

AFT Address to the LSCS Board of Trustees on Adjunct Workload, December 5, 2013

I am John Burghduff representing the American Federation of Teachers.

Among the items on tonight's agenda, listed as Action Item 1, is a first reading of a proposed change in LSCS policy to limit adjunct faculty teaching loads to 15 credit hours per academic year with no more than 9 credit hours in any given semester.

Current policy defines the teaching load of an adjunct as less than half of the workload of full time faculty. The choice of the word workload is important since a fulltime faculty member's workload consists of more than teaching. Dr. Carpenter, in one of his first initiatives as chancellor, recognized this distinction and approved guidelines increasing adjunct teaching loads accordingly. Tonight's proposed reductions tie adjuncts to fulltime faculty teaching loads rather than workloads and are, therefore a change in policy, not a clarification of policy as indicated in the agenda.

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If this policy change goes into effect, adjunct faculty who currently can teach up to 8 classes including summer will see their already meager incomes drop by 37.5%. For many of them, adjunct teaching is their sole income. Also, in some departments, 20% or more of spring semester classes will be uncovered risking the cancellation of literally hundreds of sections and affecting thousands of students.

Although it would pain us all, we would have to accept these losses if they were legally necessary but, in fact, they are not. This evening, you should see among the handouts on your desks a packet of information from the AFT explaining why this proposed change is not necessary under state and federal law. Although the documents are lengthy, we ask the members of the Board to consider them carefully since we cannot do justice to the details in three short minutes. We address the administration's concerns that current practice would place us at risk of paying health and retirement benefits. Even though new state guidelines instruct us to count one hour of preparation time for each credit hour an instructor teaches, existing LSCS guidelines generally keep adjuncts to 18 work hours per week, less than the 20 hour threshold that would mandate benefits. Even though the number of classes an adjunct teaches at other colleges can now increase the retirement benefits we must pay, the extra cost of about \$105 per course is not in the tens of millions as has been discussed since health benefits are not triggered. Furthermore, reducing workload at Lone Star will not decrease the probability that an adjunct will accept additional classes elsewhere.

Lone Star College relies on adjunct faculty to teach the majority of our courses. In fact, according to the TCCTA, we are second from the bottom among Texas community colleges in the percentage of classes covered by full time faculty. We could not function without them and we owe them our gratitude. Implementing a policy change that is not legally necessary but hurts them and their students this severely is bad for Lone Star College.