



The Advocate

Boomers: Successes and Failures

Political Changes and Social Consequences: One Man's Perspective



When the editor of The Advocate asked me to spin some words on the general topic of “changes in politics” during my teaching career and lifetime, two thoughts competed for dominance in my increasingly and lamentably forgetful mind. One thought was of that popular pseudo-science book, Megatrends, which many readers of this article were asked to read during our salad years as graduate students. (Has anyone mounted the energy to determine how many of the trends identified in that tract proved to be accurate and/or meaningful??) The other, perhaps more reasonable, thought was that of the old saw, “There is nothing as foolish as an old fool.” Can there be a more foolish enterprise than to imagine one’s intellect to be so keen as to identify those changes most significant for the practice of our public affairs? Asking a teacher of political science to opine on changes in public life is akin to asking, “So, what have you been doing for the past 30 years?” One of the challenges of teaching “survey” courses is that one always risks oversimplification when trying to “sum up” the key elements of American political life. So, dear friends and colleagues, forgive this aging fool as he tries to sum up the major changes he sees in a career of teaching politics. All errors of fact and judgment are mine and mine alone.

The Rise (and Fall?) of the American Empire

Empire is a word from which Americans instinctively retreat. Yet empire is the transcendent and transforming historical fact of our national life. The ascendancy of the American Empire marks the outlines of my life and teaching career. Our national creed tells us that we are a nation born in opposition to empire and committed to the ideals of liberty and individual opportunity. I believe, however, that conquest is the midwife of opportunity and liberty in this, my native land. I have had the good fortune to fashion an academic career during the apex of the American Empire. I sense that I am closing my teaching career during its decline. In the 18th and 19th centuries Americans essentially conquered a virgin land. Those of us who came of age in the 20th Century inherited even more empire from the wreckage left in the wake of World War II. The United States emerged not only essentially unscathed by that historic conflict but in some fundamental ways “strengthened” by it. Empire may be “won” on the basis of military power and conquest, but it can only long survive on the value of what it offers to those who must live in its shadow. America has offered opportunity to most of its immigrants. Opportunity for individuals has been our signpost



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to the world. During my lifetime our empire has allowed many of us to achieve in life what many less fortunate peoples and nations could only dream. Following the Bretton Woods Agreement, the almighty American dollar ruled the financial markets of the world. Traveling abroad recently, I stared in disbelief everytime I passed a currency exchange booth. And when I read a couple of years ago that the drug traffickers in Europe and Russia are trading in Euros rather than dollars, I opined that the cracks in the American empire were as broad as they were deep. In 1950, this nation was a net exporter of energy. Today this nation exports approximately \$500 billion in our national currency to pay for our seemingly endless demand for cheap energy. The world, apparently, no longer wants to accept our currency at face value. Yet our “leaders” continue to act as if this were 1960. The costs of this decline in the financial basis of the American Empire are only now beginning to emerge for the public mind. Dealing with these consequences will be the fundamental challenge of the next generation.

The first teachers in classical Athens believed that hubris was the fateful error of leaders and peoples in their small, democratic republic. Hubris occurs when strength is not tempered by rational humility. The dominant mantra of public affairs during my life has been the promise of “peace through strength.” In 1947, the “War Department” was renamed the Department of Defense. This Orwellian twist provides the general outline for my thoughts here. “Peace through strength” has become our national pathos. Empires typically fail when the burdens of maintaining the frontiers exceed the benefits and when imperial leaders are no longer capable of rationally distinguishing necessity from folly. I fear I am closing my teaching career when this republic faces the greatest challenge to its survival. We must choose empire or republic; we cannot have both. If the people fail to recognize this challenge, I fear our republic will find its way to the graveyard of hubris. I was born during the Korean Conflict, attended college during the Vietnam War, and now I enter the autumn of my career while the nation is militarily and politically en-

gaged in the heart of the oil sands of the Middle East.

In 1958, when I was a mere child, I met Dwight Eisenhower. My Congressman happened to be the Minority Leader in the House of Representatives, and Ike was in my small town, no doubt, repaying a favor to Charlie Halleck. Maintaining our empire requires expenditures of the public treasury unmatched in human history in addition to the sacrifices of the lives “of the little people.” I have always had a love-hate understanding of Dwight Eisenhower. Along with Truman he laid the foundation of the Cold War and was the first president to campaign on the agenda of “peace through strength.” Yet he was also the president who warned us of the Frankenstein-like nature of what he created. In his famous farewell address to the nation, Eisenhower warned future generations of the emerging “military-industrial-Congressional-complex.” Sorting out the moral, psychological, and political consequences of the military industrial complex has been and remains the dominant fact I confront when I try to explain the deep forces that shape the currents of American politics.

The militarization of American society and politics, about which Ike warned us a generation ago, is now almost complete. Budgets, I have always believed, are moral blueprints for society. We have long practiced what some of us call “military Keynesianism.” During my lifetime the federal government essentially primed the economic pump by using the hose of military spending to flood the economy in dollars. Even Richard Nixon admitted, “We are all Keynesians now.” Ronald Reagan promised an end to “big government” while increasing military spending by borrowing money from affluent investors, both foreign and domestic. (Veracity is not a quality the American voters admire in a politician. Voters prefer candidates who weave updated and comfortable tales rooted in our national mythology.) The results of this “strategy” are now widely known. Our nation spends more on military and related “national security” affairs than the rest of the world combined. The United States maintains over 700 foreign military bases in more than 50 nations.





The current total cost of the Afghan and Iraq Wars are expected to exceed \$3 trillion. The annual U.S. national security budget now exceeds \$1 trillion when factoring in the “off budget” expenses of the Global War on Terror and other “hidden” expenses buried in the budget of other federal departments. If our “military Keynesianism” were a national home mortgage, we would be “upside-down” today. Our appetites have come to exceed our ability to pay. We have gutted the industrial base of the nation, must borrow \$ trillions annually from foreign investors, and must invite others to purchase de-valued American assets. The single-greatest failure of my generation is that we have handed off to the next generation an IOU unparalleled in the history of humanity! “Peace through strength” is our national obsession.

Parochialism Meets Paranoia: From Cold War to the Global War on Terror

What fears, exactly, haunt our national politics? I have studied human politics long enough to know that good things may happen for all the wrong reasons and great evils can follow from noble intentions. The Cold War may have been inevitable given the circumstances of Europe circa 1947. I most certainly have benefited from its consequences. During my lifetime Cold War politics and fear produced the interstate highway system, a military-based Research and Development industry (including a space program, a jump start for the hi-tech computer industry, and the Internet—Al Gore had it right), educational reforms, and provided access to affordable higher education for poor kids like me. The Vietnam War eliminated the draft and ushered in our current “volunteer” military. As I face my young students today, I am haunted by the question: “Will the Global War on Terror produce positive benefits for these young people as the Cold War did for my generation?”

The Global War on Terror seems to me to be waged to secure the positions of entrenched political elites and to enrich the financial interests of those who benefit from a “fortress” America. Our politics has always had an undercurrent of xenophobia fueled by our national parochialism. Whole

segments of our political and economic establishment need enemies, and they have had many enemies from which to choose. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security (2002) may yet prove to be the most significant change in America to take place in the later part of my career. While terrorist attacks are matters for concern, they do not threaten the foundations of the republic. What we do to ourselves and to others in response to terrorism pose far greater challenges to the body and soul of American politics. Thus far, the record is not encouraging. We are mired in a civil war in the heart of the Middle East. Domestically we have set forces in motion to spy on Americans without regard for proper oversight or the rule of law. This nation which gave birth to the Geneva Accords following the mistreatment of prisoners during World War II now tortures people in its custody and “renders” them to foreign officials for even worse treatment. Perhaps it is inevitable that a “national security state” would give birth to a “national surveillance state.” A lifetime of study has taught me that war centralizes power in a nation-state. I am not the first to say it, but a republic cannot survive in a permanent state of war.



Culture Wars 1960-2010: From Flower Power to WWJD

American culture is not conservative; it is liberal and experimental. The great culture clashes of my lifetime, in my judgment, are being settled to the detriment of traditionalism. Women have entered all fields of commercial and civic life. More than 60% of our students are female. No-fault divorce led to easier to obtain, if not user-friendly, separations and remarriages. (I am still trying to find the re-married divorced person who wants to make divorce more difficult.) In 1964, *Griswold v. Connecticut* confirmed what Americans wanted—more sexual freedom. Today sexual enhancement drugs have become popular fixtures of our mainstream “drug culture.” Wall Street and advertising companies pocket millions from a sexed-up America. “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” caused a furor when Clinton adopted it. Bush may even have won reelec-



tion by riding the backlash of voters motivated to vote down “gay marriages” in 2004. Homosexuals have nevertheless emerged from many closets and will not close the doors again. Though there have been many skirmishes in the great cultural war since the sexual revolution of the 1960s, none of these changes, in my judgment, will be rolled back. And, I believe, America is the better for it.

Black Power, Civil Rights, and the Recurring Theme of Racism

Dealing with racial tension has always been the central domestic challenge of American political life. One must always tread carefully on soil made red by the suffering of so many. To this day I claim to my students that the single-most important piece of domestic policy legislation passed in my lifetime is the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Achieving real equality among a people accustomed to the privileges born from serfdom has not and will never be without moments of conflict. But who among us can truly believe that a pre-civil rights America was a better America? We are all familiar with the arguments regarding affirmative action, control of neighborhood schools, the consequences of white-flight, the ravages of children bred by irresponsible boys and born to unwed girls who are themselves still children, and the shocking statistics of our criminal justice system. Yet we are better for trying to meet those challenges without the additional burden of state-sponsored racism. In my lifetime the moral tide turned against overt racism although it still has its voice on talk radio and certain television broadcasters. Discrimination still exists from the boardroom to the church pews, yet we now have both civil and legal means for dealing with the tensions that result from our diversity. I am encouraged when I speak of these matters in class, and I get the vague feeling that my students see me as one of those “older” people from a by-gone era. Let us hope it is so.

Where Have the Wise Ones Gone?

Like so many of my educator colleagues, I was

attracted to education as a career because I believed that education was a “noble profession.” Perhaps it is an affliction all educators suffer, but I wanted to be in the front lines of the endless struggle of civilization to ward off the ravages of ignorance. I still believe education is a noble undertaking, but the optimism of my youth has been shaken by the advance of modern communication technology and its profitable mating with corporatism. I remember my family getting our first television set and my father struggling mightily to train the antenna to receive the signal. Today I get almost all my “news” from the Internet. TV, however, remains the most important source of information about public life for the vast majority of the American people. The universal lament of teachers today is that students simply don’t read enough. TV has changed our landscape. People no longer think in sentences, let alone paragraphs. Sound-bites have replaced cogent and thoughtful argument among the general citizenry and the political establishment. (This affliction even haunts the Oval Office, or so I am told.) Our president dresses up in costumes befitting a “war president” in order to “send a message” using a choreographed photo opportunity.

In 1950, when America was gearing up for the Cold War, two towering American intellectuals of the 20th Century toured the nation engaging in a series of debates. George Kennan and Walter Lippman toured university campuses to raise civic consciousness about the coming Cold War much as Lincoln and Douglas awakened the nation about the challenges of slavery and union a century earlier. In my lifetime intellectuals like Kennan and Lippman, acting as regulators of our national public debate, have been replaced by the raw bravado of a charlatan like Limbaugh and the sublime deceptions of O’Reilly. The debasement of American political discourse is a dangerous development in my lifetime. The repeal of the “fairness doctrine” in 1985 and the Federal Communications Act of 1996 have unleashed primitive forces in our national discourse. If the medium is the message and if television, as I suspect, is the medium of the primal, then I have reason to fear this change. I have been taught to fear the primal



in human beings. Television and radio play on people's primal ignorance; moreover, I believe that ignorance begets fear and fear is the birth-mother of repression. Can a democratic-republic long survive when the minds of its citizens are steeped in a television-induced ignorance?

Anarchy of the Establishment: A Den of Thieves

"The people don't govern; elites do" is an axiom of my discipline, Political Science. The success or failure of any society and governing system depends on the quality of its governing establishment. Commercial, legal, religious, educational (in the broadest sense of the term), and political elites all participate in the "governance" of our society. Justice exists in a society to the extent that the basic needs of the people are satisfied, individuals and groups are treated fairly, and civic leaders respect the limits of power associated with their authority. A good society is a just society. Justice is a noble word now almost absent from our political lexicon and, I fear, a value absent from the consciousness of our governing elite. I believe that the New Deal, above all else, was about establishing conditions for a just society. Historians and philosophers from Plato onward suggest that societies vacillate between public-spirited and self-interested elites. Tyranny exists when power is abused. Anarchy exists when the governing elite are self-serving and fail to honor the civic responsibilities associated with authority. So where do we stand now? How has the governing elite of my generation conducted itself? Greed has replaced justice as the governing ethos in my lifetime. Reading Hobbes taught me that human beings are self-interested and human appetites must be restrained by the rule of law. This old conservatism has been replaced by the silly notion that the "hidden hand" of greed will somehow magically restrain people from excess and produce the greatest good for the greatest number. As I take measure of the quality of the American elite of my generation, I am driven to apologize to my younger students. Can anyone of my generation truly believe that the civic leaders we pro-

duced are better or more responsible than those who governed America in 1950? The self-serving nature of our governing establishment is a cancer eating at our national body politic. Choose any metric you wish. In 1960, the average CEO salary exceeded the average worker's salary by a factor of 22 to 1. Today that factor stands at 262 to 1. America now trains more MBAs and lawyers than engineers and doctors. This is a condition that is never conducive for establishing justice or creating real wealth for society. I would trade 100 investment bankers for every Bill Gates. The legions of lawyers and MBAs we produce grease the wheels for the exportation of jobs in the name of the Chicago School of Economics as the middle class continues to shrink. Low wages for workers, low taxes for the affluent, and free trade have been zealously pursued as a national economic policy for fifty years with predictable results. Unions have been busted in the name of economic liberty and efficiency, and average wages adjusted for inflation for the middle class have remained stagnant for a generation. General Motors was the largest corporation in the world when I was born. It recently signed an agreement with the UAW that will effectively bust the union for the next generation of workers. It is said that capital now moves in a world without borders, but this isn't true. Governments have to create and maintain the conditions for the free flow of capital. The rules governing the World Trade Organization now determine the economic fate of the citizens of the free world. Capital chases around the world in pursuit of cheap labor, and the smart investor must join the parade or fall behind. The banking-Internet marriage makes it possible to move wealth from one country to another with a keystroke. How, therefore, has the middle-class fared as a result of these "innovations?" The middle class reached its apex during the 1960s and has been shrinking ever since. So-called "religious leaders" are often willing to exploit every human fear in search of the next donation to fund what have become, by all appearances, corporate churches. The political and corporate establishments exist in a state of sym-





biosis. The political elite literally shake-down business interests to fund elections and produce the next slick campaign commercial to fool an already anaesthetized voting public. The business/lobbying elite return the favor by passing legislation conducive to the business establishment. The directors of the mass communications and entertainment industry have joined forces. Infotainment, misinformation, and outright propaganda have become the mainstays of our consumer-driven mass media...I could continue, but I worry I rave too much.



Three years ago on a February day so cold each breath signaled we were alive, my wife and I were visiting Washington D.C. We walked among the glass towers of K-Street, the halls of the money changers influencing policy in our nation's capital. We marveled at the majesty of the Old Postal Service building which at one time housed that first great public service in America. We walked the national mall in order to re-live some of the epic episodes in American history. We moved among the ghost-like figures of the Korean War Memorial. We were stunned by the sublime power of the Vietnam War Memorial. We read aloud every word etched in the stone of the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials. We stumbled upon the modest monument honoring George Mason and the Virginia Declaration of Rights. And then we found our way to the Franklin Delano Roosevelt "living monument." The Franklin Roosevelt Memorial is not a monument in the classical sense; rather, it is more of a contemporary, open-air, participatory exhibit. It is humble, close to the earth as the people Roosevelt served, but the whole edifice of the mall and the city beyond serve as a dramatic visual backdrop. As we strolled through the display, we lingered before the mural containing the text of the **Four Freedoms** speech:

"In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression -- everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship

God in his own way -- everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want -- which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants -- everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear -- which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor-- anywhere in the world." Standing in the shadows of the center of power in this nation, tears welled in both of us, and as my eye caught hers, I said, "I understand; the barbarians have taken over."

James Puetz, Ph.D.
Professor, Political Science,
NHC

Finding the Right Mix

Historically, the Lone Star College System has considered two main issues when setting the faculty and staff pay raises during the budget process: 1) are we keeping pace with inflation, and 2) are we remaining competitive in the market?

As we review the first issue, it becomes apparent that the District is succeeding on this front. Based on the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics for the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria area, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased cumulatively 42% over the past 15 years.

How does that compare to the System's pay raises? The salaries of our lowest paid group of employees increased 97% since 1993. The salaries of our professional and administrative employee group increased 76% for the same time period. Comparatively, our full-time faculty salaries have increased 93%.

The second issue (Are we remaining competitive in the market?) is less obvious. To begin with, we must ask ourselves why this is important. Among the first reasons that most people cite is that we





want to be competitively positioned to hire high-quality faculty and staff. Of equal importance, however, is that we provide a compensation level that makes it less likely that other institutions will entice our best away.

If we want to attract and retain world-class faculty and staff, we must continuously strive to be "best in class." An easy way to see how we stand in the market is to compare ourselves to those who are hiring away our faculty and staff. While employees who leave us are not required to reveal their reasons for doing so, the information we have collected from those who have volunteered this information is quite revealing.

Over the past two years, 34 administrators left the System, representing a 10% turnover rate. Thirteen of these administrators were hired by an out-of-state community college compared to only six who took a job within Texas. The remaining 15 administrators retired or were terminated for other reasons.

During this same time frame 43 full-time faculty left the System, representing a 3% turnover rate. The majority of these (28) moved to jobs within Texas. Ten moved out of state, and the remaining five represent retirements or other terminations. From these data one might conclude that our competition for quality faculty is more Texas-based than it is for administrators.

Another way to examine our market competitiveness is to compare ourselves to the other large college districts in the state. Recently, we surveyed Alamo, Dallas, Houston, and Tarrant to compare average salaries for four classes of employees: faculty, administrators, professionals, and support staff. Along with Lone Star College System, this group represents the five largest community college districts in Texas. As we compare ourselves with our Texas peers, we find that our salaries rank 3rd for administrators and support staff, and 4th for faculty and professional staff. As we strive to build further upon our nationally earned reputation, I believe that we will need to pay close attention to these comparisons. No higher education institution can hope to build national prominence

unless it can attract and retain the best faculty. Moreover, if our average salaries are comparable to others of our size within Texas, why did 10% of our administrators leave during the past two years? Could it be that our market is more national for these positions? Even a cursory review of prominent higher education publications will reveal the aggressiveness with which out-of-state colleges are pirating seasoned administrators. Against this backdrop of comparative data there are other questions that I believe we should be asking. For instance, how are we rewarding our faculty and staff who are producing at a higher level than others? How does our full-time/part-time faculty ratio affect our quality of instruction? How do our faculty and staff workloads compare with those of our peer institutions? How do our student success levels compare with those of our peers?

Currently, we lack a mechanism for rewarding faculty and staff who excel. Could this be a contributing factor to our loss of quality personnel? Surely this potentially thorny issue cannot be addressed in haste, if we collectively choose to tackle it at all. But the Board of Trustees has charged the Chancellor with the development of increased performance and accountability measures, and the groundwork for these metrics is being laid as part of the 2008-09 System budget process. Expect more on this topic in the coming months as we begin the System strategic visioning and planning process.

The ratio of full-time to part-time faculty is a universal issue within higher education. In fact, the Texas Legislative Budget Board has identified this as one of the performance measures that all community colleges must report annually. The last reported ratios among the five largest community colleges in the state ranks us lowest with only 46% of our courses taught by full-time faculty. Not only were we the lowest in the group, but we are far below the 56% average of these five colleges. Our continued fast growth impedes our progress on this front, as illustrated with simple arithmetic. We currently employ over 630 full



-time faculty. With a system-wide average of 5% growth, we would need to add 32 full-time faculty members next year *just to maintain the current full-time/part-time ratio*. System-wide, the cost to achieve a 1% improvement in our full-time ratio next year is about \$1.8M.

With respect to our faculty output and performance, here are some interesting facts. For the calendar year 2007 (spring, summer and fall semesters), the average Lone Star faculty member produced 10,800 contact hours with an average class size of 20. Of those 20 students, 17 completed the semester and of those 17, 13 received a grade of A, B, or C. Unfortunately, most of this information is not tracked by our peer institutions, so we have no direct comparison to make except internally among our campuses and within each discipline (class size will necessarily differ within certain disciplines). The Executive Council has been discussing workloads and reviewing proposed adjustments. While I fully support a process to make workloads more equitable, I will find it difficult to act upon any recommendation that reduces workloads without the outcome being specifically tied to student success.

The final issue that needs to be addressed with this year's compensation deliberations is our increasing numbers of senior faculty. Many have suggested another early retirement incentive program. As we know, the heavy financial impact of such programs limits their implementation feasibility to every seven to eight years. The last such program offered at LSCS was in 2000, so the time may indeed be ripe for considering this. But the savings generated by a retirement incentive program are usually not realized for three or more years after the program is implemented.

Be assured that the 2008-09 budget discussions will focus upon our need to move LSCS higher in both state and national markets so that we can aggressively compete in attracting and retaining quality faculty and staff. These discussions will unfold in combination with their inseparable components: that is, full-time faculty ratios, workloads, productivity, and the potential retirement incentive program.

Our collective challenge is to find a balance that addresses all of these components within our financial means. The reality of the 2008-09 budget is that we will be serving 13% more students than when the legislature set our funding, which is based on our contact hour generation for the 2006 base year. To put this in perspective, if the state were to fund these additional hours at our current funding levels, we would receive \$7.1M more next year. But we will not receive additional state funds until the 2009-10 budget year when the state budget cycle restarts. Rather, new funds for the upcoming academic year will be limited to student and tax revenues generated through our growth.

Richard Carpenter,
Chancellor, LSCS

A Place at the Table

Throughout this academic year, the AFT has emphasized our concerns over recent events affecting faculty and staff salaries. Dr. Carpenter and I have established a regular monthly meeting to discuss issues, concerns, challenges, common interests, and means by which to solve various problems. He reads The Advocate, and it is clear from our conversations that the union's message on salaries has been heard. In our last meeting, he said, "I am committed to addressing the union's salary concerns." The AFT welcomes that commitment. Our predictions about significant increases in the cost of living have proven accurate. For instance, Texas A&M regents recently voted tuition increases ranging from 4% to 24% at A&M and nine other institutions within the system (chron.com, March 27, 2008). Regents at University of Texas raised tuition and fees from 5% to 9% at its universities and medical schools for 2008 with similar increases for 2009 (chron.com, March 26, 2008). At this writing, a gallon of regular gasoline costs \$3.49 with predictions of \$4.00 this summer.



Dr. Carpenter further went on to ask for help in establishing priorities among salaries, the full-time/



part-time ratio, and a retirement incentive plan, noting that all the money from those competing items “comes from the same pot.” I pointed out that that reasoning assumes that the size of the pot is not adjustable. However, there is plenty of precedent in the recent past that “pots” can be adjusted when the administration and Board deem it appropriate. As Dr. Carpenter has noted, administrative costs have been and will continue to be reduced. Perhaps the money saved from that pot can be transferred to the ones that fund the competing values.

Once concern Dr. Carpenter expressed was that choosing one competing interest over another opens him up to criticism. For instance, if he chooses to favor a significant salary increase over improving the full-time/part-time ratio, he might take a hit for not improving the ratio. I assured him that if the union were at the table in a meaningful discussion and the decision was not made in a unilateral manner, the union would have no criticism of the decision. It is critical to have the appropriate players involved in the discussion. The chancellor committed, at that point, to devising a plan, with the AFT’s help, that will be inclusive. The union sees these commitments as the best news we’ve heard in some time on salaries. Everyone will be watching.

Alan Hall

Update on Change in Status Policy

On April 15, 2008, Dr. Carpenter met with North Harris employees in an open forum in which he discussed a number of issues. When he opened the floor for questions, one quickly asked had to do with the language in proposed policy about changing a faculty member from a multi-year contract to a single year contract if it were in “the best interest of the college.” The union has expressed strong concern with this vague language because it provides such broad latitude to the administration in reducing a faculty member from a multi-year to a single year contract. Our view is that this action should only be “for cause,” and the policy language should reflect this.

Dr. Carpenter’s response to the question from the floor began with, “There has been so much misinformation put out on this issue that it makes me sick.” I knew to what he was referring but felt that he painted with too broad a brush. Many people in the room knew that the union has focused on this policy in The Advocate, and for all they knew, Dr. Carpenter was referring to the AFT. I felt that impression shouldn’t stand.

In fact, the AFT is in agreement with most of what Carpenter said next, evidenced by the article that I wrote in the January/February 2008 issue.

I pointed out that the language in the proposed policy is virtually identical to the language in current policy. The issue of “best interest of the college” is not new. That language has been in place for some time. The union’s position is that it should not be there.

Dr. Carpenter and I happened to have a regularly scheduled meeting on April 16th. I brought up my concerns with him then. He immediately agreed that he was not speaking of the AFT with the “misinformation” comment and acknowledged that attendees could easily have gotten the wrong message. We decided that the best way to correct the problem would be a brief article in the newsletter. We went on to discuss his plan to scrap the proposed policy’s entire personnel section and replace it with the current one. I explained the AFT’s position that this approach doesn’t solve the “best interest” problem. It leaves the vague and potentially dangerous language in place. He rightly pointed out that this review process has dragged on for three years. He wants to get the new policy in place and then work on the remaining concerns. On the issue of change in status, he committed to work with the AFT to “find common ground on language” that would satisfy our concerns. So far, Dr. Carpenter has been good on his word with the union, and we are going to accept his offer at face value. We plan to address this language at the earliest opportunity.

Alan Hall



Heads Up, Everyone: Election Time

The AFT, interested as always in all things LSCS, spent some time in recent weeks getting to know most of the candidates running for the Board of Trustees election. We sent out questionnaires to all the candidates for the four positions. The candidates are:



Position 3

Jerry Albrecht

Robert Gandy

Stephanie Marquard

Fred Blanton

Postion 4

Robert J. Adam

Terry Morton

Position 6

Bob Wolfe

Jason Roper

Alan Quintero

Postion 9

Jean Iverson

Diane Porter

Priscilla Kelly

Gail Stanart

Joe Williams

Six of the candidates did not respond to our questionnaire, so we have no personal information on them. In addition to the questionnaires, the screening committee of the AFT local invited all the trustee candidates to an interview on Saturday, April 12th although some did not accept our invitations. We began at 8:30 with the intention of giving each person about a 20 minute interview. We finally finished the interviews about 2 P.M. but felt better informed about those who visited with us. Some of the interviews are worthy of note. Fred Blanton, for instance, showed very strong support for the community college system and presented a number of intriguing ideas. Ms. Gail Stanart proved to be energetic, informative, and passionate about the community college process. Mr. Terry Morton has two children in our college system and presented some new, practical ideas.

Many employees have been asking where they can find information on the candidates. Several candidates agreed to allow the AFT to post their questionnaires on our website. The union also offered to post links to websites providing information about the candidates. This information can be found under "Events and More" on our website: <http://aft-lonestarcollege.org/>.

After a few days of consideration and discussion the screening committee voted to endorse: Position 1: **Stephanie Marquard**; Position 4: **Robert Adam**; Position 6: **Alan Quintero**; Position 9: **Priscilla Kelly**.

The AFT executive committee also strongly endorses the Bond Referendum. Most significantly, the Referendum will not cause an increase in our local property tax rate, and the money raised is urgently needed to provide the services for our nearly 50,000 students enrolled in credit classes last fall. As most of you are aware, if the growth trend continues, LSCS will likely reach 72,000 students by 2015. If the Bond Referendum is defeated, we could be in a world of worry, trying to serve that many people with the budget we have now. Without new funds many students will be underserved, and some might not be served at all.

The AFT would also like to remind everyone that early voting runs Monday, April 28th through May 6th, 2008. We urge anyone interested in LSCS' future to vote during the first three days. Our employees and other registered voters in LSCS area can vote on the individual five campuses and seven satellite centers. Voting just takes a few minutes, about the time it takes to walk



from one building to another. During the last election the early voting turnout was very light, and that may have had an effect on the ultimate outcome. I, personally, would be delighted to see many of you on Monday morning as I cast my early vote.

Pat Gray, editor

Letters to the Editor:

The Advocate invites all members of our academic community to share ideas with us. We welcome this offering by Ronald Trowbridge.

PG

Raise Tuition and Faculty Salaries at Lone Star Colleges

Let's look, not at theoretical abstractions, but at hard data as to why student tuition should be raised, as an independent issue, and faculty salaries raised, as a separate matter, within the Lone Star College system.



Student tuition:

Tuition in the fall of 2008 at the University of Texas-Austin is \$4,266 per semester. The Lone Star College system charges \$564 for this same semester. At UT students will likely be taught in their introductory courses for two years by graduate students, generally 22-25 years old, with little training and experience. Within the Lone Star College system these same students will be taught by instructors much older and vastly more experienced.

A tuition of \$564 for this caliber of instruction is cheap—and I mean dirt cheap, by both relative and absolute standards. Students should properly be charged more for these user services. Higher tuition would weed out in advance students who are not really serious about attending college and who tend to withdraw. And higher tuition would be morally proper for the services students are provided.

Higher faculty salaries:

At, say, UT professors generally teach three

courses per semester. For a salary of, say, \$90,000 for two semesters or \$45,000 per semester, the professor is paid \$15,000 per class. At Lone Star College, where teaching is often done by adjuncts, the adjunct receives \$1814 per class. Go figure.

But these professors will respond that they are given release time to publish and that they do a lot of publishing, right? Wrong. Former Harvard College president Derek Bok in his recent and appropriately entitled book, *Our Underachieving Colleges* reports that “fewer than half of all professors publish as much as one article per year.” Not much heavy lifting here.

In short, professors at UT and other research universities in Texas generally don't publish as much as perception would have it and don't teach many classes or students—still receiving fairly handsome salaries, even, dare I say, being overpaid for the work performed.

At the Lone Star Colleges, on the other hand, most instructors receive payments, without fringe benefits, that even Charles Dickens would protest should be subject to child labor laws. Fringe benefits at UT and elsewhere add an additional 20-30 percent to faculty benefits.

Now the Adam Smiths will argue that if adjuncts are willing by their own choice to work for \$1814 a course per semester, let them. This, after all, is the market at work. But by the same logic, the market should also be applied to students: they should pay \$16 for a steak, not \$2—which so to speak is now the case. It is morally, financially, comparatively proper to require students to pay a larger share for the services they as users receive. As for me personally, I teach as an adjunct at LSC-Montgomery for the fun of it. I don't in retirement need the money and would teach, if permitted, for free. My wife died two years ago, and teaching young people joyfully fills a vacuum. But when I see my colleagues needing the money and getting a paltry \$1814 for a course and students paying only \$141 tuition (v. \$1066 at UT) for that course, the disparity is morally, financially outrageous. Administrators and Board members should have the courage to raise tuition and faculty salaries. Courage is the most difficult



of all virtues because it is all virtues at the testing point.

Ron Trowbridge, Ph. D.
ronaldtrowbridge@yahoo.com

Substitute Pay for Full-time Faculty

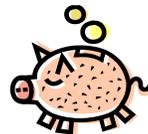
We need to revisit the new policy of not paying full-time faculty to substitute. It is not in the best interest of the students, nor is it a real savings for the college. The reputation of our institution suffers when students cannot perform at appropriate levels when they transfer. Our students today need all the support they can get in order to compete and transfer to four year institutions. I feel very strong that it is a disservice to the students to cancel any of our multi-section language classes. It also puts a lot of pressure on the faculty member to catch up and be able to fulfill the course outline.

I teach 20 contact hours of French and Spanish. My classes are arranged in 2 ½ hour blocks. Last week for the first time in several years, I was so ill that I missed two days of class. My husband had to bring me to the office one evening to gather handout materials, exercises for my students to do. I sent lengthy lesson plans for the students to follow and complete. The students only covered the first line of my lengthy explanations and were glad to be free to go.

It is hard enough to get someone to substitute in both languages, and it is even harder to expect a part-time faculty member to substitute for an early morning class and then an afternoon class on the same day. Several of our part-timers also have evening classes.

In the past I used to feel that if I needed to miss a day, I could ask my full-time colleagues to substitute for me. I knew that they would be compensated, and I really appreciated their willingness to do so. Now I feel that they, too, are overwhelmed, especially at this time of the semester, and that asking them to substitute for 2 ½ hour blocks is too much to expect. I myself don't

have the energy to teach a split schedule and cannot imagine adding an extra class to my day. In sum this unilateral decision, which affects our reputation, the faculty, and the student body, needs to be discussed, re-examined and re-evaluated.



Bertha Ibarra Parle
Professor of Foreign
Languages

Lone Star College and the Tale of the Monkeys

After my last article appeared, voicing my frustration at the lack of faculty involvement in the decision making process, I attended Conference Day. I will say that "What's Going on at the Systems Office? None of the Faculty Seem to Know" (*Advocate*, Jan/Feb. 2008) was the first article I've ever written that was responded to with hugs. I will admit that felt good. What didn't feel good were the comments I received from deans, vice presidents, and others who said they were glad I said what I said because they didn't feel the freedom to do so. In other words, they felt their jobs may have been threatened if they stated their opinion. I wondered what kind of organization LSCS is becoming.

Historically, one factor that leads to more effective decision making in organizations is dissent. President Kennedy, for example, learned that after the fiasco at the Bay of Pigs. Dissent, nonetheless, seems to have become unacceptable within current political organizations. That is unfortunate because it means bad decisions go unchallenged and potential feedback and cautions are not addressed.

I feel morale at LSC is at one of its lowest points ever. At least, this is what I conclude in talking with colleagues. The administration, however, seems to think morale is good. Why is that?

An interesting study was recently reported in *Scientific American Magazine*, showing that even animals know when they are getting a bad deal. At the Yerkes National Primate Research Center



in Atlanta, monkeys were given granite pebbles and asked to then give them back to the experimenters. When they did so, the monkeys received a piece of cucumber. 95% of the time the monkeys made the exchange.



When the researchers increased the reward to a grape but gave it to only a few select “favored” monkeys, the short changed monkeys became less cooperative. The lack of cooperation became more pronounced when some of the “clearly more favored monkeys” were given the grape without having to do anything for it. The non-rewarded monkeys began to refuse to trade the pebble for a piece of cucumber, and those who did make the exchange often threw their piece of cucumber back at the experimenter.

In an interesting variant finding, unequal rewards did not always produce a lack of cooperation when given to monkeys who had known each other and been raised together for 30 years. Chimps perceiving inequity with adults that they had just met, however, or whom they had only known for eight years or less, became highly agitated at inequity. Perceived inequities certainly impact organizational morale.

Don Stanley, Ph.D
Professor and chair of
Psychology



Below are two brief articles published in the newsletter of the Harris County Central Labor Council about Kevin Bailey, State Representative of District 140. Kevin was the first president of the AFT here at the college. After serving for a few years, he left to become an aid to then city councilman Dale Gorczynski and later entered politics himself. Kevin recently lost his bid for reelection. The two articles emphasize two areas in which he was important to unions. There were, of course, many more.

Alan Hall

Kevin Bailey

Labor's Loss - Kevin Bailey

Labor's biggest disappointment was the loss of State Representative **Kevin Bailey**, District 140, to **Armando Lucio Walle** (both candidates were screened by Labor and both completed excellent questionnaires). Kevin was first elected in 1991, and over the years built up seniority and power. Kevin Bailey has a strong record of supporting Labor. **Most recently, Kevin was able to secure Meet and Confer Collective Bargaining rights for City employees.** Kevin also Chaired the powerful Urban Affairs Committee that considers many issues important Labor. Kevin also stood up for **Carmen Mayorga**, AFT, Local 6345, after she was arrested and battered by the Aldine ISD for passing out union literature. Labor loses a strong advocate who championed our issues and who is still a member of the American Federation of Teachers, Local 4518. It is always difficult to replace years of experience and seniority in the Texas Legislature. Representatives like Kevin start at the bottom and over the years build up seniority and influence that translate into positions on important committees; these committee assignments often determine whether legislation advances or dies. Kevin simply “got things done.” We thank Kevin Bailey for standing with us these many years, and we wish Kevin the absolute best in whatever he may pursue. We look forward to working with Armando Walle on issues important to Labor and to his district in which many of our members reside.

Hope And City of Houston Reach Contract Agreement

Hope - the Houston Organization for Public Employees and the City of Houston have reached a tentative agreement in contract negotiations (March 5, 2008). The agreement includes a pay package ensuring that every city employee will make at least \$10 an hour by September 2009, an



immediate across-the-board 3% pay increase followed by an annual 3% increase in fiscal 2010 and 2011 and performance pay of 1.25% of the payroll. The agreement must be ratified by the HOPE members and approved by City Council. This is the first contract for city municipal workers in the state of Texas (Police and Fire already have a collectively bargained contract). Congratulations to the 13,000 plus city workers and to HOPE - a merged Union of the *American Federation of State, County and municipal Employees - AF-SCME* the *service Employees International Union - SEIU*. Thank you again, **Kevin Bailey**, for making all of this possible.

The restaurant is located at 25831 NW Freeway, Cypress, TX 77429. Directions to the restaurant going north on 290 (NW Freeway) is to exit at Spring Cypress/Fry Rd. exit and then make a "U" turn at the first street which is Spring Cypress. The restaurant will be on your right as soon as you make the "U" turn. That places the restaurant just south of the Spring Cypress St. and on the south bound feeder. The phone number is 281-758-1450.

A free Barbeque dinner and one beverage will be provided.

We hope to see you there.



**END OF SEMESTER
CELEBRATION**

**EVERYONE IS INVITED TO
CELEBRATE THE END OF ANOTHER
SUCCESSFUL SEMESTER WITH GOOD
FRIENDS AND GOOD FOOD**

WHEN: May 2, 2008

**WHERE: SPRING CREEK
BARBEQUE**

TIME: 4:00 to 7:00 pm



Hotel Savings for AFT Members

Join AFT Today!



The Community Advantage

Membership Eligibility

Membership in the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) is open to full 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 page 20 of this newsletter, or check out our online information and application at: www.aft-lonestarcollege.org/.

Monthly AFT Dues

Full-time Faculty	\$29.30
Full-time Professional Staff	\$25.50
Full-time Support Staff	\$21.90
Adjunct Faculty & Staff	\$10.00



Campus Updates

NORTH HARRIS COLLEGE

A recent open meeting of the AFT—Lone Star at North Harris provided faculty and staff with an opportunity to voice concerns about issues ranging from the language of the proposed policy manual to the new policies regarding faculty overload limitations. We continue to represent staff members with personnel problems, and we have held interviews with board election candidates.

Bruce Machart, AFT Faculty VP

KINGWOOD COLLEGE

Change! A word that brings apprehension and concern along with excitement about the future. Change is not always something we can control, and that is what brings about a wide range of emotions. The majority of the faculty and staff are anxious about all of the changes coming to Kingwood. We are currently searching for a new president and vice president. The good news is that there have been a number of candidates interested in the president's position at Kingwood. We have an excellent committee screening the candidates and are looking forward to the final group meeting with faculty and staff. I look forward to seeing everyone at graduation on May 9th.

Rich Almstedt, AFT Faculty VP

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

At LSC-Montgomery, we continue to enjoy the support of our college president, Dr. Tom Butler, and vice president of instruction, Dr. Julie Leidig who meet with faculty leaders, including the AFT faculty representative, every couple of weeks to discuss any issues or subjects of concern to our members. We are also pleased to report that our membership has grown by 6 and we welcome our six newest members!

Martina Kusi-Mensah, AFT interim Faculty VP
Cheri Riggs, AFT Staff VP

CF-FAIR COLLEGE

All is quiet here at CF at this time. We are hosting our annual end of semester party. See our party invitation on page 14.

Robert McGehee, AFT Faculty VP

TOMBALL COLLEGE

Tomball Union News From LSC-Tomball

Well Maties,
Tis fairly quiet on the western seas of academia. The hustle and bustle of Port Spring Break has come and gone, and nary a mate was left behind. Seems that all hands and officers have buckled down and are preparing for warm weather as we head for Port Finals. While the water barrel stays full due to plenty of rain, the scuttle butt has quieted as the past sailing season changes have begun to take hold.

So until a rogue wave hits or the sea turns stormy, keep your eyes to the forewind least you fail to see the foam change in time to hang on.

Til next report from the Ship's log.
Richard Becker, AFT Faculty VP



2700 W. W. Thorne Dr.
Suite A217



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 articles to **Pat Gray, Editor**, NHC, ext. 5545 or e-mail: patsy.gray@nhmccd.edu, or **Heather Mitchell, Assistant Editor**, CFC, ext. 3254, or e-mail: heather.mitchell@nhmccd.edu or submit to any of the other following officers:

Alan Hall, President	North Harris College	ACAD 217-G	ext.5544
Velma Trammell	North Harris College	DTEC 101	ext. 5612
Bruce Machart	North Harris College	ACAD 217-A	ext. 5542
Bob Locander	North Harris College	ACAD 270	ext. 5592
Allen Vogt	North Harris College	ACAD 264-C	ext. 5583
Vivian Brecher	North Harris College	LIBR 114	ext. 5403
Rich Almstedt	Kingwood College	FTC 100-G	ext. 1656
Laura Yates	Kingwood College	SFA 113-D	ext. 1414
Catherine Olson	Tomball College	S 153 - H	ext. 3776
Richard Becker	Tomball College	E 271-D	ext. 1835
Martina Kusi-Mensah	Montgomery College	E 209- J	ext. 7276
Cheri Riggs	Montgomery College	C 100-C	ext. 7370
Robert McGehee	Cy-Fair College	ART 113-H	ext. 3935

Membership Has Its Benefits

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 say that 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, it's there for them.

If you believe in these values and are not a member, now is the perfect time to join. The AFT advocated effectively for the raise employees received this year. The annual membership dues are a small percentage of the raise. If you believe in our values, take action now and join the AFT.

Alan Hall