

# AFT & PROFESSIONAL STAFF

## A Record Of Accomplishments

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has been representing professional staff in the state colleges and universities since 1974. During this time it has negotiated several master agreements, processed countless grievances and provided professional staff with all kinds of assistance with employment-related problems. Individual members of the professional staff have always been very active in the Union. Their participation is key to the Union's effectively addressing their needs and concerns. Here's a partial list of what professional staff have accomplished through the AFT.

### ✓ CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A sabbatical by another name is Career Development Leave. Locals have implemented a program which allows professional staff to have leave at ¾ pay for "personal development aimed at improving professional skill." Each year approximately 24 staff are eligible for leave for up to a full semester under this Union-sponsored plan. Your local Union's implementation involves negotiated clauses concerning eligibility, peer review committee, administrative review procedures, etc. (See Article XVI.L.). Professional staff are also covered under the Career Development Procedure outlined in Appendix II of the State-Union Agreement.

### ✓ STRUCTURAL PROMOTIONS & RECLASSIFICATIONS

The Agreement provides a procedure for applying for higher level administrative positions, or for initiating reclassifications. Several locals have negotiated procedures to speed up the processing of promotions and reclassifications on the campus. Council staff have assisted professional staff in preparing job descriptions and in preparing and

presenting their cases for promotion or reclassification. The colleges and universities must follow procedures for announcing, posting, and interviewing as set forth in Article XVI.F. of the State-Union Agreement.

### ✓ PERFORMANCE-BASED PROMOTIONS

The State-Union Agreement provides professional staff who meet or exceed the criteria for performance-based promotions to be eligible to be considered for such promotions. The performance-based promotion consists of advancement to the next higher title in the employee's title series.

### ✓ RESTRICTION ON OUT-OF-TITLE WORK AND TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENTS

Pursuant to Article XVI of the State-Union Agreement, locals are working to further define professional staff rights in these areas. Council staff representatives will assist members with out-of-title work complaints.

### ✓ JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The Union negotiated the right of every staff person to have a job description. A current and accurate job description is an important tool in evaluation, promotion, reclassification and filing grievances. On some campuses, the Union has pressed the college/university to provide all professional staff job descriptions, lists of vacant positions and so forth in order to better monitor professional staff rights under the contract.

### ✓ PROFESSIONAL STAFF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

Some local Unions have worked on such programs in order to give professional staff an opportunity for development in their professional careers. Time minimums, procedures and content are some of the issues covered.

### ✓ SUMMER TEACHING AND OVERLOAD RIGHTS

Thanks to AFT, all qualified professional staff are now eligible to obtain overload teaching assignments and, like faculty, have priority in summer session assignments.

### ✓ TIME OFF FOR IMPORTANT MEETINGS

Under the Agreement, professional staff who are released from their regular duties to attend work-associated meetings or negotiations or grievance sessions may not be required to make up the time missed.

### ✓ PROFESSIONAL STAFF INPUT IS GUARANTEED ON CAMPUS

Our AFT contract states that unit directors and supervisor must hold periodic meetings with staff input on establishing such meetings.

### ✓ BINDING ARBITRATION FOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF

From time to time, the State has tried to deny professional staff bringing cases to arbitration when they were denied second or subsequent multi-year contracts. This protection as set forth in Article VII, Section E.5, amounts to a form of tenure.

### ✓ TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Tuition reimbursement has been improved in two ways after AFT negotiations. The numbers of eligible credits and the maximum reimbursement figure have increased with each succeeding contract. AFT

## Professional Staff Committee

The Council's Professional Staff Committee is composed of a professional staff representative from each of the nine locals. The members of the committee meet periodically to discuss mutual

concerns, gather information related to negotiations and other suggestion for demands for upcoming negotiations. The Committee is chaired by the Professional Staff Representative to the Council, who is a member of the Council's Executive Board. Her or she is elected annually by the full Council.

### — A RECORD OF SERVICE —

On a daily basis, Council staff provide a myriad of employment-related services you should know about. Here's a sample of what we've been able to do in the past:

- Medical benefits: Council staff have successfully speeded up collection of delayed claims and represented unit members before the Health Benefits Commission when coverage and claims are disputed.
- Pension-related matters: Council staff have been notably successful in challenging erroneous computation of benefits and have also assisted unit members who have had problems with their accounts.
- Sick-leave/maternity benefits: Council staff have been successful in ironing out problems such as erroneous computation of sick leave, discriminatory denial, pay-docking, etc.
- Disability and workers' compensation: Council staff have assisted members with both filing claims and getting them processed

### SO WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?

The Council of New Jersey State College Locals has secured higher wages, pension and more rights with each new contract. However, your colleagues need your help. Union membership sends a clear message to management that the Union is strong and that it's a force to be reckoned with at the bargaining table. Negotiating strength means improved working conditions for all Professional Staff. Please join your campus AFT Local and become part of the Council of New Jersey State College Locals so we can continue our record of accomplishment.

## Become an AFT Member

Together — we have strength!



## JOIN NOW

CONTACT US IF YOU NEED MORE  
INFORMATION OR HELP

Council of New Jersey State College Locals

908-964-8476

[info@cnjscl.org](mailto:info@cnjscl.org)

[www.cnjscl.org](http://www.cnjscl.org)

## Professional Staff

and the

## American Federation of Teachers

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1435 Morris Avenue  
Union, New Jersey 07083  
(908) 964-8476  
[www.cnjscl.org](http://www.cnjscl.org)