



The Advocate

AFT Lone Star College Celebrates 40 43 Years

On April 29, AFT Lone Star College celebrated our 40th anniversary with a dinner and party at Shirley Acres Event Center in Spring.

To tell the truth, this is actually our 43rd anniversary. Our union was chartered in 1980 and we had originally planned a 40th anniversary celebration for April, 2020. That turned out to be incredibly bad timing! However, with life returning to normal (or a new normal), we decided it was time to resurrect our plans.

Much has changed since we first chartered. In 1980, Lone Star College was known as North Harris County College. AFT Lone Star College was then known as North Harris County College – United Faculty (NHCC-UF). The newsletter we now know as The Advocate was then called The Reporter (and later was briefly called the Knight). And we quaintly referred to ourselves as a guild rather than a union.

What has NOT changed over 43 years is our commitment to do what the title of our newsletter implies. We advocate! We advocate for policy and we advocate for people! For policy, we push for changes in college policy that protect the rights of Lone Star employees, freeing them

to give their all for the success of our students. For people, we continually advocate for good salaries and benefits, and we come to the aid of individual employees each and every week who are having challenges or being mistreated at work.

Starting with twelve brave souls who first started envisioning a union in 1979, and facing many hardships from past administrations that did their best to destroy us, AFT Lone Star is now a recognized and respected force for good, building bridges between faculty, staff, and administrators. Many challenges and opportunities lie ahead but we are firmly committed to continue our mission of advocacy for the next 40 years and beyond. Join us as we work together to make Lone Star College a truly great place to work and a great place for our students to learn.

In commemoration of our anniversary, this issue of The Advocate includes a photo montage of our celebration at Shirley Acres.

We also reprint the very first article from our very first newsletter dating to 1979, before we officially chartered. Kevin Bailey, who later went on to an illustrious career in the Texas House of Representatives and

Inside this issue:

⇒AFT Lone Star College Celebrates 40- 43 Years	1-2
⇒Photos from 40 Year Event	2-3
⇒From the First Newsletter	3-5
⇒Building a Chancellor-Results of the Spring, 2023 All Employee Survey	5-13
⇒Dispatches from the Front # 6-Triage	13-16
⇒Union membership information, AFT Plus benefits, and Shopping	16-19
AFT Officers	20

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now teaches at Houston Community College, was our first president. Alan Hall was our vice president before beginning an incredible 37 year run as president and the face of the AFT at the college. Although many of the names in the article may be unfamiliar to you, you will clearly see the adversity our original twelve members overcame to get us to where we are today.

Also in this issue, we include a report on the results of our Build a Chancellor survey we conducted in February and March. These results have gotten much attention from the college administration, from the Board of Trustees, and from the hiring firm Lone Star has hired as consultants. The outcomes ARE influencing the search process for a new chancellor which is now underway, and we believe they will help guide us towards a good choice.

Steve Davis returns with the next installment of his column Dispatches from the Front writing about student success and the challenges we face in getting there. He concludes with important reflections about our retiring chancellor, Dr. Steve Head, and his impact on the life of Lone Star College.

The column Know Your Rights will return with our September – October issue. You will be reading this as we all gear up for and do our best to survive Final Exam week. Here's wishing all of you strength for the crush and hope for a restful summer to come!



Original Founding Members of AFT Lone Star College



Zeph Capo, President—Texas AFT



Alan Hall, Former President of AFT Lone Star (for 37 years!)



Mike Stoma, LSC Board President & founding AFT Lone Star Member



Chris Tritico, our union attorney & John Burghdoff, AFT Lone Star President



To see a video montage of our night with many more photos, visit our Facebook page!

<https://www.facebook.com/AftLoneStarCollege>



From AFT's Very First Newsletter

THE REPORTER

Published by the NHCC United Faculty/AFT, Local 4033
P.O. Box 38893, Houston, Texas 77088, President -
Kevin Bailey; Vice-President - Alan Hall, The Reporter
is designed to provide periodic information on Guild
activities.

[Editor's note: This article is reprinted from the Fall, 1979 issue of The Reporter, the very first issue of our union's newsletter. It was typed on a cheap typewriter with hand corrections and run off on a mimeograph machine. Some readers may have never seen either of these ancient machines. The union called itself a guild and was then known as North Harris County College – United Faculty (NHCC-UF). It was preparing to charter as a local of the American Federation of Teachers. Kevin Bailey was the first union president. Mr. Thorne, referenced in the article, was W.W. Thorne who, as the first president of the college, ran NHCC with an iron fist. Dean Airola was Dr. Joe Airola who succeeded Thorne as president and the first college executive to take the title of chancellor. Read and be amazed!]

Guild President Kevin Bailey was recently informed by Mr. Thorne that union officers would no longer be allowed to discuss the union in faculty offices. This directive was followed by a memorandum from Dean Airola, dated September 3, which said, in part:

- First, 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 . . . which includes union recruiting activities. The cafeteria, lounge areas, etc. are not regarded as work or teaching areas.

- Second, you will be expected to restrict your union activities to those hours not within your 35-hour work week . . .
- Kevin, it is most imperative that these guidelines be observed very carefully. Failure to do so could subject you to disciplinary action.

Subsequently, Dr. Airola informed President Bailey that this restriction applies only to union officers and to union related business. Other organizations, such as TJCTA and the Faculty Senate, as well as salesmen, insurance agents, and so forth, may use faculty work time to carry out their affairs. Only union activities, by the officers, is forbidden. Furthermore, the officers were informed that they may not discuss the union in faculty offices, nor read union material while in their office. They can respond to questions about the union, as long as those inquiries are initiated by others.

Shortly, after the memo, Mr. Bailey was called into the Dean's office and accused of visiting with a faculty member in that person's office, and discussing the union. Dr. Airola informed Mr. Bailey that he must not talk to faculty members while on his 35 hour schedule nor during the other persons' 35 hour schedule. The administration believes that they must protect the taxpayer from having to pay for non-work of faculty members. However, a discussion about topics such as football or the Faculty Senate and its business has been deemed as legitimate and, therefore, in the taxpayers' best interest.

This month, two divisions voted to have a union representative speak to them as a group following their monthly faculty meeting. However, the administration has forbidden such discussions.

The Board of Trustees refused to allow a union representative to appear before the September meeting to discuss these recent restrictions. Although union officers have twice before addressed the Board, this will no longer be allowed. In addi-



tion to these denials, the Trustees voted at that same meeting to use taxpayers' money to pay for any damages assessed against Board members in the lawsuit filed by the union. The suit charged President Thorne and the Board members with a violation of First Amendment rights to free speech against all NHCC union members.

The NHCC/UF will continue to monitor the situation, striving constantly to seek equality for all on campus. Its officers will keep all NHCC faculty informed as to its struggles and, hopefully, progress.

Building a Chancellor- Results of the Spring, 2023 All Employee Survey

By John Burghduff

In its 51 year history, Lone Star College has only had five chancellors: W.W. Thorne, Joe Airola, John Pickelman, Richard Carpenter, and Steve Head. (Technically, Mr. Thorne's title was president, but the point is that these are our five chief executives.) This is remarkable stability and it means that, on average, U.S. presidents come and go more frequently than Lone Star chancellors. Given the powerful influence that chancellors in our system have for good or for bad, that makes transition times from one to the next especially momentous, and, frankly, a little on the frightening side. If we make a wrong choice, we can be stuck with it for a long time.

The process of selecting a replacement for Dr. Head is underway. A search firm has been hired. A selection committee of members of the Board of Trustees has been chosen. An employee search advisory committee has already had a first meeting. A timeline has been agreed upon that would place the next chancellor in his or her office by August (if all goes exactly on schedule). Applications should be coming in even as you read this.

Almost immediately after Dr. Head announced his coming retirement, AFT Lone Star College decided that employees needed a voice in creating a vision for what Lone Star needs in the person who will lead our college into its second half century. Thus, the Build A Chancellor survey was born. All employees, full time and part time, faculty, staff, and administrators were invited to participate, and the survey was open from early February through mid March.

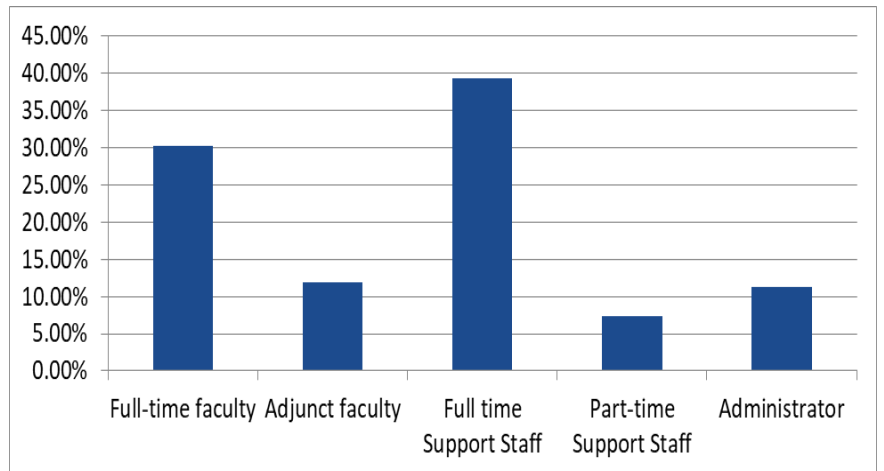
The Board of Trustees invited the union to present the results of our survey at their April meeting and our presentation was very well received. We also shared our results with the search firm and, I am very pleased to say, the results significantly impacted the chancellor profile that the Board has approved as their guideline in judging which applicant would be the best fit for our next leader.



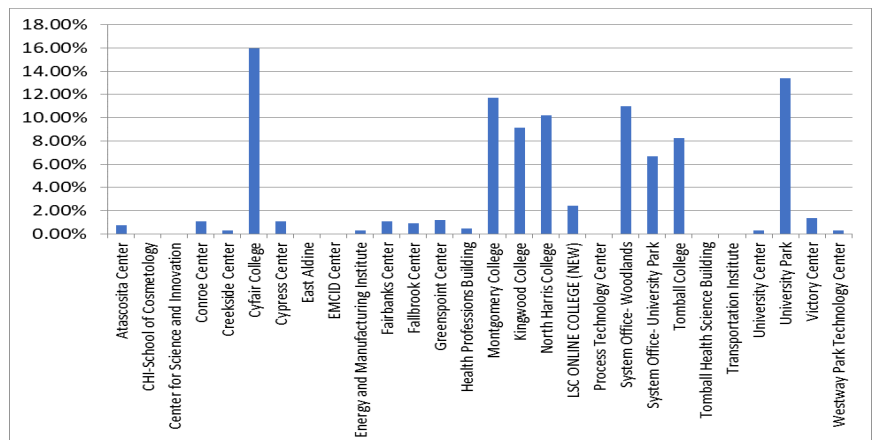
It is with great pride that AFT Lone Star College takes this opportunity to share these results with the college community at large. If you participated in the survey (or even if you meant to but never quite got around to it), I am sure you are interested in the results. So, let's get started!



First, we are excited to report that 668 Lone Star employees filled out the Build a Chancellor Survey. This is a significant response – in fact more than double the number of responses the search firm got from a survey they sent out. We are pleased to report that a significant number of employees from every job category participated. In our first chart, we show what percentage of survey respondents came from each category.

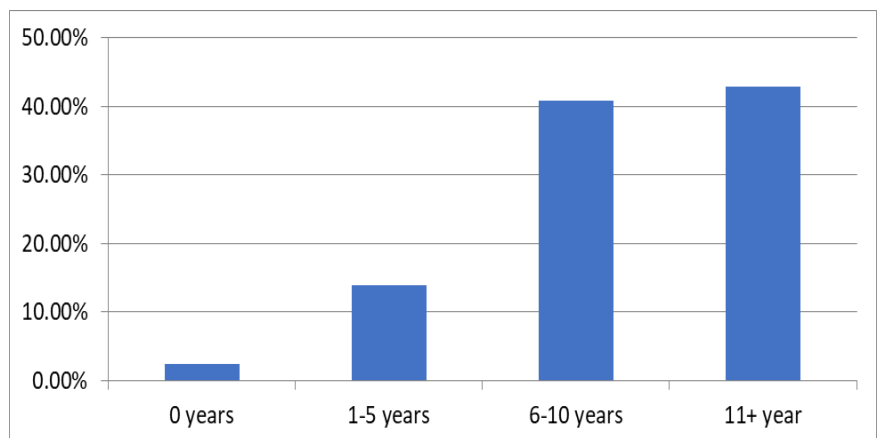


This second chart will be hard to read but we wanted to show what percentage of our respondents came from each campus or site. The main campuses obviously had the most respondents but nearly every one of the smaller centers was represented and there was strong participation from System Office – Woodlands and System Office – University Park.



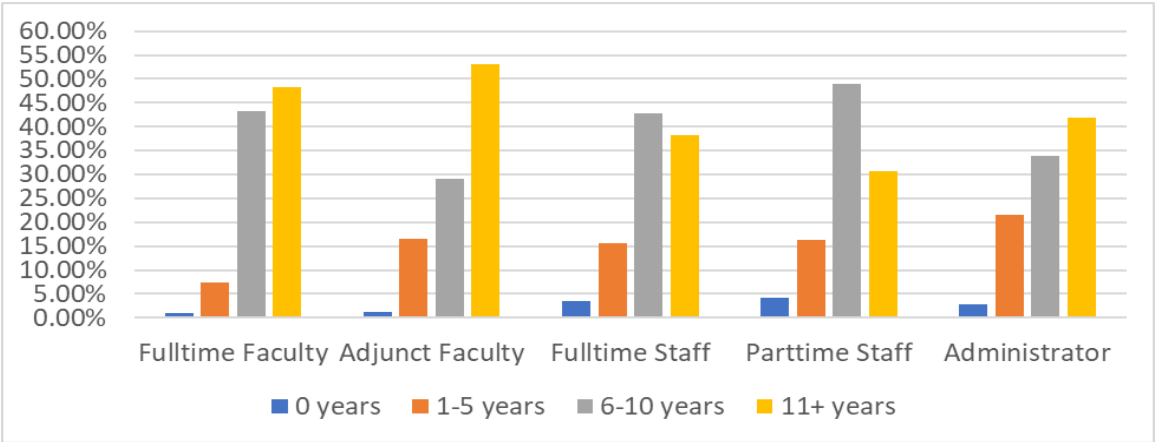
After gathering this demographic information, our survey turned to a series of questions about specific qualifications employees believe are important in the new chancellor.

1) How many years of college or university teaching experience do you think are important for a new chancellor?



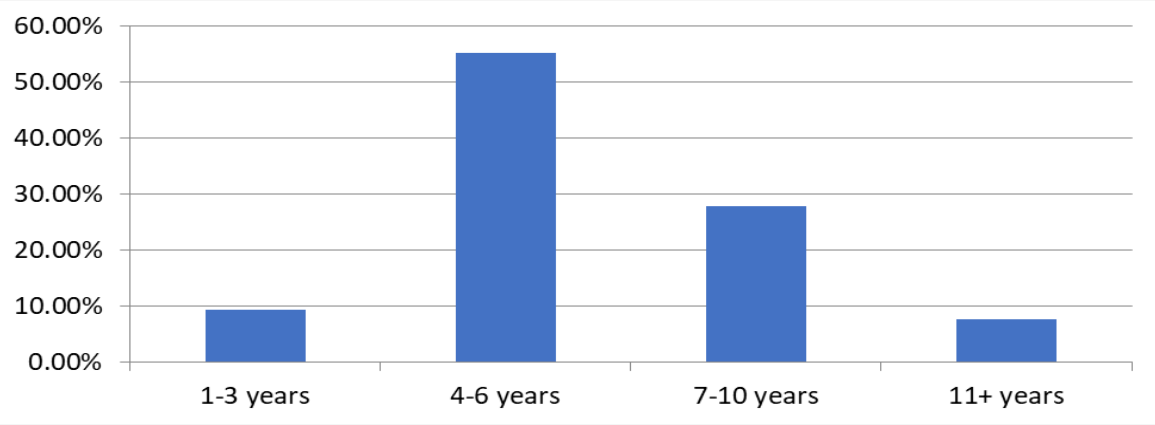


We disaggregated these responses to see how each job category answered this question.

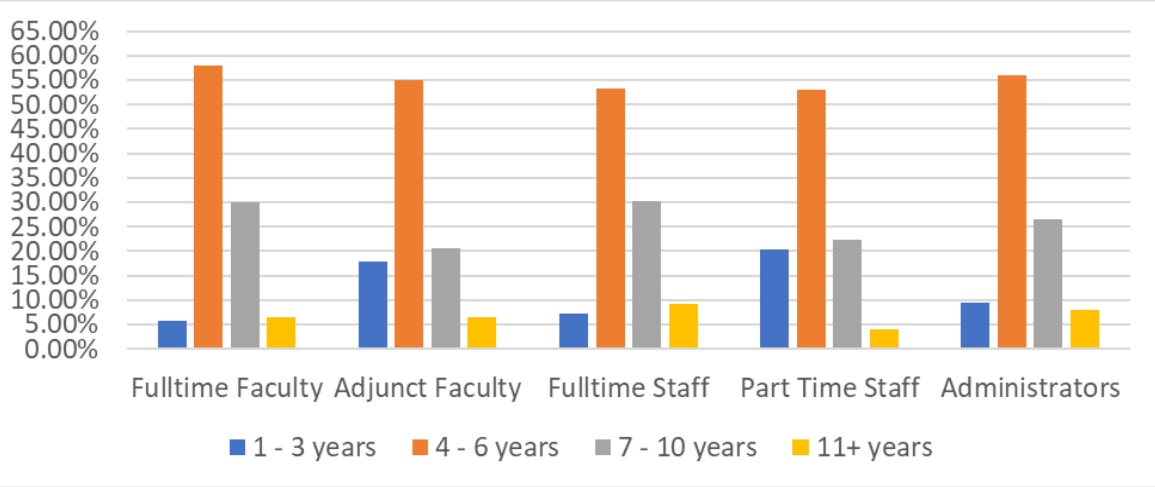


Although there are some differences, it is very clear that employees from all categories believe that a chancellor should have significant experience in the “core business” of the college – teaching.

2) Ideally, how many years do you think a prospective chancellor should have served in his/her last position.



Here are the answers to the same question disaggregated by the job category of the respondent.

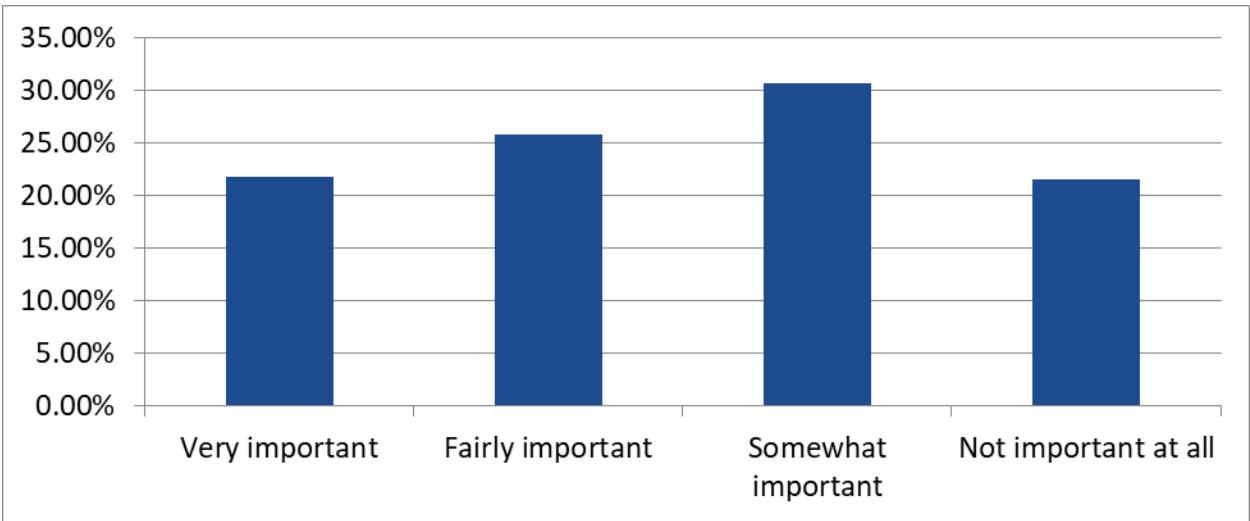




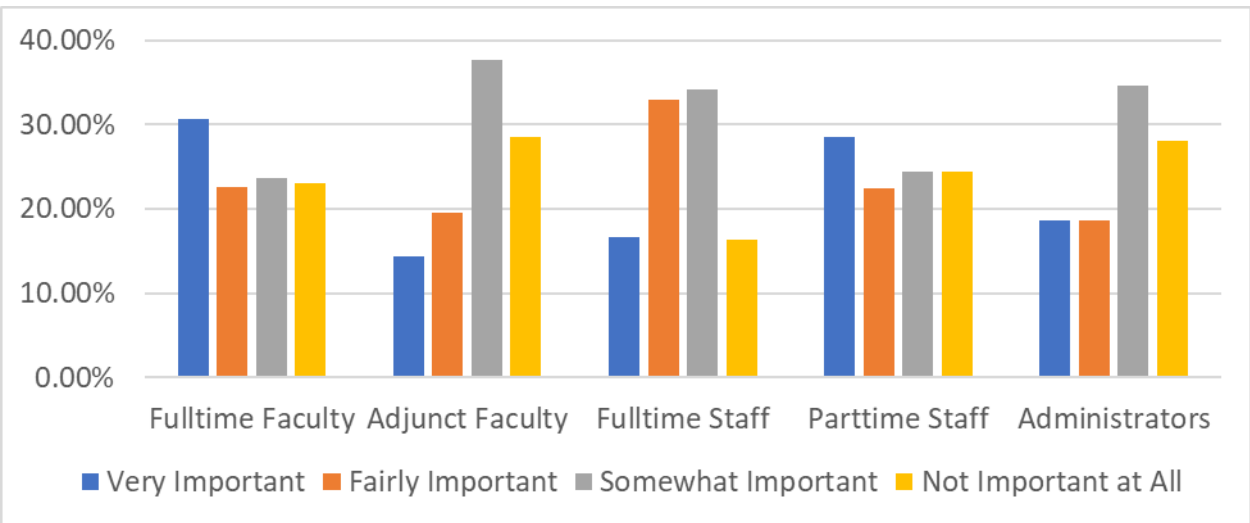
Both we and everyone we have showed this chart to have been amazed at the striking uniformity of these responses across all employee groups. Employees are looking for a chancellor who has a proven track record of commitment to the institution he or she currently serves. We're not interested in a job hopper!

We weren't sure what would come of this next question, but we decided to ask anyway:

3) Do you think a discipline-specific doctorate (not education) is an important qualification?



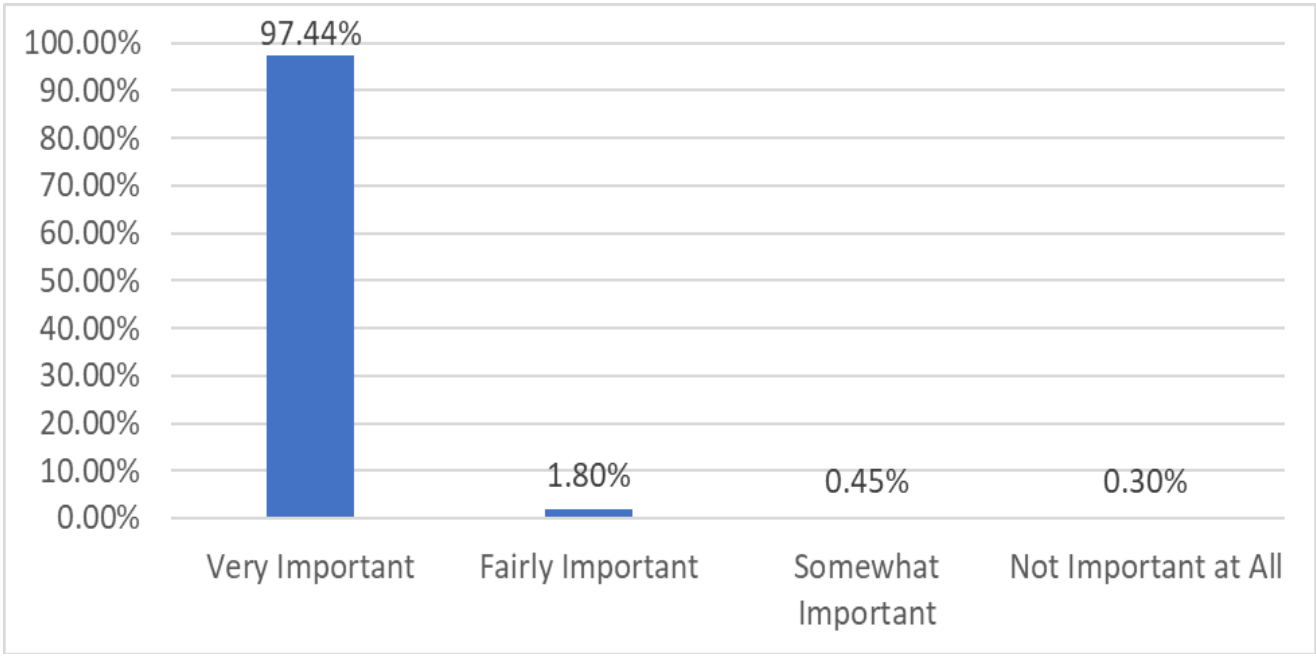
Here are the disaggregated responses to the same question.



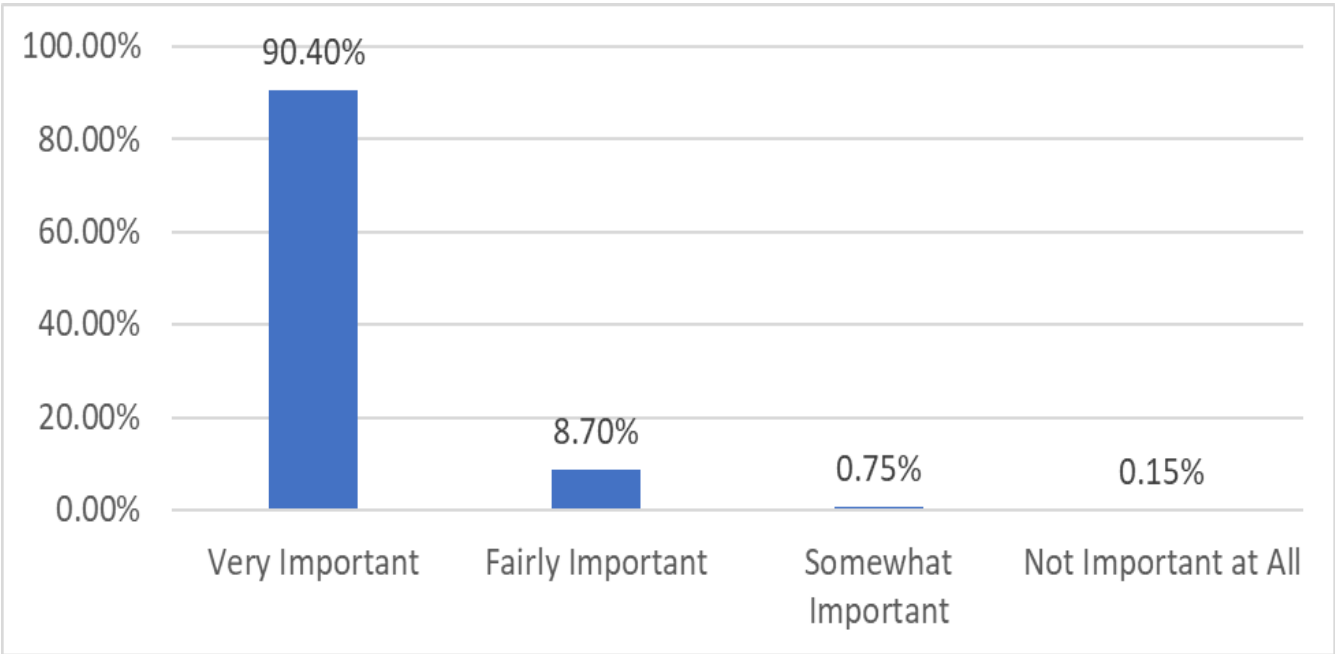
With none of these responses reaching 40%, there's clearly no consensus on this question and the union would not recommend any criteria based on this measure.

Moving on from these questions, the survey next asked about characteristics of a new chancellor. Specifically, we asked “How important are the following characteristics in a prospective chancellor?” Answers were so incredibly consistent across the five employee groups that we will just report the answers as one group. Some of these characteristics were supported nearly unanimously. All of them had at least 75% of employees asserting that the characteristic was either very important or fairly important.

1) Proven record of integrity and transparency.

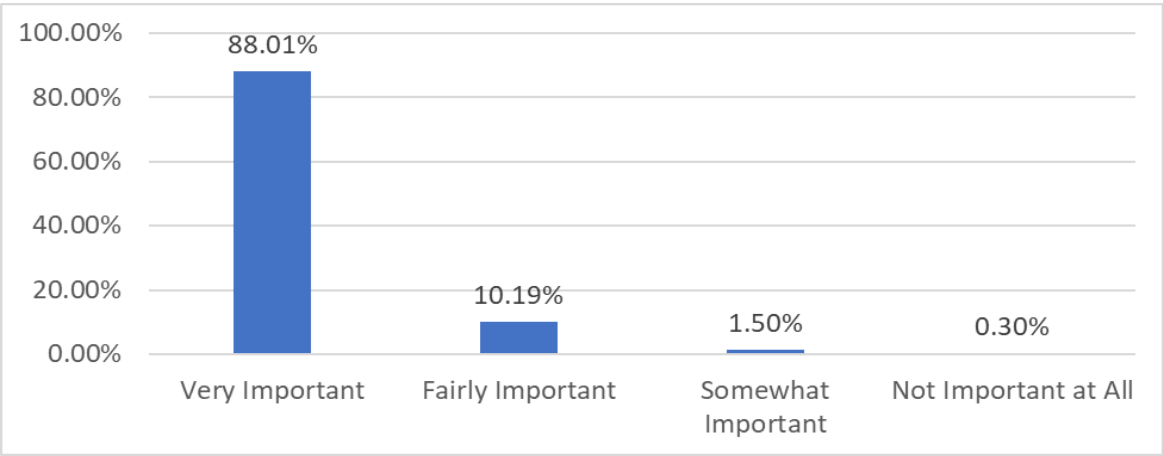


2) Proven ability to maintain cordial relations with faculty and staff:

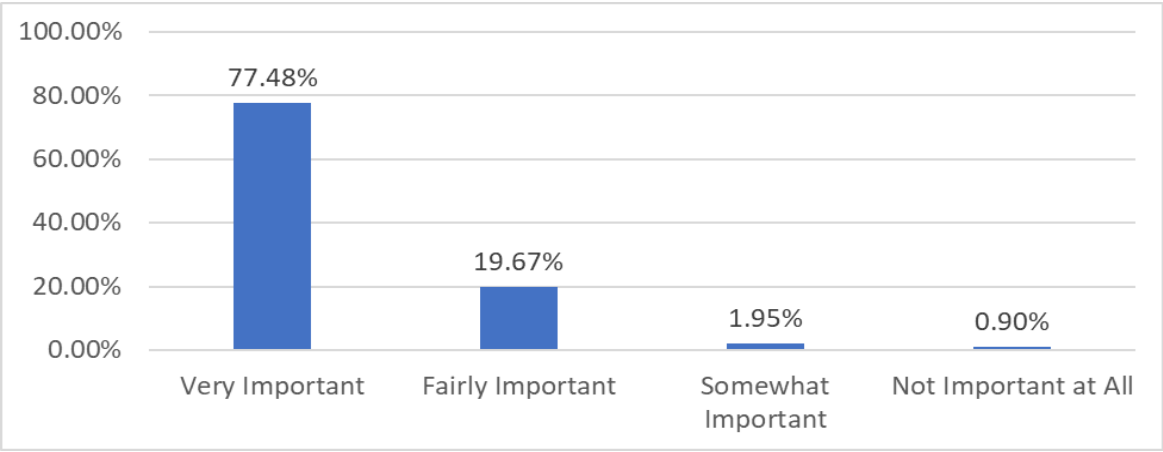




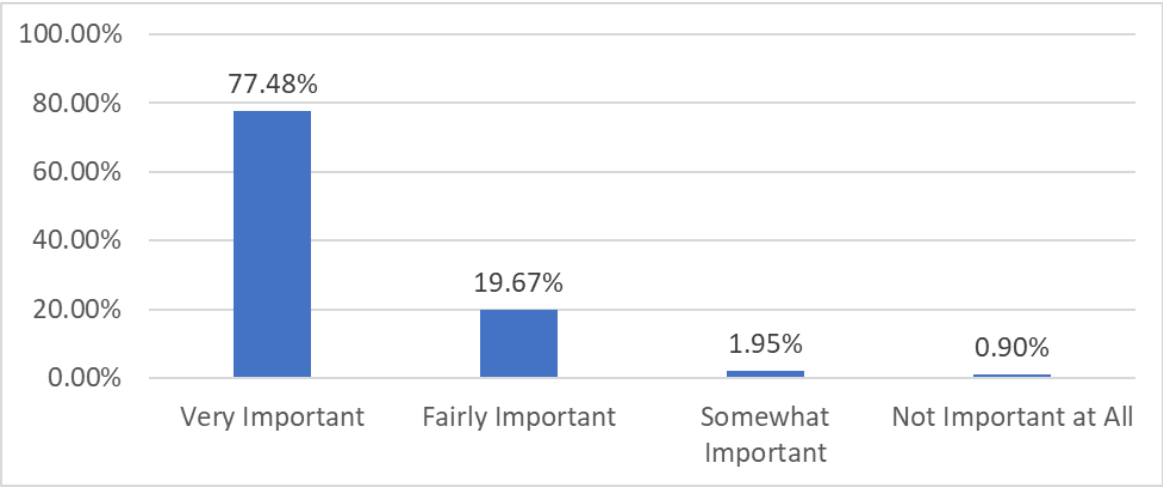
3) Proven record of negotiating tactfully and fairly with people from a broad range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds (both inside the college and in the broader community):



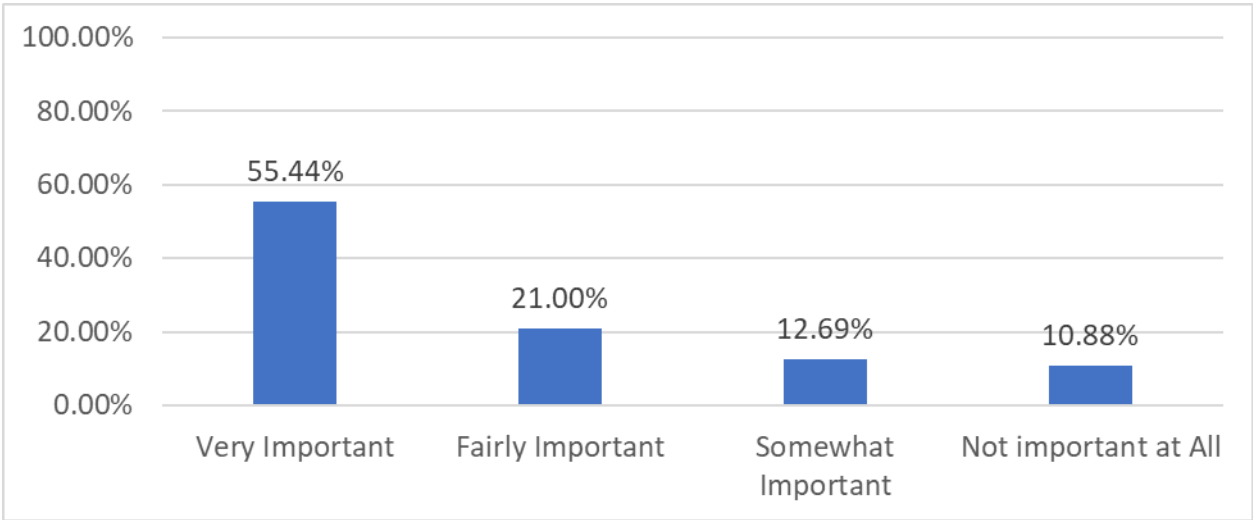
4) Proven record of emphasizing academic standards in the face of shifting enrollment trends.



5) Proven record of expanding educational opportunities for underrepresented populations.



6) Reflects the diversity of Lone Star College students and community:

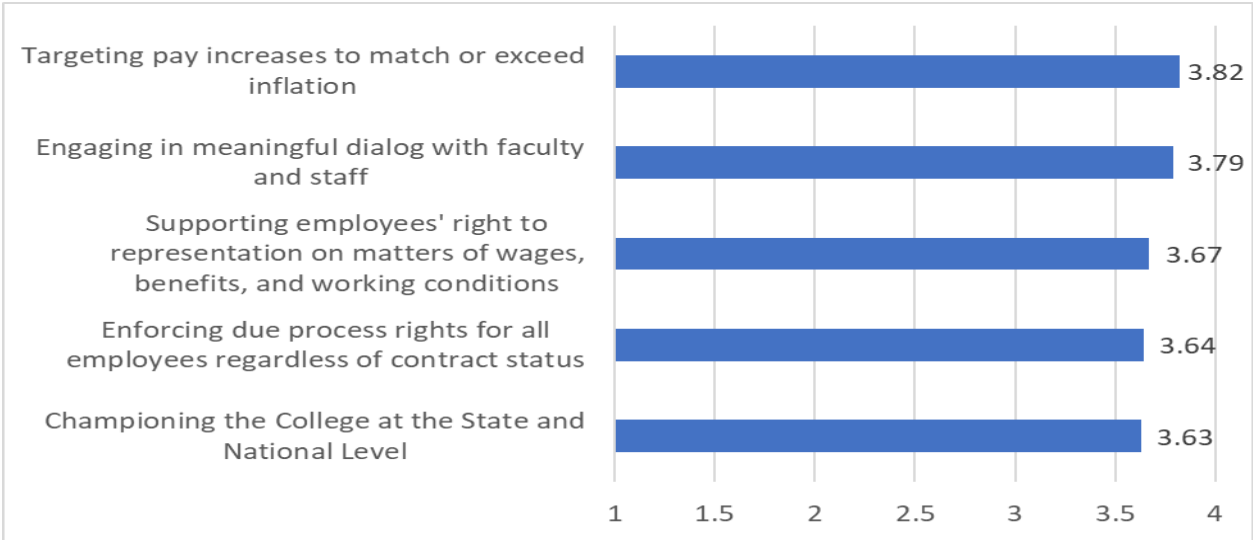


Next in our survey we suggested a list of potential agenda items for the new chancellor to consider. We asked employees to report to what degree they agree that these agenda items should be priorities for the new chancellor. The options we gave were

- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = disagree
- 3 = agree
- 4 = strongly agree

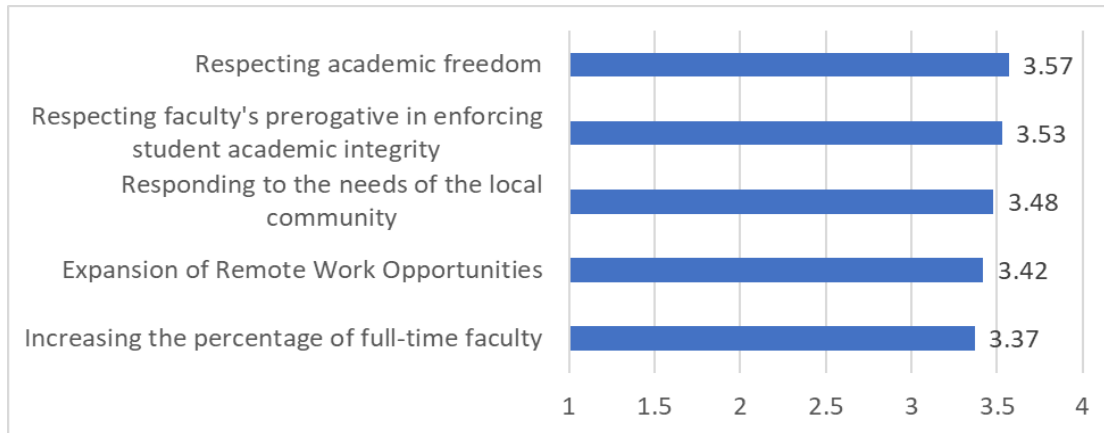
A weighted average was calculated for each agenda option. A weighted average close to 4 indicates strong agreement that this agenda item should be a priority. A weighted average close to 1 indicates strong disagreement that this agenda item should be a priority.

Employees were in very strong agreement that this first group of agenda items should be priorities.

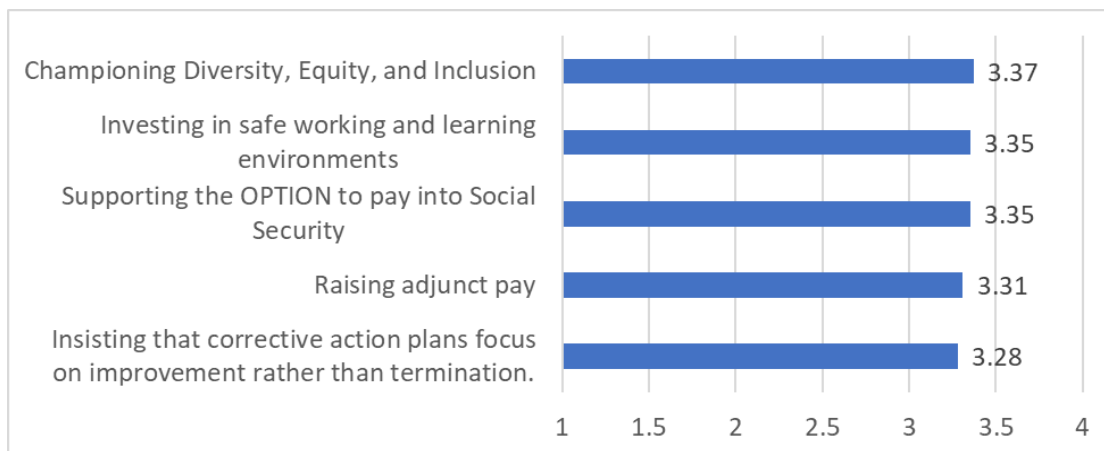




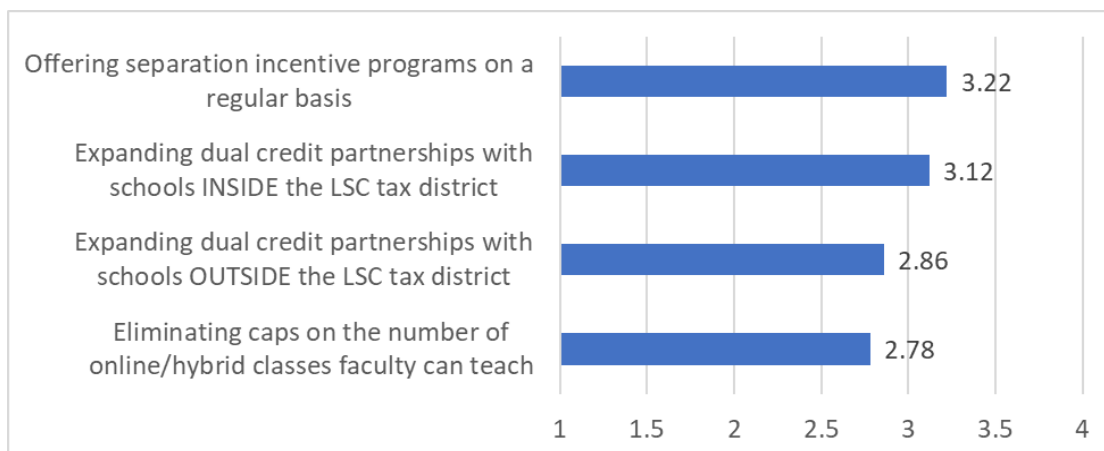
Employees were in slightly lesser agreement, but still very strong agreement, that the following should be priorities:



For the following group of agenda items, employees were definitely in agreement, and partly towards strong agreement, that these should be priorities.



Finally, for these remaining agendas, employees agree that these should be priorities. 2.5 would be the score right in the middle and would indicate ambivalence – employees equally split between agreeing and disagreeing.



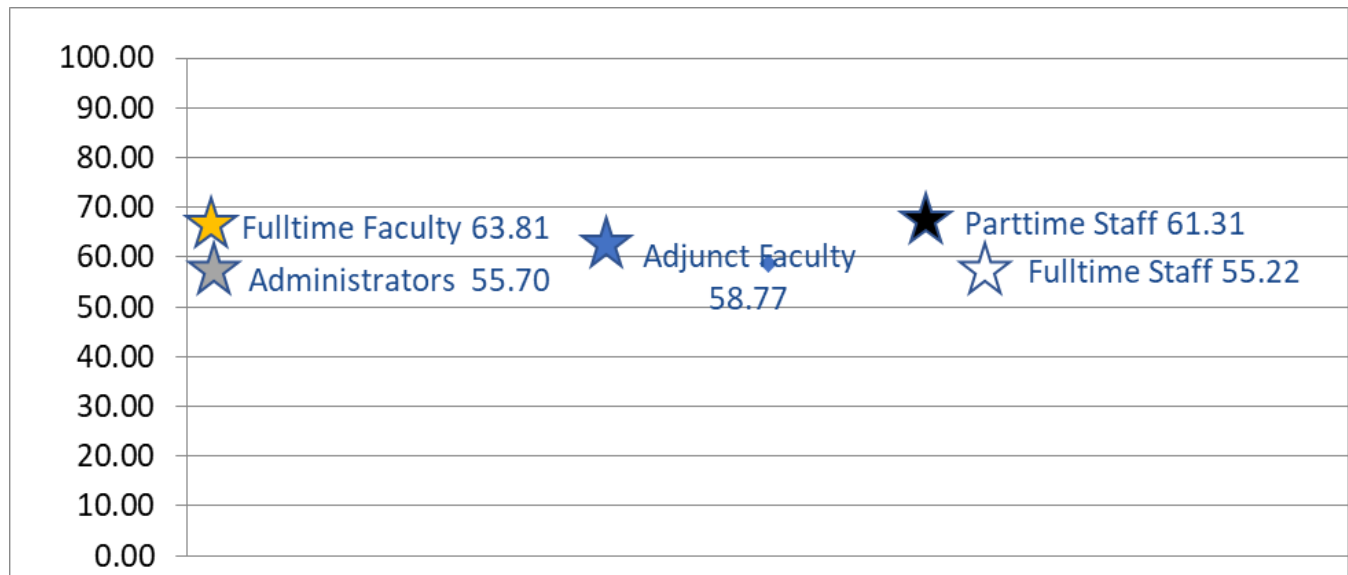
In our final question, employees were given a slider, marked from 0 to 100, and asked to set the slider at the point that best represents their view about where decision making within the college should come from. 0 indicates that the employee believes that decision making should be completely centralized at system office. 100 indicates that decision making should be completely site based on the individual campuses.

There is a trend in community colleges towards centralizing authority. At both Houston Community College and Dallas College recent changes have largely dismantled leadership roles at the separate colleges within the system and reassigned nearly all decision making to system office. I would view those colleges as close to 0 on this scale.

The opposite extreme would be for a system to consist of basically completely autonomous colleges loosely affiliated together. I would view this arrangement as close to 100. Alamo College used to be closer to this scenario although less so now.

The weighted average along this scale among all employees was 58.81. This indicates that employees would reject both extremes and see value in splitting decision making between the colleges and the system – with a slight tilt towards site-based decision making. Replicating here what has happened at HCC and Dallas would be very unwelcome but each college completely making their own rules would be unwelcome, too.

This last chart shows how the different employee groups selected their spots on the continuum from 0 = completely systemized to 100 = completely site based.



What is truly remarkable, and encouraging, is that employees of all categories are in remarkable agreement on this and other issues. We are not a collection of factions each with vastly different priorities. The Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, and others have picked up on this sense of consensus in our survey results and all of us are heartened. Lone Star employees are definitely pulling together in the same direction for the sake of our students and for the sake of each other.



We believe this bodes well for our future and gives the next chancellor a solid starting place. As the selection process continues the union hopes that the employee search advisory committee, the Board subcommittee and the Board of Trustees as a whole will keep these survey results front and center in their minds. Doing so will help us find a chancellor who shares our values, who can transition seamlessly into his or her new role, and who can lead us successfully into our second half century.

Dispatches from the Front #6 Triage

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

I've been thinking a lot about triage lately. One impetus is Steven Spielberg's WW II classic, *Saving Private Ryan*. For many years, I've used in class the opening clip of 22 minutes or so that graphically depicts the landing at Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944. It conveys the horror and desperation of the initial phase of the D-Day fight as the success of the Allied invasion hung in the balance. In one unforgettable segment, medics under fire are doing a split-second assessment of the wounded. They are quickly divided into three categories: those requiring urgent treatment, those who can wait a bit, and those already beyond help. The concept of such a three-fold division (hence the term "triage" from the French *trier*, "to separate out") dates back to the mass armies of the Napoleonic Wars and the military imperative to not only save lives but also to get soldiers back into action as soon as possible.

I've encountered triage in a real-life context recently while accompanying my mother to the emergency room at the HCA hospital right around the corner from LSC-Kingwood. One of the first steps is to undergo a triage assessment to determine where patients need to be placed in the queue. It's no fun being with my mom while her condition is so serious but one of the comforts has

been the compassion and competence of the nurses who are helping her. I've talked to several who have been trained at our college and many others who think so highly of Lone Star for the quality of its programs.

Lately, it has struck me that triage also applies to our students and indeed, I've raised this question during recent class discussions over the Spielberg movie. What I'm going to say will perhaps disturb some LSC personnel but it's the truth all the same, one observed over many years of teaching. Students also divide into roughly three categories like the casualties on Omaha Beach. There is a group in any class which is highly motivated and requires little inspiration. Any Honors class is like that almost in its entirety as these are exceptional students, but we encounter others at this elite level in any of our decent-sized sections. That doesn't mean that students in this category don't need good teaching; it's just that the basic drive to succeed academically is already present. There is a second type of student who is perhaps less prepared or motivated but who skilled and committed teachers can move in a good direction.

That leaves a third group which in some cases is just not reachable. Rarely is this a factor of intellectual ability. Almost all our students who study hard, acquire the books, do the assigned reading, and come to class on time each day, can learn and make decent grades. But any Lone Star instructor will tell you that we have some who just don't try and have about as much chance of academic success as someone has of winning the Indy 500 on a bicycle. Why is this? In some cases, students are overcommitted, working 40 hours or more per week while taking a ridiculous number of classes. I don't think any amount of counseling will dissuade some from attempting the impossible in this respect. And as long as much of our focus at a public institution like this one is on enrollments and contact hours, we will continue to be more than willing to take the money from students who make these kinds of self-defeating choices.



Sometimes students, especially just out of high school, aren't sure why or whether they should be here. Their hearts may simply not be in doing college work at this stage of life, hence the lack of personal initiative which can come across as sheer laziness. Yes, we have among us a relatively small number of students who resemble academic zombies, a kind of Lone Star version of the walking dead.

What can teachers do about students who don't seem to care? Sometimes the honest answer is nothing. Just like the medics in *Saving Private Ryan*, we have limited time and resources and have to concentrate our efforts where it will make the most difference. I think here of the history teacher, Mr. Hand, in the movie *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, who had a problem student named Spicoli played by Sean Penn. Near the end of the film, Mr. Hand goes to Spicoli's house to administer an oral final exam to the problem-child stoner who thereby manages to pass. If only this were a real-world solution! The last thing we can do as teachers is to internalize failure to motivate some students as a sign of personal failure or professional incompetence. Nor can we accept the insinuation of some administrators that we are lacking in compassion when we don't bow to the demand of every student who is in academic difficulty due to their own actions or lack of such. We owe it to the students who are actually trying to give them all the attention and encouragement we can and not to wear ourselves out trying to save those who can't be saved.

This is not to say we should ever entirely give up on students. Sometimes the dead come back to life. I've had a recent case of a student who during two semesters with me did *absolutely nothing*, who missed at least half his classes, and who rarely turned in an assignment. This term, he is with me in two separate courses and has a chance to ace both of them. Why did he sign up for me again? Perhaps I had planted some seeds of interest in the prior classes or maybe personal circum-

stances changed or could it be a case of simply maturing and becoming more focused on school? Whatever the case, it's important to be aware of such heartening examples.

Let me close with some connected thoughts on the retirement of Dr. Steve Head and the current search for his successor. I have known Steve for nearly forty years and will always consider him my friend. Perhaps a century from now, some historian will do a ranking of LSC chancellors as Arthur Schlesinger famously started doing with U.S. presidents in 1948. Over that course of time, who will be judged the greats, the near greats, the mediocrities, and the outright failures? I am utterly confident that Steve Head's tenure as our leader will always earn him a spot in the top rank. It has been a consequential term of service and one in which he has been a very effective helmsman. Three things quickly come to my mind for which he should be applauded. First, he exemplifies the best of progressive Southerners of a certain generation in his outspoken contempt for racism. Second, one of his enduring messages is his insistence that all LSC employees be treated with respect whatever their credentials or type of service to the institution. And finally, he must always be lauded for his commitment to maintaining jobs through the pandemic at a time when so many Americans suffered loss of livelihood.

What comes next? Well, given what I have written in this column and given our emphasis on student success, *it should be required* that our next chancellor have actual community college teaching experience as was true of Steve Head when he rose to his current position. That person must have basic understanding of what goes on every day in every classroom in terms of the learning process and the student-teacher relationship. It doesn't matter how much a candidate has in regard to business acumen, legal expertise, educational theory, or administrative service---if there is no experience in the reality of instruction at this level, something essential will be missing.



As I close, a respiratory therapist has come into the room whose training was at LSC-Kingwood. I can't tell you how proud that makes me. I know my mom is literally in good hands, those of one of our successful students. In the meantime, eyes forward, fingers crossed, and hopes high as we put the wraps on yet another semester.

Stephen Davis
Professor of History, LSC-Kingwood
April 30, 2023 (written at Kingwood HCA)

Breaking News

The Lone Star College Board of Trustees has just announced that the AFT will now have a permanent place on their meeting agendas! This is an incredible opportunity for us to share YOUR input with our elected leaders.

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.

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



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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.

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- 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
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- Educational resources and publications
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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
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AFT PLUS BENEFITS
to save money!**

**Union membership gives
you discounts on things
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goods and services with our
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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
Cassandra	Khatri	University Park Faculty Vice President	University Park

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.

