



# The Advocate

## Jerking the Chain—Fixing Problems with the Appeals Process

AFT-Lone Star College has long advocated for the due process rights of employees. By due process, we mean that, if employees have a grievance, or if they have had disciplinary action taken against them, they should have the right to appeal their case to an objective third party that has not already ruled against them. This is why, in 2015, we endorsed a change in Lone Star College policy, opening up a pathway for employees to appeal to the Board of Trustees.

During the tenure of former LSC Chancellor Richard Carpenter, appeal to the Board was eliminated from policy. In fact, employees not on contracts (primarily staff members) only had the right to appeal a grievance or disciplinary action to their supervisor's supervisor. For much of that administration, in violation of state law, employees were not even allowed to have representatives present at hearings to assist with their appeals. That problem was resolved only after a legal challenge by the AFT.

As a corrective measure, Dr. Head instituted the Six Signature Process, which has been highlighted in these pages in past issues. That process, we believe, was well intentioned because it means that individual administrators can no longer terminate an employee unilaterally. However, there are serious concerns. According to the process, decisions to terminate or change the contract status of an employee must be approved all the way up through the administra-

tive chain of command to the chancellor, but as those signatures are gathered, the affected employee is not informed of the process, nor given the chance to present his or her side. Once a disciplinary decision is announced to the employee, she or he must then appeal the decision up through the same administrative chain that has already ruled against the employee. By contrast, we believe employees should be able to appeal that decision to a neutral third party that has not already ruled against them.

Lone Star Policy recognizes that the State of Texas vests in the Board of Trustees "exclusive power and duty to govern and oversee the College's management."<sup>1</sup> The AFT agrees that the Board should not interject itself into decisions about day-to-day operations, but the Board is the legal and ethical watchdog of the college. The new grievance policy, as adopted in 2015, reflected this role by allowing employees to ultimately appeal their grievances, changes in contract status, and terminations to the Board of Trustees as long as they could identify an alleged violation of college policy or procedure. With this policy in place, AFT leadership hoped that a system had finally been developed that would introduce neutral and unbiased checks and balances to the system.

Unfortunately, appeal to the Board has not worked as well as hoped.

The path to appeal was greatly narrowed in a policy revision adopted

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earlier this year. Under this revision, only violations of the Grievance Policy or procedures explicitly listed within college policy that specifically relate to grievances are grounds for an appeal. LSC policies, approved by the Board, are accompanied by implementing procedures written by the administration. Under this 2017 policy revision, these procedures no longer count as procedures for this context, as paradoxical as that sounds. Under this revision, it seems unlikely that the Board could ever hear an appeal.

Appeal to the Board is not working well for other reasons. In order to appeal to the Board, an employee has to first submit briefs, and then a subcommittee of the Board makes a recommendation to the entire Board about whether or not to hear the appeal. It is not the purview of the subcommittee to decide on the merits of the appeal itself. Their job is to determine if the appeal fits the requirements to be eligible. For their decision to be fair and unbiased, one might expect the subcommittee to follow the same protocols in gathering information from both sides of the disagreement. The three employees who have applied for appeal to the Board and their attorney assert that the subcommittee never contacted them for additional comment or clarification. We had hoped that the administration had been treated the same way.

However, in open session at the August 2017 Board of Trustees meeting, Trustee Dr. Ron Trowbridge, who serves on this subcommittee, stated that, at least in one case, he had contacted administration sources for input and made a decision about the merits of the appeal itself, not just the eligibility, based on that input. The following quote from Dr. Trowbridge is transcribed from the video of the August 2017 meeting:

“I got in touch with the administration to ask questions about things, having read this brief in full. And I got answers. And the answers I got, which I cannot discuss here, convinced me that we’re doing the right thing in not recommending this grievance appeal to the Board. I say that again: I read this twice. I asked questions. I think finally that the position the administration took was the right and fair position.”<sup>2</sup>

Three employees requested appeal to the Board between September 2016 and August 2017, and all

three requests were denied. Dr. Trowbridge’s comments raise questions about the neutrality of the subcommittee.

Currently, there are proposed revisions to the Policy Manual that may receive final approval at the December Board meeting that would narrow the path to appeal to the Board even farther. One revision states that if non-contractual employees (primarily staff) are terminated, they would have no right of appeal to anyone at all.<sup>3</sup> Under another proposed change, the Chancellor’s decision to place an employee on administrative leave would not be subject to administrative review and would not be grievable.<sup>4</sup> These two changes eliminate due process rights altogether in these two circumstances. The AFT sees these proposals as a return to the approach of the Carpenter administration.

In addition, the LSC Office of the General Counsel recently posted proposed policy changes for public comment on their webpage that would completely eliminate the right of employees to appeal grievances, terminations, or changes of contract status to the Board of Trustees, undoing the policy that was enacted only two years ago. This change may get a first reading at the December meeting of the Board and potentially could come up for final approval at the February 2018 meeting if it survives as originally presented.

This newest proposed policy change affirms that employees who have exhausted all appeals up through the level of the chancellor could address the Board during Citizen Participation (a right they have always had under state law), but since the Board cannot act on or address issues not on the agenda, this provides no remedy to the employee and only creates an embarrassing situation for all concerned.

Foreshadowing this policy proposal, Dr. Trowbridge proposed at the September 2017 Board meeting that appeals should stop at the chancellor, invoking his good character. The AFT acknowledges and appreciates that positive solutions have been found for some employees through the intervention of Dr. Head. However, the AFT believes that policy should be based on ethical principles of due process, rather than the changing fortunes of current personalities or circumstances.



Although the appeals process as it has turned out in practice has not been pleasant, the policy proposals described above seem reactive. Appeal to the Board was only revived less than two years ago. Only three employees out of approximately 8,000 have even attempted to appeal an issue to the Board. To put that in perspective, only 0.04% of employees have attempted an appeal, an exceptionally low percentage. This is far too small a sample to warrant a complete reversal of a process begun only two years ago. In the September 2017 Board meeting, Dr. Trowbridge stated that "this year" three appeals to the board alleged procedural irregularities, but all were denied by the board, the legal cost to the system amounting to \$200,000.00. According to Trowbridge, "That sum has been virtually wasted."<sup>5</sup> This dollar amount seems surprising for cases that only involved internal hearings. Nevertheless, taking his word for the cost, we believe this figure should be placed into perspective. Within an operating budget of around \$435,000,000, \$200,000 is about 0.05%. Moreover, the notion that every appeal denied is a waste of resources is based on a narrow understanding of the value of appeals. Even denied appeals bring problems out into the open so that they can be addressed.

In short, let us not repeal unless we can also replace.

The due process right of employees to have their cases heard by a neutral third party is paramount. If that third party is to be the Board of Trustees, let us embrace that paradigm and allow appeals cases to be heard. We believe there are models in other places that work and that are worth considering.

Also, the AFT believes it is a mistake to see only two alternatives: appeal to the Board or nothing. If the Board does not want to be that neutral third party, there are other viable alternatives we can and should consider.

For example, Austin Community College provides for an *ad hoc* peer review board consisting of members chosen by the administration and members chosen by the aggrieved employee. Public school districts sometimes appoint outside hearing officers with investigative powers who recommend resolutions for their Boards to approve. Spring Independent School District has a very explicit model for this approach. Use of an outside mediator is another viable option.

Rather than advocate for one particular model at this time, the AFT proposes an open and public conversation about better options before any policies are changed. Thorough documentation from other schools and colleges is available. Input should be sought internally from administrators, Board Members, and employee organizations, including the union.

Lone Star College is known for innovation in higher education. Although developing a fair grievance policy is difficult, we can focus our innovative spirit on building a better process together. As inspiration for the task, we would like to quote from a speech given by Dr. Trowbridge to the Lone Star College Board of Trustees at their August 2013 meeting. The AFT believes that, in that speech, he set out principles that can guide us in our work:

There are two major things that would jerk my chain as a trustee. The first is any violation of anyone's constitutional rights, especially free speech, obligation of contracts, and due process. The second is any poor treatment of people.

We are all on the same team, and that team consists of trustees, administrators, faculty and staff—both union and non-union, students, parents, the public, and, I trust, legislators. There is no good reason we cannot all work together harmoniously.<sup>6</sup>

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#### Endnotes

1. Lone Star College Policy Manual section I.D.1.05, paragraph (a)
2. Quote from Dr. Ron Trowbridge, video of August, 2017 LSC Board of Trustees meeting, [www.lonestar.edu/trustees](http://www.lonestar.edu/trustees)
3. Proposed Lone Star College policy IV.G.3.2. Listed in the agenda of the November, 2017 meeting of the Board of Trustees
4. Proposed Lone Star College policy IV.G.1.4. Listed in the agenda of the November, 2017 meeting of the Board of Trustees
5. Quote from Dr. Ron Trowbridge, video of September, 2017 LSC Board of Trustees meeting, [www.lonestar.edu/trustees](http://www.lonestar.edu/trustees)
6. Transcript of speech at the August, 2013 Board of Trustees meeting provided by Dr. Ron Trowbridge to Dr. John Burghduff



*Editor's note: Many of us have non-native speakers in our classes, and how they came to be in the US is not always clear. We are often moved by these students' attitude, diligence and commitment despite difficulties they encounter. The following article, second in a series, presents the life-changing challenge many of our students are facing and offers ways to support them.*

## Our Undocumented Students, Part 2 —The Threat of the State

**It does not allow that the sacrifices imposed on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by many. Therefore in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests."**

— John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*

In May 2017, Texas Governor Abbott signed a bill meant to ban "sanctuary cities" in Texas by requiring that all local police—including college campus police—cooperate with federal immigration authorities. The bill makes it illegal for a local authority to have any policy that stops an officer from requesting information about immigration status, and it threatens jail time for any leaders who don't honor requests to hold inmates who may be subject to deportation. Opponents of the bill—including lawmakers, college faculty, immigrant rights groups, and many law enforcement officials—point out that such a law creates a situation in which even a minor offense creates the possibility of deportation.

At this printing, the State of Texas defends its Senate Bill 4 (SB 4) before the Fifth Circuit Court, and the Governor has consistently maligned immigrants as "gang members and dangerous criminals."<sup>1</sup> Despite this rhetoric of criminality, migrants are *less likely to commit a crime* than "native" born Americans, as we discussed in the previous issue of *The Advocate*.

This summer, while Chief U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia ruled a temporary stay against SB 4, the decision let stand one of the most controversial portions of the law, which allows police officers to

question the immigration status of people they detain—the "Show your Papers" provision. While the provision is similar to one struck from Arizona law requiring all officers to ask for immigration status from detained individuals, the Texas law skirts the issue by *suggesting* this action. This relationship of police officers and federal enforcement still permits Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to ask LSCS Police about student status. Thus, our college students and their families are still threatened by the state.

So, while the Abbot-Patrick-Paxton axis argues for "safety," Judge Garcia concluded that SB 4 "will erode public trust and make many communities and neighborhoods less safe."<sup>2</sup> Several Texas cities leaders criticized the governor, understanding that SB 4 will lead to rampant discrimination and make communities *less safe*, particularly as it acts as a deterrent for communities with undocumented people to report crime. That's why police chiefs and mayors have been among the harshest critics of the governor—they recognize that this local-federal police collaboration will harm, not help, our communities.

To understand SB 4, try to understand the inane rationale: SB 4 "requires local government entities and law enforcement officials to comply with federal immigration laws and detainer requests, and creates criminal penalties for entities that do not enforce the law."<sup>3</sup>

When Abbott signed the law, he argued that there are deadly consequences to not enforcing the law, and Texas has now become a state where those practices are not tolerated. With this bill we are doing away with those that seek to promote lawlessness in Texas.<sup>4</sup>

Attorney General Ken Paxton (while defending his own felony indictments), argued that "Texas has the sovereign authority and responsibility to protect the safety and welfare of its citizens."<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, most police chiefs disagree and show that SB 4 makes migrant communities *less safe*.<sup>6</sup> Sadly, higher education leadership was not as vocally opposed to the legislation as were our police chiefs. Certainly, SB 4 does not make a college campus more safe. Few of our students have time to both study algebra and actively engage in Mara Salvatrucha-13 (the international criminal gang originating in LA).



Further, SB 4 attacks *all migrants*, including those who have never committed any felonies. Understand that crossing the border without permission is a *misdemeanor, not a felony*,<sup>7</sup> and it is an error when pundits call undocumented migrants “criminals.” Consider how we would resist if the federal marshals were to come to the college campus and arrest all workers—all those students and staff and faculty and administration—with misdemeanors.

In *Arizona v. United States*, the Supreme Court held that states (that means you, Texas) may not make their own laws criminalizing undocumented migrants. Moreover, because over-policing in schools impacts all communities of color, effective sanctuary policies must also include dismantling the racially discriminatory school-to-prison pipeline, which the Texas Legislature and Governor Abbott ignore as the real concern about safe communities.

To be clear, Abbott lied when he signed the law on 7 May 2017: He argued that “only criminals” should worry about being asked for their papers under SB 4. Now that the current president has named Thomas Homan as Director of ICE, we should expect even more thuggish aggressions from the man who said “No one is off the table”<sup>8</sup> and that *all* undocumented immigrants “should be afraid.” Some of our most hardworking students are on the table. We should be afraid.

The American Federation of Teachers opposed SB 4, claiming that colleges would be distracted from their mission and obligation to educate, and that the law creates an atmosphere of suspicion and fear on campus for students and their families that would impede learning.<sup>9</sup>

Under SB 4, ICE has the authority reach out into the student records of Lone Star College, identify the hundreds of undocumented students, and seize students from their homes, *or the campus*. Understand that under the current Immigration and Customs Enforcement policy, over 400 undocumented migrants are arrested *daily*, tearing apart families, children separated from their parents, lacking true due process. The Immigration Court *does not provide public defense*, and many impoverished migrants cannot afford legal counsel. ICE’s policy is increasingly aggressive and ruthless—they’ve de-

tained parents who were dropping students off at school and deported even DACA-authorized university students.<sup>10</sup>

To be clear, SB 4 is another brick in the pan-opticon assault on laborers in Texas; everyone can be scrutinized and controlled. The Texas labor movement has a proud tradition of fighting for working families—immigrants and those who were born here, alike. From striking pecan shellers in San Antonio nearly 80 years ago, to striking steel workers in the Texas Golden Triangle, to state pressure on teachers and college faculty and staff, in resistance, Texas working families always have each other’s backs.



### A Drama in Five Acts

What does SB 4 mean to the undocumented college student?

1. ICE sees headlines such as “Lone Star College designated Top 25 College for Hispanics” and ICE collaborates with the college to identify which *hundreds* of students are undocumented.
2. Hundreds of college students detained in private/profitier centers,<sup>11</sup> most likely in Montgomery County, for an undetermined time. College students fail all courses and fail to graduate or complete any certificate. The community lacks important trained and educated adults.
3. The college students appear before the Immigration Court, without defense because ICE does not provide public defense services.
4. College students are separated from their families; college students lose their employment, further impoverishing the remaining family in Harris County. College students are deported to a country which is, most often, unknown, because they were raised in Houston.

Our former college students will live in deep poverty, threatened by extreme violence, even murder.<sup>12, 13</sup>

But this drama is not a play. This is not hyperbole. ICE deportation of college students has already started. This is real. This is Texas.



## What we can do:

### As citizens

Demand Congress pass a “clean” DREAM Act (that is, a DREAM act without legislated increases in deportations and ICE enforcement). The 2017 Congressional session ends on December 15th. That gives us a month to pass the Dream Act in the House and in the Senate. Immigrant youth can’t afford to wait any longer. Call your Congressional Representative today.

### As educators

Listen to student lives and demonstrate empathy to lives and histories that are dissimilar to our own. Become much more aware of migration, and bring multiple disciplines to address our communities’ and students’ lives. Migration is very complex, and as trained educators, we must bring our academic disciplines to inform the community. Bring migration stories into our curriculums as a *real* intellectual space that bridges textbooks to our students.

### As a union

Visit the AFT website to support immigration at <https://www.aft.org/our-community/immigration>. Join with United We Dream chapter in Houston at <https://unitedwedream.org/>.

### As a college

Bridge the faculty and the community in a common town square that addresses migration. The community relies on and believes too many “mistruths,” but an institution of higher education like Lone Star College should lead the community with local academic research, local stories, local analysis, and local problem-solving.

In our future issue, we will address the legal and philosophical questions of “unjust laws” and how all of us are threatened.

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## Gratitude

I'd like to end this November-December edition of *The Advocate* for 2017 by celebrating a number of positive experiences that occurred during this difficult fall semester. First, I am grateful to work with such excellent, caring colleagues throughout LSC. Faculty and staff banded together to help mitigate the challenges of Hurricane Harvey for employees and students. Their compassion and desire to help were heartwarming. Our students also deserve recognition for their efforts to carry on in spite of challenges involving transportation, displacement from their homes, and rebuilding. Those of us who haven't experienced flooding can only imagine and wonder at the fortitude of the friends and students who did and are still moving forward.

AFT-Lone Star; our state affiliate, the Texas AFT; our national affiliate in Washington, DC, the American Federation of Teachers; the Texas AFL-CIO in Austin; and the Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation headquartered in Houston, all joined together to offer relief to union members, many who survived the storm with only what they were wearing when they evacuated—cars and houses left behind in deep water. Our organization and our members reinforced a truth about the union: we are a family. We have each other's backs.



I am also pleased to note that the UAH (United Academics of Houston) is moving forward with plans to develop a robust organization for adjuncts across the greater Houston region. Our initial goal is to improve salaries and working conditions for adjuncts. They are a group that teaches a significant percentage of college classes in Houston, and they deserve decent compensation and respect for their services.

AFT-Lone Star continues in our most important effort, one shared by every employee—staff, faculty, and administration—to build the college and make it better. Every day here, we build not only physical spaces, but the structure of individual efforts and personalities that must work together in action and decision making at all levels to balance and strengthen our college...so that students can succeed.

I hope the semester break with family and friends reenergizes and refocuses all of us.

Alan Hall

## Tales from the Unionside

The 85<sup>th</sup> Texas legislative regular and special sessions, which met in January-May and July-August, are mercifully over. As the old political saying goes, "No man's life, liberty, and property are safe while the House and Senate are meeting in Austin." In the Capitol battle between good and evil in odd-numbered years in the Legislature, the Devil generally wins out, and 2017 was no exception.

How can 181 state legislators, a governor, and a lieutenant governor do as badly as they do with such regularity? My measure of goodness and badness is based on policy outcomes for public employees and working Texans. On this measure, our elected officials deserve an "F" grade for what they did and did not do to average state residents.

The late Molly Ivins, a smart observer of Lone Star politics, once said of a past Republican governor and a Democratic Legislature that "If you are waiting for them to raise taxes to help the poor and needy in Texas, then you have to hold a gun and a court order to their heads and be ready to use both." The Ivins comment was made when the Democrats, the alleged party of the people, controlled the House and Senate, a time not seen in Austin since dinosaurs roamed the earth.

With Republicans in charge today, the people should know exactly where they stand—waist-deep in quicksand. Before the beginning of the 2017 Legislature, Governor Greg Abbott identified his top four legislative priorities as fixing a broken Child Protective Service Agency, banning sanctu-



ary cities, reforming state ethics laws, and supporting a states' call for a U.S. constitutional convention.

Of Abbott's agenda items, the governor can claim credit for signing bills related to his top four priorities. The law he signed for helping Texas children facing abuse and neglect came about only after a federal judge had ruled that the state foster-care system violated the civil rights of children. Nothing like the state chief executive leading from behind!

The Republican support for banning sanctuary cities in Texas is purely Trumpian in spirit. Despite the opposition of local government officials in urban areas, the Texas version of "show me your papers" is now in effect. Both the Trump and Abbott administrations favor "federalizing" city police into *de facto* deportation agents over the strong objections of church, civil rights, and community leaders.

The multiple bills aimed at government ethics reform were pure political theater as just two of six reform bills passed, and neither one did much to upset those in power and control of the state. Asking Texas politicians to act in an ethical manner is just so unTexan. Have these 181 elected officials of dubious intellect and morals not heard of Lyndon Johnson, John Connally, Tom Delay, and a cast of hundreds of bad supporting actors?

The GOP attack on the ghost of Obama's Washington was a red-state-generated move for a proposed national constitutional convention to meet for the purpose of limiting federal government power by requiring a balanced budget and term limits, among other things. For this convention to meet, thirty-four state legislatures must approve the idea, which is an unlikely prospect even with a "yes" vote from Texas. Governor Abbott's backing of this convention of states reflects more about his Tea Party principles and 2018 election politics than any genuine admiration for James Madison.

While Abbott did next to nothing for the folks in 2017, what about our wild and crazy Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick? If Patrick were not a real person, you would swear he was a cartoon character on Comedy Central. From his early Houston days as a TV sportscaster with an Oiler-blue paint-

ed face, Danno has reinvented himself into a political demagogue with a holier-than-thou Christian attitude.

It was the LG's personal crusade to have Texas pass a bathroom bill this year designed to protect women (female at birth) from transgender women using female restrooms. Despite civil rights and corporate opposition, Patrick pushed the bill in the regular and special sessions only to be stopped by House Speaker Joe Straus, who realized the serious harm this law could cause to the Lone Star State. While civil rights groups spoke against Patrick's intolerant bill, it was the business community that convinced Straus to kill the bill. The Texas Association of Business, a powerhouse lobby group, and individual corporations convinced the House Speaker that the economic loss of a projected \$5.6 **million** dollars over the next ten years was reason enough to defeat the Patrick Senate bill.

While the big four Abbott items grabbed the headlines, what did the Republicans do for public employees like you and me? As teachers and staff, we came up losers again, along with our students. The Republican Party of Texas is no friend of public education. What Republicans would like to see in education is privatization, vouchers for nonpublic schools, and charter schools operating outside established education guidelines. Since 2011, the GOP Legislature has cut \$5.3 billion dollars in state educational spending.

If public education were cost-free, Republicans would be there for us. Since my first year at North Harris County College in 1977, the state government has dropped its funding support for Lone Star College from over 70 percent to below 30 percent of our budget. The GOP is not completely at fault here, as Democrats ran the government show during parts of the 1980's and 1990's, but since 1998, it has been red-party control in Austin. While spending money is part of the Republican party's problem with education, the other part is political, for the GOP in Texas is the party of white Anglos. As the party of suburban and rural whites, red politicians know that their base voters are not enthusiastic about K-12 education spending, which the base interprets as state dollars going to urban districts made up of black and brown students.

Along with big-city voters, Republicans know that



public school teachers vote for the Democratic candidates in elections. For a teacher to vote Republican in Texas is an act of professional suicide. With the GOP knowing how votes are cast, educators can expect little but rhetoric from the likes of Abbott, Patrick, and friends. It was a cruel joke played on K-12 teachers by the Governor when he called for a \$1,000 pay increase for teachers only to omit the fact that this would be an unfunded state mandate left for local districts to pay for. This raise and other past education promises to teachers and students are examples of GOP smoke and mirrors.

If Republicans see most teachers as political foes, we unionized educators are the enemy of their state. As Richard Shaw, long time secretary-treasurer of the Harris County AFL-CIO has said, "Unions at best get to play defense in Austin. The job of unions is to stop bad legislation from being passed that hurts workers and average Texans." To show how petty and small-minded Republican elected officials can be, the Texas Senate passed a bill that would have stopped local governments from deducting union dues from the paychecks of teachers and municipal employees. As is the usual case, the GOP deception was based on a Trumpian "fact" about the costs to taxpayers, which in reality is no cost at all.

The *Houston Chronicle* came out with a strong editorial exposing Governor Abbott and other Republicans for their backing of such a bill which had nothing to do with government costs. According to the editorial, "Teachers don't get many breaks that make their lives slightly easier. So why is Governor Abbott trying to eliminate one that costs the taxpayers nothing? Politics not reform is the answer." The newspaper's last words against this Republican brain-dead proposal, which failed in the House, were, "Education groups often don't see eye-to-eye with the Republican-controlled Legislature on issues like school funding and vouchers. As such, this feels like a solution to a problem that doesn't exist—unless in lawmakers' eyes, the problem is teachers having a strong voice."

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

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[www.facebook.com/AftLoneStarCollege](http://www.facebook.com/AftLoneStarCollege)

**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 & 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](http://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](mailto:aftlonestar@yahoo.com) or visit our webpage: [www.aftlonestar.org](http://www.aftlonestar.org).



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

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.aftlonestar.org](http://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](mailto:katie.hurter@lonestar.edu), or submit to any of the following officers.

Alan Hall, President	North Harris	ACAD 217-G	281-618-5544
Stephen King	North Harris	ACAD 162-H	281-618-5530
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
Martina Kusi-Mensah	Montgomery	G 121-J	936-273-7276
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

