

I'm a proud member of the Texas State Employees Union CWA 6186 and a Professor of Practice at UT-Austin. I have been a faculty member at UT-Austin since 2000. I'm the recipient of the Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award. This year I received the Creative Achievement Award in the Moody College of Communications.

We are told by President Hartzell, who is highly respected on both sides of the aisle, to "hang in there, June will come." What if June comes with an ill wind from our capitol.

SB 18 will go down as a mean-spirited threat to our prestige and recruitment. SB 17 should go down as easily. I find it hard to imagine the hearts of those who oppose these core principles of opportunity for all Texas citizens, academic freedom, and institutional integrity.

In 2020 UT-Austin received the Seal of Excellence as a Hispanic Serving institution when the student population passed 25% and these students proved successful. We are #5 on the College Choice list for 50 Best Disability Friendly Colleges. We are #1 for Student Veteran Affairs. All are housed in the DEI offices at UT-Austin.

We are making long needed strides forward. We need your continued support. You have taken a constitutional pledge to support quality public higher education.

DEI does not threaten the inclusion of white males. Currently with active DEI offices and initiatives since 2017, full professors are 3.6% African American and 5.9% Latinx. These numbers increase to 5.3% Black and 10.4% at Assistant Professor level. Only 35.6% of the women faculty currently are included in the tenured or tenure track category.

The Texas State Employees Union opposes the anti-DEI, anti-CRT teaching, and anti-tenure bills currently in the legislature, even though these are not direct bread and butter issues. Remember, we're the folks who brought you the weekend, ended most child labor, and organized with Dr. King for the 1963 March for Jobs and Freedom. We should have your attention and respect.

We believe it's only collective action that can lead to positive change. We're on-the ground experts and advocates for our students and the educational community. We speak with a loud courageous voice. We are in the fight for social justice, human rights, dignity, and democracy. And we know full well as Frederick Douglass said in 1857, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." We thank you for the opportunity to struggle.

It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. This is an ill wind.