

SAFAGRAM

President's Message

By James McWilliams



Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.

This familiar quote resonates with many of us. I am sure that there have been times in our lives when we have experienced or been in the presence of extraordinary individuals. These people have the innate ability to capture the moment; they engage our minds and elevate our senses. We are mesmerized by their skill, determination, and vision.

None are more prolific than the professional athletes: Gretzky, Orr, Crosby. On many occasions, they brought us all out of our seats as they enthralled us with their puck handling. In the soccer world, Pele, Best, and the now deceased Johan Cruyff all exemplified mastery in ball control and the fortitude to always give 100 percent. At some point in our lives, we all admired or even aspired to a sports figure we subconsciously idolized.

Then there are many of our colleagues who prefer and gravitate to the world of academia. Many are captivated by the writings of a favorite author or playwright: Hemingway, Stephen King, William Faulkner, and more recently J. K. Rowling. Personally, I was a bit more patriotic and enjoyed Arthur Conan Doyle and C. S. Lewis.

Although the greatness banner spreads far and wide, not everyone looks or desires the over inflated accolades or the trophies that accompany above and beyond achievements. Many of our instructors are of this mind set; they achieve their greatness through the success of their students—and SAIT has a cornucopia of successful students.

Our industry partners recognize the value of a student's success. They are committed to investing in the growth of our infrastructure and our programs. The return on their investment is innovative, competitive, and educated graduates. Confidence, pride, and skills are the trademarks that SAIT Faculty fosters in the development of their students.

Nowhere was this more evident than the prestigious President's Gala this April. Orchestrated by the School of Hospitality and Tourism and a stellar team of dedi-

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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



Recently I attended the Annual Accommodation Law Conference in Edmonton. There were many topics covered: Family Status, Workplace Policies, The Duty to Accommodate, etc. One area that I would like to discuss is accommodating mental health issues in the workplace.

The employer (in our case SAIT) has a “duty to accommodate” an employee with mental health issues. There are several contributing factors that make accommodating mental health disabilities more complex than other types of disabilities. Due to the complexity associated with these issues, it means that SAIT must demonstrate flexibility, patience, and compassion.

Obviously, treating someone for depression or anxiety isn’t the same as for a broken arm or a sprained knee. The symptoms of the illness are invisible, variable, and often unpredictable. Because of this, the treatment and recovery process varies from person to person. SAIT will need to make adjustments in scheduling, changes in duties, and be flexible in work performance. This may be a challenge to management, who may not be familiar with how to help when it comes to mental health issues and may compare it to a physical disability.

Of course, the stigmas and stereotypes that follow mental health issues make acceptance in the workplace more difficult. This is often due to the circumstances leading up to the diagnosis of a mental health-related disability. There can be damage done to relationships with one’s co-workers and supervisor. These relationships will need to be repaired as part of any successful return to work plan, but we must remember that these outbursts or behaviors are simply symptoms of the illness. Co-workers, as well as managers, need to be helpful and supportive of a person returning to work after an absence due to, or suffering from, a mental health disability.

The key to much of this is getting the Association involved early so that we can stay in the loop as effective communication at the early stages of the return-to-work plan will help make it a success. Please alert us at SAFA if you are going on General Sick Leave, Long Term Disability, or returning to SAIT on a return-to-work plan.

On another topic, soon we will be in the annual performance review season. I would like to remind you of your rights under the Collective Agreement. Performance reviews are covered in the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement in Section 18.

You have a couple of entitlements in this section. Your Academic Chair (on an annual basis) will review your performance with you. You may respond in writing and that response will be attached to the performance review in your personal file. This provides you with the opportunity to have your opinion included for future reference in your personal file. Assuming your overall performance is determined to be satisfactory, you will advance one step on the salary grid.

However, in the event that your overall performance is deemed to be less than satisfactory (“requires improvement”), Section 18.01 (b) of the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement entitles you to receive the reasons in writing and to appeal through the

grievance procedure. The reason is that there is a **significant financial penalty** attached to a “requires improvement” performance review. If your overall performance review results in a “requires improvement” evaluation, you may not receive your annual salary grid step increase. Keep in mind your “long service allowance” is also tied to a “meets expectations” performance review.

However, there are time limits you need to be aware of: Section 20.05 (a) requires that an academic staff member must submit the grievance within ten (10) days of the date upon which you had the first reasonable opportunity of knowing that a grievance had allegedly occurred. In the case of a performance review, I would think that would be the date you signed the PPR document acknowledging that you have been advised of the contents. It’s very important that you contact the SAFA office or me directly if your overall performance is deemed “requires improvement” as soon as possible following the PPR meeting with your supervisor.

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. ✍

Mark your Calendars!

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

Showcase '16
JUNE 8 – 10, 2016

*President's Message
Continued from Page 1*

cated instructors, it was a demonstration of efficiency, timing, and competence. Guests were not only impressed but also entertained. Leadership was most predominate that evening and validation of a well-trained team was never more evident. It was a culinary spectacle with an impressive display of food courses highlighted by an artistic ensemble for dessert. Staging an event of this calibre requires a remarkable number of people; this was a tribute to SAIT’s commitment to excellence.

We were reminded that evening that our venue was surrounded by Greatness and the Great achievers who contributed to the evolution of SAIT. Mrs. Norma Carroll, wife of the deceased Clayton Carroll, was the recipient of the President’s Cornerstone Award. The Clayton Carroll Automotive Building stands as a reminder of the vision our former alumni aspired to. SAIT and its students now reap the benefits of these Great individuals and their investment: Stan Grad Centre, the Aldridge Centre, the Johnson-Cobb Energy Centre, and out in Mayland Heights, the N. R. Buck Crump Building to name but a few. As we remember the Greats of the past, we can be rest assured that there will be no shortage of great achievers departing and returning with gifts tenfold to the hallowed halls of SAIT. ✍

Brightspace (D2L): Friend or Foe?

By Ian Cowley

First, allow me to clear up something.

Most of us know our resident SAIT Learning Management System (LMS) as D2L. Increasingly, we are referring to it institute-wide as Brightspace. This is because the actual product we use has been renamed "Brightspace" created by the *company* D2L.

In my seven+ years at SAIT, the last two years working extensively with Brightspace in Faculty Development, I have seen and heard many opinions about our LMS. Some instructors embrace and utilize its tools and features fully. Others have openly stated that we shouldn't be using it because it will make us redundant. These are the extremes—most of us fall somewhere in between.

Technically, Brightspace is software, no different from other helpful software we use all the time such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Angry Birds, or the lines of code that make our favourite websites run. It is important to remember that it is only a tool such as printers, data projectors, Elmos, whiteboards, and pencils. What do all of these things have in common? They will not, and cannot, replace great instruction by a talented, knowledgeable, skillful, and instructor. Alone, a wrench will not fix a pipe, a computer will not create a supply chain, a chef's knife will not dice an onion, and Brightspace will not engage and educate SAIT's learners. Only we can do that.

However, I do find Brightspace very useful for the following reasons:

1. It places course content, activities, and information online where SAIT learners can easily access it anywhere and anytime with an Internet connection (and for some things without). This gives Brightspace an advantage over the O Drive which can be accessed only on campus or by having students go through the process of connecting via our Virtual Private Network (VPN), which they often won't bother to do.
2. It has tools that can help learners to engage and participate fully in activities that deepen the learning that we provide in our classrooms and labs. In effect, it can shift more responsibility for learning to our learners. As my colleague Marcel Carpenter likes to say, "If you are working harder than your learners, you're doing it wrong."
3. It makes an instructor's life better. It can ultimately decrease workload and allow us to focus on activities that move our instructional practices forward instead of just being able to keep up with the crush of preparing to teach, teaching, and endless grading. It can do all of this in a pedagogically-sound, research-based-learning way.
4. It can provide "back-end" data telling us which learners are at risk, who is participating in activities, and what course content learners are and aren't grasping.

The drawbacks?

Yes, there is an upfront investment required. It can take a significant chunk of our time to set up an activity in Brightspace. This is the kind of work best saved for our offloaded time(s) of the year. Alternately, we can divvy-up this work and then share it among like-minded colleagues instructing other sections of the same course. However, once set up and automated, well, see numbers 1 – 4 above.

"But Ian!" you may be thinking, "It isn't user-friendly!" While I might not classify Brightspace as easy, I suspect most of us have learned other software that is as complicated. If you have formatted a Word document, created a PowerPoint, used tax software, or figured out how to level-up in a game on your phone, you are more than qualified to dabble in Brightspace. You must dabble—no amount of training can replace hands-on playing with software, in keeping with our belief at SAIT of the value of applied, experiential learning.

With any technology, a support network is indispensable, and you have a ton of support at SAIT such as the following:

Educational Technology Services (ETS): Our fabulously helpful Brightspace specialists. Sign up for and attend one of their regularly scheduled workshops in CITD on the 6th floor of the Senator Burns Bldg. at citd2.sait.ca/ets or send them an e-mail at ets@sait.ca to arrange a one-on-one consultation.

Faculty Development Services (FDS): Send us a message at faculty.development@sait.ca, especially if you don't know exactly what you want to do with Brightspace. We will jump all over your request and help you... I promise. Maybe all you need is a conversation to start. We do that too.

Find the Helpers: There are most certainly Brightspace champions in your school, or colleagues who have monkeyed with a feature or two. Ask around or ask your Academic Chair.

D.I.Y.: Check out citd.sait.ca/d2l/quickstart or community.brightspace.com. One word of caution if you are Googling for sources of help: Other institutes' sites may not solve your problem—our SAIT version of Brightspace is most certainly different from their version.

Remember, nobody at SAIT expects you to embrace the entirety of Brightspace all at once. In fact, please don't! Some Brightspace features and tools may not improve your instructional practice or your life. Much depends on your course content, learner demographics, and your own teaching style and personality. Perhaps try one feature in your next semester/intake and see if it makes *your* life easier.

If you have no idea how you can use Brightspace but want to try, we specialize in that in Faculty Development Services. Call us and we will help you get where you *think* you may want to go—always confidentially and without judgment—after all, we are SAFA instructors too.

Ian Cowley is a School of Hospitality & Tourism Instructor and SAFA Board of Governors Faculty Representative currently on secondment with CITD/Faculty Development Services. ✍





We all need to eat, and luckily there is no shortage of meetings that serve lunch. Be sure to bring your big (lined) briefcase!

Career Booster

Anybody who attends as many meetings as you do must be important to the institution - pretty soon you won't need to follow the black 'Chartwells' cart because people will be inviting you to the meetings!



Clothing is costly—but necessary. Fortunately most committees and volunteer roles come with an opportunity for free shirts, hats and accessories.

Career Booster

Not only will you impress students and colleagues with your sartorial splendour—but also you will be sending the message that you are a real team player!

The Frugal Faculty

A Guide to Career Advancement

TL:DR

Flavoured coffees are fashionable, but they are also expensive. A cheap (as in free) solution is to warm up your coffee in the student microwaves in the middle of the lunch time rush.

Career Booster

Not only do you get exotically infused coffee, but also you gain the reputation of being an instructor who is committed to engaging students on their turf!



Calgary is an expensive place to live and it is not easy to find affordable, convenient housing. But it is possible to find binders to build a comfortable on-campus shelter.

Career Booster

Your co-workers will see you as the first one in and the last one out every day. Supervisors will see you as a go-getter with an insatiable appetite for policy and committee reports.

