

SAFAGRAM

President's Message

By Doug Spurgeon



Many people have been asking about the Provincial budget cuts. While we will have a little less money, we still have lots of work.

Our Collective Agreement was ratified by both our membership and the Board. We have a deal for the next four years and a commitment from both parties to work together and come up with a plan for workload and performance reviews. Perhaps these next four years will establish a new tone around campus, hopefully one in which the relationship between faculty and management becomes more congenial than in the past.

There are, of course, some old disputes that still need to be resolved. The “Kearney Award” is one of these. SAIT has filed for an appeal of the Judicial Review of the Arbitration, which agreed with the faculty that monthly pay on abolishment includes educational allowances and by extension the long service allowance. We await another trial date to put this issue to rest. Of course, our long-standing issue regarding the Fee-for-Service Instructors, who we as an association feel are no different from us, is progressing. Yes, this is the Charter Challenge for these instructors. More will come on this issue in the upcoming months. We also have a couple of current discipline grievances, which will hopefully be completed soon.

What does the new academic year look like? To take a quick look in the crystal ball, I can see it will be very busy with fewer resources. The budget cuts will have an impact on classes—we just wait to see how much. The severity of the cuts should start with excess payments; yes, I am referring to the “pay for performance,” which we see as only a value for senior management but not for the management levels below that.

Will we have extra pressure to teach larger classes or longer hours? While the class size can be controlled by only physical space limitations such as available equipment for students or safety restrictions, the work hours are different. Remember that Section 36 gives the restrictions that are currently in place for hours a day and hours per week. The work outside the class must also be considered, and Section 36 also provides mechanisms for that. Please read that section and have discussions with your Chair about these important issues.

One last look in the crystal ball, and I see “potential”—potential for a workplace that

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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/>

LRO Report

By Al Brown, LRO



Well, we will soon be in the annual performance review season, and I thought it may be an opportunity to refresh you with 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 supervisor—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 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 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.

While we can always ask for an extension to the time limits to allow us to meet for an informal conflict resolution meeting with Employee Services and your supervisor in the event that vacation days intervene, I would prefer to begin the process as soon as I can to avoid any further complications.

Last summer, I worked with several instructors who had received a “requires improvement” on their overall performance review evaluation. I was able to work with Employee Services and several of the schools on campus to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome for most of the complaints.

During this recently completed cycle of collective bargaining, we received a letter of understanding regarding “Performance Management and Teaching Excellence” in which SAIT confirms that Student Instructional Reports (SIRS) will not be the sole criteria used for the purpose of conducting performance evaluations. Further SAIT has agreed to work with SAFA to outline the performance management and evaluation process. SAIT also agrees to provide SAFA with an annual report, by July 31, of the total number of instructors who did not receive a satisfactory performance review for the previous academic year.

I know there is a lot more that we discuss when it comes to PPR meetings, but I wanted to make you aware of your rights to dispute an overall rating of “requires improvement” on your annual performance review.

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

Faculty Hockey News

By John Dumonceaux

Some of you may not know that SAIT Faculty and Staff have a hockey team. We play our home dates at the SAIT arena every Wednesday evening with away games scattered throughout the city. We average 60 games a year with rates much lower than other leagues.

Next year we are losing 4–5 players to retirement and need to build up our reserves. Even if you are interested in playing only part-time we have spots for you.

The team is mainly beer league with some star players. One player from last year is now in the NHL—okay, Carmen is a retired faculty member who is a cameraman for NHL games! We aim to have fun along with some exercise. The average age of players is well north of 30!

If you are interested, please e-mail me at john.dumonceaux@sait.ca, call Llyal Grummett at 403-651-1019, or e-mail Randy at randy.kaltenbach@sait.ca. We will also have summer ice at the Flames Community Arena every Monday at 5:30 p.m. if you want to meet some of the guys. ➡

Notice of ICT Fourth Annual Capstone Project Showcase

By Jason Fisher

The fourth-semester students and the faculty of the Information Technology Computer Systems major would like to invite you to attend our Fourth Annual Capstone Project Showcase. You are invited to drop by anytime.

Location: Four Nines

Date: Friday, April 26

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more details, please visit proj354.com

Response to Anonymous Submission

By George Haeckel

I would like to respond to the anonymous submission in the January/February/March 2013 issue of the SAFAGRAM. For nearly 33 years, I have been an instructor at SAIT and prior to that I was a systems analyst at SAIT and NAIT for four years. I have worked under six presidents and their administrations (including my service at NAIT). Working under the previous regime here at SAIT has been very challenging indeed.

While I agree with many of the points made by the anonymous author, I find myself taking issue with inflammatory statements such as the following:

- Over the years, there appears to have been a concerted effort to employ managers at all levels who have no experience with SAIT's core business—that of education and training.
- How could these inexperienced managers do other than parrot what they are told?
- For the answer to any question, other than that of the most mundane nature, sends them [the inexperienced managers] scuttling to the next level above for a decision.

As a faculty member, most of my interactions with SAIT's management are with Academic Chairs (ACs). My focus in this article is on ACs. I interact with several of them as I teach many service courses to various departments as well as academic upgrading mathematics. There are many ACs here at SAIT; and in my experience, many of them do excellent work and some do not, just as many instructors (or people in any position within an organization) do excellent work and some do not. I would suspect that many ACs were offended by such blanket criticisms just as I am when senior management imply that faculty or support staff are lazy and need to be more closely managed.

The attrition rate of ACs at SAIT is very high. Given the conditions that they have to work under, such as having new tasks arbitrarily assigned to their workload and decisions made such as removing their EDOs (Earned Days Off), it is amazing that we do not lose more of them.

There are certainly some ACs working here without any experience in academia, but there are many who have the experience. I do not know what the breakdown across campus would be, but in my department (CALs) two of the three ACs came to their positions directly from teaching positions.

One might ask why faculty members rarely apply for AC positions when they become available. Coordinator positions,

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can be much more than a "work" place. I have had a brief discussion with the new SAIT President. Something that has resonated with me is that he wants to meet with me to discuss events and to learn what is going on. Those few words provide the "potential" to create an environment similar to the one that brought many of us to SAIT.

As we get ready for the summer and prep for next year, I hope to cultivate this "potential" and start the fall with a rejuvenated labour relationship. 🗨️

which had a reduced teaching load, were once filled largely from the ranks of instructors as they were also faculty positions. This is how the college system in the western world functions. Perhaps we should consider a return to the mainstream of colleges and have the ACs return to partial teaching loads. Now that we have a new administration here at SAIT, a change such as this might be possible. 🗨️

Reg Erhardt Library by the Numbers

By Alison Hart

- The Library hosts over **450,000 visitors annually** and the website receives 330,000 hits each year.
- In the 2012 academic year, Librarians taught classes which reached more than **4300 students**.
- The Reg Erhardt Library conducts an annual student survey in order to understand how students currently use the Library. The survey addresses the students' needs, opinions, and changes they would like to see in the future. From the 2012 survey:
 - ✓ 53 percent of students use the Library at least once a week.
 - ✓ The top three reasons for students to use the Library are studying, researching topics, and using computers.
 - ✓ **88 percent of students think Library services are excellent or good.**

Based on student survey feedback and other input, the Library implemented the following improvements last year:

Services:

- **Rock and Rove Reference** was launched! Staff now walk throughout the Library on an hourly basis offering research assistance to students. This also provides additional security and increases staff visibility.
- **Student Drop-in Sessions** every Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. provide students with one-to-one help on research questions.
- **Extended Study Hours** during the three weeks before Exam Week means the Library is open later on the weekends!

Communication:

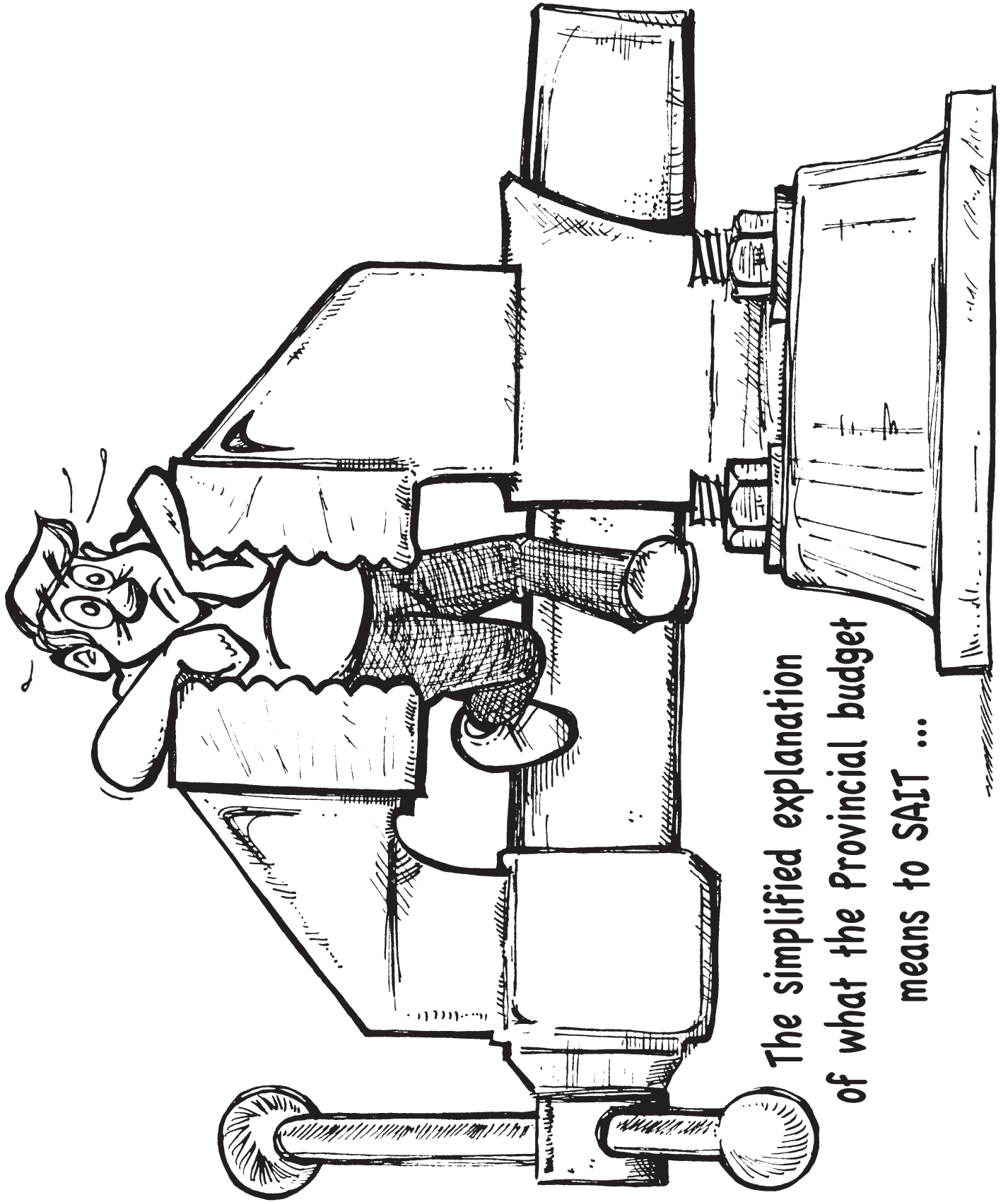
- **Services for Distance Students** continue to improve with additional e-mails about Library services, new resources, and upcoming events.
- **Increased Radio and Print Marketing** promotes Library awareness throughout the main campus as well as at the Mayland Heights campus (Buck Crump and Bob Edwards Buildings) and the Art Smith Aero Centre.

Facilities:

- **New Flooring** in the computer areas and new carpet on the main floor help reduce the noise level in the Library.

In 2013, watch for:

- **New Media Desk Services** in the spring! Students will have access to equipment like laptops and headphones.
- **Library Website Redesign** is also underway! This will make it easier for students to navigate and access the resources they need. 🗨️



**The simplified explanation
of what the Provincial budget
means to SAIT ...**