

AFT Presentation to the Board of Trustees on Full Time Faculty  
Compensation Issues – 5/1/2014

Good evening. I am Catherine Olson, a professor of English at Lone Star College-Tomball and a member of the American Federation of Teachers. Since the Board of Trustees will soon be considering the Lone Star budget for the coming year, I would like to bring to your attention some issues related to the compensation of full-time faculty that I hope you will consider.

This past fall, the Board made a good move in approving an increase in the salary schedule for new full-time faculty, thus improving our competitiveness in hiring. You also correctly adjusted the salaries of any existing faculty whose salaries would have fallen below this schedule. The problem is that mid-career and senior faculty whose salaries had already increased above the new schedule did not get a commensurate adjustment in their salaries. This resulted in a “compression” of the pay scale.

In the most recent issue of *The Advocate*, the union highlighted this problem of salary compression. The article included a specific example of a professor who was affected by this compression. Since *The Advocate* came out, many other faculty members have come forward with their stories. For example, we heard from a professor who was hired five years ago who is being paid exactly the same amount as a colleague with the same credentials who was hired this year. We also heard from a professor who was hired eight years ago who makes only \$2 more per year than someone hired this year with the same credentials.

As faculty members, we chose this career because we love teaching and want to help students. We went in knowing that we could make more money elsewhere. However, it hurts morale when we feel that our years of dedication to the college have been overlooked or undervalued. We all understand that these inequities will take time to fix, but I'd like to respectfully ask that you make salary compression an important priority in this year's budget planning.

Two additional changes in full-time faculty compensation should be addressed immediately. This last fall, the new budget capped faculty salaries and eliminated salary increases for incremental milestones between the master's and doctorate degrees. This means that those who have served the longest now see only a frozen salary in their future, and those who seek to reach up by working on a PhD have lost some incentive because they no longer see a remunerative carrot within reach along the way. All employees—at all levels—want the same chance to advance in their careers. In short, they all want to know their lives here have meant and will mean something, and at the very least, they all want their salaries to keep up with inflation. Faculty committees used to advise the college on faculty pay scales. Restoring this practice would help us avoid problems like these in the future. On behalf of all LSC faculty, I ask you to reverse these changes as you plan the new budget.

Thank you for your time.