



# The Advocate

## 2007/08 Salary Increase a Mixed Bag

### The Good News

Dr. Carpenter’s August 30<sup>th</sup> announcement of Board approved compensation changes included some welcome news. Eligible full-time employees received a 5% increase for this academic year “to ensure that employees do not lose buying power” (Dr. Carpenter via email). Part-time and adjunct pay rates also increased 5%. The minimum NHMCCD salary was raised from \$18,800 to \$20,794. Employees who have topped out in their pay categories received a long overdue \$1,200 one time stipend. A more flexible date-of-hire window allowed some new employees, who would previously have been ineligible, to receive a portion of the salary increase. The AFT is gratified to see the Board action in the aforementioned areas, particularly since we have vigorously advocated for the majority of them.

### The Bad News

However, not losing buying power only maintains our current buying power. It does not increase it. The inflation rate was 4%, but that percentage includes everything. As Cindy Gilliam, Vice Chancellor, Business Affairs/CFO, pointed out in her Budget Workshop July 27, 2007, the percentage increase for the typical items that employees most often buy were higher:

- A gallon of gasoline: 10%
- A loaf of bread 12%
- A pound of hamburger 6.7%
- A pound of coffee 8.3%



Considering these percentages, then, 5% was just enough to prevent employees from losing buying power. However the prevention of lost buying power should not be confused with increased buying power.

Moreover, the AFT advocated an 8% salary increase as necessary to keep employees from losing ground. Regular readers of The Advocate know that for 2003/04, full-time employees received a one time stipend of \$750 that was not applied to base salaries. As a result we have lost buying power by 3% for four years now. The AFT appreciates the support of the NHC Faculty Senate on this point. At their August, 2007 meeting, they passed the following resolution:

We thank the Board of Trustees for the 5 percent pay raise; the raise for adjunct faculty and stipend for those at the top of their pay scale is appropriate, but we note that faculty salaries are still not keeping up with inflation. We support the 8 percent increase suggested by the AFT as being more appropriate.

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Additional disappointing news is that part-time and adjunct pay rates remain low in spite of the 5% increase. The increase is a step in the right direction, but more work needs to be done here. It is also unfortunate that, while the Board recognized a crying need of employees who had topped out, the \$1,200 stipend was not applied to their base salary. This means that unless there is a stipend again next year, these employees will make no more in 2008 than they did in 2003. If no stipend is forthcoming next year, these employees will see their \$1,200 stipend spread over at least six years. That works out to \$200 per year, an amount far outstripped by inflation.

An adjustment in the entry level salary to \$20,794 is also a step in the right direction. This practice of adjusting the lowest salary began when the AFT wrote a feature article in The Advocate titled "Welfare to Work." We pointed out that many of the District's employees were paid so poorly that they fell below the poverty line. Surprised and embarrassed to learn that information, the administration began to recommend to the Board a new minimum salary each year to prevent such a travesty from happening again. However, making sure our lowest paid employees are just above the poverty line is an embarrassing position for a district of our caliber. Much more work needs to be done here.

**The Great News----For A Few**

Although the changes were not announced, the best compensation news came for upper administration. Based on a market analysis determining national average salaries for these positions, the Board of Trustees provided compensation changes that far exceeded 5%. The following charts show the compensation packages for administrative positions for 2006/07 and for this year.

**Chancellor  
2006/2007**

**Chancellor  
2007/2008**

Salary	\$211,229	Salary	\$310,000
Deferred Compensation, performance-based	15% (28,167)	Deferred Compensation, performance-based	10% (31,000)
Auto Allowance	\$1000/month	Auto Allowance	\$.0/month
Business Expense Stipend	\$1000/month	Business Expense Stipend	\$.0/month
<b>Total Compensation</b>	<b>\$263,396</b>	<b>Total Compensation</b>	<b>\$341,000</b>

**Presidents, Vice Chancellors,  
and Executive Vice Chancellor  
2006/2007**

**Presidents, Vice Chancellors,  
and Executive Vice Chancellor  
2007/2008**

Salary	\$133,547	Salary	\$155,000
Deferred Compensation, performance-based	10% (13,355)	Deferred Compensation, performance-based	10% (15,500)
Auto Allowance	\$800/month	Auto Allowance	\$800/month
Business Expense Stipend	\$600/month	Business Expense Stipend	\$600/month
<b>Total Compensation</b>	<b>\$163,702</b>	<b>Total Compensation</b>	<b>\$187,300</b>

(information obtained from AFT requests to DSTC)



The compensation for the Chancellor's position for this year increased \$77,604, or 29.5%. To be clear, this was an adjustment to the position. Dr. Carpenter did not receive a 5% raise. The total compensation for the President, Vice Chancellor, and Executive Vice Chancellor's position increased \$23,598, or 14.4%. I have consistently taken the position that we generally don't begrudge the administration their salaries. Most of them, and I say that advisedly, work hard for their money. I know because I meet with them all the time as the AFT works to resolve problems.

Midlevel administrators were also moved to a new standard salary based on a national market analysis as indicated in the chart below.

Non-instructional deans	\$77,000
Instructional deans	\$85,000
Vice presidents and Associate Vice Chancellors	\$95,000

Some of these administrators were already above the new minimum standard and received only the 5% raise. Others were raised to the new standard and then received 5% on that new salary. The average increase for those positions is as follows.

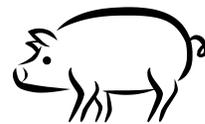
Non-instructional deans	6.7%
Instructional deans	6.3%
Vice presidents and Associate Vice Chancellors	6%

No one would quarrel with such a modest increase above the standard 5%.

What is problematic is the discrepancy between 5% for faculty and staff and 14.4 to 29.5% for administrators. The old adage that a rising tide floats all boats in this case fails. The continuing problems of (1) lower-end employees being held just above the poverty level, (2) low part-time and adjunct salaries,

(3) topped out employees averaging a \$200 increase per year, and (4) full-time employees remaining 3% behind the cost of living are all hard to swallow in the face of these significant administrative salary increases. Particularly troublesome are the low-end salaries. The Board's targeting just above the poverty line for some employees while providing others with a 14.4 to 29.5% salary adjustment is simply unconscionable. Moving the minimum salary from \$18,800 to \$20,794 is an 11% increase, but 11% of a low end salary comes nowhere near 14.4 to 29.5% of the upper end. The gap between upper and lower end salaries has increased dramatically, a trend that should not continue. The problem isn't the increase the upper administration received; it's the increase other employees didn't receive.

The AFT always attends meetings of the Board of Trustees. We frequently hear board members and upper administration talk about how important our employees are to the college. I have always assumed that the reference included all employees. I am reminded of Orwell's novel, Animal Farm, where Napoleon, the power hungry pig, first agrees that everyone is equal but then issues an edict: "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others." The AFT will continue to advocate on behalf of faculty and staff on compensation. If you are not a member, we urge you to join and help the union represent the best interest of employees.



Don't sit back and complain. Do something. Join the AFT.

Alan Hall





## **In Memoriam**

Walter Garrett died on September 20, 2007. He was thirty seven. Walter had worked alongside his brother, John, in the custodial department since 2001. When I first met the Garrett brothers, it did not take long to realize that they were smart, honest, funny, hard working, decent men. Clearly, they took pride in their work. They also valued family. When their father died four years ago, they devoted themselves to looking after their mother.

Walter struggled with some health issues. He also struggled with conflicts with some supervisors over time. Assisting him with the problems that he brought to me was easy because, in every case, he was right and only wanted what was fair. I admired his courage and willingness to speak up. His goal was the union's goal---that every employee be treated with dignity and respect.

When I walked into the visitation on Sunday night, I was touched to see Walter's casket draped with a North Harris College flag. The family requested the flag because Walter loved the college and the people here. His love of his coworkers was reflected in a way that I have seldom seen before. The funeral program listed as survivors family and coworkers. In addition, it listed six best friends, including three from NHC: Hilda Harman, Gertrudis Morales, and Robert Harris. What a tribute to their relationship.

I had the honor of meeting and visiting with many members of Walter's family. I had a poignant conversation with his brother-in-law, Gene Griswold. When we were introduced, it was clear that he knew all about the union because Walter talked about it all the time, about how we had helped him. Gene said, "I want you to know something. You made a difference in Walter's life. You improved the qual-

ity of his life." That is about as good as it gets as compliments go. It was gratifying to hear that the union mattered so much to a man who matters so much to many of us.

Alan Hall

## **From the editor:**

Regular readers of The Advocate will remember that we have started a series called "Nearing the Finish Line" wherein we try to examine the life experience of baby boomers, "a retrospective focused on our triumphs and defeats, our legacy, for good or ill, we leave our children and grandchildren." In our next issue Gary Clark, Dean of Business, Social and Behavioral Sciences, NHC, will address the workplace as it has evolved over the last decades. We eagerly look forward to his essay.

PG

## **Board Policy Update**

It seems that the review of proposed changes in Board Policy has been languishing for some time. When proposed changes were first made available, the document was available for general review and response. There it seemed to stall. Last spring, the five Senate presidents and I met with Dr. Steve Head, Executive Vice Chancellor and Interim President of NHC, to review the proposed new policy. We made significant progress and had many good suggestions to be taken back to the Chancellor's Executive Council. Unfortunately, we were only halfway through our discussion when the review stopped. In fact, we were just getting ready to discuss a very important section on employee rights and responsibilities, a section that I believe needs some significant change.

Individuals involved in our review got busy with the chancellor's search, the NHC presidential search, and summer teaching. We never completed our assessment. When I inquired as to



when we would resume our work, the answer was vague. I have seen policy review appear at least once on a recent EC agenda but am told that it was not discussed. I have also been told that the proposed revision may again be put to general review for final comments before going to the Board of Trustees for approval. Another possible scenario is that the Board will go ahead and vote on proposed changes and then make adjustments as necessary after approval. I am hopeful that at some point the senates and union will be able to resume our work together. Excellent suggestions came from our discussion.

However it plays out, Board policy governs a great deal here in the district. The union encourages anyone who has the opportunity to provide input to take the time to do so.

Alan Hall

### Op-Ed

( Editor's note. The Advocate is always willing to print letters to the editor offering both pro and con opinions about previous articles. This letter is in response to Martha Whitley's article, "Achieving the Dream at NHMCCD: Community Colleges and the Twenty-first Century," and Alan Hall's accompanying evaluation, "AtD: a Skeptic's Assessment," presented in the May 2007 issue. Mr. Cotton's letter is printed exactly as written. PG)

Alan;

Get to your optometrist quickly!! Your eyesight is failing to recognize snake oil salespeople!!!! I read with great amusement the article written by Martha Whitley it was worth several laughs!! What a pile of meaningless statistics and conclusions drawn from those statistics. I laughed for quite a while. At present the AtD is just more self-serving, self-promoting, self-enhancing, perk generating, waste of my tax dollars in an attempt to incite a call to action.

One of the first things I teach all of my

biology classes is – Question Authority!!

If you examine this document closely it is mostly self-justifying statistics that serve only to insure the programs continuation and the advancement, salaries and perks of those involved. Now let's talk reality!! Reality 1: Where are the demographics / statistics that profile the 2 year college student compared to the 4 year college student in age, socio-economic level, entering educational level/ achievement etc. The reality is at a 2 year school our students can be divided into two distinct types of students the first group is one with the lowest probability of successfully completing college they didn't complete high school, attained a GED or graduated in the lowest segment of the graduating class. The second group are students with work, family or financial commitments that require them to attend a college close to home until their educational successes force them to attend 4 year school. If the AtD program had separated the two distinct groups we'd have a more accurate picture of our student population. In my 14 years of teaching at 2 year schools my students belonging to the second group to be successful, need only an opportunity to learn, since they are self-motivated. Group one is the challenge. Reality 2: The AtD document has taken spin-doctoring / dazzle them with bull to a whole new level!!! It makes one very wrong gross assumption – all students are equal (AtD must be designed to be a brown nose attempt to concur with the "No Child Left Behind" stupidity of the Bush administration). To be a meaningful real study aiming to help our students it would have to include statistics that show the I.Q. or some other measure of learning ability of our student population and the distribution of those abilities. Remember with open enrolment you can attend college with a I.Q. too low to be successful but you will still be counted in the AtD statistics.

Let's fix AtD!! First we start a program that tests I.Q. or learning ability of each incoming student. Now we know what we have for raw material. Second let's face reality that we can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear and design "trade" or other programs for those that do not have the ability to succeed in college. The world will always need electricians, plumbers and carpenters but not that many rocket scientists. Reality three we live in a society of



“instant gratification” and “entitlement” so each student who enrolls in school thinks that since they have paid their fees they should receive an A (one of the believable statistics from the AtD presentation - 42% spend 5 hours or less studying). To help this student we must use tough love by remaining firm and let the student fail instead of giving them “extra credit” assignments so they can pass and the instructor can look good because of high retention numbers. Reality four we need to integrate our workforce and academic programs by requiring college level hours in Technical Report Writing or other English, and History classes. Math classes should be determined based on the students ability and taught in a manor consistent with the academic goals of the student.

What’s more important job promotions, raises, perks for the full time college employee’s or student success?

William Cotton, D.C., C.C.S.P, C Ac.

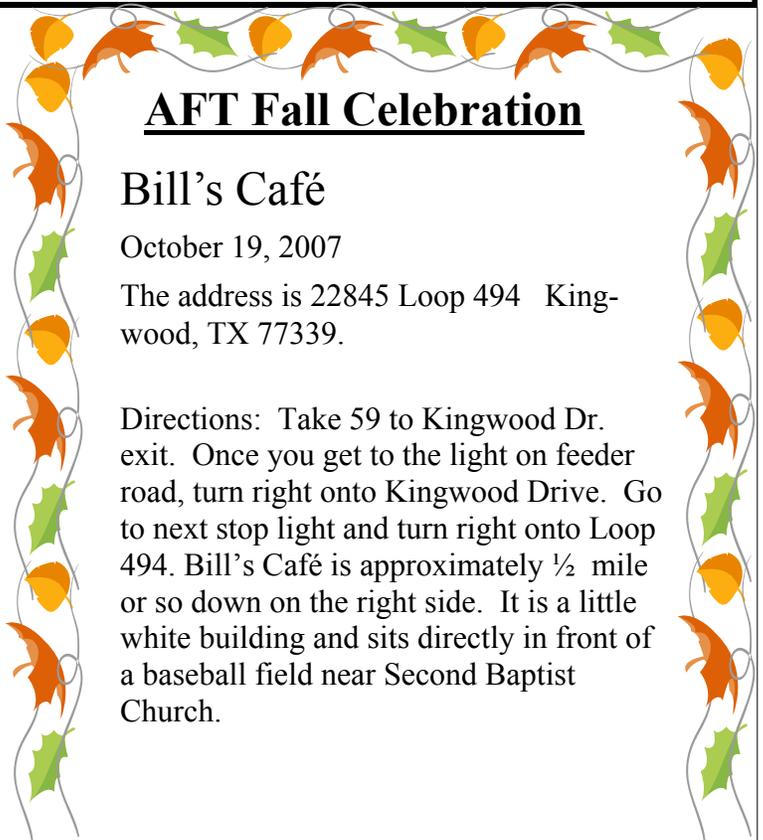
## AFT Fall Celebration

### Bill’s Café

October 19, 2007

The address is 22845 Loop 494 Kingwood, TX 77339.

Directions: Take 59 to Kingwood Dr. exit. Once you get to the light on feeder road, turn right onto Kingwood Drive. Go to next stop light and turn right onto Loop 494. Bill’s Café is approximately ½ mile or so down on the right side. It is a little white building and sits directly in front of a baseball field near Second Baptist Church.



### Dues Increase

The union’s state affiliate, Texas AFT, and the national American Federation of Teachers increased their dues twenty-five cents and seventy-five cents per month respectively. The local AFT executive committee approved the one dollar per month increase for all membership categories except Adjunct Faculty and Staff, which was left at ten dollars per month.

#### **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

#### **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

We continue to work well and cooperatively with the new (interim?) administration hereabouts. So far this semester we've mediated a conflict between two staff members, and we have in the works yet another mediation. In another instance, we've helped to quell an intradepartmental personnel conflict. We are at work to organize a professional development training session in conflict resolution, which should be of great benefit to our Executive Council staff and local member alike.

Bruce Machart, AFT Faculty VP

### KINGWOOD COLLEGE

It has been the typical hectic start to the fall semester. Laura Yates and I would like to thank Alan Hall for filling in for us this summer and helping resolve an issue with one of our faculty members. All parties involved seemed satisfied with the solution. Laura and I have been working with a few members on issues and are looking forward to satisfactorily resolving them. We are excited about hosting the fall kick-off celebration on October 19<sup>th</sup>. We are hoping that there will be a large turn out from Kingwood and our sister colleges.

Rich Almstedt, AFT Faculty VP

### MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Welcome Back! We hope that you had a great summer. A new semester is upon us and off we go. As many of you know, Julie, our Faculty VP, will be on sabbatical during the Spring '08 semester. Faculty can rest assured that there will be representation for them during that time. More details to come.

Julie Alber, AFT Faculty VP  
Cheri Riggs, AFT Staff VP

### CY-FAIR COLLEGE

Robert McGehee, VP for Cy-Fair, continues to recover from surgery he had earlier this year, and we are glad to report that he is doing well. Until he returns, staff members with questions or concerns are encouraged to contact Earl Brewer at Fairbanks Center. Faculty are encouraged to contact Charles Wuest at the Fairbanks Center.

### TOMBALL COLLEGE

No report at press time.

Richard Becker, AFT Faculty VP

The popcorn is expensive  
+ but the tickets don't have to be.



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### 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](mailto:patsy.gray@nhmccd.edu), or **Heather Mitchell, Assistant Editor**, CFC, ext. 3254, or e-mail: [heather.mitchell@nhmccd.edu](mailto: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
Julie Alber	Montgomery College	E 205-E	ext. 7241
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