

Board Presentation on the Search for a New Chancellor, April 3, 2014

Good evening. I am John Burghduff representing the American Federation of Teachers.

Tonight Lone Star College stands at the beginning of a search for a new chancellor. With an institution that is larger, more complex and faces more challenges than ever before, the stakes have never been higher. Our future success as a college depends on a search that is careful, thoughtful and engages the wisdom of the hundreds of faculty and staff who do the hard work of educating and supporting our students every day. A number of those employees have joined us tonight to show their love of this college, their concern for the success of this search and their commitment to reclaiming the promise of Lone Star College for our students and our community.

The AFT had planned to recommend, at the cancelled March Board meeting, that this process be overseen by an internal committee including significant representation of faculty and staff. Such a committee would actively engage the college as appropriate throughout the process as priorities are set, resumes are gathered and interviews are conducted. Collectively, Lone Star employees hire dozens of new employees per year and we can do this search ourselves. However, although we can find no public record of the Board making this decision, a consultant firm, Gold Hill Associates, is already developing a hiring profile they will use in choosing which candidates to actively recruit.

The AFT is convinced that this search still can and must be inclusive of faculty and staff. Considerable feedback has already been provided about what Lone Star needs in a new chancellor by many employees including those participating in our survey. This feedback should be a primary consideration as screening moves along. The candidate pool must not be restricted to the narrow group known by one company. Faculty and staff should be on the committee to read resumes and interview candidates. Later, at candidate forums, employees must be free to ask any respectful questions they need. Also, those forums need to be scheduled on dates and at times to maximize participation. The AFT is concerned that those are currently planned for this summer when many faculty and some staff are unavailable.

The timeline for a search should not be arbitrary. A few months under an interim are preferable to a rushed decision. On another note, this fall the nature of this board will shift as single member districts open up oversight of the college to new constituencies. A new chancellor will work with and for a new board. A few months under an interim so that the new board members can bring their perspective to the decision could result in a stronger long term working relationship.

No one knows the college better than those who work for it. Many of us were here long before the current chancellor arrived and many will be here long after the next one is gone. We care deeply about this decision and we stand ready to serve. Thank you.