



# The Advocate

Spring semester, 2025 is off with a bang. I hope that your work at Lone Star College, whatever it might be, is going well, and that your personal lives outside of work are tranquil and joyful. I am proud to present to you our first edition of The Advocate, the newsletter of the American Federation of Teachers - Lone Star College, for 2025.

The world around us is anything but tranquil. Conflicts abroad are at perilous crossroads with reasonable voices often getting drowned out by extreme ones. At the national level chaos reigns with executive orders flying about in dizzying disarray and getting swatted down by the courts like mosquitos in summer. At the state level, public education from kindergarten through college is under threat both in terms of funding and freedom. And, sorry, having grown up on the southeast side of this great city, the body of water beside which I spent many happy days growing up will forever for me be the Gulf of Mexico.

If we had written about all the topics we could have written about, this issue of The Advocate would have been 100 pages long. There is SO MUCH going on and, if the topic that concerns you most, at the College, State, or National level is not covered this time, rest assured that your union probably knows about it, cares about it, and is doing what we can about it.

There will be more in the next issue!!

## We begin this issue with three articles that focus on the national level:

- 1) The VERY good news that the hated Windfall Elimination Provision of the Social Security code, which negatively impacted the retirement prospects of many LSC employees, is GONE.
- 2) Concerns about the possibility of rising inflation and what that could mean for LSC employees.
- 3) A guest article from a union colleague from Chicago explaining the serious consequences of the threatened closing of the U.S. Department of Education.

Next come three guest articles submitted to us from faculty at Lone Star College. We don't get op-ed submissions as often as I would like, but I am very pleased that they are coming more frequently. The Advocate is here to give a voice to all employees and contributions are welcome. Do you have something you think your fellow employees would want to hear about? Propose a guest article and we'll talk. If you have something on your heart that you want to say but you would prefer not to be identified, we can print your article under the byline "Staff" or "Concerned Employee".

## Inside this issue:

⇒Introduction to this edition	1-2
⇒Social Security Fairness Act Passes!	3-4
⇒The Price of Eggs, Lone Star Salaries, and the Second Coming of Smoot-Hawley	4-5
⇒AFT Lone Star Spring Celebration Invitation	5
⇒The Impact of DOE Policies on Community Colleges	6
⇒PhD Journeys	7-8
⇒Does a PhD have value in a Community College Classroom?	9-10
⇒Education, Higher by Degrees: The Value of Advanced Degrees in the Classroom	10-11
⇒Dispatches from the Front #13 "Anyone for Football?"	11-13
⇒Paid Parental Leave	13
⇒Know Your Rights- Los derechos de nuestros estudiantes, y de nosotros(The rights of our students, and ourselves)	13-19
⇒AFT Membership and Benefits Information	20 - 23
AFT Officers	24

## SAVE THE DATE!

Live Band (Featuring Karina Notal)  
 Complimentary Beverages!  
 Spacious outside venue!  
 Lots of door prizes!  
 Free Taco Bar!

**DATE:** Saturday, April. 5th  
**TIME:** 5-8 pm  
**LOCATION:** Swanny's Bar & Grill

AFT Lone Star  
 Spring Celebration

<https://bit.ly/AFTLS-spring-celebration-2025-RSVP>



## We're on the Web!

[www.aftlonestar.org](http://www.aftlonestar.org)  
 E-mail:  
[aftlonestar@yahoo.com](mailto:aftlonestar@yahoo.com)





The three guest articles come from different people but relate to the same theme, the value of having faculty members on our campuses who have PhDs. We decided to include them all because each presents a unique perspective and we wanted to honor all the writers for stepping up.

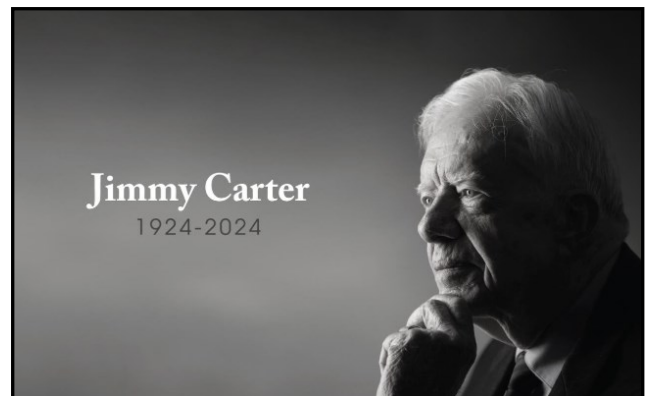
Before I describe the rest of this issue, let me digress to say a few words about community. My number one goal as president of AFT Lone Star College is to inspire our members to think of the union, not as an insurance policy, but as a community. To be a true community college, Lone Star College must also think of itself as a community. Communities thrive when the talents and contributions of all its members are celebrated and embraced, and no talents are dismissed as unimportant.

The employees of Lone Star College bring a host of talents and skills all of which make us better. We come from different backgrounds. We represent different communities. We bring to our work different experiences and different qualifications. Some bring the real-world perspective of experience outside of academia. Some have the perspective of pedagogy and knowledge of intellectual development that comes from working in K-12 education. And some have the depth of knowledge in an academic discipline and the critical thinking skills that come from extra years of advanced education. Many have a mixture of life experiences that have enhanced all of these perspectives and skills. Some even have law degrees! None of these make us perfect or better than someone else but ALL of these experiences, and many others, make us stronger and should be celebrated.

This issue of the Advocate finishes with our two regular columns, Dispatches from the Front, by LSC-Kingwood professor Steve Davis, and Know your Rights, by yours truly. You will find Steve's column an upbeat respite from the serious (but necessary) tone of the rest of our issue as he proposes a change of our nation's number one sport. My column focuses both on our own rights as employees and, even more critically, the rights of our students as we face the specter of ICE raids on our campuses due to one of the recent executive orders from the White House. My purpose is not to debate immigration policy but to provide valuable information to people who might get caught up in this situation to let them know that they DO have rights. This information is designed to share with people you care about. Please do so freely.

In thinking about Black History Month, I am reminded of a favorite phrase of the great African American writer Howard Thurman. To appropriate his words, community colleges are the institutions of higher education for "people who stand with their backs against the wall". We are here for everyone, but we are especially here for those who are ignored, written off, marginalized and, often, reviled. We have always been the schools of choice (or necessity) for the poor, for people of color, for women, and, particularly now, for immigrants. Let us continue to embrace that identity and stand in solidarity along that wall with our students.

I am also mindful at this time of the passing of, in my view, one of the greatest human beings of my lifetime, the late President Jimmy Carter. (His 1976 presidential campaign was the first political campaign I actively worked for.) He was president at a time, much like ours, marked by economic turmoil at home, and violence abroad. Historians will debate how effectively he navigated these challenges, but no one will disagree that he was a man who stood for "people who stand with their backs against the wall". He did so as president. He did so in the decades after his presidency working for justice



and democracy worldwide, and performing acts of practical service for the poor here at home. We need people of character like his now more than ever. Let us each strive to be such a person because a greater world will be built from the bottom up on humble service, not boastful arrogance.

So, in closing, I would like to take the liberty, as editor of this newsletter, to dedicate this issue of The Advocate to the memory of a great man: President Jimmy Carter. I hope you will find it informative, useful, and inspiring.



# Social Security Fairness Act Passes!

*Dr. John Burghduff*

The Windfall Elimination Provision that decreased the Social Security retirement benefits of some Lone Star College employees is GONE.

The Social Security Fairness Act passed both the United States House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate with significant bipartisan support and was signed into law by President Joe

Biden in December of 2024. We wrote about this act in our November/December issue of The Advocate when the bill had passed the House but was waiting to be introduced into the Senate. A special

THANK YOU to anyone in our Lone Star family who contacted either Senator Cruz or Senator Cornyn to express their opinion.

As a reminder, the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), introduced in the 1980s under President Reagan, lowered the Social Security retirement benefits of anyone working for a public entity that ran its own pension plan in lieu of Social Security. That includes the Teacher Retirement Service (TRS) and Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) that all Lone Star employees participate in here in Texas.

The Windfall Elimination Provision did not greatly impact employees who spent almost their entire careers in public education but employees who came to the college as a second career after years in the Social Security system or who had held second jobs that contributed to Social Security, were losing up to several hundred dollars in earned benefits per month upon retirement. That threat is now gone.

In addition to the WEP, the Social Security Fairness Act also eliminated the Government Pension Offset (GPO). This provision disqualified employees of public entities

with their own pension plan from receiving survivor benefits if they outlived a spouse who had been in the Social Security System. This could be a devastating blow to Lone Star employees who had lost a spouse.

WEP and GPO had harmed employees in TRS and ORP and similar plans in other states for 40 years. AFT and other organizations faithfully lobbied for eliminating these unfair and damaging policies for decades and they are finally GONE. If you took our suggestion in the No-

November/December issue of the Advocate to contact your senator, part of the credit goes to YOU.

As AFT national President Randi Weingarten wrote:

“Today, justice was finally done for the

millions of American workers who dedicated their lives to serving the public but had their retirements throttled by a punitive and unnecessary loophole. The Senate joined the House and delivered on its promise to pass the Social Security Fairness Act so that every public employee can retire with dignity and grace.

“... Ensuring a fair and secure retirement is how we respect the workers who uplift our communities. And it’s how we recruit and retain the next generation to help our country thrive.” (December 21, 2024)\*

Below is a list of U.S. Senators from Texas and U.S. Representatives from Southeast Texas showing how they voted on the Social Security Fairness Act. A “yea” vote was a vote to eliminate the two provisions (WEP and GPO) that unfairly limited retirement benefits for Lone Star employees and others. A “nay” vote was a vote to keep those limitations in place.

U.S. Senate  
John Cornyn (R) – yea  
Ted Cruz (R) – nay

## The Social Security Fairness Act

**After decades of advocacy by AFT and fellow union members, the Social Security Fairness Act is now law!**

This landmark, bipartisan legislation repeals the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset, two pieces of federal law that robbed millions of public servants of Social Security benefits they earned for over 40 years.





- U.S. House of Representatives (district number listed)
- 2) Dan Crenshaw (R) – nay
  - 7) Lizzie Pannill Fletcher (D) – yea
  - 8) Morgan Luthell (R) – yea
  - 9) Al Green (D) – yea
  - 10) Michael McCall (R) – yea
  - 14) Randy Weber (R) - yea
  - 18) this seat was vacant at the time due to the passing of Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee – no vote
  - 22) Troy Nehls (R) – yea
  - 29) Sylvia Garcia (D) – yea
  - 36) Brian Babin (R) – yea
  - 38) Wesley Hunt (R) - nay

\* Reference:

[https://www.aft.org/press-release/afts-weingarten-passage-social-security-fairness-act?link\\_id=2&can\\_id=50b2cbb3966616579cd96f302baf7d1e&source=email-last-chance-to-make-social-security-fair-2&email\\_referrer=email\\_2567437&email\\_subject=a-win-for-aft-members-the-social-security-fairness-act-passed-in-the-senate](https://www.aft.org/press-release/afts-weingarten-passage-social-security-fairness-act?link_id=2&can_id=50b2cbb3966616579cd96f302baf7d1e&source=email-last-chance-to-make-social-security-fair-2&email_referrer=email_2567437&email_subject=a-win-for-aft-members-the-social-security-fairness-act-passed-in-the-senate)

For additional details about the Social Security Fairness Act, Click the link below:

<https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2024-09/hr82.pdf>

**The Price of Eggs, Lone Star Salaries, and the Second Coming of Smoot-Hawley**  
*Dr. John Burghduff*

Lone Star College has been very diligent for a number of years about keeping employee cost of living increases in line with and even ahead of inflation. Salary increases at Lone Star have generally exceeded those offered by comparable community college systems in Texas and have included much needed market adjustments above and beyond cost of living increases. The AFT has taken a number of opportunities over the years to express our gratitude to Chancellor Castillo, and to Chancellor Head before him, as well as to the Board of Trustees and the Chief Financial Officers in place at a given time, and their staffs. Maintaining the livelihood of employees in the face of many other budgetary demands takes both commitment and skill on the parts of all of these individuals. We have expressed our gratitude in Trustee meetings, in private conversations, in emails, and in The Advocate.

Thankfully, as readers already know, the inflation rate has been trending downwards since the time period immediately following the Covid-19 pandemic. The 12 month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), a respected measure of inflation, reached a high of 9.1% for the 12 month period ending in June, 2022 and had been falling quite steadily since. Inflation was sitting at 2.9% for the 12 month period ending December, 2024.

Concerningly, inflation has begun to tick upwards since the start of the year. For the period ending January, 2025, the 12 month change in CPI reached 3.0%. This represents a 0.5% increase in prices for the month of January alone, the largest single month increase since August, 2023. The price of eggs, which became a metaphor for inflation during the 2024 presidential race, increased by a whopping 15.2% in January, 2025 reflecting the bird flu epidemic currently affecting chickens across the U.S.

Possibly the uptick in inflation during January may be a statistical blip and we certainly hope that is the case. However, policy decisions being made in the Trump White House raise concerns. Chief among those are the implementation of tariffs. Already in the short time that Trump has been president, new tariffs have been imposed on goods from China, and 25% tariffs on aluminum and steel imported from all foreign countries are planned for March. Plus, threats of large tariffs on our closest neighbors of Mexico and Canada could come to fruition soon with tariffs on other countries (friendly and unfriendly) possible.

Historians and economists are urging us to remember the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 in which, trying to slow the nation’s slide into the Great Depression, Congress raised tariffs on a host of imported goods and ignited a trade war as other countries retaliated with tariffs of their own. The result was that American businesses Smoot-Hawley was trying to protect were hurt even more, inflation went through the roof, international trade fell by almost 2/3, and the nation sank deeper into depression. Only in 1934, under the leadership of new president Franklin Roosevelt, did Congress vote to reverse these tariffs aiding the long process of recovery.

Smoot-Hawley gained renewed interest in the 1980s due to an iconic classroom scene in the teen comedy Ferris Beuller’s Day Off. Ben Stein, the actor playing the teach-



er in the scene, was himself an economist and was given the opportunity to pick the topic for the scene. If you are too young to remember this movie, or if you want a quick primer into the intricacies of Smoot-Hawley, you can view the scene here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X\\_wHBlouFSc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_wHBlouFSc)

In addition to tariffs, another historical event with profound economic impact that occurred during the Great Depression was the mass deportation of Mexican immigrants that I wrote about in the November-December issue of The Advocate. You can read that article, *Sojourners in our Midst*, at the following link beginning on page 11:

<https://aftlonestar.tx.aft.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2024/2024%20The%20Advocate%20NOV-DEC.pdf>

Although by far the most important tragedy of this dark episode was the human impact on millions of people, a side effect was that a decimated workforce imperiled important sectors of the economy, notably agriculture, resulting in additional shortages and higher prices.

To what degree the Trump administration follows through on threats of tariffs and deportations is unknowable. The president does not exactly have a reliable record of following through on what he says he plans to do. However, the impact on inflation, if these measures are fully implemented, could be profound.

So how does this connect to the topic of cost of living increases at Lone Star College? I am fully convinced that the intention of the Administration and the Board would be to do their best to keep employee pay increases equal to or ahead of the cost of living. However, bluntly put, if inflation were to return to 2022 levels or go even higher, it would be very hard to expect the College to be able to afford to increase employee salaries enough to keep us ahead.

A profound difference between both the tariff and deportation bills of the 1930s and the actions of today is that those historical actions were implemented by votes

of Congress. Today's actions arise from Executive Orders, out of the oversight of Congress. Reed Smoot and Willis Hawley, the authors of the tariff bill, were voted out at the next election. This time that direct accountability is not there. However, citizen pressure on senators and congressmen is still probably the best hope of some checks on executive power.

“...citizen pressure on senators and congressmen is still probably the best hope of some checks on executive power.”

Watch for more information over time about efforts that AFT will be making at the national level, in coordination with many other organizations, to attempt to influence decision makers in Washington.

In the meantime, if anyone was hoping that decisions made far away in the White House could not possibly impact Lone Star employees' ability to buy eggs, well, maybe oatmeal won't be too expensive.

Footnote: Anyone interested in tracking government statistics on inflation, can find great resources on the website of the Bureau of Labor Statistics:

<https://www.bls.gov/charts/consumer-price-index/consumer-price-index-by-category.htm>

## You're Invited! AFT Lone Star SPRING CELEBRATION!

**AFT LONE STAR  
SPRING CELEBRATION!**

Live Band (Featuring Karina Nistal)  
spacious outside venue!  
Complimentary Beverages!  
Lots of Door Prizes!  
Free Taco Bar!

**WHO: All LSC Employees**  
**DATE: Saturday, April 5th**  
**TIME: 5:00 - 8:00 pm**  
**LOCATION: Swanny's Bar & Grill**  
6224 Theall Rd. Houston, TX 77066

<https://bit.ly/AFTLS-spring-celebration-2025-RSVP>





**The Impact of DOE Policies on Community Colleges**  
*Troy Swanson, Legislative Chair*  
*Cook County College Teacher's Union, Local 1600*

The Trump administration and its allies want to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, drastically impacting our students, members, and colleges. No state, no single entity, can replace what the Department of Education does. Without it, we are left with 50 disconnected state networks, each with its own policies, priorities, and limitations. Spreading these functions across other government agencies would be even worse. This is a recipe for inefficiency and a reduction in services to our colleges.

The Department of Education ensures that higher education in the United States operates as a unified system, rather than a patchwork of competing interests.

For community colleges, the Department of Education is especially vital because it fills critical gaps supporting our curricula and students. The Department:

- **Manages federal financial aid and student loans** – Pell Grants, federal work-study programs, and subsidized student loans are all administered through the Department of Education. Without federal oversight, each state would have to create its own system, leading to major disparities in who can afford college. Community college students, who rely heavily on these programs, would be disproportionately harmed.
- **Compiles nationwide data on colleges and students** – The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) collects data that no state could compile alone. This data informs funding decisions, enrollment trends, and workforce needs. Without it, we would be flying blind, unable to compare institutions or track national progress in education.
- **Tracks student achievement through the Nation's Report Card (NAEP)** – The Department of Education provides a national benchmark for student success, helping educators and policymakers understand where improvements are needed. Without this,

states would have inconsistent, unverified data on educational outcomes.

- **Provides essential support for students with disabilities** – The Office of Civil Rights ensures colleges comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other protections. It provides grants and guidance so students with disabilities have access to higher education. No state could enforce these protections at a national level, leaving students vulnerable to discrimination and inadequate support.
- **Supports veterans returning to college** – The Department of Education works alongside the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer GI Bill benefits, support veteran-focused campus programs, and provide funding to help veterans transition into civilian careers. Without this coordination, veterans would face a confusing and inconsistent system.
- **Funds Workforce Development grants** – The Department of Education provides direct funding to community colleges to build programs that align with labor market needs. These grants support partnerships with employers, create career pathways, and fund equipment and training that individual states or colleges often cannot afford alone. Without federal support, workforce education would become fragmented and less responsive to industry demands.

Without the Department of Education, these functions would disappear—or worse, be left to individual states, leading to inconsistency, inequity, and lost opportunities for our students.





## PhD Journeys

*AFT Staff*

We appreciate the chance to talk about the role and value of the PhD, particularly in the context of community colleges and institutions committed to student-centered education. The critiques raised in faculty discussions—regarding career planning for all on the teaching path, the challenges of the PhD process, and its role in faculty hiring—are important and deserve a response, especially in conversations with administrators shaping institutional priorities. However, we also want to emphasize that the PhD is not simply a status marker; it is a meaningful commitment to the skills of intellectual labor and inquiry as such, inquiry that benefits students, faculty, and the institution alike. Consider the orders of learning, where one key area educators focus on is helping students get to where they can learn to learn.

Acknowledging the expertise of PhD faculty should not be seen as diminishing others. Just as we recognize the specialized training of advisors, librarians, and student support staff, we should recognize that faculty who have pursued doctoral studies have dedicated years to refining their knowledge and methods of inquiry.

To administrators, we would recommend this: A thriving institution does not reduce expertise to a status marker. It recognizes expertise as a vital resource for student success, institutional growth, and the advancement of knowledge, even encouraging assimilating throughout the institution an understanding of recent innovations in educational and organizational practice. The goal should not be to ask, “Does this credential make someone better?” but rather, “How can this expertise be used to enrich our students' education and our institution's organizational effectiveness?”

This discussion is rooted in a shared commitment to institutional vibrancy, which is inseparable from widely shared commitments to the many forms of learning, scholarship, and student success. Let's focus on that shared purpose rather than on hierarchy or insecurity or who gets what title. We can foster an academic culture that values all contributions in higher education without diminishing the contributions of those who have taken different paths. That is what we all exert ourselves to do

in much of our practical, day-to-day work in the college. We have all seen the Dean who works in the office late, or heard the instructor listening with patience and compassion to a struggling and earnest student. We have all heard of the weekends and evenings given to grading papers, and we have witnessed the colleagues in the hall discussing passionately and with vocal institutional memories, present-day institutional priorities and function, as well as all today's challenges to the integrity of education. And, of course, all these instances almost always numbered some mix of master's and PhD holders, and they didn't refer to each other habitually or casually by honorifics, titles, or degrees. They all brought an excellence and specific areas of extended knowledge to the work.

The PhD degree's value in community colleges could be seen as somewhat contradictory. One might emphasize that excellent teaching does not require a PhD—many of the professors who shaped some of us at the community college level had master's degrees. Yet, the PhD represents a depth of training, independent research, and commitment that enhances teaching, student engagement, curriculum development, and an awareness of what is current in a subject area. Marginalizing PhD holders does not contribute to the many essential purposes of college teaching.

Rather than viewing these points as contradictory, let's regard them as complementary. The issue is not whether a PhD is necessary for wonderful teaching (it isn't)—but whether higher educational institutions value the expertise that comes with it. The PhD brings not only subject-matter expertise but also a widened experience with reasons and a framework for helping students engage in critical inquiry, research, and interdisciplinary thinking.

For administrators making hiring decisions, the question should not be: “Does every faculty member need a PhD?” Instead, consideration should be given along the lines of this question: “How do we ensure that faculty expertise—at all levels—supports student learning and the institution's goals?”

At institutions like Lone Star College, where faculty are so engaged in student success, curriculum innovation, teaching, and ideas about teaching and learning, PhD-holding faculty contribute not by virtue of their title but by bringing a breadth of intellectual curiosity and re-



search experience into their teaching. Throughout their career, that individual, because of that additional training, may make numerous contributions that yield dividends, enriching the institution culturally and educationally in ways that are difficult to predict.

The PhD is not simply a credential, nor should it be an instrument of professional gatekeeping. At its best, it represents a commitment to reasoned inquiry, to the advancement of knowledge, and to the lifelong pursuit of learning. Those are parts of the core mission of our college system; whether stated forthrightly or not, it is difficult to imagine a “model college” without them.

In that spirit, we hope this discussion helps us move away from debates about status and toward a more meaningful conversation: How can we ensure that all faculty—PhD-holding or not—are supported, valued, and given the opportunity to contribute to the success of our students and the future of our institution’s commitment to higher education?

In an era where the purpose of higher education is increasingly questioned, where institutions lean toward treating faculty as a distant appendage of HR rather than as teacher-scholars in their own right—our expertise still matters. Not because we hold degrees, but because we have spent years engaged in sustained inquiry. That labor, that engagement with complexity, and the experience that came from the extended dialogues with the mentoring scholars on the faculty member’s doctoral committee is what students deserve access to.

Let us add too that in an era where misinformation spreads rapidly, and expertise is often questioned, having PhDs on staff plays a crucial role in an institution’s defense of rigor and evidence-based reasoning. Particularly in academia, PhD holders play an important role in preventing the erosion of knowledge by unfounded claims. Many people with PhDs contribute to public discourse, fact-checking, and scientific literacy, helping to pass this habit along to their students, and ensuring that

complex issues (e.g., climate science, epidemiology, history) are not misrepresented.

It goes without saying that a society that values expertise and critical thought is less susceptible to authoritarianism and demagoguery. Its best educational institutions, like Lone Star College, should of course be a buttress and support that aim. Having PhD-holders on staff helps cultivate a community that values complexity over simplistic solutions. While expertise alone does not equate to moral

or political correctness, the discipline of sustained inquiry that the PhD instills serves as an additional counterweight to intellectual complacency.

Looking again from the perspective of respect and faculty culture, our college system has benefited from having outstanding Deans and VPIs, most of whom were from the faculty ranks. They were not necessarily doctorate holders, but they nonetheless commanded the uncoerced respect of everyone who

worked with them. We should not be about creating divisions between PhD and non-PhD faculty, nor is there any point in dismissing the contributions of staff and administrators, whether they hold doctorates or not. It is not against the function of a nationally recognized college to ensure that the years of study, research, and professional training that go into a PhD are recognized as meaningful contributions to the institution. Lone Star College has even encouraged and supported its own employees to finish their second or third advanced degrees.

Everyone in higher education plays a critical role—whether they hold a PhD, a master’s degree, or another form of professional expertise. A strong institution does not thrive by pitting different faculty members or staff against each other. It thrives by leveraging the strengths of all its members and respecting the distinct contributions they bring to student learning. Clearly, in the normal course of events, that’s what we do: The work goes forward. We do the thing.

*“Everyone in higher education plays a critical role—whether they hold a PhD, a master’s degree, or another form of professional expertise.”*





## Does a PhD have value in a Community College Classroom?

*AFT Staff*

I cannot express how much I adored my first community college experience. Another institution gave me this initial opportunity and my US history survey classes were going well. Then I received my evaluations from department chairs. For that first semester, my chair invited me to visit her class. I did. Then the next semester, with a change in leadership, the new chair's assessment labeled my class as a high school class, not a college class.

With a bruised ego, I explained to my chair that I taught high school for 10 years. The class she observed was nothing like a secondary class. Was she concerned about the way I conducted the class? No. Was she concerned about class participation or my interaction with students? No. She had no complaints about the delivery of the course materials. So, did she feel my tests and assessments lacked the rigor of a college class? No. In fact, she never asked to see tests or other assessments. Her explanation of her crushing critique only left me confused. I pushed her appraisal aside and tried to improve, but I never really understood what she meant. Her subsequent evaluations noted an improvement, but I recognized that she did not consider my class up to her standards. Incidentally, I now acknowledge that department chair's assessment was correct. My initial community college classes conveyed undeveloped history.

Why am I writing this essay? In a recent system-wide meeting, a question arose about why we put so much value upon PhDs when we are not a research institution. After that remark, several of us came together to share our personal educational stories. This is merely one of many stories but my journey is not everyone's path to developing academic skills. I appreciate my many colleagues, in all sectors of the college, who are models of excellence without a PhD or EDD. After all, that prior department chair who classified my class as high school level did not have a PhD at that time. Many avenues exist for advancing the skills that contribute to serving students at a community college.

My decision to seek a PhD, however, had nothing to do with that early assessment. I hungered for more

knowledge about history and I also hoped a PhD would improve my chance to gain a full-time position. Nothing in my life prepared me for this new educational encounter. A beach analogy is the easiest way to explain what happened. When I received my BA, it was as if I waded into the Gulf. My feet were firmly on the ground and the water reached my knees and maybe my waist. With my MA, I ventured deeper but I maintained an awareness of the safety of the beach. Sometimes my feet were on the ground, sometimes I swam to greater depth. I knew, though, where to find the bottom while observing the vastness of the Gulf.

When I entered my PhD program, I found myself in that vastness of the Gulf. I could not find a bottom and I was completely surrounded by the endless ocean. I splashed about, trying not to drown. I choked upon the brine and barely kept my head above the water. To be honest, those first history classes were over my head. I thought I knew history, but now I anxiously feared it would swallow me. However, I discovered I was not alone in my struggles as I developed relationships with other student and faculty mentors.

What does this actually mean? I had always approached history with an insatiable hunger to learn more. This implies, however, that I expected the "expert" to feed that hunger. I learned that I needed to reimagine my role from a consumer to a seeker. My professors did not show up to impart knowledge. My task was to arrive in class prepared and to share discoveries and insights from the weekly assignments. If I did not know the history of a particular topic, my task was to learn it on my own. This new phase included analyzing, investigating, comparing approaches, applying ideas and theories, and discerning the meaning of what happened.

My relationship to history altered from being a consumer to a contributor. Instead of becoming arrogant, the experience humbled me. With new confidence, I put the elements of history together in a manner that departed from the way I first learned it when I waded into the discipline. Research opened my eyes to voices from the past. The growth I experienced did not come because I learned more facts but because I understood the discipline better. When a search committee forwarded my name to be considered for a full-time position, it was not because I had a PhD, more precisely an ABD, on my application. I had transformed from a consumer of his-



tory to a seeker and contributor. My classes focused upon a more mature history rather than simply imparting facts. That is a college class.

I genuinely acknowledge the diverse avenues that boosts any Lone Star College staff's knowledge and skills and contributes to the well-being of our college. When we evaluate applications for faculty positions, we need to create rubrics that award all enhancing experiences, including but not limited to a PhD, EDD, ABD, or other academic achievements. Admittedly, not all advanced degrees recipients are good teachers, but not all good teachers have the expertise to teach a college-level course. We create a powerful institution when we combine all relevant skills.

## Education, Higher by Degrees: The Value of Advanced Degrees in the Classroom

*Submitted by a Group of Interested Faculty*

The goal and purpose of higher education is to provide students an opportunity to obtain advanced degrees, licensure, or certificates. In response to a recent public statement implying that advanced degrees go hand-in-hand with a sense of egocentric superiority and entitlement, we would like to point out that such sweeping statements can never hold true because of the diversity of individuals such statements attempt to describe. We would additionally reference the benefits terminal degreed individuals bring to the classrooms and their students and by extension the institution.

Do doctorate level degrees, especially subject specific PhD's, hold value for institutions of higher education? Conversely, if a terminal degree holds little additional value as compared to other lower-level degrees, then seemingly the entire purpose of higher education is thrown into question. While training for the workforce, advanced licensures, and certificates are critical to the infrastructure and operations of our society as we know it. Purely academic degrees are equally critical for our students, the majority of whom transfer to academic programs at four-year universities. Many of these students will find themselves working in research institutions, graduate programs at four year institutions, as well as undergraduate programs, and yes,

even community colleges such as Lone Star College. Advanced degrees awarded within the United States, as well as the recruitment of individuals holding advanced degrees from other countries to US companies and universities is the most critical advantage the United States holds as a country of innovation, discovery and technical developments. The advances established by the United States cover all areas of academics from literature, research in biomedicine, developments in the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts, as well as mathematics. In short and not withstanding a few outlier examples such as Steve Jobs or Bill Gates, individuals holding advanced degrees form the front line of innovation for the United States.

It is true that many individuals who hold advanced or terminal doctorate level degrees do not necessarily make model instructors. But the degree was never a guarantee of an individual's skills at instruction. Instruction is a workforce level skill, not an academic area. The advanced degree is awarded after an individual has demonstrated a depth of knowledge and has made original contributions to the field in which the degree is awarded. It's a demonstration of the ability to advance the growth and development of a subject area, it is not a degree aimed at teaching pedagogical skills. Additionally, as has been mentioned publicly, there are likely an equal percentage of individuals who are unskilled at instruction that do not hold terminal degrees.

Also, it's important to realize that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's minimum requirement for teaching at a higher education institution is a master's degree with a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the subject being taught. To phrase this another way; an individual may be an excellent faculty member or teacher, but if they do not already hold thorough understanding of the subject, what can they teach with those skills? As a group of faculty composing this mis-sive, we have, to the individual, experienced the benefits of having completed a doctor of philosophy in our fields. This experience provides us with lived knowledge and understanding of various points of perception, the fact that what seems to be common sense may be inaccurate, and it helps us to convey to our students the ability not only for critical thinking, but the ability to literally dissect commonly held beliefs to determine the veracity and accuracy of that knowledge.



And this level of thought skills has been proven by our original contributions to the fields we specialize in.

We would hope, and maybe even request, that the Lone Star College System publicly and routinely value those individuals who have invested their time, their money and their hard work completing advanced degrees so that they can best understand the subject they are bringing to their students and the classroom.

## Dispatches from the Front #13 “Anyone for Football?”

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

Sometimes sports is a healthy rather than problematic distraction. A case in point is the most recent Super Bowl, won by the Eagles in a blowout over the Chiefs. I told myself beforehand that I might conduct my own personal boycott, disgusted as usual by the frenzied hype in the two preceding weeks and by the public’s anticipation of game-time commercials, ads in which some of the country’s finest creative minds stimulate us to engage in an orgy of mindless consumption. In the end, I caved and watched it, glad that the game was essentially over by halftime and that I could turn to final prepping for Monday morning classes. We live in times in which it is often ill-advised to read the paper or watch the news, hence the need for TV sports. In recent days, Trump has doubled-down on his plans for ethnic cleansing in the Gaza Strip, Vice-President Vance while in Munich (in a display of what might be termed Hillbilly Diplomacy) praised Germany’s neo-Nazi party in the run up to that country’s election, and Elon Musk and his young punk posse (featuring a 19 year-old called Big Balls) have torn through a number of federal agencies, leaving a large number of terminated civil servants in their wake. Closer to home, the knuckle-draggers on the Montgomery County Commissioners Court have fired the county librarian on apparent grounds of political and religious incorrectness. I wonder how many books or what kind these guys read?

In this context, I return to a thought which has grown stronger over the years. That thought is that we Americans would be better off to join the rest of the world by making soccer the national game. It is increasingly

clear to me that European, Latin American, Asian, and African football is far superior to the misleadingly named American variety. The preceding sentence is utter blasphemy to a certain kind of American mindset. All the better reason to make this case.

A personal confession---I have loved our football since boyhood and have never kicked a soccer ball in my life. When I was growing up in Houston’s East End, fellow neighborhood urchins and I commandeered two adjacent vacant lots where we filled the hours with either improvised baseball or tackle football depending upon the season. One indelible memory is coming home from our field one chilly November Sunday in 1963 and getting the news from the adults that President Kennedy’s assassin had just been shot on live TV. NFL games were played that same Sunday upon the insistence of Commissioner Pete Rozelle as an ill-considered gesture toward maintaining some semblance of national normality in the aftermath of the Dallas horror. It is only in recent years that I’ve tried to appreciate the true “foot” ball that is understandably the world’s most popular sport. Here are some of the game’s most appealing features to me:

- 1) **It’s difficult to score.** The paucity of goals is historically one of the biggest turnoffs to Americans who thus conclude that soccer is boring. Fans in this country want action in the form of runs or points scored or knockouts in championship fights. We are shaped by a consumer capitalist culture (the culture reflected in Super Bowl ads) that demands instant gratification. Football is an antidote as it teaches patience. My Peruvian colleague, Math Professor Miguel Cáceres, taught me how important it is to watch a match in its entirety. Teams or sides often start slowly with the pace picking up in the second half. You have to view the whole game to appreciate its rhythm, its development. And then when a breakthrough occurs and a goal is scored, the effect is practically seismic!
- 2) **Matches can end up tied.** This is another affront to capitalism in that our system demands winners and losers. But in sports as in life, sometimes no one wins and there are occasions when a draw feels like victory. For example, in a recent encounter in the Portuguese league, a traditionally weaker team, Santa Clara, ended up tied with powerhouse Porto despite being a player short in the



match's crucial final minutes. That was an achievement. And I will never forget the incredible drama of the scoreless tie between Mexico and Brazil in the 2014 World Cup. I watched at an eatery way out Westheimer filled with Brazilian fans wearing yellow and green fright wigs and creating the most incredible cacophony blowing horns and banging on drums. Mexican goalie, Memo Ochoa, deflated the crowd by making one brilliant save after another. It was unbelievably exciting! I also experienced multiple occasions as our college club baseball coach (we didn't play extra innings) when a tie was more than acceptable, a good excuse for me to celebrate with a cold one once home.

- 3) **Severe penalties are meaningful.** In football, a player who is red-carded for an outrageously dangerous or unsportsmanlike play is ejected and made to leave the field in ignominy. Not only that, but his team then plays the rest of the game short-handed. Imagine the effect in the NFL or in college football if an egregious foul meant that the offender's team had to continue with just ten. This would be a far greater incentive to play cleanly than a fifteen-yard penalty. When my colleague, Chris Davis, and I took Lone Star students to a match outside of Lisbon in 2023, we saw the coach of the losing team get red-carded after the final whistle. That hurt his club as he had to be absent for the next match, one that was crucial to them in the final standings.



Lone Star Students at Estoril Praia- Marítimo Match, May 2023

- 4) **Lousy teams are relegated to a lower division.** I really like the fact that the two or three bottom teams in European leagues each year move

down a rank to the next league and are replaced by that league's top finishers. The 2018 Netflix series "Sunderland 'Til I Die" documents the anguish of an English industrial city (one of the birthplaces of Brexit) whose team was relegated twice, disgracefully tumbling from the Premier League to the third-tier League One. Sunderland has since turned around its fortunes and has a chance to return to the Premier League by the end of this season. This is one area in which American pro sports are truly rigged, providing incentives for teams to tank by purposefully losing to save money or get higher draft picks. Imagine if the price of that sleazy behavior or of simple organizational incompetence were relegation of a franchise to the minors. The Houston Astros embarrassed the city with three-straight hundred loss seasons from 2011-2013 as part of a conscious strategy to strip and rebuild the squad for future winning seasons. Was it worth it, even considering the World Series successes that followed? Perhaps a couple of seasons in the minors would have been a more just outcome and would have kept management from even thinking about fielding such pathetic lineups those three campaigns.

- 5) **Games are short.** As I write this Saturday morning, matches in Europe are starting. With two non-stop 45-minute halves, a few minutes of stoppage time, and a 15-minute intermission, those contests will take less than two hours. A typical NFL game lasts over three hours and some college games that feature a lot of passing and scoring can last four. Until recently, baseball had become a joke in this respect with even a pitcher's duel often requiring three hours. Life is too short to sit in the stands or in front of a screen through the constant time-outs, commercial breaks, replay decisions, and other ridiculous interruptions. Let's hope that reforms like the pitch clocks introduced in 2023 will be a corrective.
- 6) **Soccer is safer.** Let's be blunt: American football causes brain damage. The evidence is now undeniable that the frequency of concussive and sub-concussive hits to the head that are integral to the sport impairs players and shortens their lives. The inherent physicality and violence that made football the national favorite by the late 1960s are the seeds of its eventual demise as more and more parents will reconsider ever introducing their boys to participation. As athletes have become bigger, stronger, and faster over the decades, the physical risks of football



have only increased. In regard to size, the average Eagles offensive lineman in Super Bowl LIX weighed almost one hundred pounds more than his counterpart in Super Bowl I in 1967! I know that players get hurt in soccer, that heading the ball is medically problematic, and that inadvertent head bumps can cause concussions. But there is no comparison with the life-altering injuries suffered in our own football.

These are excellent reasons to prefer world-style football. One of the most encouraging trends around us is the enthusiasm of our students for the sport. Chris and I are taking another Lone Star group to Portugal and Spain this May. Among them are several out-and-out football fanatics. We will attend at least one match, do a tour of Lisbon’s Benfica stadium, and read a selection about Portuguese football god, Cristiano Ronaldo, as part of their course work. These kids are on to something. Perhaps their willingness to cast aside certain traditions in the sports world will one day help lead us out of this political mess as well.



## Paid Parental Leave

AFT thanks and celebrates Lone Star College for adopting the Paid Parental Leave Program for employees announced at the February 21st WWOTS.

This is a forward thinking benefit! We look forward to this program supporting many employees that need it!



## Los derechos de nuestros estudiantes, y de nosotros (The rights of our students, and ourselves)

### Know Your Rights



**By: Dr. John Burghduff,  
Professor of Mathematics. LSC– CyFair**

For generations it has been U.S. policy that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, ICE, needed to keep its enforcement operations away from certain sensitive areas. These sensitive areas include medical facilities, houses of worship (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, etc.), and schools (including colleges and universities).

There are plenty of opinions about how to address the issue of persons living in this country without proper documentation of their right to be here. (That debate is not the subject of this column.) What had been widely (if not universally) accepted as self-evident was that it did no one any good (undocumented immigrants or the rest of us) if people were too afraid to go where they needed to go to seek medical help, spiritual support, and education for themselves and their children.

Because of an executive order of Donald Trump, the prohibition of ICE activity in sensitive areas is now a thing of the past and we are faced with the prospect of raids on Lone Star College campuses. The thought that someone in a uniform could knock on my door during class and demand to take one of my students away because they don’t have proper paperwork is soul crushing.

So, in this edition of Know Your Rights I want to talk, first, about our rights as college employees, and second, about the rights of our students as related to immigration actions on campus.



### What do we do as employees if ICE comes?

Since Texas law requires that public employees must show proper documentation of legal status in order to be employed, if ICE comes to campus, they are probably not coming for college employees. They will be looking for students (who aren't asked about their immigration status when they apply) and possibly other community members on campus for various reasons.

Chancellor Castillo has already given us clear and solid directives in the email he sent to all employees on January 31, 2025 and I refer you back to that email for details. In that email, he assures us that Lone Star has plenty of people on staff who are well versed in all of the necessary legal and law enforcement issues that would arise. They have extensive experience with law enforcement on campus. Basically, if someone comes to your door or office suite looking for someone, you just need to call the police department either using the emergency phones in classrooms or directly at 281-290-5911. The police will contact the Office of General Counsel and any other administrators that need to be involved and they will take it from there.

The legal counsel of the American Federation of Teachers national office in Washington has sent out information to local unions as well. Their advice is completely congruent with the information sent out by Chancellor Castillo. First and foremost, AFT's advice is for individual employees not to attempt to handle interactions with ICE or DHS (Department of Homeland Security) officers themselves but to contact school administration by whatever protocols those schools have in place. This is exactly in line what Chancellor Castillo has said to us.

#### **AFT national office offers the following additional advice which I will quote directly from their communique to be certain I don't misrepresent them:**

"Don't disclose a student's immigration status or give records to ICE. Refer them to admin and invoke your right to remain silent."

"Don't physically impede a properly identified officer or attempt to hide a student. You could be hurt and/or arrested."

In addition, they offer the following advice which I think will be relevant mainly if the ICE or DHS officer starts taking action before Lone Star police can arrive. Ideally, they would honor our request to wait but, if they insist on proceeding, this could be valuable information for LSC police and legal counsel after the fact.

"Do discretely record the encounter if possible and document it immediately after it ends, writing down the following:

- The officer's credentials and contact information
- Identity of all school personnel who communicated with the officer
- Details of the officer's request
- Whether the officer presented a warrant or subpoena to accompany his/her request, what was requested in the warrant/subpoena, and whether the warrant/subpoena was signed by a judge.
- Your response to the officer's request
- Any further action taken by the officer."

Repeating for emphasis:

- If an ICE or DHS agent appears at your classroom or worksite seeking someone, call LSC police.
- Invoke your own personal right to remain silent and defer all questions to Lone Star administration. Don't share records or any other information about the student.
- Document if the officer refuses to wait for LSC police to arrive.
- Don't put yourself in danger.

If, in spite of all of your efforts to handle the situation according to College protocol, you end up in legal trouble because of an immigration incident, it is also important to know this:

If you are a member of AFT, our Legal Action Trust covers up to \$10,000 in legal expenses for criminal cases (and \$35,000 if exonerated), provided the charges arise because of your employment duties. AFT national office has decided that this would include circumstances surrounding an ICE raid on campus. It is imperative you follow all Lone Star protocols and procedures to ensure you are legally protected, and that you contact us as soon as possible.

Also, AFT offers free trauma counseling to provide help and healing for our members, whenever needed. For



more information, visit <https://www.aft.org/benefits/trauma>.

### What can our students do?

Although I'm referring to students in the title for this section, everything I write applies also to their family members, and friends, and also anyone you know in your own circles either at Lone Star or elsewhere.

It is important to know that EVERY human being living within the borders of the United States has certain Constitutional rights REGARDLESS of whether they are a citizen or not, REGARDLESS of whether they are properly documented OR NOT.

It is so critical that everyone understands this. Many of our students (and friends) come from countries where a knock on the door from the police means that their families will never hear from them again. I am certain that many undocumented residents assume that the same is true here and they live in complete terror.

The national office of AFT has prepared a flier published in both Spanish and English to make available to anyone you want to help. The title in Spanish is "Protegiendo a Nuestros Niños: Lo que necesita saber sobre derechos de inmigrantes y la amenaza de deportación." We have posted copies of this flier in both languages immediately following this article and a pdf can also be downloaded directly from this address:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/7790526e801/5e635909-40af-462e-99e7-2a3d50112d05.pdf>

**Please feel free to share this information with anyone. All the information has been vetted with AFT lawyers.**

Also, our local has purchased 1500 "red cards", business size cards that people can carry with them to help them to be ready if they are afraid that they may be the subject of a raid. We have 1000 in Spanish and 500 in English and we can order more. These cards are also available in other languages including Creole, Arabic, and Vietnamese. Statistics I have heard state that roughly a quarter of all undocumented residents in the U.S. are of non-Hispanic descent. We can order more cards in other languages as needed. You may have seen these red cards

elsewhere. For example, both my church and my sister's church have stacks of these cards available because both churches have large numbers of immigrant parishioners.

One side of the red card is written in the native language of the card holder. This side is for the person holding the card and reminds them of their constitutional rights. Here is the first side of one of these cards in Spanish:



Usted tiene derechos constitucionales:

- No abra la puerta si un agente de inmigración está tocando la puerta.
- No conteste ninguna pregunta de un agente de inmigración si trata de hablar con usted. Usted tiene el derecho a guardar silencio.
- No firme nada sin antes hablar con un abogado. Usted tiene el derecho de hablar con un abogado.
- Si usted está fuera de su casa, pregúntele al agente si tiene la libertad de irse y si le dice que sí, váyase con tranquilidad.
- Entréguele esta tarjeta al agente. Si usted está dentro de su casa, muestre la tarjeta por la ventana o páselo debajo de la puerta.

The same side on the English version of the card says:

You have constitutional rights:

- Do not open the door if an immigration agent is knocking on the door.
- Do not answer any questions from an immigration agent if they try to talk to you. You have the right to remain silent.
- Do not sign anything without first speaking to a lawyer. You have the right to speak with a lawyer.
- If you are outside of your home, ask the agent if you are free to leave and if they say yes, leave calmly.



- Give this card to the agent. If you are inside of your home, show the card through the window or slide it under the door.

The reverse side of the card is written in English and is meant to be handed to the immigration agent by the person being stopped. Whether there is a language barrier or not, someone may be afraid to speak up for themselves. The card will do the speaking for them:

- I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documents based on my 5th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution.
- I do not give you permission to enter my home based on my 4th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution unless you have a warrant to enter, signed by a judge or magistrate with my name on it that you slide under the door.
- I do not give you permission to search any of my belongings based on my 4th Amendment rights.
- I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.

(Notice that one of the lines on this side of the card emphasizes the right to deny permission of entry unless the officer has a warrant specifically addressing the person in question and signed by a judge. This is called a judicial warrant. ICE and DHS both also write their own administrative warrants that do not have the signature of a judge. The legal issues are way beyond my expertise, but these administrative warrants do not carry the same weight as a judicial warrant. It is good to know there is a distinction.)

Working with our organizers, AFT Lone Star College is going to get these cards out to all the campuses as soon as practical. You are also more than welcome to simply print out the content on your own paper from this article, take a picture of the text of the cards and text the picture to friends, or to share the link to this issue of The Advocate with others. If you are interested, these cards are very inexpensive and you can even buy your own from [www.ilrc.org/red-cards](http://www.ilrc.org/red-cards).



**So, what can you do with these cards?**

Of course, if you already know someone in your circle is at risk, you can simply offer them a card. If they come from a more repressive country, they will probably be shocked that they have these rights and it will help them feel more confident.

If you are in a setting where some may be in attendance who need these cards, you can make a general announcement that you have them and you can leave them in a place where people can discretely pick one up.

**NEVER ASK ANYONE ABOUT THEIR IMMIGRATION STATUS if you don't already know.**

Not only is this offensive but, especially if you are an employee of the College and you are talking with a student, you would be breaking privacy laws. In fact, if someone starts to tell you their status, consider stopping them from doing so. Unless you are a lawyer or a priest, you could be called on to testify against the person and would have to tell what you know. If you are talking with someone in your circle who you think MAY have an immigration issue, simply tell them about the card and let them know that, if they know someone who might like to have one, you'd be happy to give them one.

In another publication, the national office of the AFT offers additional advice for students and others. This is a longer document and we only have it available in Spanish so we will not print it here. It is available online at the following link:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/7790526e801/7b98137e-a9c4-4edc-b421-7f60cecd67b.pdf>

The following is a portion of this document, translated into English, so you can decide if it would be useful to someone you know.

**WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU ARE CAUGHT UP IN A RAID**

- Identify a local organization that can assist you for free (legal aid societies, churches, workers' centers)
- Identify a lawyer. Find the name and telephone number of a reliable immigration lawyer ahead of time and keep this information with you at all times





- Obtain a “know your rights” card
- Advise your family members that they do not want to be interrogated by ICE and that they should stay far away from where a raid occurs or where their loved one is being detained.
- Create an emergency plan for the family

### QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE A RAID OCCURS

- Who will take care of my children?
- To whom can I give power of attorney?
- Who can access my belongings (bank accounts, car, house, etc.)?
- How and where can I get legal help? What paperwork do I need to have ready in advance to receive legal help?
- How can I contact my loved one if I am in custody?
- What are the rights of a person in custody?
- How can I be sure my loved one has money to pay for bail?
- How can I raise funds to pay for bail or the services of an attorney?
- What can I do to help my loved ones?
- Who or what organizations can help me?

I think it is obvious that the information I have shared raises even more questions that it answers. We are new to this and we will be working on gathering more information we can share.

Unfortunately, unless you happen to be an immigration lawyer, you can't fix whatever immigration problems our students (or others) have. I have had the privilege of helping out with an immigration clinic sponsored by the AFT before – basically as a friendly face to welcome people and get them set up for conversations with lawyers. Some of the situations people find themselves in seem staggeringly complicated to me and it is no wonder they feel quite helpless and afraid.

What we can do is provide information. The United States is not a place where people are disappeared in the middle of the night as is the case in many of the countries our students and others have fled from. Helping our students and others know that they have rights can go a long way to help them feel safer.

AFT will continue to learn more and share out what we know. What will make a difference is building coalitions

among organizations in the labor movement, the charitable community, and the legal community. If you know more than we do, which is highly likely, please contact us and let us learn from you.

Besides information, there is another thing we can do to help our students and others who are caught in these difficult times. We can offer our emotional support. Some find themselves here in the U.S. because of situations they had no control over – including people brought here when they were still children. Others may have made their own decisions, likely out of desperation, and some people will judge them as wrong and say hateful things about them. Either way these are human beings caught in a bad situation and they are scared.

Most of the philosophical systems on which we all build our lives call for compassion on the outsider. Some of those systems are faith based. Others are more humanistic. I will close this article from a well-known quote from the Jewish Torah, revered also as Old Testament scripture by Christians. I think the principle will resonate with you even if you order your life from a different perspective - because all of us at one time or another have experienced what it is like to be an outsider and to be hated.

And, fellow Christians, take note: This is not optional for us!

“When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:33,34





Protegiendo  
a Nuestros  
Niños

LO QUE NECESITA SABER SOBRE LOS  
DERECHOS DE INMIGRANTES Y LA  
AMENAZA DE DEPORTACIÓN

**i** **Todos los Niños Tienen el Derecho a una Educación Pública**

Bajo la ley federal, todos los niños, independientemente de su ciudadanía o estado de residencia tienen el derecho a una educación primaria y secundaria (de K-12), incluyendo servicios de consejería universitaria. Los distritos escolares que prohíben o desalientan a los niños de matricularse en las escuelas debido a que ellos o sus padres son inmigrantes indocumentados pueden estar en violación de la ley federal.

**i** **Que Dice la Ley sobre la Deportación y las Escuelas**

De acuerdo con un memorándum de política publicado por el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas, comúnmente conocido como el "memorándum de lugares sensibles", los oficiales y agentes de ICE se abstendrán de acciones y actividades en los siguientes lugares y eventos:

- Las escuelas (incluyendo escuelas preescolares, escuelas primarias, escuelas secundarias, colegios, universidades y otras instituciones de aprendizaje, tales como escuelas de formación profesional y de comercio);
- Hospitales
- Iglesias, sinagogas, mezquitas y otras instituciones de culto, tales como edificios alquilados con el propósito de servicios religiosos;
- Funerales, bodas y otras ceremonias públicas religiosas; y
- Manifestaciones públicas, tales como una marcha, una conferencia o un desfile.

**i** **Lo que Dice la Ley en cuanto a Compartir la Información de los Estudiantes con las Autoridades de Inmigración**

Bajo la Ley de Derechos Educativos y Privacidad Familiar (FERPA por sus siglas en inglés), las escuelas están prohibidas, sin el consentimiento de los padres, de proveer información del archivo de un estudiante a los agentes federales de inmigración si la información potencialmente pudiera exponer el estatus migratorio del estudiante. Si los agentes del ICE presentan una orden de expulsión (orden de deportación) a la escuela, se le permite a la escuela de abstenerse de proporcionar información del estudiante, ya que la orden es administrativa y no judicial. Para mayor información sobre FERPA, visite [familypolicy.ed.gov/ferpa-parents-students](http://familypolicy.ed.gov/ferpa-parents-students).

**i** **Las escuelas deben ser un santuario, lugares acogedores libres de racismo, discriminación, y la amenaza de deportación.**

Los distritos escolares son responsables por la salud y bienestar de todos sus estudiantes. Educadores y personal de apoyo escolar pueden trabajar con organizaciones comunitarias sin fines de lucro y organizaciones de los derechos de los inmigrantes para reafirmar que las escuelas sean santuarios, libres de ICE.

**Qué Hacer y Qué no Hacer para los Estudiantes y Sus Familias si las Autoridades de Inmigración (ICE) Llegan a sus Hogares**

- ➔ **No abra la puerta**, los agentes de inmigración no pueden entrar a su casa sin una orden de arresto emitida por un juez de la corte criminal, o sin su consentimiento. ¡No les abras la puerta!
- ➔ **Permanezca en Silencio**, ICE puede usar todo lo que diga en su contra. Tienes el derecho a permanecer callado/a, si se enfrentan con un agente de inmigración diga, "I plead the 5th and choose to remain silent", Uso mi derecho bajo la quinta enmienda para permanecer callado/a. No digas nada más.
- ➔ **No firme Nada**, que los agentes de ICE te den. Usted tiene el derecho de consultar con un abogado antes de contestar preguntas o firmar cualquier documento.
- ➔ **¡Haz Un Plan y Defiéndase!** Obtenga un abogado de confianza, busque una organización de derechos de los inmigrantes, y consiga a alguien que cuide a sus hijos. Pueden pelear un caso de detención y tal vez recibir una fianza. ¡No pierda las esperanzas!

**Para más información y recursos, visite:**

- ➔ **American Federation of Teachers**  
[www.aft.org/immigration](http://www.aft.org/immigration)
- ➔ **Share My Lesson**  
[www.sharemylesson.com/immigration](http://www.sharemylesson.com/immigration)
- ➔ **Colorín Colorado**  
[www.colorincolorado.org/immigration](http://www.colorincolorado.org/immigration)
- ➔ **National Immigration Law Center**  
[www.nilc.org](http://www.nilc.org)
- ➔ **United We Dream**  
[www.unitedwedream.org](http://www.unitedwedream.org)
- ➔ **Center for Law and Social Policy**  
[www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org)



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS AND THE THREAT OF DEPORTATION

**i All children have a right to a public education**

Under federal law, all children, regardless of their citizenship or residency status, are entitled to a K-12 education, including college counseling services. School districts that either prohibit or discourage children from enrolling in schools because they or their parents are undocumented immigrants may be in violation of federal law.

**i What the law says about deportation and schools**

ICE officers and agents are to refrain from enforcement actions at least at the following locations and events:

- schools (including preschools, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities, and other institutions of learning, such as vocational and trade schools);
- hospitals;
- churches, synagogues, mosques and other institutions of worship, such as buildings rented for the purpose of religious services;
- during funerals, weddings and other public religious ceremonies; and
- during public demonstrations, such as a march, rally or parade.

**i What the law says about sharing student information with immigration authorities**

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), schools are prohibited, without parental consent, from providing information from a student's file to federal immigration agents if the information would potentially expose a student's immigration status. For more on FERPA, see [familypolicy.ed.gov/ferpa-parents-students](http://familypolicy.ed.gov/ferpa-parents-students).

**i Schools must be safe havens, welcoming places of learning, and free from racism, discrimination, and the threat of deportation.**

School districts are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of all their students. Educators and school support staff can work with community allies to reaffirm that their school and campus is a safe zone.

**Do's and Don'ts for students and their families if ICE authorities come to their homes**

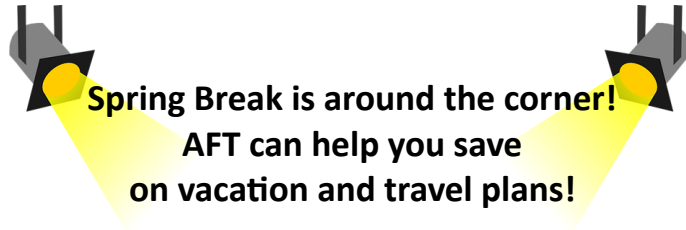
- ➔ **Do not open the door.** ICE authorities cannot come in without a signed judicial warrant. Tell them to pass the warrant under the door before you open it.
- ➔ **Remain silent.** ICE can use anything you say against you in your immigration case, so claim your right to remain silent! Say **"I plead the Fifth and choose to remain silent."**
- ➔ **Do not sign.** Don't sign anything ICE gives you without talking to an attorney.
- ➔ **Fight back!** Get a trustworthy attorney, contact a local immigrant rights organization and explore all options to fight your case. If detained, you may be able to get bail—don't give up hope!

**For more resources and information, contact:**

- ➔ **American Federation of Teachers**  
[www.aft.org/immigration](http://www.aft.org/immigration)
- ➔ **Share My Lesson**  
[www.sharemylesson.com/immigration](http://www.sharemylesson.com/immigration)
- ➔ **Colorín Colorado**  
[www.colorincolorado.org/immigration](http://www.colorincolorado.org/immigration)
- ➔ **National Immigration Law Center**  
[www.nilc.org](http://www.nilc.org)
- ➔ **United We Dream**  
[www.unitedwedream.org](http://www.unitedwedream.org)
- ➔ **Center for Law and Social Policy**  
[www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org)

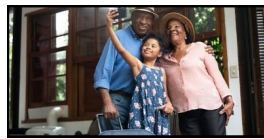


## AFT Discounts & Savings: Travel and Vacation Perks Spotlight!



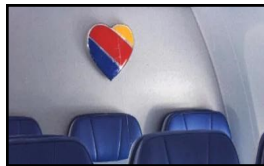
### HOTEL DISCOUNTS

As an AFT member, you can choose from two options for hotel discounts—Hilton and Wyndham properties. You will save up to 20% off the 'best available rate' at over 9,000 participating Wyndham hotels worldwide; and 12% chain-wide discount at all global Hilton hotels.



### SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

AFT members can receive discounts on domestic flights through our SWABIZ® account. SWA is offering an 8% discount off Business Select® fares, 6% discount off Anytime fares and a 3% discount off select Wanna Get Away® fares for travel, along with other benefits. (For members only; login required)



### VACATION TOURS

Take the vacation of your dreams. Save on travel destinations around the world using your AFT discount.



### CAR RENTAL

AFT members and their families save up to 25 percent with car rental discounts.



### THEME PARKS

Members can receive great discounts on water and theme park admissions, including Disney, Universal Studios, Six Flags Sea World and many more.



### ENTERTAINMENT & SHOPPING

Union members and their families can save big with discounts on shopping, restaurants, movie & concert tickets, and more!



## AFT MEMBERS:

### DO YOU HAVE HOUSEHOLD DEBT?

**Get the funds you need today!**

- Texas AFT  
A Union of Professionals
- Loans starting at \$2,000\*
- Payments made over 16 months\*
- Biweekly payments of \$75.00\*
- Apply regardless of your credit score

The Texas American Federation of Teachers has partnered with **BMG Money**. Get access to reliable, affordable online installment loans to help you regardless of your credit history.

[BMG Money - Affordable loans and financial wellness solutions for employees and retirees](#)

Sign up now at

[app.bmgmoney.com/signup](http://app.bmgmoney.com/signup) and **TYPE** "Texas American Federation of Teachers" as the name of your employer

### DO YOU HAVE STUDENT DEBT?

#### LOWER MONTHLY PAYMENTS

**Enroll in income-driven repayment (IDR):** IDR is a free federal program where repayment plans are based on your personal income. Summer helps find the best IDR plan to lower your monthly payments (with possible forgiveness as well).

#### LOAN FORGIVENESS

**Certify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF):** You may qualify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), a program that will forgive ALL of your remaining loan balance after ten years. In order to enroll in PSLF, you must also be enrolled in an IDR

This is a **FREE** benefit for AFT Members!  
[Join today!](#)

## Summer

- My Plan
- My Student Loans
- Tools ^
- Income-Driven Repayment
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness
- Forgiveness Finder
- Refinancing
- Extra Payments
- Resource Center
- Support



## 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)
  - \$ 36,250 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](http://www.aftlonestar.org)

**PHONE:** 281-889-1009

**E-MAIL:** [aftlonestar@yahoo.com](mailto: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
- \$30,000 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

### 24-25 Monthly AFT Dues

Full-time Faculty	\$51.00
Full-time Professional Staff	\$33.00
Full-time Support Staff	\$33.00
Adjunct Faculty	\$20.00
Part-time Staff	\$20.00

### 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](http://www.aftlonestar.org)



American Federation of Teachers  
Texas AFT  
AFL-CIO



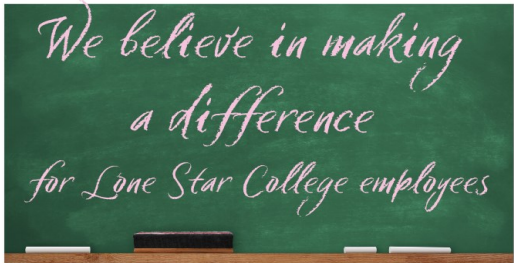


**JOIN AFT - LONE STAR TODAY!**



[www.aftlonestar.org](http://www.aftlonestar.org)

**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 reach out to them!

See back page of this publication for a list of our officers.

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

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

**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!

"like" us on **Facebook**

Stay Connected with AFT Lone Star!

[www.facebook.com/AftLoneStarCollege](http://www.facebook.com/AftLoneStarCollege)





**New mailing address:**

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

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.aftlonestar.org](http://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](mailto: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	President Emeritus	At-Large
Earl	Brewer	Secretary	At-Large
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
Cathleen	Quayle	System Office, Staff Vice President	System Office
Katie	Truax	University Park Faculty Vice President	University Park

**Our AFT Lone Star Organizers are on the campuses regularly!**  
 Please reach out if you have questions about membership and benefits

Daler Wade	dalerwadeaft@gmail.com	Cyfair, Tomball, Creekside, Cypress, Fairbanks, Fallbrook, UP, Westway, Online, Process Tech
Dee Williams	Dee.Aftlonestar@gmail.com	Kingwood, North Harris, Montgomery, Atascocita, Conroe, E. Aldine, Greenspoint, Victory, Westway, System Office

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.

