



# On Campus

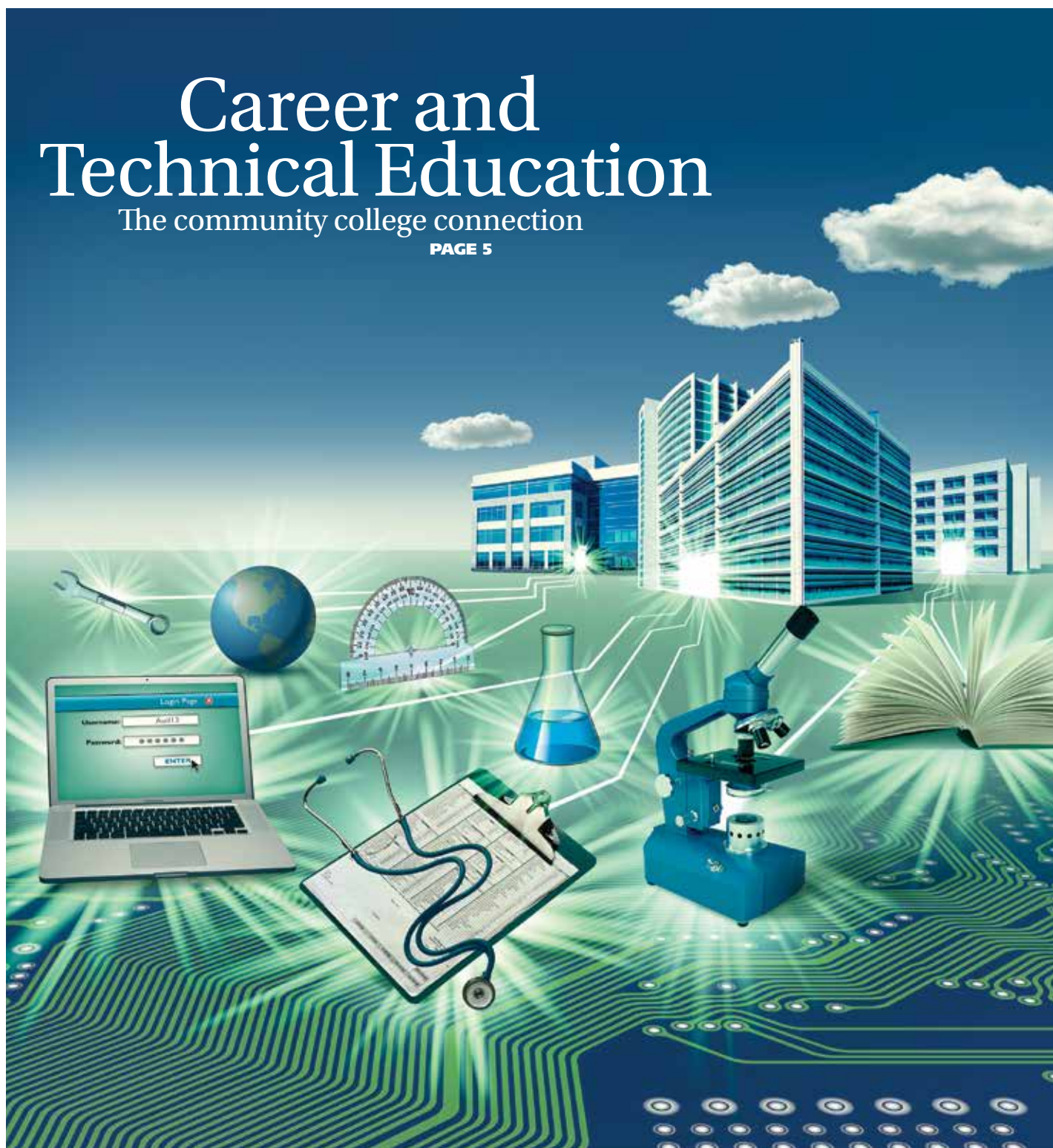
THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF AFT | HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF

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## Career and Technical Education

The community college connection

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## OUR MISSION

The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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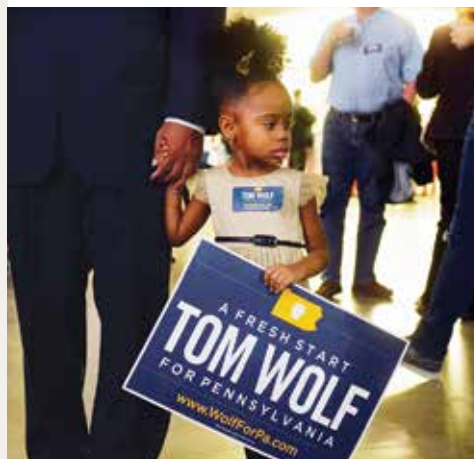
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WILLIAM DUKE

# Wins on an otherwise tough election night

## Voters flock to progressive issue-based contests

NOT EVERYONE WAS “SEEING RED” in the days following the 2014 vote. In instances where campaigns focused on strong, well-supported public education, laws guaranteeing livable wages, and other basic concerns, progressive candidates frequently won—and often won big.

Pennsylvania is a case in point. The AFT’s Pennsylvania affiliates mounted a successful across-the-board effort behind Tom Wolf, who won a landslide victory over Republican incumbent Gov. Tom Corbett in one of 2014’s most closely watched gubernatorial races. Rallies, phone banking, a get-out-the-vote blitz and extensive media helped ensure that education remained key to the contest.



AP PHOTO/YORK DAILY RECORD, CHRIS DUNN

**Tom Wolf rolled to a double-digit win in Pennsylvania’s gubernatorial contest, one of the 2014 elections’ bright spots.**

As much as 40 percent to teachers’ and public workers’ retirement security—all while championing reckless corporate tax giveaways. During Corbett’s tenure, tuition at the state’s four-year public colleges and universities soared to become among the nation’s most expensive, and graduating students’ average debt load rose to become the nation’s third-highest.

Against this disturbing landscape, Wolf campaigned hard to make Pennsylvania a full partner in education—a message that helped

propel the Democrat to a double-digit victory, one of the most decisive wins of 2014.

“AFTPA members have been incredibly committed during the campaign, registering new voters, making tens of thousands of phone calls, knocking on doors and distributing literature to help Tom Wolf win,” said AFT Pennsylvania President Ted Kirsch, who is an AFT vice president, following the win. “As a result, we have a governor who has promised to make public education a top priority, [and] we are confident that Tom Wolf will give Pennsylvania a fresh start.”

AFT President Randi Weingarten, who was in York, Pa., on election night to help Pennsylvanians celebrate the win, said that Wolf’s victory is a prime example of how strong results followed whenever “public education was at the forefront.” Many down-ballot contests bore out that point as well.

California solidified its standing as a progressive bulwark in the 2014 elections: Every single statewide office was won by a candidate endorsed by the AFT-affiliated California Federation of Teachers. Some of these contests had national implications as well. In one, voters awarded a decisive victory to incumbent State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, rather than gambling the future of their schools on a billionaire-backed, anti-union challenge from Marshall Tuck.

“We can now expect continued attention paid by the superintendent’s office to the real issues facing public education, rather than wasting time fighting distracting and destructive ideological battles,” said CFT President Joshua Pechthalt, who is also an AFT vice president.

AFT affiliates across the state contributed to the win. One standout effort came from the Los Angeles Community College District, where AFT members ran joint statewide phone banks that helped get out the vote for Torlakson.

Outcomes like those in California and Pennsylvania, Weingarten said, illustrate not only that progressive candidates can win big but also that, for voters, the central question driving their vote has not changed much, despite the talk of sea-change elections. “What is the path to opportunity for my family and especially my kids?” remains their focus, the AFT president said.





## Worth fighting for

RANDI WEINGARTEN, AFT President

FROM CONNECTICUT TO ALASKA, Florida to Pennsylvania, our union engaged in the midterm elections big-time. I was proud to stand with our members as we knocked on doors, made calls, talked to our friends and neighbors, and cast our ballots on behalf of our schools, our kids, our families and our communities.

As the results came in on Nov. 4, we watched as many of the candidates we had worked for lost. It was hard to see but, frankly, upon reflection, not hard to understand.

National elections inevitably turn on the choices voters make between the economy and national security, between hope and fear. This one turned on the economy, particularly people's fear and uncertainty about their future. Despite the fact that there have been 54 months of private sector job growth, median family income has fallen during the Obama presidency, just as it did during the Bush (both) and Carter presidencies. As *New York Times* columnist David Leonhardt said: "When incomes, the most tangible manifestation of the economy for most families, aren't rising ... Americans don't feel good about the state of the country. When they don't feel good about the country, they don't feel good about the president, and they tend to punish his party."

According to exit polls, 63 percent of voters believe that our economic system generally favors the wealthy, yet virtually the same percentage voted with the party that is known to represent the interests of the wealthy. Those exit polls also showed that people support more public education funding, a higher minimum wage and congressional efforts to lower the cost of student loans, yet they voted for candidates who oppose those things—out of frustration or because they felt the Democrats didn't have a compelling economic message or solutions.

While voters want an economy that works for everyone and not just the wealthy few, in many of the highly contested races they didn't believe that those we endorsed would get them there. They didn't see that the candidates we supported were the ones who are

in it "for the nurse on her second shift, for the worker on the line, for the waitress on her feet, for the small-business owner, the farmer, the teacher, the coal miner, the trucker, the soldier, the veteran," as Hillary Clinton famously said in 2008.

It's critical to remember that, in these elections, not everything was washed away. In fact, in places where voters were given the chance to weigh in directly on their val-

though the labor movement doesn't have the density or power by ourselves to change the trajectory of our economy, we are still the firewall that thwarts complete control of our economy and democracy by the anti-union, free-market ideologues and oligarchs. And they will do everything they can to take us out, dismantle our infrastructure, divide us from the community and consolidate their power.

We must connect with our community and make  
community our new density. We must engage more of our  
members—because **our members are the union.**

ues, they resoundingly sent a message that they are on the side of working families and public education. Alaska, Arkansas, Illinois, Nebraska and South Dakota increased the minimum wage. Massachusetts granted workers paid sick leave. Missouri rejected an initiative that would have abolished due process for teachers.

In California, voters re-elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson over a candidate backed heavily by Wall Street interests intent on gutting teachers' union rights and worker protections. In Pennsylvania, anti-education and union-busting Gov. Tom Corbett lost badly after battling a multiyear community groundswell resisting his attempts to destroy the state's public schools.

Poll after poll has shown us that people still believe higher education is a vital stepping stone to a new life. People believe taking that step shouldn't leave students or their families saddled with a lifetime of debt. People believe all faculty and staff, including contingent faculty, should be professionally supported and have a voice in academic decisions.

But we face a new reality where anti-worker, anti-public education forces won big, and their No. 1 target will be unions. We know their playbook. We know that even

We are going to face some real attacks and challenges, but we can't just go into defensive mode. We faced a lot of these attacks in 2010, but we didn't hunker down; instead, we were solution-driven and community-engaged, and we became a stronger union.

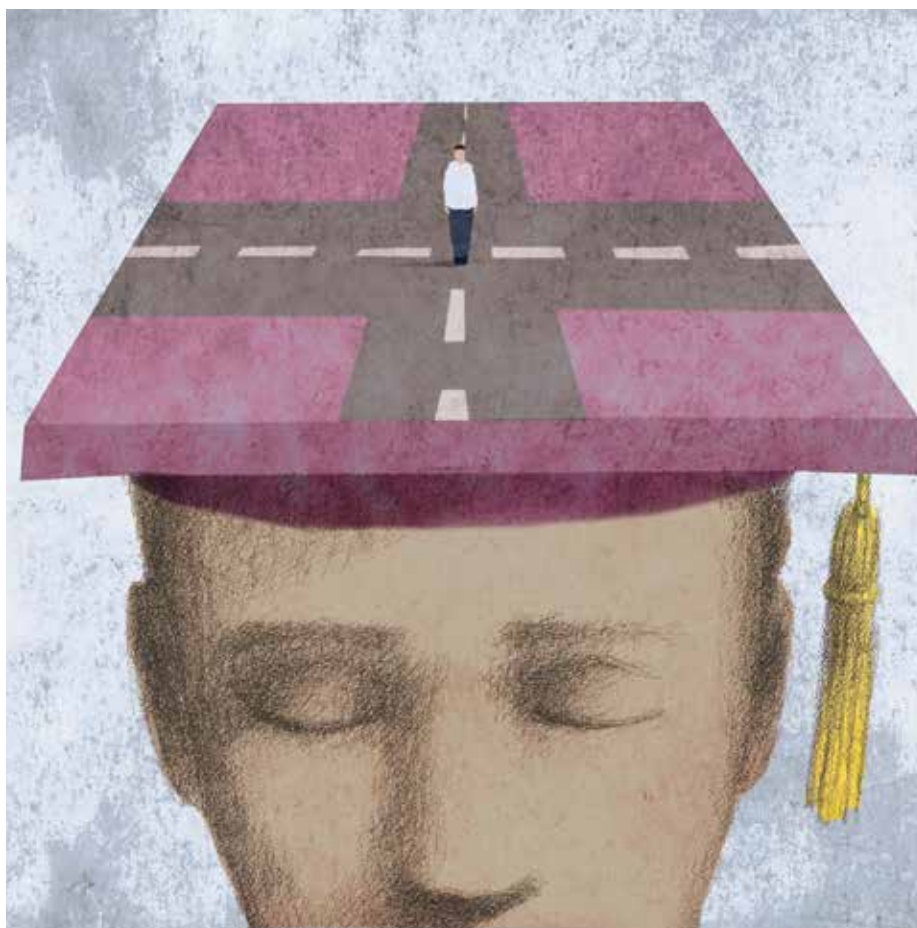
We need to think about everything we do through the lens of whether it's good for our kids, our schools—including higher education institutions—working families and our communities.

We must be solution-driven, by being willing to solve problems, to innovate to make things better, to find common ground when possible, and to engage in conflict when necessary. We must connect with our community and make community our new density. And we must engage more of our members—because our members are the union.

The next few years won't be easy. If there's one thing we know, it's that power never yields without a fight. To change the balance of power, we must fight harder and smarter, and stand together.

We will never stop fighting to reclaim the promise of an America where, if you work hard and play by the rules, you can support your family and ensure that your children will do better. I think we can all agree that is a promise worth fighting for.

## Pursuing multiple pathways



A RESURGENCE OF INTEREST in career and technical education has spurred much discussion on ways to ensure high school students gain the knowledge and skills they need to prepare them both for further education and training and for a professional career.

Last month, the first-ever Career and Technical Education/Workforce Development Summit, co-hosted by the AFT and the AFL-CIO, featured presentations on how to scale up and sustain programs that provide multiple pathways for student success. Former and current CTE students from Connecticut and Ohio shared the opportunities that technical education has opened up for them, while business owners affirmed the need to strengthen CTE programs. Conference speakers also included such prominent leaders as AFT President Randi Weingarten, Vice President Joe Biden and Labor Secretary Thomas Perez, underscoring the issue's significance.

Within the AFT, CTE—commonly defined

as the education that prepares students for careers in skilled trades, applied sciences and technology—is among the many high-priority



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL

items on the union's agenda. The results of a survey of 570 K-12 CTE teachers reiterate the need for greater support of vocational education and are highlighted in a report, "The Voices of Career and Technical Education Teachers," as well as in the Fall 2014 issue of

*American Educator*, which examines policy proposals and model programs for re-envisioning CTE.

All this focus on CTE at the high school level, however, gives rise to an important question: Where does higher education fit in?

Community college is the main type of postsecondary institution that offers CTE, enabling students to expand their minds, hone their skills and improve their economic circumstances. Accordingly, this issue of *AFT On Campus* focuses on CTE's community college connection.

An article by UCLA professor Mike Rose details the economic and intellectual benefits of one urban community college program and explains the class bias that has long been directed toward vocational education in general.

A pair of Q&As with community college professors shed light on the rewards and challenges of teaching in occupational programs. And this issue also includes an update on the AFT's work to prevent for-profit career and technical programs from engaging in fraud and abuse by failing to prepare students for jobs and leaving them saddled with insurmountable debt.

In the timely and important conversations finally taking place on the benefits of a re-imagined CTE,

**Vice President Joe Biden and Toledo Technology Academy graduate Alexis Smith at the CTE summit in Washington, D.C.**



we must remember the powerful role of community colleges. A variety of occupational and technical programs and a wealth of professional expertise are hallmarks of such institutions. Any meaningful discussion of CTE must include them.



# Career and Technical Education

The community college connection

This excerpt by Mike Rose is unavailable online. Please contact [online@aft.org](mailto:online@aft.org) for a print copy.



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# Guaranteeing gainful employment

BURIED IN THE HIGHER Education Act's 800 pages of rules and regulations is a single sentence stating that career education programs "must prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation" in order to receive funds, like Pell Grants and direct loans, from the federal government.

Such a stipulation may seem like common sense, but the fight to define "gainful employment" and when a program achieves it is on year four and counting. An earlier version of a regulation defining the term was vacated by the courts on a technicality in a 2011 suit brought by the well-heeled for-profit college lobbying group, the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities, whose members—despite the group's name—derive most of their funding from federal tax dollars. Subsequently, the Department of



Education restarted the rulemaking process to define gainful employment in 2012. For-profit colleges continue to fight all attempts to regulate their industry. But the AFT, along with a coalition of civil rights, student, veteran and consumer protection groups, as well as

policy experts, remains committed to advocating for a strong gainful employment rule to prevent fraud and abuse.

The AFT and our allies want a few simple and transparent requirements:

■ **Multiple measures:** Consistent with AFT policy, we believe that multiple measures are needed to set a baseline for minimum program qualifications. In a draft version of the gainful employment regulation, we supported the use of a cohort default rate *and* a debt-to-earnings ratio on the rationale that someone who is well-prepared for gainful employment should be able to pay back his or her debt without going into default and such payment should not be overly burdensome.

■ **Financial relief for defrauded students:** If and when programs become ineligible for federal aid, they should be required to reim-

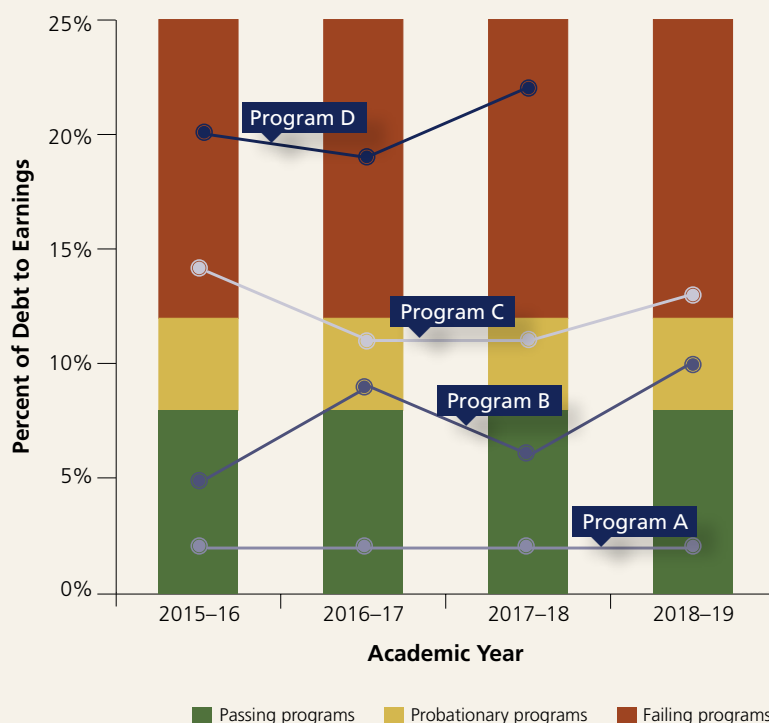
## What the gainful employment rule means for CTE programs

THE RULE'S CENTERPIECE is a metric meant to ensure that programs do not put students in the position of taking on too much debt to prepare for careers. They should be able to earn enough in their intended careers to reasonably pay back student loans.

If students borrow low amounts to attend a program and then find jobs in their fields, the program should pass easily (see Program A in the figure at right).

If a program's students regularly take on high levels of debt and/or have trouble finding jobs that pay enough to help them repay student loans, that program (see Programs C and D) could face sanctions, including the loss of federal funds like Pell Grants, direct loans and work study.

A program whose graduates' annual loan payments total 8 to 12 percent of their total earnings is neither passing nor failing—it is probationary and may face sanctions later (see Program B).



Note: Programs shown are examples only and do not represent actual programs.

Source: D/E Rates Thresholds, 79 Fed. Reg. 64916 (October 31, 2014).

burse students who enrolled in the program, and students should be eligible to use their financial aid at other colleges. Providing full debt relief to all such students is not only fair, it also creates a greater incentive for schools to quickly improve their programs.

■ **Closure of loopholes:** Unscrupulous schools can easily manipulate job-placement rates and evade accountability by limiting program size, combining or disaggregating online “campuses,” and misleading students about the nature of a program’s accreditation. These standards must be raised.

■ **Protection for low-cost programs:** Low-cost programs where most graduates do not borrow at all should automatically meet the standards because, by definition, they do not consistently leave students with insurmountable debt.

The new, final gainful employment rule was released on Oct. 30. Unfortunately, after relentless lobbying by the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities and others in the for-profit college industry, the rule was seriously weakened. It relies on only one measure: the ratios of debt to earnings for recent program graduates.

The rule defines two metrics: One is based on graduates’ debt-to-gross income ratio; the other is based on their debt-to-discretionary income ratio. It creates passing, probationary and failing benchmarks based on these metrics. A program becomes ineligible for federal financial aid if it receives a failing grade for two out of any three consecutive years *or* if it re-

ceives less than a passing grade (any combination of probationary and failing) for four consecutive years.

A program passes when its graduates’ annual loan payments total less than 8 percent of their total earnings or less than 20 percent of their discretionary incomes. A program is labeled probationary when its graduates’ annual loan payments total 8 to 12 percent of their total earnings or 20 to 30 percent of their discretionary incomes. A failing program is one whose graduates’ annual loan payments total more than 12 percent of their total earnings and more than 30 percent of their discretionary earnings.

Notably, these metrics count only students who use federal financial aid and complete the program; a program is not penalized for students who do not graduate.

The rule goes into effect at the start of the 2015–16 school year. The first year a program can lose its eligibility to receive federal funding is 2017–18.

We are disappointed that the regulations, which leave out many of our demands, don’t address the core goal of helping students, especially since no accountability metric exists for those who do not graduate. And students—especially low-income students—will still have few protections.

On a positive note, the regulations did address accreditation and licensing issues, and we are hopeful that those changes will improve the for-profit college industry.

Despite the relative weakness of the new

## Gainful Employment Rule Basics

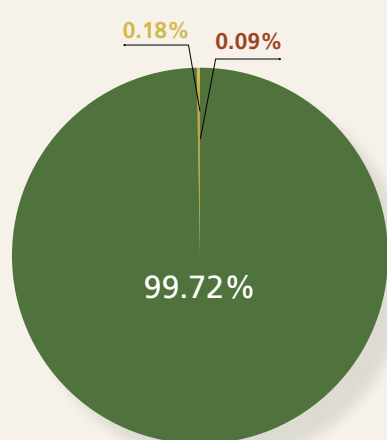
- The gainful employment rule applies to programs with at least 30 students in either a two- or four-year CTE program, not to entire institutions.
- Only graduates/completers of the program count.
- All programs at for-profit colleges are subject to the rule, but at other institutions only career-focused programs or programs in which students earn certificates after two years or less are generally considered gainful employment programs.

rule, APSCU, whose members include Bridgepoint Education, Career Education Corp. and DeVry Education Group, among others, has already filed suit to vacate this rule, just as it did in 2011.

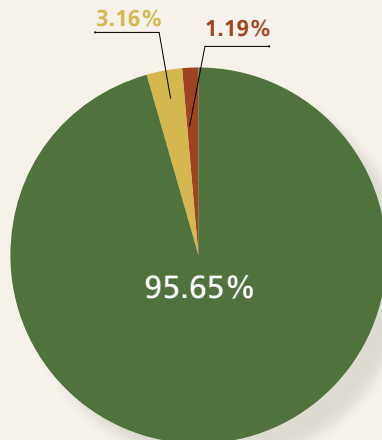
The AFT will continue the fight to make college accessible and affordable. We believe students must be valued over profits and that federal dollars should go only to high-quality programs that don’t leave students with insurmountable debt. We will work with federal, state and local authorities to hold programs and institutions accountable for the taxpayer dollars they receive.

—AFT HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

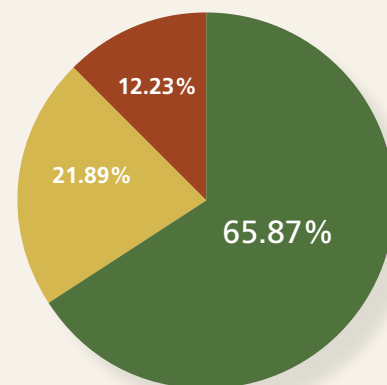
## How differently funded programs fare (2012 data)



**Public**  
Total = 1,093



**Private Nonprofit**  
Total = 253



**For-Profit**  
Total = 4,193

Source: 2012 GE informational D/E rates program results, 79 Fed. Reg. 65065 (October 31, 2014), table 2.21.

■ Passing programs ■ Probationary programs ■ Failing programs

# Professional educators

Committed to community college



## ROBIN MOSLETH Milwaukee Area Technical College

**On Campus:** What do you teach?

**Robin Mosleth:** I am a registered nurse, and I have taught nursing courses since 1980. I have worked at MATC in the School of Health Sciences for 11 years. Previously, I worked in both clinical and management positions, and I have taught elsewhere at both two- and four-year institutions. I specialize in mental health, community nursing, and management and leadership.

I mainly teach courses in those areas now, but I've also taught students at the very beginning of their program. Currently, I teach students who are typically in their fourth and final semester in clinical and theory courses in which they transition into practicing as entry-level nurses. This 16-week semester prepares them to take their licensing exam. I find it

exciting and very rewarding to see how far students come in 16 weeks.

**OC:** Who are your students?

**RM:** A majority are the first in their families to graduate from college. Others are parents and grandparents starting a second or third career. Many have never worked in healthcare. A significant percentage already hold bachelor's or even master's degrees, but they can't find jobs in their fields. So they enroll in MATC for other training.

Sometimes students enter through the programs in emergency medical training, business or other fields. Some are immigrants to the United States, such as physicians seeking asylum, who are struggling to re-enter a field they know but in a country where schooling and licensing are very different. They enroll in our program for an associate degree in nursing, and after four se-

masters they can sit for their licensing exam and get a job. It's a privilege and an honor to teach all these students.

**OC:** Are they able to find jobs upon graduation?

**RM:** I actually haven't heard of anyone who doesn't get a job in nursing within the first year of graduation. There is a huge need for nurses in our community, especially for nurses who can speak another language. For many in our diverse community, English may not be their first language, so our graduates—many of whom speak another language—can fill that void. My students typically land jobs in local hospital settings where they start out earning between \$23 and \$25 per hour.

**OC:** Tell us about your college's nursing program.

**RM:** MATC offers about 30 different health-occupation career programs that range from

three-month certifications to two-year associate degrees. Across our two campuses, we have about 250 to 300 total nursing students; enrollment has held steady.

Our big initiative is retention—helping students with personal obstacles (for example, homelessness, finances, juggling multiple responsibilities such as being the primary caregiver for grandchildren). Faculty members are advisers, and we look early on—by midterm at least—to

see if students aren't progressing. When they aren't, we put out a campuswide "retention alert." Those students are then contacted by student services advisers, in addition to their faculty adviser, to help them succeed.

**OC:** Does your program partner with local employers in the healthcare field?

**RM:** Yes, we have formal partnerships with businesses across Milwaukee, and we also work closely with hiring agencies in the area. A group from MATC meets with other nursing schools and employing agencies across the city, and we review what employers are looking for in new graduates as well as what employment opportunities are available.

**OC:** What challenges do you face in your work?

**RM:** State funding was cut by the governor and his administration a few years ago for all Wisconsin technical colleges. It was a 30 per-



SUSAN RUGGLES



cent hit, which was huge, and amounted to \$30 million over two years.

Also, there's a big push across the country to re-examine what preparation nurses need to enter the profession. Some are saying that almost all nurses should hold at least a bachelor's degree, but right now about two-thirds of the nursing workforce have only associate degrees. I think we need to look at what's really reasonable as the healthcare industry becomes more complex. Our MATC program boasts one of the highest pass rates in the country for the licensing exam—the same exam students with bachelor's degrees take—at nearly 100 percent. To tell our students, who have earned their associate degrees and passed the exam, that they now need to earn bachelor's degrees in nursing is a lofty goal. Nursing is very stressful. Adding a bachelor's requirement only increases the pressure, especially for students age 40 and older who have come so far. It sends the message that an associate degree is not good enough. We are partnering with universities to streamline matriculation to four-year institutions so that our students don't need to repeat course work they've already completed. Given the increasingly complex and ever expanding healthcare environment, we encourage them to continue to grow in the profession.

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**KIERON CONNOLLY**  
**San Jose City College**

**On Campus:** How did you end up at San Jose City College?

**Kieron Connolly:** I'm originally from Ireland. When I was in college there, I studied electronics and electro-technology. I also worked part time for an air conditioning and refrigeration company. When I graduated in the early 1980s, there was a slump in the high-tech areas in which I had studied. I fell into the air conditioning and refrigeration business, in sales, service and installation. At the same time, I enrolled as an apprentice and gained a journeyman's card in the trade of refrigeration. I worked for a small company and eventually ended up the owner.

I started teaching electro-technology part time in an adult education school in West Cork, and in 1989, I decided to get out of business and teach. I was interested in the U.S. education system and flew out to California to understand it better. Within a few days of the visit, I had landed myself a job in the Institute for Business and Technology in Santa Clara.

In 1991, I took an adjunct position at San Jose City College, while also working as a self-employed training consultant in the facilities maintenance arena for high-tech companies in Silicon Valley. After moving back to Ireland for a couple years, I returned to work full time at SJCC. I'm now a CTE faculty member in two program areas: air conditioning technology and facilities maintenance (which I set up in 2002). Air Conditioning Principles, Refrigeration Principles and Refrigeration Service are a few of the courses I currently teach. I'm also an acting coordinator for the college's CTE division.

**OC:** Can you tell us about your students?

**KC:** SJCC has very large air conditioning and facilities maintenance programs with a combined enrollment of more than 350 students, mostly male. We run both morning and evening programs. In general, most morning students have just graduated from high school or have been out of high school for two or three years, and now realize they need

skills, we teach how to troubleshoot and analyze situations. There are basic mathematical formulas in algebra and trigonometry our students must know if they want to succeed in this field. Also, on the writing side, our students need to be able to write reports and service requests. The older students, those 35 and older, seem to show stronger problem-solving skills.

**OC:** What are the specific needs of Silicon Valley that you train students to meet?

**KC:** Silicon Valley is the epicenter of electronics and high tech. To meet the industry's needs, we must specialize in commercial refrigeration, which is the facilities management area that entails climate control in large buildings, energy management and system controls. In Silicon Valley, the buildings that house research and development are run by highly trained facilities technicians who must know how to operate the control systems of air conditioned environments where there's a very low tolerance for



“We can start people on a career that propels them into the middle class.”

—KIERON CONNOLLY

a career path. The evening program, which tends to enroll a larger number of students, mainly attracts folks from industry who are updating their skills, learning new skills or working toward formal qualifications such as their associate degree. Some are looking for a career change; others want to move up in their career. Our graduates earn at least \$16 per hour in entry-level positions.

**OC:** What kind of remediation do your students need when they enroll in your program?

**KC:** The technicians we are training must have strong analytical skills. When they come to us, many of our students lack basic math and writing skills. We take a holistic approach to our programs, and instead of just teaching

error, such as “clean” (i.e., sterile) rooms used for research, and server rooms used to house computer servers. Our students must understand the movement of heat, be familiar with electric power, and also have a strong background in control theory and practice.

**OC:** What's most rewarding about your work?

**KC:** We can start people on a career that propels them into the middle class. And that's part of the mission of community college. The community college system here in California is reasonable in price, accessible to anyone, and driven by faculty who have a vision and genuine interest in the future of their students.



AFT LOCAL 2121 PHOTO

AFT members and City College of San Francisco students rally outside the San Francisco Superior Court.

### CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO'S FUTURE ON TRIAL

A trial in the San Francisco Superior Court to determine the future of the City College of San Francisco adjourned Oct. 31, after five days of sometimes dramatic testimony. It was scheduled to resume in December with closing arguments. The trial centers on whether the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has acted properly over the course of a two-year process that threatens to shut down the college. "The basic issue in this case is fairness," says Tim Killikelly, president of AFT Local 2121, which represents faculty at the college. "Is it fair to close down a college of 80,000 people, the educational quality of which is not in question? We hope the trial will help create a fair and transparent accreditation process for City College of San Francisco and all the community colleges in California."

### TIME MAGAZINE COVER TRIGGERS BACKLASH

Parents and teachers were joined by AFT President Randi Weingarten to protest *Time's* cover.

magazine, which reads, in part, "Rotten Apples: It's Nearly Impossible to

Fire a Bad Teacher" and shows a gavel about to smash an apple, generated an outpouring of anger and activism among AFT members and the public at large. On Oct. 30, the AFT delivered a petition with more than 100,000 signatures to *Time's* editors demanding an apology for the magazine's incendiary treatment of a major educational issue. "This *Time* cover isn't trying to foster a serious dialogue about solutions our schools need—it's intentionally creating controversy to sell more copies," remarked AFT President Randi Weingarten, who personally delivered the petition. The petition ultimately garnered more than 125,000 signatures.

### RIISING COSTS AND FALLING WAGES SQUEEZING ACCESS TO COLLEGE

As a result of skyrocketing college costs over just the past three years, the share of a family's income needed to meet postsecondary education expenses has increased dramatically. A new report from the Center for American Progress notes that higher tuition and fees charged by colleges and universities account for much of this increase, but so does the fact that median family income fell by 3 percent during the same period.

Additional investment by the federal government to assist low-income students has partially addressed the issue of affordability and helped fill some of the gap caused by rising tuition.

But not surprisingly, the authors say, the burden of tuition payments often translates into the burden of debt. This student debt has disproportionately affected communities of color. Together, these factors have led to decreased access to college, higher cost and higher debt. The report is titled "The Middle-Class Squeeze: A Picture of Stagnant Incomes, Rising Costs, and What We Can Do to Strengthen America's Middle Class."

### WALL STREET DEALS COST COLLEGES AND MUNICIPALITIES BILLIONS

A new report from the Roosevelt Institute details how Wall Street sold toxic deals to school districts, colleges and municipalities that are costing communities billions in fees, interest and other payments. In response to the report, educators, parents, community members and local officials joined together for a Day of Action in cities across the country to demand transparency and accountability to ensure taxpayer money is being used to invest in education and communities, not to enrich Wall Street.

"Dirty Deals" details how banks sold school districts, public colleges, and state and local governments predatory financial products like interest rate swaps and capital appreciation bonds—products that were laced with hidden costs and hidden risks, and in many cases were designed to fail—as well as charging exorbitant fees for products and services. The report cites the example of the Peralta Community College District in California, which is paying \$1.6 million a year in interest rate swap payments—the equivalent of 320 classes.

### PALOMAR COLLEGE PLEDGES TO INFORM EMPLOYEES ABOUT LOAN FORGIVENESS

Through the efforts of part-time faculty who are AFT members, Palomar College in California became the first community college in the country to take the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau pledge to inform employees of their student loan repayment options and help them apply for loan forgiveness. A group of members of the Palomar Faculty Federation circulated a petition, gained support of the union's executive board, then took the issue to the faculty senate and college president as part of the effort. Employers that take the pledge agree to talk to their employees about their options for student loan forgiveness, help



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them prove they work for a public service organization, and check in with employees annually to make sure they stay on track. In one such loan forgiveness program, for example, employees who work for 10 years in public service and make 120 qualifying monthly payments can have any remaining federal student loan debt forgiven.

#### AFFILIATES RECOGNIZED FOR INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

Two AFT higher education affiliates were honored in October when the AFT announced this year's winners of the second annual Prize for Solution-Driven Unionism, designed to highlight innovative, inspiring and collaborative solutions to tough problems. Two first prizes were awarded. One went to Milwaukee Technical College



The winners of the union's Prize for Solution-Driven Unionism at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Federation, AFT Local 212, for its solution to lagging graduation and course completion rates. The other was shared by the United University Professions (which represents faculty on State University of New York campuses) and the New York State Public Employees Federation for their successful campaign to save SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., from

privatization, promote investment in the facility and actually expand healthcare in Brooklyn. The prize comes with \$25,000 for each of the two winners. "These unions thought outside the box and worked with community partners to come up with innovative and, ultimately, successful solutions to seemingly intractable problems," says AFT President Randi Weingarten.

## 'No hikes, no fees! Education should be free!'

ON A RAINY WEDNESDAY morning in November, more than 2,000 University of California students traveled to the bimonthly meeting of the UC Board of Regents, the university's appointed governing board, to fight back against a proposed tuition increase. Janet Napolitano, UC's president, has proposed a five-year plan to raise student fees 27 percent, which would amount to about \$5,000 per student, on average.

Students won a tuition freeze in 2011, and it has been renewed every year since. This year's tuition and development plan by Napolitano would break that freeze.

"We were here in 2011 fighting back against tuition increases. I strongly oppose this proposal, and the students are doing a great job of educating the community and advocating for other solutions to the budget crisis," says Matt Haney, a former executive director of the UC Student Association who is now a member of the San Francisco Board of Education.

At 7 a.m. on Nov. 19, students met at the Mission Bay campus of UC San Francisco, where the regents were meeting. To disrupt the meeting's agenda, the students blocked entrances and parking lots, holding members of the board outside so they could share their personal stories and explain how an extra \$5,000 in tuition could affect their education and future. Many of the students work multiple part-time jobs while pursuing double majors or participating in student organizations; they are stretched to the limit now, with



the current tuition, and don't have the family support or the other means to pay for a drastic tuition increase.

"The students and workers should not be held hostage whenever the state and the UC system have to look for funding," says Sadia Saifuddin, the only student with voting rights on the board of regents.

Members of the AFT, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Teamsters union and the Public Employees Union were present to voice their support for students and urge the regents against burdening students with more debt.

"As a single parent and as a mother of a child in college, education won't be attainable for me and my family with these hikes. ... Their responsibility is to provide public education for our communities," says Ameera Snell, a UC San Francisco nursing student.

While the meeting was in session, students

filled the room, waiting for their chance to speak during the public comment period, while others rallied outside, chanting, sharing personal stories and demonstrating resistance against officers who tried to control the crowd.

The tuition increase passed 7-2, with California Gov. Jerry Brown and Saifuddin being the only two "no" votes.

After the vote, students gathered outside to strategize about their next steps.

"To fix this problem in the long run, we need more student regents with voting rights on the board. One student regent cannot represent more than 200,000 students," says Momo Hussein, a student at UC Riverside.

—TIFFANY DENA LOFTIN  
AND HAILEY SNOW

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