

An Instructor Dilemma

Anonymously by an Instructor

I am currently evaluating student presentations and am about to write comments on the evaluation sheet. Some comments praise and others critique. In other words, I'm trying to provide honest feedback: the good, and the "not so good."

Ooops! Wait a minute. I'm forgetting the lesson in Dale Carnegie's book: *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936). "Criticism is dangerous, because it wounds a person's precious pride, hurts his sense of importance, and arouses resentment" (page 5). "Criticisms are like homing pigeons. They always return home" (page 8).

Now I'm not quite sure what to do. Write only "good" comments and refrain from any negative ones? Write nothing and simply provide a grade? What grade? Anything less than an A+ suggests something is wrong. Isn't this criticism?

Am I trying to win friends or am I trying to provide the students with a quality education? Can I do both? Too frequently, a choice must be made—appease and placate the student to minimize resentment and negative feelings, or practice good pedagogy that evokes anger and resentment.

SAIT seems to be saying that I am to "win friends." They will assess my ability to win friends by conducting two "customer" satisfaction surveys (SIRs) each semester. If the score is below the benchmark, I am in trouble and will be required to take more training.

If my SIR score is below the benchmark, maybe it is not because I am practicing poor pedagogy but because I am practicing good pedagogy. Is it unreasonable to

- ✓ provide feedback that is both good and bad that can assist students to learn, grow, and develop?
- ✓ assign grades that reflect the students' level of competency?

Some students hold the belief that, as the customer, they deserve to pass all courses and receive only A's and B's regardless of the quality of their work. Learning is not the purpose of attending SAIT according to some students I have asked; the diploma is the outcome coveted.

SAIT could look at ways of measuring student learning, which is really why the institution exists. Would not my efficacy as a teacher correspond, to a degree, to what the students know and can do in relation to their vocation?

SAIT could think about teaching and learning from a systemic perspective.

I am discouraged with the amount of power provided to students. As Daniel Daly states in an article in the *Omaha World Herald*, "Our system has infected students with the idea that they have the expertise, the authority, and the power of judicious scrutiny to appraise their instructors." The emphasis of instructor evaluations at SAIT is resulting in a significant erosion of academic standards that ultimately results in unqualified graduates.

References

- Carnegie, D. (1936). *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. New York: Simon and Schuster Inc.
- Daly, D. (2000). "Students Rating Teachers is Idiocy." *Omaha World Herald*.
- Davis, T., & Murrell, P.H. (1994). *Turning Teaching into Learning: The Role of Student Responsibility in the Collegiate Experience*. ERIC: ED372702. Washington: George Washington University. ♦♦

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Casual Employment Agreements—Academic

Instructional Hours: Preparation Hours

Instructors should be aware when entering into Casual Employment Agreements—Academic that they should not be selling themselves short on the number of hours for preparation. There have been an increasing number of agreements where the ratio of instructional hours to preparation hours has either been reduced or is non-existent.

Although there is nothing specifically in the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement on the ratio of instructional to preparation hours, historically, a benchmark for a minimum has been a ratio of 1:1; i.e., for every instructional hour, there is a preparation hour. Preparation and evaluation is an integral part of instruction, and instructors should not accept anything less than a 1:1 ratio.

In the cases where instructors are doing curriculum development and teaching the same course, it is fair and reasonable to request additional preparation hours. There may also be times when additional preparation hours are required.

Please contact the SAFA office if you have any questions on Casual Employment Agreements. ♦♦

Four-for-Five Leave Policy

Interested in applying for Four-for-Five Leave? The policy has been changed and the deadline for application for Four-for-Five Leave is March 30.

The rationale for the change of application deadline from April 30 is to accommodate faculty members returning from Four-for-Five Leave by August 1, in order to have some preparation time prior to the commencement of the fall semester. ♦♦

SAFAGRAM

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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.

Workplace Health & Safety Resource Information

Workplace Health & Safety is a division of Alberta Human Resources and Employment and falls under the jurisdiction of Minister Mike Cardinal.

You can contact Workplace Health & Safety at any time for information by phone at 1-866-415-8690 or visit www.whs.gov.ab.ca/expert.

A large selection of occupational health and safety information materials are available through the Alberta government at www.gov.ab.ca/hre/library.

A subscription to the Occupational Health & Safety magazine is available free of charge from:

Circulation Department
Alberta Human Resources and Employment
Workplace Health & Safety and Employment
Standards Compliance
10th Floor, South Tower, 7th Street Plaza
10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5J 3E4
Email: whs@gov.ab.ca
Phone: 1-866-415-8690 ♦♦

Educational Quotes

"We're going to have the best-educated American people in the world."

—Dan Quayle

"I'm a philosophy major. That means I can think deep thoughts about being unemployed."

—Bruce Lee

"An intellectual is someone who has found something more interesting than sex."

—Edgar Wallace

"I can speak Esperanto like a native."

—Spike Milligan

"Why don't they pass a constitutional amendment prohibiting anybody from learning anything? If it works as well as prohibition did, in five years Americans would be the smartest race of people on Earth."

—Will Rogers

"What's on your mind, if you'll forgive the overstatement?"

—Fred Allen

"Ever wonder if illiterate people get the full effect of alphabet soup?"

—John Mendosa

"Experience is the name so many people give to their mistakes"

—Oscar Wilde

"College athletes used to get a degree in bringing your pencil."

—Ruby Wax

"If a man is a fool, you don't train him out of being a fool by sending him to university. You merely turn him into a trained fool, ten times more dangerous."

—Desmond Bagley

"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper."

—Robert Frost ♦♦

LIBRARY REPORT



by Dave Weber (284-8476) and
Nora Robinson (210-4073)

- ⇒ We have a very active library instruction program. In the fall semester, 2351 students attended 93 library classes. The presentations ranged from introductory tours to the Library Skills Workshop (LSW) sessions offered as part of the Communications courses to sessions on specialized research and plagiarism. In the spring of 2004, we received a Faculty WebCT grant through CITD to redevelop the LSW in WebCT format. We also developed an HTML version available through the Library web site, www.sait.ca/library. If you are interested in a library instruction session for your students, please give Nora (4073) or Dave (8476) a call.
- ⇒ Renovating your house? Decorating on a shoestring? Buying your first house? Planning on being your own contractor? The SAIT library can help. In the fall, the SAIT Library received an \$8,796 donation from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation to buy consumer-related library material on the real estate industry. The resources we ordered have started to arrive. For a listing of the new titles, go to the Library home page, www.sait.ca/library and check the announcements at the top of the screen. SAIT students and staff can borrow these items. Members of the public may also borrow items from this collection if they have an Alberta Library (TAL) card.
- ⇒ For those of you looking for a bargain-cost book, we have our discard shelf. When we remove a book from the library collection, we put it out for sale on our discards shelving. The discards shelving is located adjacent to the west wall of Level 0. Books from the catalogued collection are \$1.00; general interest paperbacks are 50 cents.

FAQ's
continued from page 3

Q: What is the maximum for dental coverage?

A: The maximum for orthodontic coverage is \$2,000 lifetime maximum and \$2,000 annual maximum for basic and major services combined.

Q: Does seniority apply to Instructors working on casual employment agreements?

A: The SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement does not contain any seniority clause. Instructors working on a casual employment basis are hired by the academic department Dean and/or Coordinator. It is the decision of the Dean and/or Coordinator whether they give preference to hiring an Instructor who has a longer service history at SAIT. ♦♦

- ⇒ In January, we once again hosted ArchitExpo, a display of works by the Construction Department's architectural drafting students. The students worked in groups to develop a display that illustrated the work of a specific architect or an architectural theme. The pavilions were on display January 20–February 18.
- ⇒ In February, we invite you to visit the Library to view the work of the Photojournalism students. Every student in the program submits 4 or 5 photos, which are then mounted for the display. We have hosted both ArchitExpo and the Photojournalism displays in past years, and every year, the student work amazes us with its variety and visual appeal.
- ⇒ The Library and the Manufacturing Department recently completed a cost-sharing purchase of AV materials. In November, Anne Marie DeGroot, Library AV staff member, completed an extensive search for AV material that could replace the material currently borrowed from the U of C and ACAD for the Computer Integrated Design Program. Dave Weber and Rick Burrowes, Coordinator, Mechanical Technologies, Curriculum Development, negotiated a cost-sharing arrangement for this purchase. The Manufacturing Department has agreed to contribute 50 per cent of the purchase cost of these materials.

Library Liaison Events:

Zahina Iqbal and May Chan hosted Library Liaison lunch presentations for Business and Tourism and Health & Public Safety instructors, respectively. Dave Weber presented a "Know your Library Liaison Service" contest for the CALS, Construction, and Manufacturing departments. ♦♦

Calories Lost ... Go Figure

<http://www.poohebear.com/Fun/BlkondeHTML/CALORIES.HTM>
Here's the guide to some calorie-burning activities and the number of calories per hour they consume.

| | |
|---|-----|
| Beating around the bush | 75 |
| Jumping to conclusions | 100 |
| Climbing the walls | 150 |
| Swallowing your pride | 50 |
| Passing the buck | 25 |
| Dragging your heels | 100 |
| Pushing your luck | 25 |
| Making mountains out of molehills | 500 |
| Hitting the nail on the head | 50 |
| Wading through paperwork | 300 |
| Bending over backwards | 75 |
| Jumping on the bandwagon | 200 |

LAPP Retirement Checklist



LAPP

The following original documents are required to complete a LAPP retirement application:

- Employee birth certificate (NOTE: If the name on the birth certificate does not match the employee's present name, documents leading up to the name change are also required, e.g. marriage certificate, divorce certificate.)
- Pension Partner birth certificate (NOTE: If the name on the birth certificate does not match the employee's present name, documents leading up to the name change are also required, e.g. marriage certificate, divorce certificate.)
- Marriage Certificate (if applicable)
- Void cheque for direct deposit of pension
- Alberta Health Care Number (optional – Only if you would like Alberta Health Care deducted from your pension cheque. You and your spouse must both be under 65 years of age.)

Things to Remember:

LAPP application process should begin about 2 months before your retirement date.

The SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement specifies the notice required to give to your supervisor (Section 34).

You may have optional service (eligible service where no contributions were made to the pension plan) available for purchase to increase your pension benefit.

BENEFIT COVERAGE TERMINATES AS FOLLOWS:

Alberta Health Care coverage terminates at the end of the month of termination. Dental benefits and extended health care benefits terminate on your last paid day. Group life insurance terminates 31 days after your last paid day.

CONVERSION OF BENEFIT COVERAGE:

31 days from the last paid day to convert group life insurance to private coverage without medical evidence.

30 days from the last paid day to convert dental and extended health care to private coverage without medical evidence.

Contact the federal government regarding Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security (website: www.hrdc.gc.ca).

LAPP website address is www.lapp.ab.ca. As well as having general information about LAPP, this site provides calculators for pension estimates and purchase of services estimates.

Other questions or for more information, call Maria Gagliardi in SAIT Human Resources at 210-4066. ♦♦

Robbie Burns Fundraising Dinner Benefits Culinary Students

by Heather Sagan

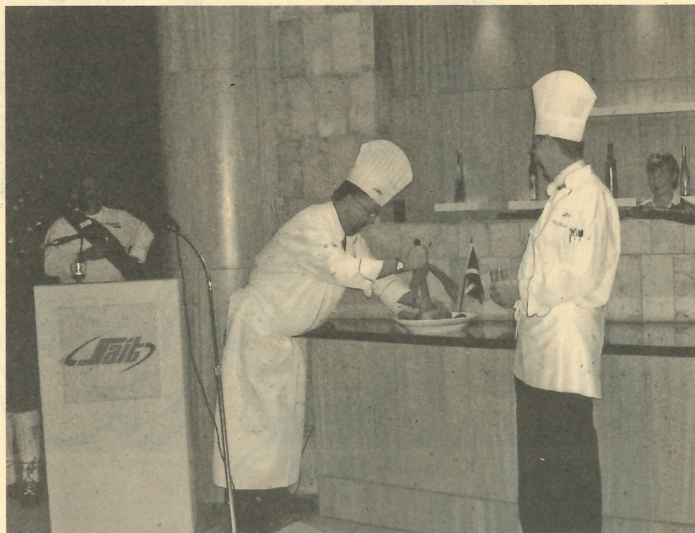
On Friday, January 21, 2005, Academic Coordinator, James McWilliams, and Instructors, Maxwell Lawrence and Sean Toner, organized a Robbie Burns fundraising dinner for students who will be visiting Scotland on a Culinary Exchange in April 2005. About 75 guests enjoyed an evening that began with scotch tasting, complete with haggis being piped in by Stuart Brazier, Scottish dancers

from the Brazier Highland Dance School, and a toast to Robbie Burns. A special thank you to Vaulker Bauman for his tasty "Baps," Victoria Dodd's class for their marzipan treats, Pat Ryan who tended bar, and Wolfgang Stampe who assisted with the food preparation.

The dinner was excellent and there were several SAIT faculty members in attendance who enjoyed the evening. ♦♦

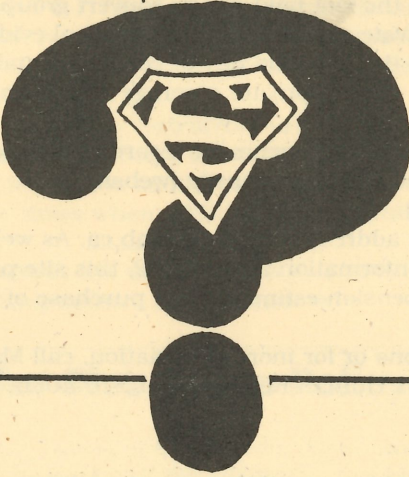


L to R: Fred Bloom (student), James MacWilliams, Max Lawrence, and Stuart Brazier



L to R: James MacWilliams and Max Lawrence with "the Haggis"

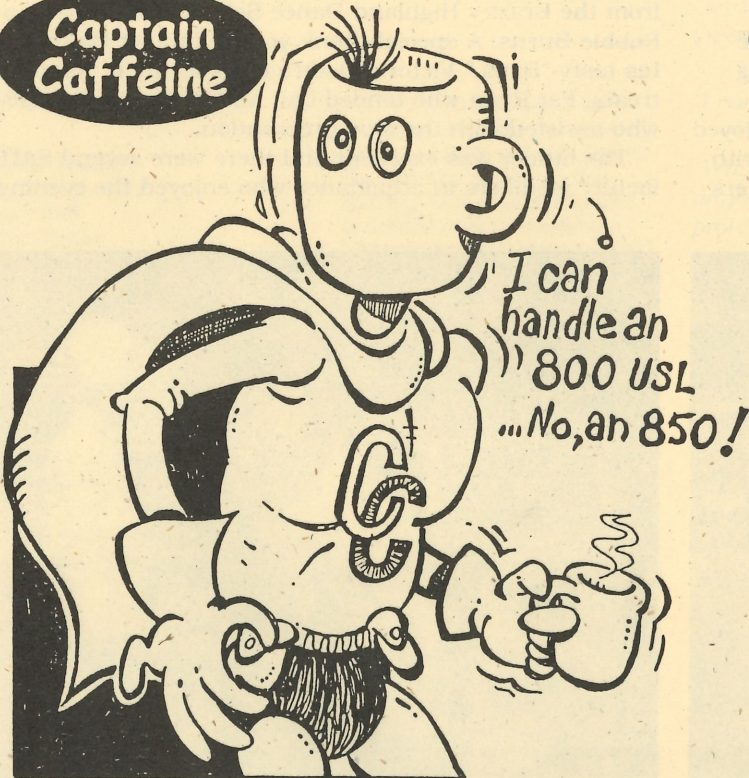
Have
you ever
imagined
your co-workers
as superheroes?



Fear me,
for I am
a Master
of WebCT!



Captain
Caffeine



SuprVsr

Defender
of the PPR
Way

