

SAFAGRAM

President's Message

By James McWilliams



"I can't believe it's the end of the year already." "I don't know where the time goes." "This has been the fastest year ever." "I'll be glad when it's the end of June."

These familiar phrases echo all over the campus especially as the academic year begins to wind down. Traditionally the May and June period is the time when Faculty purge the inexplicable amount of "stuff" we collect throughout the year, revisit lesson plans, update learning materials for next semester, and provide last-minute details and words of encouragement to those "strag-gling" students. In most circumstances, many of us look forward

with enthusiasm to the Sait Graduation ceremonies. It is an opportunity for us to extend our congratulations, offer some words of advice, and connect with parents and guardians who wait patiently to speak with us.

As we count down the days towards our long-awaited summer vacation, many of us will take the time to reflect on the year and the impact on us physically, mentally, and most important emotionally. We have some of those little nagging self-doubts such as the following: Did I do enough for that one particular student? Could I have handled things differently? Was I too tough or not tough enough? Do my students "get" me or more important, do I "get" them? Managing ourselves back into a sense of normality is usually our goal prior to our R & R time.

However, as we begin to adopt that feeling of assurance that "me time" is just weeks away, there is one more hurdle that we must get over. This is the often intense and unpredictable Performance Plan Review (PPR). For most, if not all Faculty, this process is an accepted norm within the rules of academia. However, for many of us it can be an anxious time and perpetuate our already stressful last few weeks. The Performance Review process for all intents and purposes should have been an ongoing dialogue between Academic Chair (AC) and instructor through the course of the academic year. The Performance Plan should not magically sprout new acrimonious performance objectives or unobtainable completion dates unbeknownst to an instructor.

All full-time Faculty at Sait should understand the value and the implications of their Performance Review Assessment and the information it contains. It is also

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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



Summer break is approaching, but before we leave for holidays I thought it may be beneficial to discuss the emerging topic of social media in the workplace; in particular how it has complicated employment law.

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace (still a thing?), LinkedIn, YouTube, Spotify, Snapchat, and even e-mail are, from a labour relations viewpoint relatively new. Remember Facebook has been around only since 2004! Social media sites have implications for employers and employees with regard to employment relationships. As a result, there is a growing library of arbitral decisions and case law that is beginning to define the boundaries beyond which employees may encounter complications with their employer.

The typical “grumblings” or “water cooler talk” about your employer, supervisor, or co-workers takes on a different connotation when posted online. I’m sure you’re aware of the privacy settings on your Facebook account (and if not, you should be). Did you know that contrary to popular belief the law generally doesn’t recognize a “reasonable expectation to privacy” when posting something to social media sites? What employees have said in blogs, chat rooms, e-mail, and discussion forums have been the subject of various discipline or dismissal arbitrations.

For example, in a recent grievance arbitration, (the Wyndels Grievance, 2010), Captain John Wyndels, an airline pilot, was terminated after posting comments on his Facebook page about the employer. The employer claimed it created potential harm to the reputation of the employer and the business. The arbitrator held that the termination was excessive but that the grievor’s misconduct in posting the comments had “poisoned the work environment” and, therefore, reinstatement was not appropriate since the employment relationship was rendered untenable.

In the Clarke Grievance (2007), the employee (a personal caregiver at a home for the aged) had created a blog that was accessible to anyone on the internet. She published information and pictures without resident comment and made inappropriate comments about residents entrusted to her care. Her termination was upheld by the arbitrator.

The issue of freedom of expression and social media has been discussed by the Supreme Court of Canada in which the majority wrote: “... the protection attaching to freedom of expression is not limited to the ‘traditional media’ but is enjoyed by everyone who chooses to exercise his or her freedom of expression on matters of public interest whether by blogging, tweeting, standing on a street corner and shouting the “news” at passing pedestrians, or publishing in a national newspaper.”

The Charter cautions that all forms of protected expression, including that which is communicated via social media, is subject to such “reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”

The University of Calgary’s General Faculties Council Review Committee placed two students (who are brothers) on proba-

tion for non-academic misconduct when they posted negative comments on Facebook about one of their professors. The brothers went to court where the judge quashed the Committee’s decision. The judge said that the effect of the committee’s decision was to sanction the brothers and prohibit them from publicly expressing their critical views of their professor while studying at the U of C and that restricted their freedom of expression. The judge went on to say that the order had a direct effect on their freedom of expression and violated the brothers’ Charter Rights. The U of C appealed the judge’s decision, and in May 2012, the Court of Appeal unanimously upheld the original judge’s decision. However, only one of the three judges on the appeal panel would agree that the Charter had been violated; the other two declined to comment on that part of the original decision.

Social media in Canada isn’t going away, and it will continue to have an impact on the employment relationship. A “social media policy” is one way to minimize the negative effects for employers and employees. While SAIT does not currently have a social media policy in place, it is my understanding that the Policy Committee is currently in the process of developing one. Whatever policy emerges will need to be well drafted in order to strike a balance between protecting the employer and restricting the employee’s freedom of expression.

If in doubt, here are a few “rules” to remember for Facebook (in an employment context):

1. Don’t facebook without protection (check your privacy settings!)
2. Don’t facebook with co-workers.
3. Don’t facebook with your boss.
4. Don’t facebook with students.
5. Don’t facebook with strangers.
6. Don’t facebook at work.
7. Don’t use facebook for revenge.
8. Don’t facebook late at night when you’re overtired.
9. Don’t facebook when you’ve been drinking or are under the influence.
10. Remember that, when you facebook with someone, you’re potentially facebooking with everyone they’ve facebooked with.

Last but hardly least, I would like to remind you of your rights under the Collective Agreement as it pertains to your annual PPR. Performance reviews are covered in the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement in Section 18.

You have a couple of entitlements in this section. Your supervisor/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.

In the event 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

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Library Report

By Alison Hart

The Results Are In!

The Library's first Faculty and Staff Survey ran from March 7–24, and we received great feedback that will help us improve existing services and collections and develop new programs and resources to support employees in their teaching, research, and learning goals. Here's a sneak peek at some of the results with more information to come in the future!

Survey Results Summary

Most survey respondents (54%; n=96) work in Schools, with the Schools of Business, Health and Public Safety, and Information and Communications Technologies. Almost half of respondents indicated they have worked at SAIT for 7 years or more (47%; n=84), and almost one-quarter have worked here for 1–3 years (24%; n=43). Instructors accounted for 53% of respondents (n=95), and most of them teach in diploma programs on campus.

There were 79% of respondents who visit the Library at least once per semester with almost 40% stopping in on a monthly basis or more frequently. The most common reasons for visiting the Library are to borrow Library materials (54%; n=76), to find resources for courses being taught (35%, n=49), and to consult with a liaison librarian (23%; n=32).

Respondents also shared the barriers that prevent them from using the Library more, including the feeling that the Library does not have the materials needed (22%; n=31) and preference for using other libraries or resources (9%; n=13).

The Library strives to maintain collections of relevance and currency which directly support teaching and research areas

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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.

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 you have been advised of the contents. So, 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 e-mail Al.Brown@sait.ca.

Have a great summer everyone! I look forward to seeing all of you in the Fall. 🍷

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important that an agreement has been discussed and reached at the beginning of the academic year, and for the most part, objectives are obtainable and not just back-filled by the ACs when they are often irrelevant and outside of the scope of the original agreed upon discussions. Most importantly to all Faculty who are involved in the PPR process, strong emphasis should be directed to Part III – Performance Assessment Factors (PAF) of the PPR. This process should be an honest and transparent discussion that goes to the quality, expertise, and credibility of the instructor and is not subject to biases, personality conflicts, prejudices, or preferences.

I encourage all Faculty members to be vigilant when reviewing the PAF with their AC. The process is designed to encourage impartial communications and address concerns that are of benefit to the employee, supervisor, and the institution. The PPR is not intended to be used for punitive measures. I believe a clear explanation regarding the Role Model vs Expected Performance and/or New Assignment should be forthcoming from the AC during the Assessment discussion. Going from a Role Model one year to Expected Performance the next can be somewhat demoralizing to an instructor, and some form of justification should be provided, possibly open to interpretation, but nonetheless explained.

SAFA becomes most concerned when a Faculty member has been assigned a "Requires Improvement" assessment at the end of the PPR process. Although this result may be warranted in the mind of the AC, it must be supported by accurate and relevant data which should have been identified and discussed with an instructor when his or her performance becomes uncharacteristic. This assessment can resonate negatively with an instructor's confidence level; feeling demoralized and unsupported are not uncommon. More important, it will have a major financial impact on an instructor and stall that individual's movement on the Annual Pay Grid. SAFA would advise ANY instructor who finds himself or herself in this situation to contact the SAFA Office immediately (within 10 days of the review). An assessment result of this significance will be grounds to necessitate the grievance process.

For the most part, the PPR process is a valuable commodity for providing feedback and creating a collaborative working environment between Faculty and Management. The continued development of the Faculty body and the success of the student population is the mantra by which SAIT demonstrates leadership in the post-secondary field. As we depart for the summer, we will continue to remain optimistic that the process we are assessed by is fair and values the integrity of the Faculty at large.

Please take time to revitalize and enjoy your time through the summer in whatever you do ... stay safe. 🍷



at SAIT, and we always want to hear from you if you'd like to [suggest a title](#) to be added to the collection.

Three-quarters of instructors surveyed (76%; n=66) did not bring their classes to the Library for an instruction session during the 2015/16 academic year, with some commonly cited reasons being a lack of time or uncertainty about how to integrate a library session into course curriculum.

For ideas on how librarians can support your teaching and develop custom sessions that fit your class timelines, talk to your [liaison librarian](#)!

We will continue to explore the survey results and determine how we can best respond to your feedback in order to make the Reg Erhardt Library a central hub for research and learning at SAIT. Keep an eye on <http://library.sait.ca/> and watch for e-mails from your [liaison librarian](#) for more information regarding the results from this survey and the 2016 student survey!

If you have questions about the Faculty and Staff Survey, or would like to provide additional feedback about the Reg Erhardt Library, please contact Ebony Magnus, Assessment & User Experience Librarian.

Did You Know ...

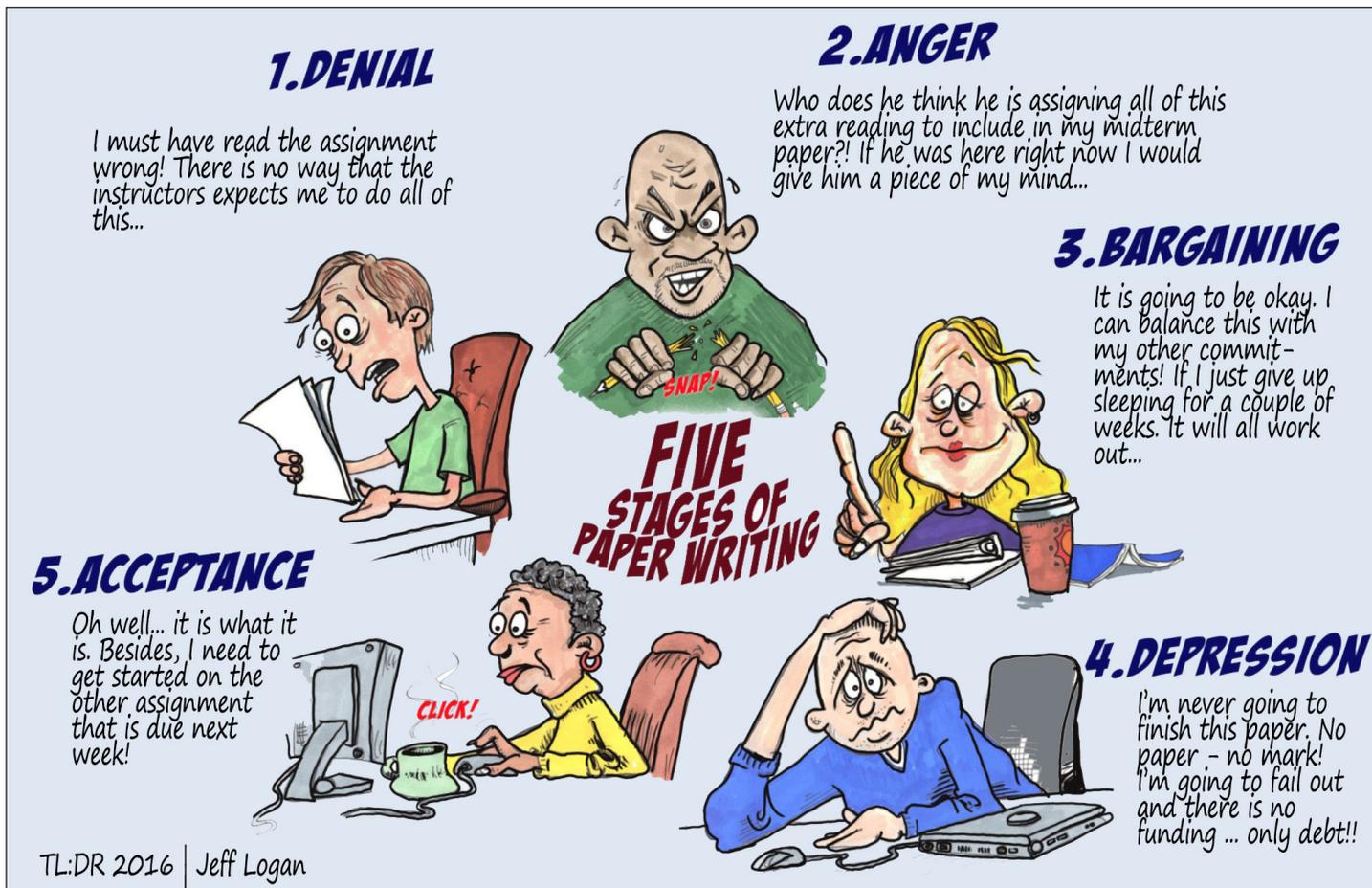
“The Library should allow SAIT employees to take Old Newspapers/Magazines home for reading for a few days.”

Good news! Magazines (except current issues) can be borrowed for one week at a time. For more information on loan periods, check out the [library website](#).



“The Library does not have online textbooks or materials in many courses. These books are used by our international students taking SAIT courses outside of Canada and who cannot access the physical SAIT Library.”

Unfortunately, most publishers do not create online versions of textbooks because of the revenue they can generate by selling print copies to students. However, we will do our best to find comparable eBooks on a topic if we're not able to provide online access to a textbook. Any SAIT Faculty, staff, or student can access our online collections from anywhere in the world! 🌐



TL:DR 2016 | Jeff Logan