



The Advocate

You'll Never Walk Alone

Inside this issue:

You'll Never Walk Alone	1 - 3
United Academics of Houston	3
Our Undocumented Students and the Union's Responsibility	3 - 6
Re-thinking the "Six Signatures" Policy	6 - 7
Tales from the Unionside: How Politics Really Works	7 - 8
Time to be Union Proud in the Wake of Hurricane Harvey	9
AFT Discounts	9
AFT Benefits	10
Directions for Joining the AFT	11
AFT Officers	12

We're on theWeb!
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**Fall 2017
 Celebration
 at
 Papasito's
 Cantina**
 It's Friday,
 Oct. 13th, from
 4:00-7:00 pm!

Join AFT Lone Star for some great food, beverages, and conversation as we welcome the return of Fall!

We would like to update you on information about union responses to Hurricane Harvey, upcoming political events, and the new regional adjunct local!

Legendary Tex-Mex food & a beverage will be provided. Please bring a colleague with you!

Papasito's Cantina
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*When you walk through a storm
 Hold your head up high
 And don't be afraid of the dark.*

*At the end of a storm
 There's a golden sky
 And the sweet silver song of a lark.*

*Walk on through the wind.
 Walk on through the rain
 Though your dreams be tossed and blown.*

*Walk on, walk on
 With hope in your heart
 And you'll never walk alone.*

You'll never walk alone.¹

This song, originally written for the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Carousel*, came to mind when I heard about the passing of actor and philanthropist Jerry Lewis. He sang this song every year at the end of his famous Labor Day telethons to raise money for Muscular Dystrophy research—for Jerry's Kids.

Hurricane Harvey put this song in a new light for me as the dark and the wind and the rain tossed and blew the dreams of thousands upon thousands of Texans. As we look at the losses (many of which readers of this article are experiencing first hand), it is hard to hold our heads high and walk on.

Yet, it is when we must walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death that we are often most aware that Something greater than ourselves walks with us and comforts





us in our hour of greatest need. In a concrete way, it is often other human beings—friends, family, colleagues, neighbors, and strangers—who become the Feet of God for us, walking with us through the storm.

As the hurricane passed, thousands of Houstonians and people from all over the country drove rescue boats, served meals, provided clothes, cleaned out wet houses, and made donations for those in need. We weren't walking alone.

We in the AFT want to especially commend the response of Lone Star College on behalf of our employees, students, and the greater community. Our administration responded quickly to open our campuses as shelters and staging grounds for first responders.

Our Chancellor and College Presidents reached out to us by email with messages of support and hope. They have promised flexibility for both students and employees who are going to have difficulty getting the semester started.

Plans are underway to bring counseling resources to the campuses for those who need it. Our office of Human Resources sent us Resources for Recovery to help with the psychological challenges. All of the colleges made arrangements for child care for employees while the public schools are closed with the cost reimbursed by the college. \$700,000 has been set aside from the Lone Star College Foundation and the Chancellor's Discretionary Fund to provide direct aid to full time employees and students. We deeply appreciate the College's commitment to walk with us in this crisis.

AFT-Lone Star College has also been involved. Working closely with our state affiliate, Texas AFT, and our national union, the American Federation of Teachers, an emergency fund was started to collect donations nationwide for union members in need of immediate assistance. Although insurance and FEMA checks will be coming for many employees, there is often an immediate need for cash right away. Our goal was to turn around funds rapidly, and the first checks were out the door before the flood waters subsided. In addition to donations from members nationwide, our local set aside funds from our operating budget to be able to respond quickly. These funds were made available for staff

and faculty, both full-time and part-time.

Although this emergency fundraising effort through the AFT is now complete, there are still ways interested readers can directly contribute to the needs of colleagues and students. The Lone Star College Foundation is collecting donations from individuals through their website, and we invite everyone who is able to do so to make contributions there.

To contribute, visit <http://www.lonestar.edu/Assistance.htm> and click the link "Donate Now."

As the devastation from Harvey continues to unfold, we need to be especially vigilant to the needs of those least able to afford the losses they are incurring. Among our employees, those would include our adjunct faculty and part-time staff. The funds originally set aside by the Foundation and the Chancellor were not available to part-time employees, but donations made through the link above can be specially earmarked for these employees. To make sure this fund would get off to a good start, AFT-Lone Star College has donated \$1000 specifically to be available to adjunct faculty and part-time staff.

If you are considering making a donation, please consider the option of earmarking it for part-time employees.

If you are in need of financial support yourself, whether you are an employee or a student, please visit the same website, <http://www.lonestar.edu/Assistance.htm>. This website also has many other resources for those recovering from this disaster. It is worth a visit.

Recovery from Harvey will take a long time. Whether acting through the Union, through official College channels, or responding as individuals one to one, we must continue to watch over our colleagues, friends and students who have suffered loss and be attentive to their needs. We must continue to walk with one another as homes and lives heal. At the end of the storm there's a golden sky.

Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart and you'll never walk alone.

John Burghduff
Professor of Math
LSC-CyFair



Endnote

¹Oscar Hammerstein II and Richard Rodgers,
© Imagem Music, Inc.

United Academics of Houston

Adjunct faculty have long been eligible to join AFT-Lone Star College, and many are members. Adjunct faculty are essential to the college and university world. Lone Star College is no exception in its reliance upon adjuncts to teach many of our classes.

For a long time, many adjuncts have not had the best working conditions. The pay is low, currently at the rate of \$2,004 for a 48-contact-hour class, and adjuncts typically have no benefits. They teach classes at several colleges throughout the metro area and are often forced to live out of the trunk of their cars as they drive from campus to campus. They may teach at four different colleges, using different textbooks and meeting different course requirements. It can be, and often is, a hard life.

The good news is that a movement has emerged to help improve the professional lives of adjuncts in the Houston area. Patterned after similar work in Philadelphia and Chicago, this movement is building a city-wide local for adjunct faculty at whatever colleges or universities they teach. AFT-Lone Star has been engaged in assisting this organization created by adjuncts. United Academics of Houston is a professional organization designed to promote and assist these dedicated teachers.

In the past, if an adjunct member of AFT-Lone Star needed help with an issue at another college system where he or she was teaching, all we could do is offer advice. We could not take any direct action because other colleges are outside our jurisdiction. Now, an adjunct member of AFT-Lone Star will automatically be a member of this new regional union and will be able to seek assistance from leaders in that group should the adjunct have a concern at one of the other colleges.

The long term goal of United Academics of Houston is to create a more positive environment for adjuncts who teach students all across the Houston area. Currently, the members are focused on two goals: to raise adjunct pay at all public institutions in Houston

and to help adjuncts gain access to full-time positions. AFT-Lone Star supports these efforts, is engaged in assisting them, and wishes this new adjunct organization great success moving forward.

For more information or to find out how you could join and become an active member of our growing movement, please visit UAHouston.org.

Alan Hall



Editor's note: We are often moved by our students' attitude, diligence and commitment despite difficulties they encounter.

The following article presents a life-changing challenge many of our students are facing and offers ways to support them.

Our Undocumented Students and the Union's Responsibilities

Politics exists because those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account.
(Jacques Rancière)

On 5 September 2017, Attorney General Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III announced that the executive order creating DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) will be rescinded in six months. Although there is a chance for a legislative fix, the failure of the Dream Act in the past makes this a troublesome situation. We're going to address this issue to clarify what DACA is (and what it isn't), why this should matter to us as members of a labor union, and what we can do.

In his announcement, Sessions repeated multiple specious claims and "alternative facts" about DACA, migrants, jobs, and public safety:

1. Sessions repeatedly uses the terminology "illegal aliens," which, although we may hear it frequently, is not a legal term in the Immigration and Nationality Act. It conflates the act of crossing the border ille-



gally with an ongoing legal investigation and criminal status, and is a term most frequently associated with nativism and xenophobia.

2. Sessions claims that DACA gave unilateral “amnesty” or “legal status” for recipients. In fact, from the time of its announcement, the program has always been clearly explained as a temporary reprieve from threats of deportation, not lawful status or steps towards citizenship.

3. The attorney general also claims that the executive order instituting DACA led to a “surge of unaccompanied minors” crossing the border, despite the fact that the Migration Policy Institute and a Congressional Report on Immigration have shown no such significant uptick correlating with the announcement of DACA.

4. Sessions points out that DACA gives recipients the ability to participate in Social Security, a claim that is true because recipients are eligible for work permits. However, stating it as he does serves to erase the reality that DACA recipients are teenagers and young adults (with a current average age of about 23) who will in fact pay into Social Security for many decades before they will receive any of the benefits granted to workers in the US.

5. Sessions claims that migrants threaten “taxpayers” and put American citizens “at risk of crime, violence and even terrorism.” In fact, migrant families *just in Harris County* provide \$3.2 billion each year, including Lone Star College System taxes.

6. The Attorney General claims that DACA “denied jobs to hundreds of thousands of Americans,” a claim that is based on no real research and that positions immigrants as ‘taking’ jobs instead of participating lawfully in the US workforce and economy. We reject the idea that DACA recipients should be thought of only or primarily in terms of their effects on the economy; however, contrary to the insinuations of this administration, DACA recipients have actually added billions to the national economy. In addition, a 2016 study in *Economics Letters* found that DACA-eligible households were 38% less likely than non-eligible unauthorized immigrant households to live in poverty.

7. Sessions ties DACA to a general “failure to en-

force immigration laws” and therefore to crime, terrorism, “corruption, poverty, and human suffering.” However much he implies it, though, DACA recipients and their families are *not* more likely to commit crimes than U.S. citizens, and in fact having a clean criminal record has been a requirement to apply for DACA. In addition, multiple studies show that migrant communities often are more safe than surrounding “native” communities.

8. Sessions claims that DACA is “an unconstitutional exercise of authority by the Executive Branch.” Though the Fifth Circuit Court argued against DACA, it did so *not based on its constitutionality*, but only on Texas’s claim that the state would incur costs by issuing driver’s licenses or being forced to change licensing laws.

In summary, Sessions, as the nation’s top law enforcer, echoes the cynical appeals of the President to appeal to his base’s most xenophobic populist sentiments, and further demonstrates a blatant attempt to divide the working class by playing native-born workers against immigrants. As with the President’s recent pardon of Sheriff Joe Arpaio, the message is clear: this administration stands with the nativists in rejecting communities of color and people of good will who understand that America’s greatest strength comes from inclusivity, not exclusion. *The community college’s strengths come from inclusivity, not exclusion.*

Canceling DACA Threatens the Union and the College

We should remember that the hegemony is effective in dividing disempowered people through fear, hatred, and xenophobia. Most DACA recipients come from working- and poverty-class families, and most are employed, which means we see that the administration’s decision to rescind DACA is an attack on *all* working class families and *all* workers. As members of a labor union, we should see such an attack of state institutions as one that hurts *all* of us, documented or not.

In short, DACA has benefitted hundreds of thousands of families in the United States, including hundreds of thousands in Texas and thousands of students at Lone Star College and local primary and secondary public schools. At least 124,000 Texan students and workers were approved for DACA before the administration announced that the pro-



gram will be rescinded. Further, *thousands more* student family members have benefited from DACA. Lone Star College is stronger because of these migrant families and the college has benefited the community. Now, college students—our students, our community families—are threatened.

We call union members to become more aware and more assertive in defending our undocumented communities. AFT has collaborated with United We Dream to protect undocumented students in primary and secondary education. Now, we must address the needs of minor and of-age students in college who pay taxes, pay tuition and fees, and enroll in college to strengthen their families and our communities. In solidarity, we must collaborate with the college system to provide guidance and resources for faculty and staff to support and prepare undocumented students and their families for changes in immigration law.

What we can do:

As citizens:

- Call your US representatives, especially in the House, and show unwavering support for a legislative bill that will continue and expand DACA. If you're not sure who represents you in the House, visit www.house.gov to find their information.
- Educate yourself about the current fight for DACA and other legislation, such as Texas's SB4, that harms migrant communities on campus.

As educators:

- Be aware that you have students who are DACA recipients, and even more who are undocumented or have undocumented family members.
- Remember that undocumented students are heterogeneous and have differing experiences.
- Openly introduce yourself as someone who supports undocumented students without asking students to identify.
- Be mindful of your language choices, such as the distinction between “illegal” and “undocumented.”
- Consider adding resources for undocumented students, such as are found at www.unitedwedream.org, to your curriculum and course information.

As a union:

- Our union has a specific website to support immigrants at <https://www.aft.org/our-community/immigration>.
- We also suggest that union members join the United We Dream chapter in Houston.

As a college:

- Recognize a transnational and migrant community that brings academic and social strengths. Openly address migration in our curriculums, college forums, hiring, and speech freedom for students.
- Lead the nation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, collect narratives from DACA recipients, Dreamers, and undocumented students, and provide multiple social and financial resources to protect the community.
- Advocate real national immigration reform and supportive state laws.

In a future issue, we will address the State of Texas's threat to students Senate Bill 4, passed in 2017, and how union members can further support our students and staff.

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ENDNOTES

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Re-thinking the “Six Signatures” Policy

At every Lone Star College fall convocation (and during the recent flood recovery period), we have heard about how valued our employees are and that taking care of them is a very high priority. With those statements in mind, I was surprised to read *The Advocate’s* recent article on Lone Star College’s “Six Signatures” policy for dealing with employees when there has been some job performance issue and the non-renewal of a contract is under consideration.

The policy is both rational and well-meaning because it assumes that a series of administrators, one at a time, must all sign off before an employee’s contract can be finally approved for non-renewal. At each stage, the policy appears to invite rational decision-making on the part of each administrator, as if an accumulation of six decision-makers, one after the other, have weighed the evidence and heard all sides before signing off. Of course, if six independent decisions were made, each after a fair hearing, then the non-renewal would certainly be valid.

But as described in the article, there appears to be a gap between the intention and the actual application of the policy. Two problems arise in that gap. They do not make every non-renewal automatic, but rather they make it more likely for a bad decision to occur as the process unfolds.

The first problem is that the employees may not get the opportunity to be heard each time there is a sign-off, or even informed that the next review is coming up. That would appear to defeat the goal of even-handedness—if each of the six decision-makers does not hear the employee’s side, independently of other decision-makers, how is a fair and impartial decision possible?

Eugene Soltes, tracing the causes of bad leadership decisions, says that the critical thinking portion of our brain works in two ways, or at two levels. In the first level, our minds seek to make sense of new information in the light of knowledge or opinions that we previously hold. The first question we ask, consciously or sub-consciously, is “How does this new information support what I already think?” (151)

Soltes goes on to note that there is, however, a second level of critical thinking which is more time-consuming but more valuable because it allows for the new information to be considered, allowing for the possibility that it may alter or even validly refute our first reaction. In this case, evidence is weighed without our thumb on the scales. However, for this level of critical thinking to be activated, *reflection must occur*. The one factor required for reflection, then, is that substantial time should pass between the presentation of the facts and the actual decision (151).

Our professional lives are carried on at a fast pace, often without reflective periods built in. An administrator’s days are a swirl of meetings, conferences, emails, and phone calls. It is very difficult to build this reflective piece into the mix, even though we know how crucial it is for our decisions to be good ones. But reflective time is required for one’s reasoning to be fully engaged.

The second problem is subtle, harder to observe in ourselves. It is likely each administrator is, by a certain peer pressure, under some expectation to support a colleague’s prior decision. In fact, it would be rare if things were otherwise. Once, when a student challenged a grade, my colleagues looked at the student’s work and concluded that my grade was not justifiable, and when I learned about their decision, I suddenly realized how much I had expected my fellow faculty members to back my decision up, just because they were my colleagues....



When our critical thinking mode does malfunction, what specific factors are in play? Stephanie Solansky, associate professor of management at UH-Victoria, lays out decision-making biases in a recent article, and two of the most likely ones in the “Six Signature Process” are the framing bias and the escalation of commitment bias. In the framing bias, the decision is affected by the way it is framed or presented (usually by someone else). In the escalation of commitment bias, we resist letting go of a previous decision because of the time and energy already invested.

The two problems in the implementation of the Lone Star College policy (the absence of an employee hearing at each stage and the tendency to support the previous decisions of colleagues) suggest that the decision makers are vulnerable to Solansky’s biases. Perhaps the procedure will be reviewed and modified to create a stronger confidence that these decisions, whichever way they go, are not vulnerable to bias and have the best interests of all the employees at heart.

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Tales from the Unionside

Editor’s Note: Beginning with the January/February 2015 issue of *The Advocate*, political science professor Bob Locander has written a regular political column on people, politics, and the AFT at Lone Star College. We are happy to report that Bob and two political comrades-in-arms, Kevin Bailey and Richard Shaw, have just written a book on *How Texas Politics Really Works*. The authors gave us permission to reprint the book preface in the newsletter. We were glad to see that these three amigos pulled off a surprisingly good read even for those not normally interested in politics.

HOW TEXAS POLITICS REALLY WORKS

PREFACE

The idea to write a short introduction to Texas politics for general readers and students came about as a result of a phone call. One future author (KB) called another (BL) to measure his level of interest in joining a group of professors in writing a Texas government college textbook. As we discussed the possibility, both authors began to convince themselves of how bad an idea this was.

As colleagues at North Harris County College in the 1980s, our old complaints began to be resurrected and haunted us again. The major textbook publishers only wanted formula books with glossy pictures, tables, charts, and inserts with sticker shock prices on the cover – better to make students poorer and no more wiser.

The thought came to us that we should break the textbook market mold and head in a different direction. Why not write a realistic introduction to Texas politics with a kick? If toes were stepped on, so be it. Our goal was to write a book that would be short, sweet, and cheap. We never considered contacting the major publishing companies, because their preferences in textbooks ran to long, bland, and expensive.

As the two of us continued our discussions, we decided to seek out a third author (RS) to complete our writing team. When asked to join the project, he paused for a moment reflecting and said, “What you want in a book is some good-old fashioned



Texas truth-telling.” Exactly! We three authors have known each other for over 35 years. Each of us comes from a different political vantage point or place: state legislator, college professor, and labor advocate.

With over 100 combined years of engagement in Texas politics, we share many things in common, but we are not political triplets. Much of this book was written during the 2016 presidential election race, and many conversations took place among us about the diabolical Don, Lyin’ Ted, little Marco, crooked Hillary, and Uncle Bernie. On November 8, we authors went in three different presidential directions.

From disunited views on national politics, however, came a united view about the structure, purpose, and powers associated with the Texas political system. Taking our lead from James Lamare, author of Texas Politics: Economics, Power, and Policy, we openly embraced the elite perspective or model as the best way to explain How Texas Politics Really Works.

As a student at the University of Texas at El Paso, Kevin Bailey took a political science course from Professor Lamare and was no doubt influenced by him. Lamare’s student would go on to serve 18 years in the Texas House of Representatives, where the reality of the professor’s theories were confirmed in practice in legislative session after session.

While Lamare’s model influenced the book’s perspective, it was another author whose work had an impact on the book’s format. As a Texas college professor, Bob Locander has seen many changes in students and books over the past 40 years. Just like President Donald Trump, many students today are nonreaders. While it used to be said that readers are leaders, Trump challenges this idea and many students are like the president in that they hate to read anything beyond 140 characters. Even today’s English majors seldom get to the “peace” in Tolstoy’s great novel. It was partly for this reason and the hope that general readers might be willing to give a short book a try that we watched our page count. In choosing brevity, we followed a template that Charles Peters utilized in his book, How Washington Really Works.

In its first edition, the Peters’ book, consisting of eight chapters and 135 pages, was very popular among BL’s students in an introductory government class. While the organization and title guided us, our work is different from his in subject and tone. We tried to draw on our collective strengths to produce a book that is different from any other Texas politics text in print. How Texas Politics Really Works is many books in one. First, we drew on our own personal experiences and political involvements in Lone Star politics as government insiders and outsiders. Second, we tried to stay grounded in political science and history where we could utilize national and state examples to better inform the reader. Third, this point of view book will not be everyone’s cup of tea. A teaching colleague of KB used to say that he did not like to be around political scientists as they were always bringing him “bad news.” The bad news of political science based on academic research has a way of bursting the bubbles of the naïve and destroying the falsehoods of partisans.

While we think of ourselves as three amigos out to inform citizens of the way things really are in Texas, others might see us as three bad hombres who have been out in the sun too long. To our friends and foes alike, we say that we have tried to give an honest appraisal of Lone Star politics as we have witnessed it from three different angles. As over 65 authors, we like to quote the late Maggie Kuhn, founder of the Gray Panther movement on the value of growing old, “Being 65 . . . becomes a crossroads. We said, we have nothing to lose (at this age), so we can raise hell.” It is time for the baby boomers in Texas to display no fear of the state political and economic establishment and to speak truth to power. For the young and the middle-aged, it is our hope that this book will get you thinking about questioning authority and realizing that the public interest is seldom the the same as the private interests controlling Austin today.

Kevin Bailey (KB)
Bob Locander (BL)
Richard C. Shaw (RS)
Houston, Texas
July, 2017



Editor’s Note: Locander is a regular political columnist for *The Advocate*



Time to be Union Proud in the Wake of Hurricane Harvey

Labor Day weekend offered us a chance to reflect on the struggles still ahead for economic equality and justice. Income inequality, lack of access to basics like affordable health care, and an aggressive attempt by the rich and powerful to undermine opportunity by stifling investments in K-12 and higher education are conspiring to make it more difficult for people to lift themselves into the middle class. The tragedy of Hurricane Harvey lays bare the thin safety net that keeps Texas families from having one stroke of bad luck put them in the poorhouse or out on the street. American workers need a collective voice now more than at any time in recent history. It is time for us to recommit ourselves to the struggle to build strong, powerful unions that can bargain collectively for better wages, benefits, and a fair piece of the pie for working men and women.

So many of our fellow Texans are still out of their homes, school districts throughout the region are closed, and many folks are either just discovering the damage done to their lives or beginning the arduous process of cleaning and rebuilding.

The hurricane did serve to highlight some remarkable efforts from our union brothers and sisters and what it means to be part of a union family.

Hundreds of Texas AFT members have donated to our Disaster Relief Fund, and that effort has been bolstered by strong support from our national union—AFT—which has collected donations from thousands of members across the country.

You can still donate now by going to www.texasaft.org/help-educators-impacted-hurricane-harvey and remember that 100% of the money will go to direct grants of money, grocery cards, and supplies for our impacted members.

If you were impacted by the storm, you can find additional resources at:

www.texasaft.org/hurricane-harvey-information-resources

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- ◆ Beauty: Free shipping for Mary Kay products
- ◆ Auto: Save 10 percent on regularly priced Goodyear tires, auto parts and maintenance at company-owned Goodyear and Just Tires stores. Plus, save 5 percent on sale tires and preventive maintenance.

GO TO:

www.aft.org/about/member-benefits



If you are interested in membership, benefits, or would like to discuss a work-related issue, our AFT Faculty and Staff Vice-Presidents are here to assist. Please don't hesitate to contact them. See the back page of this publication for contact information.



AFT-Lone Star College

AFT Local Union # 4518

GOALS

- To promote academic excellence
- To protect academic freedom in higher education
- To preserve and protect the integrity and unique identity of each of the institutions of higher education in Texas
- To protect the dignity and rights of faculty against discrimination
- To ensure that faculty have an effective voice on all matters pertaining to their welfare
- To secure for all members the rights to which they are entitled
- To raise the standards of the profession by establishing professional working conditions
- To encourage democratization of higher education
- To promote the welfare of the citizens of Texas by providing better educational opportunities for all
- To initiate and support state legislation which will benefit the students and faculty of Texas
- To promote and assist the formation and growth of Texas United Faculty chapters throughout Texas
- To maintain and promote the aims of the American Federation of Teachers and other affiliated labor bodies

Professional career
protection and a united
voice at work
Join us today!

BENEFITS

- \$8,000,000 Occupational Liability Insurance
 - provides security while teaching
 - protection against litigation
 - malpractice protection
- \$25,000 Accidental Death Insurance
- Legal Assistance
 - Free consultation and representation on grievances and job related problems
 - Services of leading labor attorneys
 - Legal Defense Fund protection
- Political Power
 - Texas AFT lobbyists in Austin
 - AFT lobbyists in Washington
 - Representation at the Coordinating Board
 - Support for local electoral work
- Affiliations
 - Affiliated with the Texas AFL-CIO
 - Affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers and Texas AFT
- Staff Services
 - Professional representatives to assist and advise in processing grievances
 - AFT research facilities
 - Leadership Training
- Savings and discounts on goods and services with AFT PLUS Benefits
- Free \$5,000 term life insurance policy for first year of membership

Monthly AFT Dues

Full-time Faculty	\$40.00
Full-time Professional Staff	\$28.60
Full-time Support Staff	\$25.88
Adjunct Faculty	\$16.00
Part-Time Staff	\$14.00

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.aftlonestar.org





American Federation of Teachers

Lone Star College



Directions: How to Join the AFT

AFT-Lone Star has a new online form that makes it easy for new members to join or for current members to switch to our new system.

Here's the best way to sign up:

1. Go to <https://join.aft.org>. From the pull-down menu in the box under "FIND A LOCAL," choose "Texas." Click "search" and then scroll down to find "AFT Lone Star College, Local 4518."
2. Fill out the form that appears; you're asked to provide your name, address and so on. Toward the bottom of the page, a question asks, "Are you an AFT member transitioning from payroll deduction e-bank transfer system?" Check yes.
3. You're then asked to identify your membership category: Full-time faculty, Full-time professional staff, etc.
4. You're then asked to provide your bank name, routing number and account number, check boxes authorizing the semi-monthly deductions for dues, and type your name. Then, press "SUBMIT." YOU'RE DONE! (in minutes!)

Note:

Our new system:

- Is PCI Level I Compliant and adheres to all payment card industry standards and best practices for the utmost security.
- Includes multiple secure layers of hardware, software and processes to ensure safety & security of valuable information.
- Uses industry-leading firewall technology and software. All critical customer data is transmitted and stored using high-grade encryption, and its leading technology monitors data 24/7 from multiple sources, ensuring protection against security breaches and reducing vulnerability.

SIGN UP TODAY!

<https://join.aft.org>



Contact us at aftlonestar@yahoo.com or visit our webpage: www.aftlonestar.org.



P.O. Box 788 Spring, Texas 77383-0788

We're on the Web!
www.aftlonestar.org



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 ideas. Send your articles to **Katie Hurter, Editor** via e-mail: katie.hurter@lonestar.edu, or submit to any of the following officers.

Alan Hall, President	North Harris	ACAD 217-G	281-618-5544
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Chris Phlegar	North Harris	ACAD 270-H	281-618-5583
Rich Almstedt	Kingwood	FTC 100-G	281-312-1656
Laura Codner	Kingwood	CLA 110-D	281-312- 414
Catherine Olson	Tomball	S 153 -H	281-357-3776
Richard Becker	Tomball	E 271-D	281-401-1835
Janet Moore	Tomball	E 210 -E	281-401-1871
Van Piercy	Tomball	S 153-J	281-401-1814
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Louise Casey-Clukey	Montgomery	B 100-G	936-273-7394
John Burghduff	Cy-Fair	HSC 250-G	281-290-3915
Cindy Hoffart-Watson	Cy-Fair	LRNC 101-C	281-290-3265
Earl Brewer	Fairbanks	S - 13	832-782-5029

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 give this message 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, AFT is there for them.

If you believe in these values and are not a member, now is the perfect time to join. If you believe in our values, take action now and join the AFT.

—Alan Hall

