



The Advocate

AUGUST 2025: SPECIAL EDITION

Presenting a Special August Edition of The Advocate.

Greetings to all faculty, staff, and administrators of Lone Star College. I hope all of you have had a wonderful summer with some time to relax and rejuvenate.

Generally, AFT Lone Star College publishes four issues of this newsletter every year: two in the fall semester, and two in the spring semester. We want some time to rest in the summer, too! Only twice in the 46 years we have been publishing The Advocate have we felt that something was going on of such great importance that we needed to break into the summer with a special edition.

This is one of those two times.

Education in the United States goes through times of calm weather and times of storm. I think we can all agree that 2025 has been a category 5 hurricane for every level of education from kindergarten to graduate school. When a hurricane is coming ashore there is no waiting for the next news cycle. Information has to get out now and it has to be reacted to appropriately and swiftly. In a hurricane, overreacting can sometimes be more dangerous than not reacting at all.

Do you remember Hurricane Rita from 2005? Rita was a category 5 hurricane with top speeds reaching 177 miles per hour at one point and, before a last-minute turn, it was heading straight towards Galveston Bay. The storm caused unbelievable damage in the Golden Triangle area. In the immediate Houston

area, the problem was overreacting. Katrina had hit New Orleans just a month before and all of the systems that were supposed to get them through and past the storm had failed miserably. Houstonians remembered that and panicked. Tens of thousands of people living outside of the risk of storm surge tried to evacuate the city bringing traffic towards Dallas and San Antonio to a complete stand still. People died on the side of the road under cloudless skies.

We have many things to cover about the current storm in education in our next regular edition of the Advocate coming out in September/October.

In this special issue we need to talk about three aspects of the storm that all of us at Lone Star need to be aware of and respond to now, before classes begin. And, like in Hurricane Rita, the biggest mistake is to overreact.



Please find in this edition three articles:

1. The Texas Dream Act: What Students Need to Know

The primary focus of the work of AFT Lone Star College is to advance and protect the rights and working conditions of LSC employees. However, whether we are members of the union or not, before and beyond being Lone Star employees, we are educators. Whether we are facul-

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<p>ty, staff, or administration, we were called to this work because we care about people and want to help them achieve their dreams of a better life for themselves and their families. So, when something happens that impacts our students, it impacts us. We care. We want to help if we can.</p> <p>In June, a federal lawsuit overturned the Texas Dream Act which had allowed undocumented students to attend college with in-district tuition if certain criteria were met. For over two decades most Texans agreed that, however students got to Texas, both they and the rest of us were far better off if they had a chance at an education. The Texas Dream Act allowed that to happen. Now it is gone. Some of our students now feel that they are unable to afford college and may even be afraid to come on campus.</p> <p>In an article written by the Texas Immigration Law Council, reprinted in The Advocate with their permission, they outline what all the facts are related to this lawsuit – and the news is not as bad as what our students might think. Never ask a student (or anyone else) for their legal status. It is, first of all, profoundly rude and, second of all, sets you up for potentially being required to testify in court about what they tell you. But, as your life situation permits, share this article and what it says in ways that respect others’ privacy. By giving them all the facts, you could help someone whether the storm.</p> <p>2. Senate Bill 37 Passes – Keep on Teaching!!</p> <p>The second and third articles apply more directly to employees. We wrote about Senate Bill 37 in the April/May edition of The Advocate while it was working its way through the Texas Legislature. Well, it eventually passed and the impacts on higher education are profound, including shutting down our Faculty Senates. However, faculty, before you finalize plans for your fall classes, read this article, especially if you were thinking that to weather the storm you might need to self-censor what you teach. It is as important to know what this law DOESN’T say as what it does.</p> <p>3. Senate Bill 2615 Ends Remote Work in Texas Colleges – Or Does It?</p> <p>After all the hard work so many people have done to bring flexible work options to Lone Star College, does a bill designed to restrict remote work in higher education</p>		
<p>bring all of that to an end? Read this article to see exactly what that bill says. It’s not what people think. Both for staff and faculty, workload decisions are being made in the next few weeks as the school year starts. If we are not well informed about this law, decisions could be made that are overreactions. We can absolutely weather this storm if we know what to expect now.</p> <p>And thus we proudly present to you our special emergency bulletin edition of The Advocate. There will be much more in our September/October edition – and, hopefully, it won’t all be about hurricanes real or metaphorical. Best of wishes to you all for a successful start of the 2025-2026 school year!</p> <div data-bbox="824 718 1507 831"><p>TEXAS DREAM ACT: WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW.</p></div> <p><i>Editor’s Note: The following article is a publication of the Texas Immigration Law Council and is reprinted in The Advocate with their permission. It is addressed to students, but the information is important to all of us who care about students. Please note that everything in the article referencing in-state tuition for public colleges and universities also applies to in-district tuition for public community colleges such as Lone Star College. You have the permission of the Texas Immigration Law Council and AFT Lone Star College to share this information with anyone you feel would benefit. Copious additional information and resources are available at the following link. You are invited to browse this website and share the information with anyone you know:</i></p> <p>https://linktr.ee/TXdreamact</p> <p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>House Bill 1403, known as the Texas Dream Act, passed in 2001, with strong bi-partisan support. The law provides in-state tuition for anyone who completes their high school education in Texas and meets other eligibility requirements, regardless of their immigration status. The law has benefited thousands of Texas students, their families, and our state.</p> <p>WHAT HAPPENED</p> <p>Efforts to repeal the Texas Dream Act were defeated in the Texas Legislature in the spring of 2025. Nevertheless,</p>		



two days after the legislative session ended, the federal Department of Justice sued the State of Texas to declare the law unconstitutional. Instead of defending the law, within hours of the filing of the lawsuit, the Texas Attorney General agreed to a court order stating that the Texas Dream Act, as it applied to students “not lawfully present” in the United States, was invalid. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has informed universities that the court order will not go into effect until fall 2025. Two lawsuits have been filed to intervene and challenge the court order. Texas Immigration Law Council (TxILC) will keep you informed as these two cases progress.

Any student can go to college, regardless of immigration status. This court order only addresses the tuition rate that some immigrant students must pay.

HOW THE COURT ORDER WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

If you have already received your tuition bill for the 2025 fall semester and have registered for classes [*editor: as of June 4, 2025*], then Texas law prohibits your school from increasing your tuition for this academic term, even if you have not yet paid your bill. [Texas Education Code § 54.009] For everyone else who has not registered for classes, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will provide guidance in the coming months. For now, absent a new court order, the THECB has stated it will apply new in-state tuition standards for the 2025 fall semester.

YOU MAY STILL QUALIFY FOR IN-STATE TUITION

The court order is limited to students who are not “lawfully present.” It's important to understand that federal immigration law does not actually define who is “lawfully present.” Instead, immigration law defines who is “unlawfully present” in the United States. This means that if you do not fall under the definition of “unlawfully present” according to federal law, you are considered lawfully present for purposes of this court order.

It is also important to note that “lawful presence” is not the same thing as “lawful status”. Lawful presence is a broader concept and includes more types of immigration

categories than the legal concept of “lawful status”. If you have any type of lawful presence in the United States (see the list below), you should still qualify for in-state tuition if you graduated from a Texas high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in Texas; have resided in Texas for three years; and have filed an affidavit of your intent to become a permanent resident as soon as you are able to. (These are the same requirements as the Texas Dream Act, except that, due to the recent court order, you must now also show that you are lawfully present).

Any student can go to college, regardless of immigration status. This court order only addresses the tuition rate that some immigrant students must pay .

You are lawfully present if you are:

1. a person with a pending I-485 application for permanent residence;
2. a Conditional Permanent Resident, Permanent Resident, or Temporary Resident;
3. a person who holds any type of valid nonimmigrant visa, and has not violated the terms of that visa; [Note that B-1/B-2 visa holders (business/tourist visas) would not be eligible for in-state tuition under this category, as enrolling in school would constitute a violation of their visa terms.]
4. a person who has a pending asylum application and has a receipt issued by USCIS or the Immigration Court;
5. a Refugee or Asylee;
6. a person who has a pending bona fide application for asylum;
7. a person paroled into the United States who is currently in the period of parole (including Military Parole-in-Place holders);
8. a person holding Temporary Protected Status;
9. a person with a pending application for Temporary Protected Status;
10. spouses, children, or parents with approved petitions under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA);
11. a person with an approved I-360 (including a person granted Special Immigrant Juvenile Status-SIJS) [See 19, Texas Administrative Code § 21.24(d)(7).]



12. a person granted deferred action status, including **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** and Deferred Action for Labor Enforcement (DALE);
13. a person with a pending U or T visa application who has received a receipt notice and a bona fide determination;
14. a person granted U or T nonimmigrant status (U or T Visas);
15. a person granted or who has a pending application for Cancellation of Removal and Adjustment of Status under Immigration Nationality Act 240A(b) or a Cancellation of Removal and Adjustment of Status under the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), Haitian Refugee Immigrant Fairness Act (HRIFA), or the Cuban Adjustment Act, and who has been issued a fee/filing receipt or Notice of Action by USCIS;
16. a person granted withholding of removal;
17. a person granted protection against the convention against torture (CAT);
18. a person granted Family Unity protection;
19. a person granted an order of supervision (OSUP);
20. a person granted a stay of removal;
21. a person granted deferred enforced departure (DED);
22. a person granted extended or voluntary departure; or
23. a person who holds a valid, unexpired employment authorization document (EAD).[See, 19 Tx § 21.24 (d), promulgated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; the Texas Department of Public Safety document “Verifying Lawful Presence” located here:
<https://www.dps.texas.gov/internetforms/Forms/DL-53.pdf> ; and the immigration statutes and statuses referenced in the Checklist: Proving Lawful Presence for In-State Tuition Eligibility located at <https://linktr.ee/TXdreamact>]

Exception to Unlawful Presence for Minors

The court order only prevents people who are “not lawfully present” (i.e., who are “unlawfully present”) under federal law from accessing in-state tuition. Immigration law provides that time spent in the U.S. before a child’s

18th birthday *never counts as “unlawful presence.”* Because minors are deliberately excluded from determinations of unlawful presence by federal statute, minors may continue to be eligible for in-state tuition until they turn 18. [Individuals under the age of 18 are exempted from accruing unlawful presence under INA § 212(a)(9)(B)(iii)(1) (8 USC 1182(a)(9)(B)(iii)(I))] If you think this may apply to you, contact info@txilc.org.

Know Your Rights

- Federal privacy law prohibits schools from sharing students’ data, including their immigration status, with anyone, absent a valid judicial subpoena! [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC § 1232g]
- If you are enrolled in the Summer 2025 semester under the Texas Dream Act, you should continue to receive in-state tuition.
- Contact info@txilc.org if you think you have been incorrectly classified and have been asked to pay out-of-state or international student tuition rates.

We stand with Texas undocumented students and families. We are committed to:

- Learning more about the impact of the decision and following the legal developments
- Sharing accurate and timely information in English and Spanish
- Sharing resources and strategies on how to support students who have been impacted
- Assisting students who MAY STILL qualify for in-state tuition

This document is intended to provide general information and does not constitute legal advice.

The following organizations and institutions have signed on to this guide.

1. Texas Immigration Law Council
2. American Gateways
3. ImmSchools
4. Fellowship Southwest
5. Breakthrough CTX
6. Texans for Economic Growth (TEG)
7. Precision Task Group (PTG)



8. International Bank of Commerce
9. Blue Sky Partners
10. San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
11. Marek Brothers
12. Children's Defense Fund - Texas
13. ETSZONE
14. McChesney Kolly PLLC
15. Cedar Park Chamber of Commerce
16. McKinney Chamber of Commerce
17. Greater Houston LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce
18. CIMA Logistics LLC
19. Proficiency Testing Service
20. Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce
21. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Grand Prairie
22. El Paso Chamber of Commerce
23. RGV Hispanic Chamber of Commerce



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.

Senate Bill 37 Passes— Keep on Teaching!!

Dr. John Burghdoff

In the April-May Edition of The Advocate we wrote about a number of bills that were under consideration before the Texas Legislature at the time. [To reread this edition and all other past editions of The Advocate, visit www.aftlonestar.org, and select the link News.]

Chief among those bills was Senate Bill 37 proposing sweeping restrictions on the operations of public universities and community colleges across the state. The regular session of the Texas Legislature ended June 2 and, in spite of valiant lobbying efforts by AFT and other interested groups, and the passionate opposition of education friendly legislators, Senate Bill 37 passed.



The implications of Senate Bill 37 are profound. The outcome that will be most immediately obvious to Lone Star College employees will be the shuttering of all Faculty Senates as of September 1. In our upcoming regular September/October edition of The Advocate we will discuss this and all the other implications of this repressive bill and how, as the education community, we will all continue to fight to serve our students in spite of it.

However, what I want to do with this article is to emphasize what Senate Bill 37 does NOT say. The final version of the bill as passed, although awful, is less awful than what was originally proposed. It is essential for faculty, in particular, to know what is NOT included right now as we are preparing our classes for Fall Semester.

Senate Bill 37 does not restrict the content of what is taught in college and university classes.

Let me repeat that, in case it took you by surprise. Senate Bill 37 does not restrict the content of what is taught in college and university classes.

Since June, I have gotten several phone calls from faculty members asking if they should change the content of their courses. I have been asked if professors should tread lightly on slavery, segregation, and other negative aspects of U.S. history. I have been asked if units emphasizing the contributions of non-white cultures should be

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<p>scaled back or if courses focusing on multicultural studies should be cancelled. Although no one has asked me directly, I have heard concerns about whether pictures of nude art, like Michelangelo’s David, should be deleted from slide presentations, and whether lessons on the human reproductive system should be scaled back.</p> <p>The answer to all of those questions is a resounding NO. Nothing in the bill either says or implies any such restrictions on the content of classes.</p> <p>Faculty should plan and teach their classes with NO changes in the content they teach. We should NOT shy away from uncomfortable topics in our classes. Academic freedom in the classroom is still intact. Even more than our right to teach what we believe is appropriate, it is a matter of our students’ right to have an objective view of reality. It is our duty to help our students to think critically about the world as it really is – not to blindly accept the white-washed fantasy land that some factions want to pretend it is. Anything less deprives them of the ability to function as citizens in our current climate of sweeping upheaval.</p> <p>So, let me emphasize: Faculty should continue to teach their classes with NO fear of covering uncomfortable truth.</p> <p>Now, this assertion may seem incredible, especially in light of what had been proposed at one time and what is still swirling through social media and water cooler conversations. So, let me quote directly from Senate Bill 37.</p> <p>SECTION 1.02. Section 51.354, Education Code, is amended to read as follows: Sec. 51.354. INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY.</p> <p>(a) The final decision-making authority on matters regarding an institution of higher education’s degree programs and curricula belongs to the institution. The institution shall make the decisions on those matters under the direction of the institution’s governing board.</p> <p>(b) In addition to specific responsibilities imposed by</p>	<div data-bbox="568 745 1055 934"> <p>You continue to have the academic freedom to teach the content that academic integrity demands you must teach.</p> </div>	<p>this code or other law, each institution of higher education has the general responsibility to serve the public and, within the institution’s role and mission, to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) transmit culture through general education; (2) extend knowledge; (3) teach and train students for professions; (4) provide for scientific, engineering, medical, and other academic research; (5) protect intellectual exploration and academic freedom; (6) strive for intellectual excellence; (7) provide educational opportunity for all who can benefit from postsecondary education and training; and (8) provide continuing education opportunities. <p>Let me be clear: Senate Bill 37 still has many deeply concerning provisions which we will explore in our September/October edition. It would very much be worth your while to read the bill for yourself to see exactly what it says. You can find the final text as approved and signed by the governor at this link:</p> <p>https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/billtext/pdf/SB00037F.pdf#navpanes=0</p> <p>I needed to get this much out to you now while we are all putting together our syllabi and designing our assignments for the new school year. My dear faculty siblings, as we prepare our fall classes, do not be afraid. You continue to have the academic freedom to teach the content that academic integrity demands you must teach.</p> <p>Teach boldly and don’t hold back.</p> <div data-bbox="885 1501 1469 1942">  </div>



Senate Bill 2615 Ends Remote Work in Texas Colleges—Or Does it?

Dr. John Burghduff

There is A LOT to unpack from 89th Texas Legislature's Regular Session that ended on June 2, as well as a maelstrom of decisions at the federal level related to education. In this special edition of The Advocate, I am focusing on issues that employees need to know about right now because they have immediate implications that can't wait until our official September/October issue comes out.

In this article I want to focus on Senate Bill 2615 which passed both houses of the legislature, was signed by the governor, and will go into effect with the start of the new school year. **I have been asked if this bill eliminates the legal authority for Lone Star College to offer remote work options for faculty and staff. It most definitely does not.**

Like with Senate Bill 37, I recommend that you read Senate Bill 2615 in its final form for yourself. You can do so by going to this link:

<https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/billtext/pdf/SB02615F.pdf#navpanes=0>

Senate Bill 2615 uses the word "telework". More commonly around Lone Star, we tend to use phrases like "remote work", "work from home", or "flex work". All of these refer to employees doing at least some of their work online at locations other than their usual worksites. Senate Bill 2615 specifically applies to state institutions of higher education and states that such institutions may not allow telework for an employee EXCEPT under certain circumstances.

It is essential to know what those exceptions are, especially as work schedules tend to be set at the beginning of the school year. To be completely accurate, and to make sure I am not introducing any personal biases by paraphrasing, I think the smartest thing I can do is quote the law verbatim. This is the relevant passage of Senate Bill 2615:

SECTION 1, Subsection C

An institution of higher education may allow telework for an employee on a temporary or permanent basis if the employee:

- (1) has a temporary illness;
- (2) has a temporary or permanent medical condition or disability requiring the institution to make a reasonable accommodation under state or federal law for the telework;
- (3) is employed in a nonteaching position and:
 - (A) has demonstrated the ability to work well with minimal supervision;
 - (B) has a deep understanding of the employee's duties and responsibilities;
 - (C) has demonstrated the ability to manage the employee's time;
 - (D) has a record of thoroughly and efficiently accomplishing the employee's duties; and
 - (E) is employed in a position that does not require the employee's day-to-day physical presence at the institution or in-person interaction with students, administration, or other employees;
- (4) is employed in a teaching position but is not a faculty member of the institution;
- (5) is employed in a teaching position and is currently assigned to teach only a course or program that the institution has:
 - (A) approved for remote instruction in accordance with the institution's academic oversight or faculty governance procedures; and
 - (B) designated as:
 - (i) distance education; or
 - (ii) a dual credit course or program provided by the institution;
- (6) is employed as a faculty member and is on a temporary research assignment located off the institution's campus; or
- (7) is employed as a faculty member who provides telehealth services as part of the employee's assigned clinical, research, or instructional duties.



This is the end of the quotation. (The bill goes on to state that telework can be also allowed on a temporary basis at certain times of crisis. I wanted to focus on times of normal operation so I will leave that portion to the reader.)

I have been asked if this bill eliminates the legal authority for Lone Star College to offer remote work options for faculty and staff. It most definitely does not.

I am particularly pleased to see the allowance for employees who are temporarily ill or who have a temporary or permanent medical condition or disability. In addition, there are specific circumstances for both staff and faculty under which telework can be approved – with responsibility put on all employees to work effectively.

Let me hasten to say that nothing in Senate Bill 2615 requires Lone Star College (or any other Texas college or university) to offer remote work. The section I quoted only states the situations in which telework **can** be allowed. It also does not address whether the telework is complete work from home or just one or two days a week. The college has latitude.

As workload discussions between employees and supervisors ramp up with the start of the new year, it is important for all parties to be aware of what this act does (and does not) say. For staff, it seems to me that Senate Bill 2615 leaves Lone Star's remote work policy largely intact as it now stands. For faculty, there is an opening for work from home in limited circumstances related to dual credit or distance education. The door is not closed but it also not swung wide open.

I am sure that discussions will continue, but the bottom line is that Senate Bill 2615 definitely does not require Lone Star to eliminate remote work.

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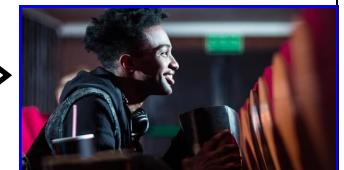
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Joining AFT-Lone Star is the best thing you can do to ensure that you have a voice on work-related issues that matter to you!



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 on issues in the workplace, 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 together and 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.

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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.**

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25-26 Monthly AFT Dues

Full-time Faculty	\$51.50
Full-time Professional Staff	\$33.25
Full-time Support Staff	\$33.25
Adjunct Faculty	\$20.12
Part-time Staff	\$20.12

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

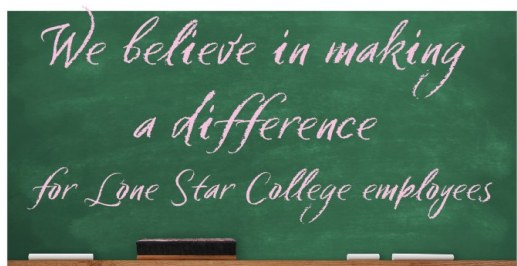


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If you are interested in membership, benefits, or would like to discuss a work-related issue, our AFT Faculty and Staff Vice-Presidents are here to assist.

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

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**New mailing address:**

AFT- Lone Star College
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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.

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Travis	Scott	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
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!

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.

