

SAFAGRAM

President's Message

By James McWilliams



The Annual Faculty Opinion Survey (A.F.O.S) concluded on December 18, 2015. The results now have been categorized, tabulated, and released for review. SAFA would like to thank all those members who took the time to participate in the survey via the Survey Monkey.

The 2015 Faculty survey has gone through a change in format from previous years, and many of the questions have been realigned to provide a coherent flow to the answering process. Although many of the questions are similar in their description, there are several new questions added in order to stay current

with the institution's climate and the validation of the new management regime. Several members provided feedback regarding the vagueness of some of the questions. We apologize if those questions may have been unclear in their explanation. Adjustments will be made for next year's survey.

Changes to the structure of the Annual Faculty Opinion Survey were made in collaboration and consultation with the Faculty Council and the SAFA Executive. The combined input gave a broader and more accurate rationalization for the questions proposed. The survey questions articulated the principles outlined in the Institutional Strategic Plan and presented the opportunity for Faculty members to provide their input. The A.F.O.S was designed to encapsulate any changes, concerns, recognitions, and observations regarding the climate within the institution. Faculty were encouraged to provide their personal comments in the comment box provided. I am pleased to say this was done in a professional and ethical manner. The A.F.O.S is intended to be confidential, and every effort is made by SAFA to ensure the integrity of the individual stakeholders and their comments are upheld. The Faculty Association has no influence over Faculty members in their decisions to participate in the A.F.O.S. nor do we restrict members' rights in voicing their opinions in the General Comment section.

The number of respondents was 230, a little less than SAFA anticipated given the size of the membership. A few responses that seemed to resonate more than others were those for Academic Chairs, Associate Deans, Deans and Directors, and Senior Management. There were 212 respondents to the Academic Chair/Manager category

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SAFAGRAM is published by the SAIT Academic Faculty Association (SAFA) five times a year usually closer to the end of the months of October, December, February, April, and June. Deadline for submissions is the 10th of the month preceding publication. Send submissions to SAFAGRAM, care of the SAFA office, N201 or e-mail submissions to kathie.dann@sait.ca. Please keep submissions under 300 words, double-spaced. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length, or content.

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



Over the past couple of months, I've had questions regarding medical leave. I'd like to share some information with all of you.

Q. "When do the Casual Sick Days reset?"

The "Casual Sick Days," as provided in Section 25 of the SAFA Collective Agreement, reset on January 1 each year. If you are ill with the flu, cold, etc., you may be absent from work for up to three consecutive work days without penalty. You have up to ten casual illness days available to you annually.

Keep in mind that you may have time off for the purpose of attending a dental, physio, optical, or medical appointment and that it will not be charged against Casual Illness or deducted from your pay provided that:

- (a) You have been given prior authorization by the Dean/Director or Academic Chair, and
- (b) You work one (1) hour in a half-day absence. A half-day absence is a consecutive four (4) hour period of time prior to or after the mid-point of your work day—typically noon.

For more information, please refer to Section 25—Casual Illness—in the SAFA Collective Agreement.

Q. "What about the General Sick Leave days? Do they reset as well?"

Yes. They reset on your anniversary date (the date you began employment at SAIT). You can receive income replacement for 80 days. Depending on your years of service, you can receive up to 60 days at 100 per cent, with the remainder at 70 per cent pay. Please refer to Section 26—General Illness—in the SAFA Collective Agreement.

Q. "When do I need a doctor's note and what information is on it?"

A doctor's note is required when you have an absence exceeding three work days—so, on the fourth day of absence, you are required to provide a note from your attending physician. The required information is the date your absence commenced and the expected return date. You do not need to go into details concerning your illness or injury at this time. On the fourth day of absence you transition from Casual Illness to General Sick Leave (GSL). If your illness/injury require that you are off for more than 10 consecutive work days, you will be asked to provide a medical certificate completed by your physician on the eleventh day of absence.

Q. "Can SAIT or the Return to Work Coordinator contact my doctor directly?"

SAIT or their agent (Homewood) can't contact or ask for information directly from your doctor without your "informed" consent. That means that you understand the reasons for and the limitations of the request. Whatever information they are requesting must be focused on what is reasonably required to accommodate your disability. SAIT may have some follow-up questions or require more details once they have made the initial request of your doctor. Again, this follow-up information

must be only to assist in determining the correct accommodation for your restriction. SAIT uses a third party (Homewood) as the interface so that your private medical information isn't shared with SAIT.

The key to much of this is getting the Association involved early. That way we can stay in the loop in order to support effective communication at the early stages of the accommodation process, and it will help make it a success. Please alert us at SAFA if you are being asked to provide further information or more detailed information after you've requested a disability-related accommodation.

Q. "I'm on General Sick Leave and I'm hoping to return to work before the GSL period (80 work days) expires. Why is SAIT asking me to fill out forms to receive Long-Term Disability (LTD) now?"

During the initial 80 work days of GSL, Employee Services and/or SAIT's Return to Work Coordinator will contact you concerning your benefits. Even if it is anticipated that you will be able to return to work prior to the end of the 80-day GSL period, you will still receive the application forms and instructions for submitting your claim. It's important that you submit these forms because there is always a delay between submitting the forms and being approved for LTD. That way, in the event you do not return to work before your GSL expires, you will be able to transition to LTD benefits seamlessly.

Q: "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 meet with me about. May 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 help available from 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.

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

Paraprosookians

(Winston Churchill loved them) are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected; frequently humorous.

- Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
- If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
- I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not so sure.
- War does not determine who is right—only who is left.
- To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
- I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
- In filling out an application, where it says, 'In case of emergency, Notify:' I put 'DOCTOR.'
- Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.

Snow Bound

By Don Leishman, RRT
Respiratory Therapy Program

Those of us blessed with being from southern Alberta, and I mean the very southwest corner of Alberta, are accustomed to the fabulous scenery. This is where the prairies rise up to the Rocky Mountains without the distraction of miles of foothills and forest. If you can get up on a bit of a rise, you can see 200 miles of the Continental Divide from the Livingstone Range west of Pincher Creek to Chief Mountain in Montana.

My wife, our young daughter, and our trusty Ford half-ton set out to visit some friends down Police Outpost Road, only a few kilometres from the U.S. border. It was a splendid sunny and cold January morning when we set out from Waterton Park.

The day before had been a truly gruelling day, overcast and snowing sideways in the howling wind. Although much of the road was blown clear, on the lee side of any of the larger hills there were snowdrifts to call Gramma about! Many drifts were forty to fifty metres long and as deep as the hill was high.

Well, we weren't about to be stopped by a little snow, so "Let's take a run at it!" was the battle cry. Maybe we should have seen this coming; we were pushed to the left by hidden forces and dropped into the left side ditch. There was a snow drift up to the window on the driver's side and the front hood was buried. We eventually climbed out the passenger side and managed to trace our tracks back to the road.

The driver (me, looking sheepish), my wife (looking annoyed), and our young daughter stood on the snow pack for a few minutes wondering how and when this could be remedied. We had no cell phone in those days (1982). It was 25 miles to town and there was no chance of us extracting the truck. We began to feel isolated, trapped, and a bit scared.

The sun shone on the drifts and made sparkles, prisms, and patterns. The mountain scenery was, as always, spectacular. Some of our extended family are not travel planners like we are. "Leap and the net shall appear" seemed the mode of the crew. I have always planned things out and we did indeed have water, some buns, and a bit of chocolate, so I knew we wouldn't actually starve.

Just when I began to think about walking out to the highway, we heard a noise in the distance. A motor noise. A plane? A snow machine? What could it be? Around the corner we began to see some kind of large machine. The County grader came growling through the drift and came to a stop 20 metres behind our truck. A few minutes and a heavy chain made short work of our predicament. The grader pulled us out like we were weightless, swooped around us, and led us the final five miles to our friend's home, happily plowing all the way.

P.S. Southern Alberta might just be paradise! ♥

President's Message
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with a large percentage of the responses reflecting on the "Very Well" and "Well" columns. Most interesting were the Senior Management questions that reverberated a large percentage from the "I don't know" column. The remaining Middle Management/Associate Deans section identified 153 respondents, and the Dean/Director section identified 198 respondents.

The SAFA office, and more directly the President of the Faculty Association, takes much pleasure in providing professional communications to the membership with monthly letters, the SAFAGRAM, SAFA's Website, and the new Facebook link. Correspondence forwarded to the membership focuses on activities promoted and supported by SAFA for the members. This also includes the recognition of Faculty members and their achievements, current events that are relevant for the time of year, and the institutional climate. SAFA is very aware of the cultural diversity of the Faculty within the institution and is respectful of all its members' views. Communications are void of any political assertions or biased comments.

The A.F.O.S and the ACIFA Survey Results can be viewed at the following website/link: http://www.safacalgary.com/acifa_safa_survey_re.html. The next Annual Faculty Opinion Survey results will be void of any historical data as this is the first year of the redesigned survey. Also available on the link are the results from the 2015 ACIFA Climate Survey. The ACIFA Survey encapsulates all Faculty responses from the 15 colleges in Alberta. Several colleges across the province had a strong percentage of participation. In 2015, SAIT had a lower participation rate.

Participation in the survey processes at the institution can be met with skepticism from some members of the Faculty. The surveys can be viewed, at times, as an inconvenience more than a productive commodity. The once highly-acclaimed Hays Survey has seen participation over the past several years drop significantly since it was first introduced. For the most part, the confidentiality portion of the Hays Survey was met with much suspicion. The results from the Hays Survey had very little to no impact on the instructional outcomes of the institution, Faculty concerns, or management performances. In retrospect, Faculty were gradually becoming "tuned out."

The introduction of the new "Employee Engagement" survey, administered by Gallup, has a much different look than that of the previous Hays Survey. The Employee Engagement Survey was rolled out in February 2015. Several information sessions were provided by Employee Services. The survey proposes only 27 questions, significantly less than that of the Hays Survey. The emphasis is to "engage" Faculty. Results from the Employee Engagement Survey are to be shared sometime in March.

While these institutional surveys may sometimes seem tedious, they are the methods by which the Faculty at large have the opportunity to provide, in confidence, their feelings regarding the operation and management of the institution. As SAIT is our place of employment, it would seem only logical that we would use the survey process to influence change and stability in our working environment. ♥

Don't Forget The Introverts!

By Ian Cowley

Ian is a SAIT instructor and SAFA Board of Governors Faculty representative currently on secondment with CITD/Faculty Development Services.

One of the most eye-opening keynote speakers I have ever heard was Nicki Monahan (George Brown College) at the Teaching Professor Conference in Atlanta last year. Her talk was entitled *"Introversion and Extroversion: Implications for Teaching and Learning."*

I had always assumed I knew what introverts were—those quiet or shy ones among us, aloof, possibly antisocial, and often alone. At the conference, I learned that my overly simplistic definition was woefully inadequate with a healthy dose of naïveté. In case your definition is similar, here are some hallmarks of introverts in educational settings:

- ✓ They need more time to process new information.
- ✓ They recharge in quiet reflection, rather than by interacting with others.
- ✓ They can be single-minded about tasks and prefer to understand something fully before beginning it.
- ✓ They are not shy and do not fear social interaction.

Do you know any? To quote Ms. Monahan, "Who are they and how do we ensure they thrive in active learning classrooms? If you have ever come to the midterm point of the semester and graded a stellar paper of a student whose name you don't recognize and who has never raised his/her hand in class, you may have just identified an introvert in your classroom."

In my opinion, there is more grey than black or white here. In truth, most of us would identify as ambivert, a belief shared by analytical psychologist Carl Jung. That is, we sit somewhere on the continuum between pure introvert and pure extrovert. In all likelihood, the context of any given situation also determines our introversion/extroversion.

How does this relate to SAIT instructors? I have noticed in my own practice that I often teach primarily to the extroverts in

the room because they process quickly. They respond to my questions right away. They "get" things rapidly. Because we all have a lot of content to cover in a limited amount of time, extroverts help move us forward, perhaps before we *should* move forward. Monahan reminds us to remember the introverts in our classrooms with the following ideas by proposing the following teaching strategies:

- ✓ When using the "think-pair-share" instructional method, alter it to "think-ink-pair-share." That is, once small groups have discussed something, and before having them share it with the rest of the class, allow a couple of silent minutes for students to write their thoughts down. This provides introverts with processing time.
- ✓ Cold calling on introverts for fast answers can be a nightmare for them. Where possible, allow thought-time for all learners.
- ✓ Wait 10 seconds for responses after asking your class challenging questions. It may take introverts at least this long to come up with a response.
- ✓ Periodically, allow time for reflective practice (Google anything by Stephen Brookfield for more on this). Incidentally, reflective practice has proven beneficial for all learners, whether introvert or extrovert, by helping to cement the retention of new learning.
- ✓ As much as we promote participatory instructional methods in SAIT's applied learning environment, make sure to use lecture in your class at least a little. Introverts are very okay with lectures. Just remember that your extroverts aren't and that TED Talks, the world—benchmark of lectures, are never more than 18 minutes long.
- ✓ Don't cater to the learning preferences of introverts too much, or any learners for that matter. Stretching our students beyond their comfort zones is beneficial too.

The truth is society and the workplaces beyond our campus require both types of SAIT graduates—introverts and extroverts. ♥

Are you going to the 2016 ACIFA Conference in Jasper May 15 – 17, 2016?

SAFA will subsidize expenses for the first 40 Faculty members who apply.

For details, see the SAFA e-mail, dated February 2, 2016.

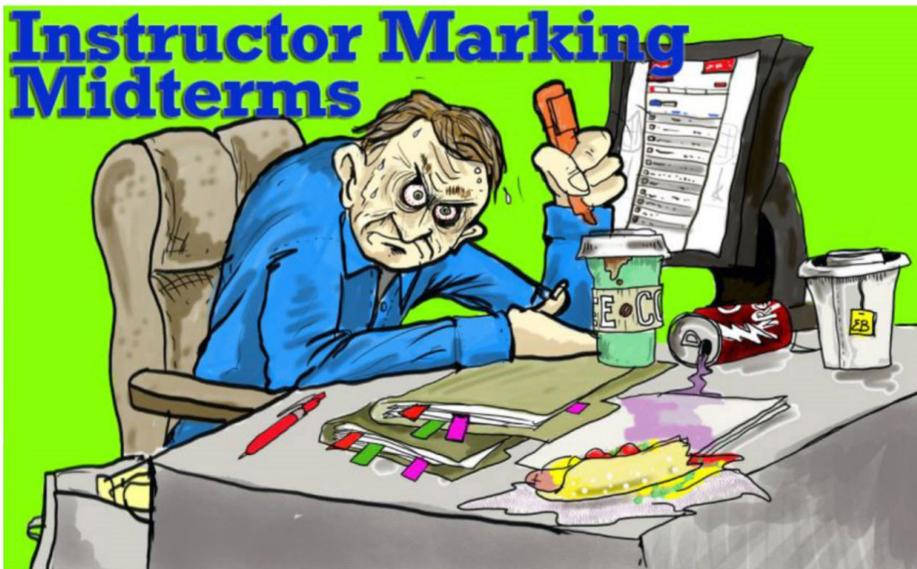
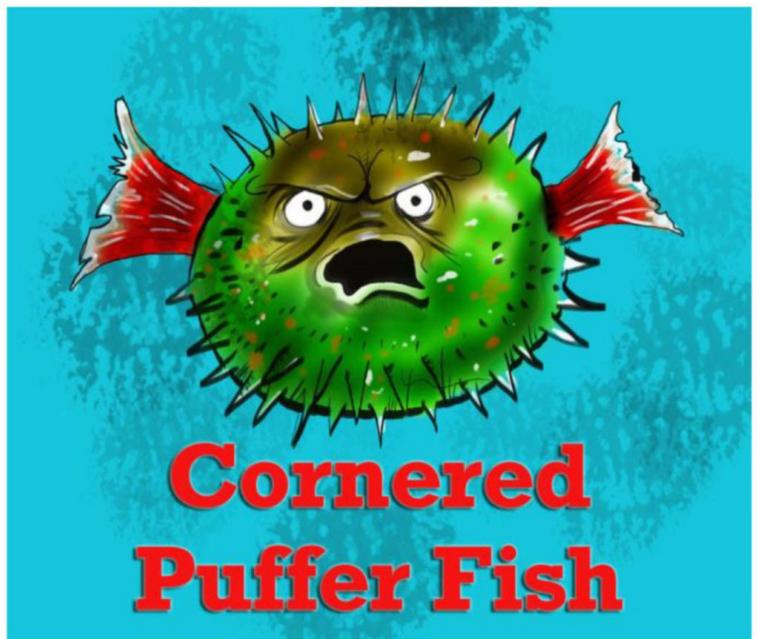
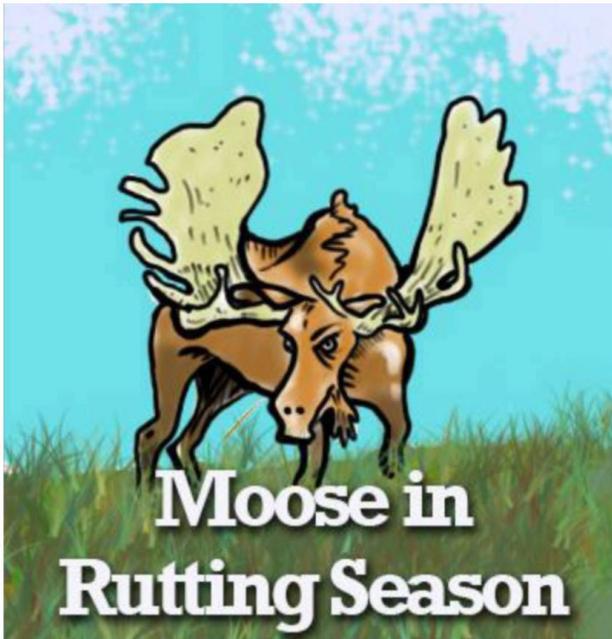
Find out about an early bird draw on March 1, 2016!!

ACIFA Distinguished Instructor Award

Distinguished Instructors "demonstrate commitment to learners and learning through a variety of measures."

The deadline for nominations to ACIFA is March 15, 2016, midnight.

For details, refer to the e-mail from Ben Turner, Administration Officer, ACIFA, dated January 18, 2016.



**Nature often
uses Body
Language to
say....**

*Don't come any
Closer!!*

DJagan 2016 TL:DR

IMPORTANT DATES

March 2016	
25	Good Friday, SAIT closed
28	Easter Monday, SAIT closed
30	Withdrawal deadline
29 – April 8	SIRs
April 2016	
25 – 29	Final Exam Week

Mark your Calendars!

SAFA Casino Night
Celebrating St. Paddy's Day
MARCH 12, 2016
The Gate, 6:00 – 11:00 p.m.

ACIFA Conference
Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge
MAY 15 – 17, 2016

Faculty Showcase '16
JUNE 8 – 10, 2016