

SAFAGRAM

President's Message

By Doug Spurgeon



A topic that continues to be on the minds of several instructors is the SIR II results. By now instructors should have received the results of their Fall semester survey. Again there have been many questions for the faculty office. Participation in the SIR II action plan is required for an average score for the academic year of less than 3.8. One of the questions I get now is “If I have a low SIR score, do I have to do an action plan now?” The answer should be “No,” because the action plan is based on your yearly average. In

discussions with management it has become apparent that Question 40 is in fact the “be all” and “end all,” contrary to being told that it is an indicator; and the sections A, B, C, D, and E should also be considered. Regrettably this leaves all faculty in the same boat that has created much disruption in the past. The sole focus on Question 40, and relating an action plan to an average that is neither posted nor known by faculty, further enforces the feeling of a lazy management that either doesn't comprehend how to measure the performance of instructors or just doesn't care, as long as a number is maintained. We have been told that the SIR II action plan is to make us better teachers and enhance our classroom effectiveness. However it is stated in the SIR II administration guide that the SIR II action plan is to increase the SIR II results.

The SIR II assessment issue is not one that the Association is saying should go away. We are saying the way it's being interpreted is improper and lazy. To look at a single number and not look at the other numbers puts the usefulness of information that it can provide into a defensive realm with the instructor who tries to justify why some numbers might be low. Instead of looking at Question 40 only, by including all the areas that the instructor has control over, a self-guided reflection may lead to the instructor saying “Guess that new teaching method didn't work—time to try another” or “What can I change to create more challenging questions or assignments?” It is a pity that one tool that can help us stay in touch with those who we teach has now become a “whip” dividing us from those we spend most of our day with. Many instructors dread the results coming in, and have become a bundle of nerves when teaching a class where the students feel it may not be the best use of their time. Do students know how the SIR II is used? I believe the current students may know.

Continued on page 5

In this Issue

President's Message	Page 1
Library Report	Page 2
Welcome To Allan Brown, Our New LRO	Page 2
SAIT Student Development & Counselling Services	Page 2
A+, Tip, Tricks, and Skills of the Trade	Page 3
ACIFA 2011 Spring Conference Logo Competition	Page 3
An Open Letter.....	Page 4
Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) Changes	Page 4
Editorial Cartoon	Page 6

Editorial Board

Pat Squibb
Wendy Strashok
Dawn Kuechle
BJ Hamilton—Cartoonist

Layout

Luda Paul

Printed by

Students of the Digital Graphics Communications (DGC) Program

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 luda.paul@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.

Library Report



By Luke Malone

Text and Twitter Come to SAIT Library

The Library announces two new and exciting points of contact for the SAIT community:

Because so many students carry their cell phones all of the time, SAIT Library has turned text messaging into a mobile reference tool. Our texting service has been set up to provide users with quick answers to simple questions. Queries are viewed and replied to during regular library hours. Library PIN (Personal Identification Number) requests and basic informational questions can be answered quickly and effortlessly through the text messaging service. Students aren't always able to physically come to the Library, so texting is one more way that we bring the Library to them. The next time you or one of your students need to quickly get in touch with us, remember that you can always text the Library at **403-805-2436**.

Another exciting development at SAIT Library has been the launch of our new Twitter account. The next time you log on to **library.sait.ca** have a look near the bottom of the page. Looking for something to read? Wondering what exhibits might be showing at the Library? Check out our Twitter feed for all the latest developments and to learn about stuff you never knew we had!



Welcome To Allan Brown, Our New LRO

Allan (Al) Brown is the new SAFA Labour Relations Officer (LRO). An electrician by trade, Al is a graduate of SAIT through the apprenticeship program and comes to us from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), where he was employed as an Assistant Business Manager and Organizer for twelve years.

While at the IBEW, he gained valuable experience in contract negotiations, grievance handling, and membership development. Al has developed and delivered labour-related courses, instructed at the Alberta Federation of Labour Winter School, and attended the National Labour College in Washington, D.C.

Al is looking forward to working with SAFA. He's available and eager to meet with SAFA members. Please come to the SAFA office (N201) or call to make an appointment.

You may also contact Al by e-mail at al.brown@sait.ca or by phone at Local 4067. ☛

SAIT Student Development & Counselling Services

Making an Effective Referral to Student Development & Counselling

Faculty and staff are often the first to recognize that students may be experiencing difficulty in their lives. Your recognition and response to students in distress can be the critical factor in helping the students to get the assistance they need.

How to recognize when a student needs help:

- Sudden drop in grades
- Changes in personal appearance or hygiene
- Excessive fatigue
- Frequent absenteeism
- Disruptive or inappropriate behaviour
- Repeated requests for special consideration
- Expressed feeling of hopelessness or helplessness
- An apparent inability to understand course
- Suspected alcohol or drug use
- Continuously poor test results
- Career uncertainty
- Students at risk of failure after midterms

How to refer a student to counselling:

You can arrange an appointment for the student or she/he can contact us directly. If you are concerned about the student's safety or believe the student is in crisis, you can accompany the student to Counselling Services. In the event of an emergency, we will make every effort to see the student immediately. Examples of emergencies are if the student feels suicidal or is emotionally distraught. If the student is displaying dangerous behaviour toward others, we encourage you to contact Campus Security (284-8000) immediately.

Consultation:

Our counselling staff is available to consult with you if you are uncertain about how to approach a student who is struggling, are unsure whether to refer him/her for counselling, or if you need support in dealing with difficult student situations. You can either phone or arrange to meet with one of our counsellors. All consultations are confidential. This means that you do not need to disclose the student's name since there is risk of harm to the student or someone else. ☛

Test Your Lateral Thinking

The answer to last month's question is *"The last person took the basket with the egg in it."*

Here's the last one . . .

There was once a recluse who never left his home. The only time anyone ever visited him was when his food and supplies were delivered, but they never came inside. Then, one stormy winter night when an icy gale was blowing, he had a nervous breakdown. He went upstairs, turned off all the lights and went to bed. Next morning, he had caused the deaths of several hundred people. How?





Tip, Tricks, and Skills of the Trade

By Jennifer K. Blezard, Journalism student

The Tips, Tricks, and Skills event hosted at SAIT Polytechnic this January was featured as a segment of annual International Printing Week celebrations.

The event provided a forum for students from the SAIT Digital Graphics Communication (DGC) program and NorQuest College in Edmonton, to exhibit their work and provide insight into some do's and don'ts of printing.

NorQuest is currently delivering SAIT's DGC program to students in Edmonton.

The celebration was sponsored by the Alberta Graphic Arts Industry Network (aGAIN).

Luda Paul, president of the Alberta Graphic Arts Industries Network (aGAIN) and an instructor for the SAIT DGC program, was pleased to sponsor the event so that Canadian Printing Industry Sector Council (CPISC), students, and industry professionals could meet and network.

"We want to let the industry people know what our students are learning," said Paul.

Upon graduation, Paul has no doubts that SAIT and NorQuest's DGC program alumni will find employment in the industry.

Representatives from the CPISC, aGAIN, and industry professionals partook in event festivities.

For the full article go to <http://www.weeklyalbertan.ca/temp/Printweek2011.zip>. ♦



DGC student participants from SAIT and NorQuest College, photo by Tiffany I. Smith

ACIFA 2011 Spring Conference Logo Competition

By Tracy Fawcett

Last semester SAFA held a competition for the second-year DGC students to design the ACIFA 2011 Spring Conference Logo. Luda Paul incorporated the logo competition as part of her logo design assignment. The submissions were excellent and we had a large number from which we selected the winning submission.

The winner of the design contest was a 2nd year student who received a plaque on which her winning logo was etched. All the participating students were treated to a pizza lunch. Thanks to Luda Paul and all her students for participating.

Mark your calendars, ACIFA 2011 Spring Conference, May 29–June 1, 2011 ♦



December 10, 2010

An Open Letter to: SAIT Academic Faculty Association
From: Ken Babey, SAIT Polytechnic Athletics Director
Re: Post-Secondary Sport in Canada

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing today to share with you the status of efforts to ensure that SAIT's student athletes enjoy the best possible opportunities for growth and competition while pursuing their education at SAIT.

Currently the post-secondary sport system in Canada is comprised of two organizations: the Canadian Colleges Athletic Association (CCAA) and the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS). These organizations were created several decades ago and reflected 'categories' (two-year diploma granting institutions versus four-year degree granting institutions) of post-secondary education.

SAIT Polytechnic belongs to the CCAA through the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC). Our Trojan teams have achieved strong success winning 104 ACAC (Provincial) Championships and 16 CCAA (National) Championships since the ACAC's inception in 1964.

As you know, the educational landscape has changed dramatically since 1964. Many colleges and polytechnics (like SAIT) have begun offering baccalaureate degree programs – and some colleges have become universities. In Canada, the structure of post-secondary sport has not kept pace with this evolution and that is becoming a growing threat to athletics at institutions like SAIT – who believe sport contributes greatly to society – and are therefore committed to providing elite level experiences to our student athletes.

In response, SAIT Polytechnic applied for membership to the CIS in 2003. Our application was turned down because SAIT was not a member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and SAIT's primary purpose was not granting baccalaureate degrees.

In 2005, SAIT established a task team, chaired by then Board of Governors member, Ivan Bernardo. The mandate of the task team was to lead the challenge of refining the post-secondary sports system in Canada.

SAIT's idea is that the CCAA and the CIS join together into one sport system. This 'blended model' would see tiers established on the basis of economies of scale, competitiveness and regional rivalries – irrespective of educational designations such as universities, colleges or polytechnics. The structure would be flexible, fluid and open and culminate in Canadian Championships in a number of sports.

Throughout SAIT's journey in pursuing this vision, we have come to understand first-hand the challenges of creating change. Nonetheless, we remain undeterred. Currently we are lobbying our supporters in sports, academics, student associations, media and government to become advocates for a system that – above all else – is focused on the best interests of student athletes.

The task is a difficult one, but students are worth the effort.

Regards,

Ken Babey B.Ed., M.Sc.
Athletic Director
Athletics and Recreation
SAIT Polytechnic
ph. 403-284-8033
fax. 403-284-7109
ken.babey@sait.ca

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) Changes

An e-mail was sent on January 27 to inform employees of the changes in EFAP. While the faces may be changing, the service should remain the same. In order to access the new provider for EFAP call the all-hours number (403-777-1272) to make an appointment with a counsellor. There is also 24-hour web and telephone counselling. The telephone counselling is available at the number provided and the web site is <https://www.ohisystems.com/memberservices/>.

The web site allows you to register and then you can access member services for the e-counselling or the Health Portal.

If you have additional questions you can contact Colleen Lavender, the SAIT Communications Consultant (colleen.lavender@sait.ca or local 8417). ♦♦

The results from the ACIFA and SAFA surveys are in. The results are being tabulated and time is going to be needed to analyze the results and to discuss the results with management. As a quick snap shot, the results seem to have dropped in just about every area. I believe there are several factors that can be attributed to this, some of which include the abolishments of last year and the continued statements of no funding increase. This leads to a general mood of uncertainty that appears when surveys are done.

Speaking of surveys, the HAY survey will be upon us again soon. I would encourage everyone to fill in the survey truthfully, and to respectfully complete your comments. Comments that are written to the President are given directly to the President while comments that are tactfully and respectfully written to the Dean are seen by the Dean, HR, VPs and the President. Perhaps we should consider that as we fill out the survey. One final question for the HAY survey is “Which question requires a 3.8?”

I know everyone is being told that zero percent salary increases are expected for this year. The bargaining team has their work cut out for them. People have read, or at least have access to, the Annual Report. Grant-funded programs have done well with over \$15,000,000 in surplus (excess revenue) for 2009/2010. Earned Revenue programs brought forward over \$8,000,000 in surplus (excess revenue) for 2009/2010. Well done for those groups in a recession year—very well done! On Page 78, Note 19, of the Annual Report the salaries of senior management are disclosed. I have had several faculty tell me that things must be hard as the senior management has taken a reduction when compared to last year. On the surface it certainly appears to be such, but just for the sake of clarity you have to compare to the Annual Report of 2008/2009. The base salary (I’ll use the VPs for this example as they are all the same) in the current Annual Report is 182K per year for 2010 while the same base salary in 2009 was 177K. Now, I’m no mathematician, but to me that looks like nearly a 3 percent increase. Upon closer inspection the only number that goes down is the “other cash benefits” which includes the performance payment when compared item to item with the previous year’s report. These types of benefits are common in industry and as mentioned above it is through their guidance and management that SAIT is able to post some impressive revenue numbers in today’s financial times.

Given the numbers above, I would say that we are in good standing moving into an economy that continually shows signs of recovery. The current political situation in Alberta also may be a kind indicator to post-secondary. As we have seen the current turmoil and shuffling around cabinet, signs point toward an election. If we see more money coming into post-secondary education we can assume an election will be nearby. As the year moves forward all we can do is wait and see if abolishments once again become an issue or if a pending election will stave off the ferryman.

Not all is doom and gloom. You will find in this issue of the SAFAGRAM a letter from Ken Babey outlining a hope that our athletes may get a chance to participate in higher competition along with athletes from our fellow post-secondary institutes.

This is a long way out but is something that both SAFA and SAIT agree on. Let’s allow all the competitors to compete, and may the best team win.

The SAFA executive wants to hear from its members as well as those who work along side of us. Any faculty or non-faculty who want to drop a line, or stop by and chat are more than welcome and time will always be given to those who ask. I am particularly interested in hearing from apprentice instructors who would like to attend the ACIFA Conference this year. I know that for several years most apprentice instructors have been in class during the Conference. This year the Conference runs from May 29 to June 1. SAFA is the host for the Conference this year and given the number of innovative things being done in the classrooms I believe it would be a great time to show off just what makes those who teach here so special to

our institute. Any instructors who would like to promote what they do in their classes, please let me know and together we will try to make arrangements to showcase your talents.

We now have a new disability management company in place. Organizational Health Inc. has replaced Shepell-fgi. Any feedback as this transition takes place is welcomed. Through feedback SAFA received when Shepell-fgi was in place, it helped to clarify areas that were in need of fixing as well as to refine practices in dealing with members who required

assistance. It is only through this feedback that SAFA was able to work with management and handle concerns as they arose, and to provide a stable disability process that gave management the accountability they have sought and SAFA the compassion and prompt care we have sought for our members. I encourage all members to continue providing this important feedback which helps us strengthen your position relating to your rights and entitlements.

SAIT is once again listed as one of the top 50 employers in Alberta. Many staff think employees voted on this and/or it is based on the Hay survey results. In fact, management from the institute has to apply for this award. Through the Canada’s Top 100 Employers application process, a single application package is completed for both the Canadian and provincial competitions. Following is a link to show the highlights of why SAIT was selected.

<http://www.eluta.ca/top-employer-sait-polytechnic> ↗





Wow, it's really piling up...

Yeah, and I'm expecting another
twenty centimeters ...

of snow!?!?

Nah ... assignments to mark.