

Resolution Title: Resolution in Support of Free Higher Education
Submitted by: Professional Staff Congress, Local 2334

Whereas, in the 19th and early 20th centuries the Labor Movement led the fight for universal access to primary and secondary education as a basic social right; and

Whereas, in the 1950's and 1960's the Civil Rights movement established the right of all Americans to equal access to public education; and

Whereas, in the 21st century a college education is a prerequisite for effective labor force participation and economic security for workers and their families; and

Whereas, the lack of access by growing numbers of Americans to post-secondary education severely limits democratic participation in the economic and political processes of the United States and results in a tragic loss of diverse human potential; and

Whereas, deep cuts in state appropriations to public higher education institutions, including the historically black institutions and those that serve large numbers of Hispanic students, along with the failure of federal student aid to keep up with tuition increases; and

Whereas, 39 percent of student borrowers leave school with an unmanageable debt with the average debt for borrowers at public colleges being \$14,300, two and a half times as high as it was in 1990; and*

Whereas, fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, at the current rate of enrollment of Blacks in institutions of higher education, college graduation parity with whites will not be reached until 2075; and**

Whereas, studies have shown that the GI Bill was one of the most successful programs in the nation's history and that every \$1.00 invested in this program on those who otherwise would not have attended college produced a \$6.90 return in increased national output and tax revenues; and

Whereas, the Collective Bargaining Congress of the American Association of University Professors, the AAUP Rutgers Council of AAUP, AFT locals such as PSC/CUNY Local 2334, Local 1789/Seattle Community Colleges, the New Jersey AFT Council of State Colleges, as well as the California Faculty Association, civil rights organizations, and community groups have embarked upon a national campaign to achieve free tuition and fees for anyone meeting the admissions criteria at any public, post-secondary educational institution; therefore be it

Resolved, that the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) support the campaign for the right of all Americans to have access to a free public higher education; and be it further

Resolved, that AFT assist in mobilizing broad public support for this right.

*"Heavy Debts for a Degree," O. Winslow, [Newsday.com](http://www.newsday.com), March 22, 2004

** "The State of the Dream," United for a Fair Economy, March 23, 2004

I hereby certify that the above resolution was approved for submission to the 2004 AFT Convention by the:

Delegate Assembly

at a meeting held on

May 27, 2004

Signed:

(President)

(Secretary)

Professional Staff Congress

Local or Retiree Council Name

Local 2334

AFT#