

KNIGHT

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MEMBERSHIP DRIVE UNDERWAY

This fall the North Harris County College United Faculty Guild began a drive to increase its membership among instructors at the College. During the week of September 1, John Cole, president of the Texas Federation of Teachers, and Dr. Louis Bolieu, director of organizing for Texas United Faculty, came to the campus to assist guild members in making office visits.

The visitation program proved successful, even if only 25 per cent of the faculty could be contacted before the Administration stepped in to halt the drive. Of the instructors contacted, the reactions were overwhelmingly positive toward the Guild and its activities. Only two instructors said they had no interest in discussing a teachers' union, and their wishes were honored.

During the office visits, most people preferred to close their doors when discussing the American Federation of Teachers. Many instructors showed some concern, and at times even fear, about the Administration's reactions to the Guild. About

half of those faculty contacted indicated a future desire to join the union, but they preferred to wait until the lawsuit was settled in court.

In spite of the chilly official atmosphere toward the Guild, many instructors encouraged us to continue along the same path we have followed over the past year. Six people offered financial contributions to the union in lieu of outright membership. Of the new members signed up during the Fall drive, most preferred not to make their membership known because they feared reprisals from the College's Administration.

Following just a day and one-half of office visits, President W.W. Thorne intervened to end the drive in the name of protecting the faculty and the community from outside agitators. Mr. Thorne instructed Kevin Bailey, Guild president, to stop going to faculty offices as they were now off-limits to the Union. Union discussions would only be allowed out in the open in the cafeteria.

After receiving the verbal order from the NHCC president,

Bailey was sent a written directive from the Administration accusing him of "accosting" faculty. The memo contained the following order: "A faculty member's office is part of his/her work station in the same manner as a classroom, and faculty members are not to be accosted in their offices for non-college business. . . . You will be expected to restrict your union activities on campus to those hours not within your 35-hour work week."

In two subsequent meetings between the Administration and Bailey, stronger orders were issued to the union's president. He has been instructed not to talk about the AFT while on campus, not to initiate discussions with colleagues on the topic, and not to read or work on Union materials while in his office. He can respond to short union-related questions asked by others and attend occasional Guild meetings.

Once again, the Administration has attempted to silence Union members and the activities of the Guild in order to "protect" the faculty. This recent action follows a long trail of past arbitrary decisions of a questionable legal nature, such as the anti-union Board policy, prohibitions against union meetings on campus, prevention of union-sponsored forums at the College, blocking access to the school newspaper, and barring union officers from addressing the Board in their representa-

tive roles.

Many school districts and college administrators have a long history of attempting to restrict the First Amendment rights of teachers. Fortunately, the federal courts have not looked kindly upon those officials who have sought to deny the constitutional liberties and rights of others. In *Montgomery vs. White* (1969), Judge William Wayne Justice struck down restrictions on the political expression of teachers and warned that such restrictions "threatened popular government by injuring the individual who is muzzled as well as having a harmful effect in depriving the community of the political participation of its teachers." This protection was further guaranteed by a 1969 Texas Civil Statute which states that "no school district. . . shall coerce any teacher to refrain from participation in political affairs."

It is obvious that the Administration plans to continue pursuing a course of action that is designed intentionally to abridge the constitutional rights of teachers. They refuse to compromise and therefore force us to continue our legal proceedings against the President and the Board. We wish the Administration could appreciate the ruling of the Fifth Circuit of Appeals in *Burnside vs. Byers* (1966) where the Court ruled that approved speech and activities "may not be confined to the expression of those sentiments that are officially approved."

Despite the great adversity, the Union will not give up the struggle. We are now going to contact faculty members at their homes. This process is diffi-

cult and inconvenient but will be done. In the words of the English poet Lord Tennyson, we will continue "to strive, to seek to find and not to yield."

DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

Editor's Note: Larry Smith, the author of the following article, is the Director of Health and Physical Education at the College of the Mainland.

My commitment is to people and to ideas rather than to authority and to institutions. So-called "authorities" and institutions tend to be bureaucratic and authoritarian, and work from the top down. Normally this results in alienation, loss of morale, and reduced productivity.

I believe people ought to have a say in decisions that affect their lives-- whether it is compensation or the selection of a leader, political or economic. Simply put, I believe in democracy. An analysis of the history of humankind (our experience at COM is no different) has shown that power is usually in the hands of a relative few. Therefore, if the people are to have a say they have to empower themselves. I believe this can be done only through people joining together and working cooperatively. That, in my opinion, is what we've been about these last few years at COM. That's where I think the logic of the Prospectus leads us. I hope

and think that's what inspired the organization of the All-College Council and FACOM (The faculty commission). They have been important but incomplete steps in empowering people, especially in the internal workings of the college.

Now I believe it is the time for us to join together in a way that will complement our existing internal organizations and will also give us access and influence in the larger external community. It is important to point out that most of the major decisions that affect the lives of students and employees of community colleges in Texas are made at the local level by Boards of Trustees. While I applaud and support the efforts of TJCTA at the state level (by the way, I'm a member), they are of little or no help to us in the local community. The way I speak of is through membership in the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). As union members in the COM Guild, we will have a representative on the Central Labor Council of Galveston County who can present our con-

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representatives of the working people of this community for their support. Needless to say, as we face the '80's and their social, economic, and political difficulties for education, we will need all the help we can get, whether the issue is a Trustee election or finding the resources needed for a comprehensive community college to continue to serve the people of this community. I hasten to add that as AFT members we will be joining almost 600,000 other educational employees who are working nationally to promote lifelong education and opportunities, child care development centers, academic freedom and education excellence. AFT opposes cut-backs in student loans and grants and the attempt to replace shared governance and a collegial atmosphere in educational institutions with the values, techniques, language, and practic-

BLOW ON THIS DOT



**IF IT TURNS BLUE
ADMINISTRATION PROMISES
MAY COME TRUE**

I am personally excited about AFT for several reasons. One is that our guild will have local autonomy. We can decide who can be a member, who our leaders will be, and what our goals and objectives will be. Another is that those of us who have initiated the union have agreed to recruit people from all employee classifications (except custidians, guards and food service personnel who, under an agreement with AFSCME, will be organized by that union). Even though I recognize that certain groups (teachers, secretaries, mid-managers, etc.) have different interest^s, I truly believe that there are many areas and issues where we will find we have similar interest^s. For example: better health and dental benefits, payment for all unused sick leave and vacation, safer working conditions, academic freedom, tenure, the privacy of the learning/instruction process, top pay for all groups, competent leadership, and a say in all decisions that affect us, just to name a few!

Finally, AFT is committed to work with all groups and organizations at COM for our collective betterment.

Larry Smith

FACULTY BENEFITS/TEACHER RAISES

1980-81

1. Lee College	\$23,600
2. College of the Mainland	\$21,700
3. Alvin College	\$20,700
4. San Jacinto College	\$20,100
5. NHCC	\$18,900
6. Houston Community College	\$17,100

1981-82(Estimates*)

1. Lee College	\$25,900
2. College of the Mainland	\$25,200
3. San Jacinto College	\$24,100
4. Alvin College	\$23,200
5. NHCC	\$21,000
6. Houston Community College	\$19,600

*Figures are estimates based upon the percentage increases reported for each of the six local community colleges. The figures for 1980-81 were prepared by the AFT Research Department with data from the National Center for Education Statistics. The totals include both salaries and fringe benefits for the average fulltime instructor.

Teacher Raises

1. Aldine	19.5%*
2. Humble	18-19.5%
3. Spring Branch	18%
4. Cypress Fairbanks	18%
5. Spring	16%
6. Houston	14.6%
7. Klein	NA

*Percentage increases for public school teachers in the Houston area for 1981-82.

AFT NEWS

AFT Convention

In his first speaking appearance before a teacher's organization, Terrel Bell, the secretary of the Department of Education, addressed 3,100 members of the American Federation of Teachers

at their 65th annual convention in Denver last July. Despite the fears within some public school circles, he indicated that the Reagan Administration would be "good" for education.

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It is Secretary Bell's belief that President Ronald Reagan's economic programs will help schools in the long run by reducing inflation and promoting economic growth. This economic change should generate more local and state tax revenues for education, according to the Secretary.

Along with the economic advantages offered by the Reagan program, Bell said that schools would benefit from Republican efforts at reducing federal government encroachment on local educational control. "The conservative approach under the Reagan Administration means that we will not be constantly on your backs or looking over your shoulders." "Under a conservative policy," he added, "we will not be trying to tell you how to teach, nor will we engage in radical stretching of the law, as has happened all too frequently in the past."

During his speech, the Secretary of Education mentioned several times how happy he was to speak before a group of teachers. On this point, it should be noted that Bell had declined to

Faculty Unions

As of August 11, 1981, university and college faculty members had chosen collective-bargaining agents at 737 campuses throughout the country. The National Education Association represents faculty at 324 higher educational institutions;

appear at the National Education Association convention in Minneapolis, which met a week before the AFT gathering. When asked by reporters to explain this decision, he said that he did not have the time to make both speeches.

The NEA was an early and loyal political supporter of former President Jimmy Carter throughout the period of 1976-1980. Many policy analysts cite this teachers' union as the primary pressure group most responsible for the creation of the Department of Education in 1979. This departmental creation was opposed by the American Federation of Teachers, and President Reagan has promised to abolish the department within his term of office.

Attending the convention and representing Texas United Faculty in Denver were TUF President Don Smith of North Texas State University and Betty Barnes of San Jacinto College.

The American federation of Teachers is the choice on 246 campuses; and the American Association of University Professors is the agent at 85 schools. NEA, AFT, and AAUP are the big three unions among the nation's faculty. At community colleges, NEA leads AFT 251-156, according to figures published in The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Being number two like Avis, AFT is working hard in states like Texas to sign up members and establish guilds for the day

when teachers and public employees achieve collective bargaining rights. While NEA

concentrates its efforts elsewhere, AFT is establishing itself in our state as the national voice for Texas faculty.

TUF/NHCC-UF NEWS

The Texas Federation of Teachers of the AFT/AFL-CIO has issued its report cards for the work completed by House members in the 67th session of the Texas legislature. Using five key votes as its grading standard, TFT graded 43 representatives as "A" performers or five correct votes; 15 as "B's"; 10 as "C's"; 17 as "D's"; 19 as "F's"; and 44 as "U's", or totally unsatisfactory because of no correct votes.

Of the four Texas House members who represent substantial parts of the North Harris County College District, the marks were good and bad. At the top of the class stands District 95 Representative Gene Green, with an "A." Democrat Tony Polumbo of District 96 did very well by TFT and received a "B."

The Republican representatives, Ed Emmett of District 78 and Don Henderson of District 94, need some remedial training or enrollment in Political Science 232. The Texas Federation of Teachers gave Emmett a "D", while Henderson's disastorous performance in Austin on educational issues earned him the lowest

possible rating of "U."

It might be that Representative Henderson had his eyes too close to the ground looking out for the armadillo in his supported effort to have it designated as the state's official mammal or maybe his sights were set too high as he looked for a new U.S. House seat for the North Harris County area from which he could run in 1982. In any event, supporters of public education should remember Don Henderson and his 43 colleagues who are no friends of education based on their voting records in Austin.

Several other state legislators who represent small sections of the NHCC District, received "A's" for their efforts during the recent session. John Whitmire, D., of District 82; Clint Hackney, D. of District 84; and Senfronia Thompson, D., of District 89 all scored perfect legislative records on education.

NHCC-UF

At the September College Board meeting, the Founding Fathers, minus one, completed an action begun last April by insuring them-

selves against any legal judgment involving financial damages for crimes or misdemeanors they might have committed in office. On April 9, 1981, the Trustees voted themselves professional liability insurance, but the policy would cover only unknown acts which occurred prior to the policy period. This policy section meant that, should the Court find for the Union and award damages, the insurance company was under no obligation to pay because the suit was public knowledge as of March, 1981.

As a followup to this April action, the Board continued its attempts to cover itself by passing an indemnity resolution. The

result of this September resolution is that the College (and the taxpayers) would be the loser should the Court rule against the Board or any single member in the Union lawsuit because financial responsibility for possible unlawful acts was now being passed from eight men to the school. Where an insurance company "feared to tread", the Trustees acted boldly to protect themselves.

Between the President's "protection" of faculty and the Board's "protection" of itself, teachers and taxpayers of North Harris County have to be warned that "protection" may be harmful to their wellbeing.