

SAFAGRAM

President's Message

By James McWilliams



Say goodbye to the Hay Survey.

As we ready ourselves for more innovative changes in 2015 and the gradual implementation of the new Strategic Plan initiatives, we have to ask ourselves the question, "How did we fare as an institution in 2014?" Did we tick off all the internal/external boxes: increase enrollment, introduce new programs, exceed apprenticeship applications, re-shuffle and abort management portfolios, collaborate for provincial funding, and maintain our collegiate parity in the post-secondary sector?

For the past several years, the institution has encouraged Faculty to go through the relentless exercise of filling out the anonymous Hay Group Employee Survey. When it was introduced at SAIT, Faculty for the most part appeared to have a vested interest in the survey's inception. There were positive comments on the diverse number of questions asked, the format and layout of the text, the weight distribution for the questions, and the fact that it had relevance for every school/department and was not "a one size fits all" document. It was an opportunity for employees to reflect on department initiatives, internal conditions of classrooms and labs, program continuity, working conditions, communications, payroll, performance evaluations, fairness, equity, leadership, and supervision to mention a few. Faculty involvement in the survey had an air of enthusiasm and participation was generally high. Even with the confidentiality agreement, employees trustingly completed the survey.

Surveys were distributed in May. After all the information was collected and tabulated by the Hay Group, it was then shared with all employee groups, usually in the earlier part of the fall semester. Meetings were scheduled within the individual departments to provide feedback to their staff and to share and discuss the results. For the most part, areas of concern were identified, strategies formulated, and improvements agreed upon. Supervisory accountability was also reviewed, but any recommendations for improvements for Chairs and Deans were never openly discussed. However, I am more than confident that any amendments for improvement would have been a management priority!

Over the past few years, the Hay Group Survey seemed to have lost its appeal—maybe too much of the "same old same old," or was there a sense of "What's the point?"

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SAFAGRAM editorial policy, as approved by the SAFA Executive on June 14, 1995, is as follows:

1. The Editorial Board has the final say as to what is included or deleted from the newsletter.
2. Editorial Board decisions about newsletter material must be agreed to by consensus.
3. The newsletter will include a disclaimer stating that the views expressed in its content do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.
4. All material included in the newsletter must
 - be signed by the author when submitted to the editors, but anonymity may be requested and granted for printing.
 - be based on "reasoned argument" if personal criticism is used.
 - not involve name-calling.
 - not include sexist, racist, or homophobic comments.
 - be related to SAIT, although this will be interpreted broadly.

The views expressed in SAFAGRAM do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.

<http://www.safacalgary.com/>

Labour Relations Officer (LRO) Report

By Al Brown, LRO



Q and A

Following are my responses to recent questions from Faculty members:

1. “If my start or hire date is August 18, what is my anniversary date?”

For the purpose of Long Service Allowance and grid step movement, if your hire date is before the middle of the month; e.g., August 11, your anniversary date will be the first

day of the month in which you were hired; in this case, August 1. If your hire date is after the middle of the month as in the case of August 18, then your anniversary date will be the first day of the next month, September 1.

2. “I’ve got my performance review coming up. Can I have a SAFA Representative accompany me?”

No, our Collective Agreement entitles you to have an Association Representative present if you are interviewed on any disciplinary matter. Performance reviews are not disciplinary in nature, and you are not entitled to Association representation. For more information on your representation rights in the case of disciplinary action, please see Section 19 of the SAFA Collective Agreement.

3. “I’ve worked on a casual contract basis here at SAIT for a few years. How do I get from casual contracts to something steadier?”

If, in one academic year, the total hours of your casual contracts exceed 800 hours, you will be assigned to a temporary or permanent position upon rehire in the following academic year. A temporary salaried position is one that is either full time or part time for a definite period—typically an academic year. However, in the case of maternity cover off, the term is still typically a year in duration but may start and end in two different academic years. For more information regarding the various levels of employment as an academic staff member, please see Section 1 of the SAFA Collective Agreement.

4. “I’m considering retirement (or resignation). How much notice do I have to give?”

If you are an instructor, six weeks’ written notice is required prior to the date you want to retire or resign your position in order to leave in “good standing.” For each calendar **week**, or fraction thereof, that the notice falls short of six weeks, you will be deducted one day’s pay. But, if you are **not** an instructor; for instance, a librarian, counsellor, probationary, or a temporary salaried position, then 10 work days’ notice is required prior to your resignation date. For each work **day**, or fraction thereof, that the notice falls short of 10 days, you will be deducted one half day’s pay. For more information on resignation notice requirements, please see Section 34 of the SAFA Collective Agreement.

5. “I would like to retire and collect my pension but come back for a year or two to teach. Is that possible?”

Yes, the SAFA Collective Agreement contemplates the re-employment of retirees. You can find the Letter of Under-

standing—“Re-employment of Retirees”—at the back of the Collective Agreement. Essentially it allows SAIT to offer re-employment for up to five years duration with the mutual agreement of the Association. You can view it at the following site:

<http://www.safacalgary.com/collective%20agreement%202007%20-%202010.pdf>

There is also a SAIT policy on it (HR 5.1.4) that you can view from the SAITNOW site —“Policies and Procedures”—Human Resources.” You should also look at the “Attendance and Resignation” Section 34 in the Collective Agreement as there are timelines for notification. (Detailed above)

6. “I’m going on a Four for Five Leave next year. Will I get my salary grid step for the year I am away?”

No, the grid step increases are based on your performance review. Typically, performance reviews are conducted in May/June. Based on a “meets expectations” or better performance review, you will move up one step on the salary grid on your anniversary date following the performance review. However, because you didn’t work during the year that you were on the Four for Five Leave, there was no performance to review. When you return from the year-long leave, you will receive a grid step increase on your anniversary date, but it will be based on the performance review you had prior to leaving. For instance, you have a PPR in June 2015 that is “meets expectations,” and your anniversary date is September 1. You go on the Four for Five Leave in August 2015 and return a year later in August 2016. On September 1, 2016, you will receive the grid step increase based on your 2015 PPR. Your next grid step movement will be based on your June 2017 PPR.

7. “I was injured while on vacation and had to spend time in the hospital. Can I claim those days as General Sick Leave?”

Yes, you can “claw back” vacation days that were spent in the hospital or under doctor’s care while on vacation. This will require submitting a form that shows the applicable General Sick Leave days as a “minus.” There is the normal requirement to have proof—doctor’s certificate, hospital records, etc.—in order to have vacation days retro converted to General Sick Leave (GSL). Please note that just catching a cold or the flu while on vacation will not trigger this benefit. For exact details on how to do this, please contact SAIT’s Return to Work Coordinator at Ext. 8761.

8. “What can I spend my SAFA PD on?”

Although commonly referred to as “SAFA PD,” this fund is **not** administered by SAFA. I believe this misconception arose because it is an entitlement to academic staff members that comes from the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement—Section 14 Professional Development. The correct name for this is “Professional Development Fund—Academic Staff” Human Resources Policy HR 2.2.2. The complete details of the fund, what it can be accessed for, and how much you are entitled to can be found in the “Policies and Procedures” Section on SAITNOW. Essentially, individual academic staff members can spend up to \$800 anytime during the two-year period. Your entitlement “resets” at the end of the 24-month period—there is no “carry over” of unused funds. If you’ve already accessed this fund in the last year or so, but are unsure of how much is still available to you, the Academic Chairs are given a report

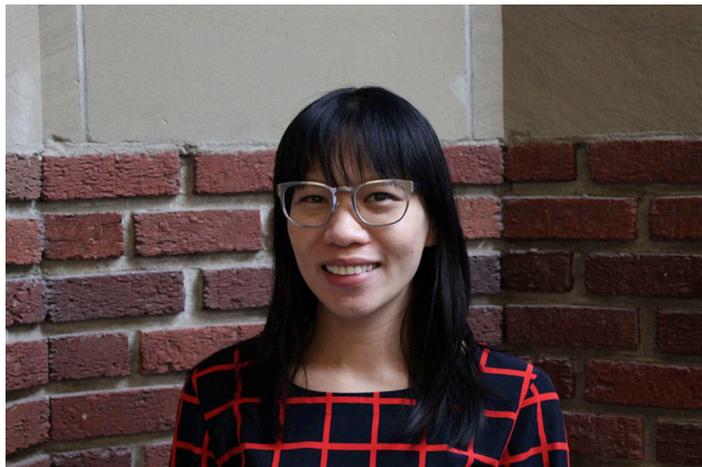
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Library Report

By Alison Hart

Introducing our new Student Engagement Librarian, Sabrina Wong!

Sabrina joined SAIT in 2015, after two years at the University of Calgary Libraries. Before moving to Calgary, she worked in a public library for many years. She holds a BA in Art History (Hon.) and English Literature and an MLIS from the University of British Columbia.



Alison Hart recently asked Sabrina a few questions about her future plans and personal insights:

How long have you worked in libraries? What interests you about libraries?

I've worked in libraries for ten years. Although people often think that libraries are merely warehouses of books, I've come to realize that libraries serve as gathering points for people, information, and technology. Libraries help build communities. I'm interested in developing programs and services that highlight this particular strength.

What will be your main focus for the Reg Erhardt Library?

My position as Student Engagement Librarian will be to create connections between the Library and the SAIT student community. I'll be looking for ways to improve the student experience at SAIT, and I know the Library has a key role to play in student success. I look forward to collaborating with staff and student groups.

Where do you see the Library in five years?

In five years, I imagine that the Library will continue to provide a range of innovative services at SAIT. The challenge will be to identify meaningful opportunities and design services to meet the ever-changing needs of our users. Luckily, the wonderful team at the Reg Erhardt Library is well prepared to succeed!

What are your hobbies?

It's not hard to guess that I enjoy reading, but I also like to hike, knit, ski, and travel.

If you were stranded on a deserted island, name three things you would bring?

A hatchet, matches, and tea

We hope you will have an opportunity to work with and get to know Sabrina as she builds new associations with student groups within our SAIT Community.

Contact information:

Sabrina Wong, MLS
Student Engagement Librarian
Reg Erhardt Library |CALS
Phone: 403-284-8617
E-mail: sabrina.wong@sait.ca ↔

Lexophile

"Lexophile" is a word used to describe those that have a love for words; for example,

"You can tune a piano, but you can't tuna fish," or
"To write with a broken pencil is pointless."

A competition to see who can come up with the best lexiphilias is held every year in an undisclosed location.

This year's winning submission is posted at the very end.

- When fish are in schools, they sometimes take debate.
- A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.
- When the smog lifts in Los Angeles U.C.L.A.
- The batteries were given out free of charge.
- A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.
- A will is a dead giveaway.
- When you've seen one shopping center, you've seen a mall.

- Police were called to a day care center where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
- Did you hear about the fellow whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now.
- A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.
- When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
- The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine is now fully recovered.
- He had a photographic memory which was never developed.
- When she saw her first strands of grey hair she thought she'd dye.
- Acupuncture is a jab well done. That's the point of it.

And the cream of the wretched crop:

- "Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end."

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Nothing is ever done with the information anyway.” Moreover, was there an underlying feeling that there would be retribution by management if one spoke out against any incompetent decision-making and/or unfair practices initiated by the managerial body? To that end, responses became less forthcoming and attitudes remained pessimistic.

An interesting note—since the Hay Group Survey’s inception in 2003, the multiple choice questions had increased from 94 to 135. Ironically, though, the total SAFA responses, percentage-wise, have never exceeded 66 percent. Furthermore, the sharing of the Hay Group survey results, which are normally rolled out by each department’s management team, has been quite erratic this year. Some departments have not yet had the opportunity to review and discuss the survey results, and some have already had open dialogue and the sharing of ideas in planning best practice in moving forward. Is this another indicator that the importance and validity of the Hay Survey within SAIT’s Institution has lost its appeal?

The 2014/15 instructional period across the institution appears to have taken on an air of stability and optimism. It would only seem appropriate given the climatic change at

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as to how much each member has left. The beginning of the 24-month period is determined by the year you started at SAIT. An easy way to remember when the fund “resets” is to look at your start date at SAIT. If you were hired in an odd numbered year—2009 for instance—then the fund resets on July 1 in odd numbered years—2011, 2013, 2015, etc. If, instead, you started in 2008, then it resets on July 1 on even numbered years—2010, 2012, 2014, etc.

9. “I’m turning 65. Will my benefits be affected?”

Yes, when an employee reaches age 65 the Benefits Department sends out notification to employees that LTD and extended health care ceases. For details, please contact Employee Services or ManuLife directly.

10. “I’ve been assigned as a Mentor to a new instructor. Do I get any offload?”

Yes, you should be offloaded 5 percent.

11. “I’m returning to work after being off for a while on Long Term Disability (LTD). My school and Employee Services have a graduated return to work plan that they want to discuss with me. Can I have SAFA representation with me?”

Yes, you have the right to have a SAFA representative with you during any return to work meeting. If you have any questions regarding these meetings, please contact the SAFA office. Also, please keep in mind that there is 24/7 counselling available through the Employee and Family Assistance Program. This confidential, professional assistance is free and available to all academic staff members. Just stop by the SAFA office to pick up a brochure or call 1-800-663-1142.

As always, if you have any questions, please stop by the SAFA Office N201 in the Burns Building, contact me directly at Ext. 4067, or e-mail al.brown@sait.ca. ♦♦

the management level that the dissolving of the Hay Survey and the introduction of a newer survey would be part of the transformation. Presently, Employee Services is in the process of soliciting offers from outside agencies for proposals for a market survey. A cross functional committee involving representatives from all employee groups is in place to provide insight into the development of relevant survey questions. The newer survey will focus on employee engagement rather than employee satisfaction. The survey will be shorter in length with questions focusing on what significantly impacts levels of engagement among SAIT employees. The new survey will align with and complement the up and coming Employee Value Proposition (EVP) solidifying the attraction and retention of employees to and within SAIT.

Surveys for the most part are intrusive upon our time; however, being employed at the top Post Secondary Institute in the Province has a certain aura of professionalism and responsibility. So as we say “au revoir” to the Hay Survey, it will be incumbent upon the employees/Faculty to be invested and pragmatic as we advance in our futures. The people matter—the survey is only the guide book. ♦♦

SAFA Fun Money Casino

All SAFA members (and guests 18 years and older) are invited to come to celebrate St. Paddy’s day at:

The Gateway

Saturday, March 14, 2015

6 p.m. – 11 p.m.

Tickets are \$5.00 each (includes 2 complimentary drink tickets)

Come to the SAFA Office (N201 Senator Burns), during office hours, Monday to Thursday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. or Friday 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

- Appetizers are included.
- Cash bar is available (\$6.00/drink).
- Fun money winnings may be used to purchase raffle tickets.
- Taxi chits will be available.

Dress up for St. Paddy’s day!



EMPLOYEE & FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Counselling | Coaching | Support

What is an Employee and Family Assistance (EFAP) Program?

Your EFAP helps you take practical and effective steps to improve well-being and be the best you can be. Within a supportive, confidential, and caring environment you can receive counseling, coaching, and support for any challenge.

SAIT provides a confidential EFAP which can help with many concerns or problems. This professional counselling service is provided through Homewood Health, which is an off-campus facility.

A *partial* list of what is covered for you and/or your family includes the following:

- stress at home or on the job;
- marriage/relationships;
- mediation;
- grief;
- conflict with supervisor, colleagues, or the public;
- financial difficulties;
- pre-retirement;
- weight management;
- addictions;
- anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems; and
- many more.

Get the right information at the right time.

Call Homewood Health (24 hours/day, 7 days/week) at 1-800-663-1142

or

Visit Homewood Health website at www.homewoodhealth.com

Homewood Health brochures are available at the SAFA office.