged in his Convocation address, we spoke with him and other key players and encouraged them to give the same raise to everyone. We are very grateful to report that the administration took our input into consideration and altered their plans.

As a result, fulltime faculty, and parttime and fulltime staff received a 4% salary increase effective September 1. With the exception of a few specific employee groups that had received special pay increases last year, fulltime faculty and all staff will see an additional 4% increase on our mid-December paychecks. The December increase will be accompanied by raising pay bands by 4%. This will especially benefit staff employees who have reached the top of their pay bands, enabling them to enjoy this salary increase, too.

Also, adjunct faculty will be paid an extra \$4 per contact hour representing an 8.7% increase in pay for them. Of all the important things that a union does, advocating for fair pay increases that help hard working employees keep up with the cost of living is Job One. **We are so glad we have been able to make a difference and we thank Dr. Head, members of the Board of Trustees, and the Lone Star College financial team for listening and taking action.**

**We Care.
We Show Up.
We Advocate Together.
AFT-Lone Star College.**





Gulf Coast Area Labor Endorses Board of Trustees Candidates



On Wednesday, September 28, the Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation voted to endorse candidates Myriam Saldivar and Rita Yates-Wiltz for Lone Star College Board of Trustees in the upcoming November 8 elections.

The Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation (TGCAFLF) is the umbrella organization for 94 union locals in the greater Houston area representing workers from musicians to steel workers, from government employees to longshoremen, from truck drivers to electricians, from football players to letter carriers . . . and college faculty and staff! AFT – Lone Star College is an affiliate of TGCAFLF.

The Lone Star College Board of Trustees consists of nine trustees representing single member districts. They are the Board of Directors for our college and are ultimately responsible for the oversight of everything we do. Trustees are elected for six-year terms with three districts up for election each even-year November. This year, Trustee David Vogt is running unopposed to represent District 5 which covers most of the Woodlands, parts of Tomball, all of Magnolia, and surrounding areas.

Two districts have competitive races for Trustee this year. Readers can select the links below to go to maps of the respective districts and a list of voting precincts that lie in those districts. There are two candidates in each race listed here alphabetically with asterisks indicating candidates endorsed by the TGCAFLF.

District 6:

https://www.lonestar.edu/images/04.20.22.04%20District6_LSC_BOTprecinct-map2019_lettersize_v1.pdf

- Joe Gordon
- Myriam Saldivar*

District 7:

https://www.lonestar.edu/images/04.20.22.04%20District7_LSC_BOTprecinct-map2019_lettersize_v2.pdf

- Rebecca (Becky) Broussard
- Rita Yates-Wiltz*

TGCAFLF endorsements are based on questionnaires sent to all registered candidates and live interviews conducted (this year) over Zoom. TGCAFLF also endorses candidates for most statewide, county, and local races. For a complete list of endorsements, please visit <https://www.gcaflcio.org/endorsements>.



Mandatory Training Deadline

Friendly (but serious) reminder that all Lone Star College employees are expected to complete their college-mandated online training for the year by 11:00 PM, Tuesday November 29. If you are unsure where you stand on your training or are not sure how to participate, please visit <https://lonestar-tx.safecolleges.com> and use the same login credentials you use for email, D2L, and MyLoneStar. Your personal dashboard MUST indicate that all mandatory training has been completed to assure that you are in compliance.

Note: The college is VERY serious about this deadline. Employees who do not complete this training by the deadline WILL BE TERMINATED. The union will be unable to defend you against failing to meet a job requirement. What we can do to help you is WARN YOU NOW.





LSC Board of Trustees Faces Critical Tax Rate Vote - 10% Budget Shortfall at Stake

Important INFORMATION

On Thursday, October 20, the Lone Star College Board of Trustees will vote to set the property tax rate for 2023 for properties within the college taxing district in Harris, Montgomery, and San Jacinto Counties. The Chief Financial Officer is recommending that the tax rate remain unchanged from 2022 at \$0.1078 per \$100 of property valuation. Lone Star College has held this tax rate unchanged for many years.

The importance of this vote is accentuated by a revision to the Texas Tax Code passed in 2019* that states that if the Board does not agree on a tax rate by October 28, the tax rate will automatically revert to the "No-New-Revenue" rate. This is the tax rate that, based on current valuations of properties across the district, would bring in the exact same revenues that the college is projected to raise for the current year, 2022. That rate would be \$0.0916 per \$100 of valuation.

By the same changes in the tax code, tax rates can no longer be set based on a simple majority of Board members present. To approve the rate requires approval of 60% of the number of seats on the Board. Since Lone Star has a 9 member Board, that means that at least 6 members of the Board must vote to approve. Because our Board has a vacancy, there are only 8 Trustees available to vote. Early indications are that one Trustee will not be able to attend bringing that number down to 7. This means that any combination of 2 no-votes, abstentions, or non-attendances would default the college to the No-New-Revenue rate.

Because college costs are rising, including the costs of recently approved compensation increases for all em-

ployees, failure to pass the recommended tax rate would represent a shortfall of \$45 million dollars in college revenue for 2023, 10% of the college's operating budget for the year. The lost revenue over the next five years is estimated at \$87 million dollars.

Because we are already operating on a budget with the assumption of keeping the tax rate the same, if the vote fails, the college administration would be forced to cut spending immediately to reflect the loss in income. What steps would need to be made are unclear. Suffice it to say that a sudden loss of 10% of the money the college was planning on for this year would require cuts that would be painful and that would directly hurt both students and employees in significant ways.

".. a sudden loss of 10% of the money the college was planning on for this year would require cuts that would be painful and that would directly hurt both students and employees in significant ways."

On Saturday, October 1, the Executive Board of AFT – Lone Star College met and passed a resolution to present the following statement to the

Lone Star College Board of Trustees:

"Given the critical priority to fully fund the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget of Lone Star College in order to serve the growing educational needs of the citizens of Harris, Montgomery, and San Jacinto Counties, to promote the ongoing economic development of the greater Houston area, and to ensure the financial stability of the over 6000 employees who work tirelessly for the success of Lone Star College students, **the Executive Board of the American Federation of Teachers – Lone Star College formally and respectfully urges the Board of Trustees of Lone Star College to approve the proposed tax rate for 2023 of \$0.1078 per hundred dollars property valuation at the special meeting set for Thursday, October 20.**"

*For details on the Texas Tax Code as it relates to this upcoming vote, please visit <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/TX/htm/TX.26.htm> and scroll down to Section 26.05(b).

For updates on this developing story, visit our website:

www.aftlonestar.org





Your Vote is Your Voice – More Texans Need to Use It

By: Robert Locander, Richard Shaw, Kevin Bailey

Regardless of who's running for office in the November midterm elections, and regardless of who wins, we already know who loses: half of all Texans who probably won't vote.

Eleven million of Texas's twenty-two million residents over age 18 didn't vote in the last presidential election, based on data from the United States Election Project. As Kinky Friedman once said, "The only thing smaller in Texas than the Alamo is voter turnout."

The high percentage of nonvoting Texans has long been a concern for nonpartisan groups like the League of Women Voters, who encourage citizen participation.

While the idea of "Let the people vote" is an article of faith for the League, this belief has been a heresy for Democrats in the past and for today's Republicans. It is the LWV which carries the voting torch against partisan efforts to continue the Texas tradition of making it as difficult as possible for people to vote.

Even before the Trump era, voting rights in Texas have always been restricted. Article Six of the state Constitution of 1876 prohibited voting for people under 21, mental incompetents, the poor on county welfare, felons, and military personnel. To these formal restrictions, Democrats would add additional voting barriers through literacy tests, poll taxes, and the white primary during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As Republicans took control over state government in the Bush, Perry, and Abbott years, the Texas GOP played its own version of the "stop the vote" game. Using the false narratives of massive voter fraud and stolen elections, state Republicans backed extreme political gerrymandering, photo ID laws, bans on 24-hour and drive-through voting, and added requirements for mail-in balloting.

On mail-in voting, Rice University Professor Bob Stein's comment about the GOP that "They're not against vote-by-mail, they're just against vote-by-mail by anyone who doesn't vote Republican" reflects how party partisans approach the voting question. To red and blue partisans, voting has been seen as a winner-take-all game and not a civic exercise in democracy.

It's no wonder that the Lone Star State has had a voting problem as Texas turnout figures have been among the lowest in the nation. Low turnout figures suited the political and economic interests of conservative, Anglo Democratic party establishment during its 100-year government reign, and now it's Republicans' turn to suppress voting as a tactic to stay in power and shape policy outcomes.

As Kinky Friedman once said, "The only thing smaller in Texas than the Alamo is voter turnout."

The old political saying, "If you don't vote, you don't count," has never been truer than today. Political scientists generally attribute nonvoting to ineligibility, apathy, alienation, or a lack of knowledge about politics and government.

In the past, academics showed little concern about nonvoting from a policy standpoint as their research turned up no major differences on issue and policy matters between nonvoters and voters. What this meant is that a greater number of voters would not have changed things given the similar outlooks between the two groups. These findings of "no differences" appear no longer to be the case as democratic alarm bells are going off in the heads of more than the Liz Cheneys of the nation.

Political scientists Jan Leighly and Jonathan Nagler have confirmed empirically in "Who Votes Now?" that nonvoters and voters hold decidedly different views on questions related to the role of government in the economy. It is nonvoters who favor government action to improve people's lives. Voters, on the other hand, take a more austere view which permits elected officials to do less not more in keeping with what the voters, not the people, are telling them.

For those of us concerned about nonvoting from both a democratic and a policy perspective, the task of increasing election turnout is formidable. We have worked in



nonpartisan and partisan drives: first to get citizens registered to vote and second to get the registered to vote in the election. This is an effort that requires the fortitude of Sisyphus.

Despite the difficulty in getting people to the polls, let's not lose sight of the democratic and policy stakes here. As the community organizer Willie Velasquez often said, "Su voto es so voz." Your vote is your voice and do not throw this away by not voting in an election. Let all Texas voices, both loud and soft, be heard on November 8!

Robert Locander holds a Ph.D. in political science and is a retired professor of political science from Lone Star College – North Harris. Richard Shaw is the retired Secretary Treasurer of the Harris County AFL-CIO Council and current Special Consultant to AFT – Lone Star College. Kevin Bailey represented Houston's District 140 in the Texas Legislature for 18 years and was the founding president of AFT – Lone Star College in 1979/1980. Their new book, The Real World of Texas Politics, will be published this fall by Stoney Creek Publishing.



**your VOTE
is your VOICE**

Dispatches from the Front #3 Fall Forward

**Steve Davis, Professor of History, Lone Star College
-Kingwood**

This is my thirty-ninth Fall at LSC-Kingwood and my fortieth such term at Lone Star counting the year as an adjunct I spent at North Harris in 1983. English professor (and dear friend) Joan Samuelson and I are the "Last of the Mohicans" at Kingwood as all the other full-time hires who opened the campus in August 1984 have now moved along. And yet, I'm not jaded about our mission at the college and my own contributions. To the contrary, this new year finds me more hopeful and confident than ever about our students and what we can bring them. I'll elaborate in the space that follows.

I begin with a memory. There's something special about that first day of class in the Fall. This year, I thought about my own initial college class at the University of St. Thomas in the Fall of 1970. The course was Physics early that Monday morning in one of the small classrooms on that quaint inner-city campus. It was taught by Father Braden who was the president of the university. God, he was an intimidating presence, a teacher who wouldn't hesitate to tell you if he thought you had said something dumb. I was never prouder in my student days of the "B" I made in his class that term. Braden was tough and demanding, but no paragon of kindness in his approach to students. Sometimes a teacher inspires us negatively as a prime example of what **not** to do in the classroom.

My own first class this term met at 9:05 Monday morning. I asked for a show of hands and a fair number present indicated it was their first day in college and even that this was their first college class. I hope I made it as memorable for them as Father Braden's class was for me. What a godsend it is to be finally back from COVID! My three classes on MWF and MW were all full at 33 when we started and I've only lost only the inevitable one or two so far in each section. All those entire terms of online teaching at Kingwood (due not only to the pandemic but also to Hurricane Harvey) have shown us how much we missed the vital face-to-face interchange in traditional classes. I am keen every time I meet a group to make sure they not only learn Ameri-



can history, but that they also enjoy themselves in the process. All these years of reading, study, teaching, and travel are bearing fruit in practically every session. Despite having turned seventy this past August on a cruise ship somewhere off the Atlantic coast of Canada, I feel like I'm entering my instructional prime. Or maybe it's because of it. There is something to the notion of the wisdom we gain with age. It pays off in front of a group of young students fresh out of high school given the insights we can share from decades of living and working.

There's nothing like the Fall term with the ability each new academic year to begin afresh. Hopes are high and everyone enjoys the honeymoon period until the first major exams and assignments come due. Plus, we all look ahead to a morale boost when the hell of the Houston heat breaks at some point in the autumn. This past week though, local highs of 98 in late September made me feel sorry for the current generation of youth who will grapple with the consequences of climate change in their mature years and suffer on account of old men who called it a hoax. This new term is special as I'm rolling out a new hybrid approach to testing (using a combination of D2L and classroom writing on major exams) and teaching a brand-new course. The latter is African American History from beginnings through Reconstruction. The students (90% of whom are Black) are wonderful and the preparation is stretching me in the best kind of ways. It's so imperative to leave our comfort zones and teach topics in which we didn't get advanced training. In my case, I know practically nothing of Africa's history, and I need to fill some gaps there to have street cred in this new offering. For some professors, there might be a temptation to repeat the same old, same old every semester. All of us have known colleagues who succumbed, essentially retiring years before they made it official. I'm grateful for the opportunity over my career to take on or even create new courses. That has been a huge factor in my longevity.

I've thought in the past couple of weeks about the teachable moments that arise unexpectedly. That happened this term with the passing of the Queen. I was in a room full of students in a club that I advise when one of them got the news on his phone and told us Elizabeth had just died. It was a moment for reflection as her reign and my own life began the same year. I have no patience for Americans who swoon over royal

babies and weddings. I can imagine Thomas Jefferson twisting in his tomb over our countrymen who go to London and fawn over the Windsors and their trappings. But the Queen taught us something about the merits of having a head of state who is dignified and fosters national unity. The mourning in the UK coincided with my own teaching of the beginnings of English colonization in North America and the coming of the American Revolution. What a boon it was to have this coincidence of events that gave familiar course content a new intensity and relevance. We can never tell when those opportunities will come to tie our classes to the news around us. Certainly, many of us did that with COVID. I assigned pandemic-related books such as *Pox Americana*, *The Great Hanoi Rat Hunt*, and *The End of October* (all recommended titles) in my classes. I spent more time than ever on the so-called Spanish Flu of 1918. It had always been in the text but easily skimmed over. I know students appreciated this emphasis and I think it added to their coping skills to study past contagions.

These are some admittedly random musings inspired by the new semester. If the tone is overly optimistic, it's a reflection of my own overwhelmingly positive feelings at this juncture. Certainly, what I caution against is unreasonable expectations about student success and our own abilities to break through to some of the less motivated of our charges. Over the years, I've sensed that some administrators who never or rarely teach are removed from the reality of what we confront in the classroom. At times, I've heard excessive expectations in their well-intentioned rhetoric or pronouncements on student progress. We can't inspire or save all the students and implying the contrary is a sure recipe for disenchantment.

Though I've been teaching at Lone Star almost four decades, I'm in no hurry to quit. The work is fun, and nothing could be more meaningful. I live in a community of colleagues that is innovative, inspirational, and encouraging. We share ideas and steal from each other shamelessly. Surely, those of us who teach and who support teaching have the opportunity to at least "make America better again." The progress that we as individuals contribute toward that goal is incremental but together those contributions accumulate. And in the end, that's no small thing.



The Real World of Texas Politics

Editor's Note: Earlier in this edition of The Advocate, I included a wonderful piece on Texas voting rights and behavior by the authors Robert Locander, Richard Shaw, and Kevin Bailey, all of whom have connections with Lone Star College in general and AFT – Lone Star College in particular. Locander, Shaw, and Bailey have just published a new book The Real World of Texas Politics, available now from Stoney Creek Publishing and the Texas A&M University Press. I am including below the introduction to the book written by Loren Steffy. The three author's previous book How Texas Politics Really Works was a fascinating, insightful, witty look at the reality of public life in this state, as opposed to the idealized picture presented in standard textbooks. It was a page turner and I can hardly wait to see what they have come up with next. I hope you will consider reading this book yourselves and passing it on to anyone who is amazed and bewildered about how this state runs and who benefits. JB



Years ago, when I was working for an international news organization, I was offered chances to leave Texas and report from Washington or New York or any number of international cities. While I was tempted at times, I decided to stay.

"Texas is the land of big stories," I told my editors, who looked at me quizzically. To them, Texas was a land of myths. They saw it as a foreign country, one with strange customs and unrefined culture.

But I knew better. I knew that Texas was the best place on Earth to write about business because business coverage, after all, is really writing about money. And as the authors of this book make clear, Texas, perhaps more than most other places, is a high-performance factory for turning money into power.

Texas is fertile ground for this money-to-power alchemy because of its history. Sure, it has a strong independent streak because it used to be a country before becoming a state, but there's more to it. Texas was a land of second chances from its earliest days.

Like Davy Crockett, millions have come to Texas looking to start over.

With folks like Elon Musk moving here in recent years, it's easy to forget that in the early days, most people coming to Texas didn't have a lot of money. Early Texans arrived poor and, if they were lucky, became rich. Texas wasn't a place for wealth to reside, it was a place for wealth to be made.

As a result, even today, most wealth in Texas isn't generational, although it's becoming more so. It used to be only a few of our billionaires, most notably Howard Hughes and the Hunt brothers, inherited their wealth. The rest made it the hard way, starting with a little and turning it into a lot. Future billionaire Ross Perot started Electronic Data Systems with \$1,000. Future billionaire Boone Pickens used his \$1,500 pension from Phillips Petroleum to found Mesa Petroleum.

The up-by-the-bootstraps wealth has meant that the monied class in Texas often lacks a certain sophistication. In other places, money may influence power with greater subtlety. In Texas, it often manifests itself with a raw crassness, such as when chicken magnate Bo Pilgrim strolled the floor of the Texas Senate, handing out \$10,000 checks to lawmakers just before a key vote on changes to the workers' compensation law that benefited his company.

Or when then-Governor Rick Perry doled out millions of dollars in taxpayer money to his political cronies through the Emerging Technology Fund, an overblown economic development program that purported to encourage high-tech startups.

Or when Texas legislators spent a decade ignoring warnings of power grid vulnerabilities. When the inevitable grid failure finally arrived in February 2021, leaving some two hundred Texans to die in the frigid darkness, Governor Greg Abbott directly intervened in the functioning of the alleged "free" market to keep prices artificially high. That benefitted some of the country's biggest gas pipeline companies. And, in a not-so-subtle thank you, billionaire Kelcy Warren, head of one of those pipeline companies, promptly rewarded Abbott with a \$1 million campaign contribution. (Unlike Pilgrim, Warren waited for the results before paying.)

And of course, nowhere is the money-to-political-power linkage more direct and unabashed than on the



Texas Railroad Commission. Here, the regulated citizens pay for the regulators and the gossamer rules do little to hold the baser instincts of the state's mighty oil and gas industry at bay.

This book lays bare the inner workings of this pay-to-play system. It has collected in one place the financial foibles, political patronage, influence, and innuendo that defines much of Texas politics.

For most of its statehood, Texas has been a single-party state, first under Democrats and, for the past quarter century, under Republicans. In such a system, dissident or even differing views are dismissed with disdain and often derision. Our leaders are rarely held to account because they are nestled inside their ideological echo chamber staunchly defended by primary voters.

I hope readers approach this book with an open mind because it offers an essential perspective. The authors are insiders—Locander as a political scientist, Shaw as a union leader, and Bailey as a state representative. They have a combined ten-decade involvement in Texas politics and government. But they're also outsiders, holding views that don't align with the people in power. Rather than placate, they seek to provide a counterpoint to the prevailing myths and misrepresentations.

Only by stepping back and viewing the status quo through a different lens can the people of Texas identify and understand the important issues that need to change.

Only then might the crass influence of money and power shift to benefit more Texans, far too many of whom are ignored or exploited by the wealthy and the political elite.

Texas, of course, will always be the land of big stories. Our tales will always be grander, our skies bigger, and our stars brighter. But maybe this book will also shed some light on another big story that needs to be told: *The Real World of Texas Politics*.

If more Texans understand what's really going on, maybe our stories will also reflect a society that's better, fairer, and more equitable for everyone.

Loren Steffy Wimberley, Texas May 2022



John Burghduff's column Know Your Rights will return in the November/December issue of *The Advocate*.

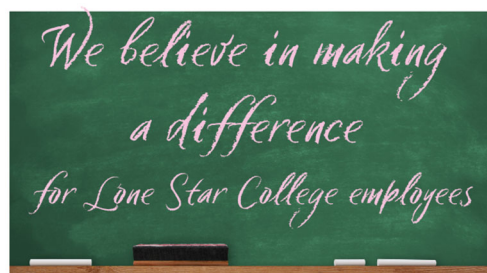
In case you never got to read our previous issues of *The Advocate*, (along with all of the back issues of the newsletter going back to 1979) Please visit us at:



www.aftlonestar.org

Select the dropdown menu at "News" then select "Archives of *The Advocate*."

We are here for YOU!



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.



Joining AFT-Lone Star is the best thing you can do to ensure that you have a voice on work-related issues that matter to you!

Whether you have been at LSC for a long time or are just beginning your career, joining AFT-Lone Star is the best way to ensure your voice at work on issues that matter to you.

Our Union has a solid history of going to bat for our members when they need help and speaking up on issues that concern our members system-wide.

- ☐ If you believe faculty and staff should have a voice in educational issues, you should join.
- ☐ If you believe employees should have a voice in the political process, you should join.
- ☐ If you believe in the value of employees advocating for each other, you should join.
- ☐ If you believe employees should be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect, you should join.

Your dues help support these values.

Membership should not be thought of as only for "protection," but if you need help in a conflict, we will be there for you.

Don't join because you think you might get into trouble; join because you embrace the values we embrace.

Join AFT-Lone Star

**Click here to Join
AFT Lone Star
TODAY!**

<https://bit.ly/AFTLONESTAR-JOIN>

Join Today!



A Union of Professionals

AFT-Lone Star College

A union of Professionals

- \$8 million in professional occupational liability insurance (in case you get sued)
- Local staff and leaders ready to assist you when you need help and information
- Legal defense funds (in case you need an attorney)
- \$25,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy
- Strong leaders and lobbyists advocating for your rights at the local, state, and national levels
- \$5,000 free term life insurance for your 1st year of membership
- AFT PLUS savings and discounts for you and your family
- Educational resources and publications
- No conflict of interest– Administrators cannot join
- Strong. Active. Vocal. When you join AFT-Lone Star, you join the best!
- Pay your dues via bank draft or credit card by signing up online! <https://bit.ly/AFTLONESTAR-JOIN>
<http://www.aftlonestar.org>

WEB: www.aftlonestar.org

PHONE: 281-889-1009

E-MAIL: aftlonestar@yahoo.com



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 AFT locals throughout Texas

**Membership provides
professional career
protection
and a united voice at work.**

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

22-23 Monthly AFT Dues

Full-time Faculty	\$45.82
Full-time Professional Staff	\$29.52
Full-time Support Staff	\$29.52
Adjunct Faculty	\$18.22
Part-time Staff	\$18.22

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



www.texasaft.org

American Federation of Teachers
Texas AFT
AFL-CIO



www.aft.org

JOIN AFT - LONE STAR TODAY!



www.texasaft.org/join



Offset your membership dues by using your AFT PLUS BENEFITS to save money!

Union membership gives you discounts on things you need every day.



Stay Connected with AFT Lone Star!

www.facebook.com/AftLoneStarCollege



Our members enjoy savings on an array of goods and services with our Union PLUS benefits and discounts!

AFT SHOPPING DISCOUNTS:

- ◆ Computers and retail merchandise
- ◆ Dining, movies and entertainment
- ◆ Electronics
- ◆ Personal vacations, hotel & car rental
- ◆ Save on Southwest Airlines
- ◆ 15% off AT&T
- ◆ Plus much more!



AFT BENEFIT PROGRAMS:

- ◆ Life, auto, home, and pet insurance
- ◆ Credit counseling
- ◆ Home mortgage and home buying
- ◆ Dental, prescription, vision and hearing programs
- ◆ Scholarships for members and their family members
- ◆ Trauma coverage
- ◆ Plus much more!



New mailing address:

AFT- Lone Star College
PO Box 310404
Houston, Texas 77231

We're on the Web!

www.aftlonestar.org



Call for Articles

We invite all employees to send us their opinions, news, questions, and so forth. *The Advocate* is a forum for information and free interchange of ideas. Send your ideas. Send your articles to **John Burghduff** via e-mail: aftlonestar@yahoo.com , or submit to any of the following officers.

First Name	Last Name	Officer title	Campus
John	Burghduff	President	Cy-Fair
Alan	Hall	Secretary	At-Large
Donna	Kroll	Treasurer	Houston North
Leah	Kirrell	North Harris Faculty Vice President	North Harris
Britney	Hall	North Harris Staff Vice President	North Harris
Pat	Chandler	Kingwood Staff Vice President	Kingwood
Cliff	Hudder	Montgomery Faculty Vice President	Montgomery
Martha	Neely	Montgomery Staff Vice President	Montgomery
Adrienne	Patton	Cyfair Faculty Vice President	Cy Fair
Cindy	Hoffart-Watson	Cyfair Staff Vice President	Cy Fair
Van	Piercy	Tomball Faculty Vice President	Tomball
Stephen	Washington	Houston North Faculty Vice President	Houston North

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.

