

SAFAGRAM

President's Message



by Doug Spurgeon

15 Weeks vs 16 Weeks For Course Delivery

This seems to be a topic that is currently creating a lot of buzz around the coffee tables lately. How will the new 15-week semester impact you as a faculty member?

I have recently had some discussions on this issue. If you are teaching Apprenticeship Programs, your current number of weeks (intakes of 8 weeks or 16 weeks) will remain the same. For all other Grant Funded Diploma courses, September 2009 will mark a change to a 15-week semester.

I have been told that instructors will continue to be loaded as if they were teaching a 16-week semester but be in class for only 15 weeks. There would be no spike in weekly contact hours to do this move. As well, overload would be reached once instructors have gone beyond the Class Contact Hours (CCH) assigned to their instructional unit.

The Association's viewpoint on this is that for those teaching in the affected programs, it will amount to a 1/16 reduction in load hours and should be dealt with accordingly through a letter of understanding until the workload section can be reopened at the next bargaining round.

Some historical background on this may help:

SAIT used to be on the quarter system--3 semesters at 12 weeks each. Going from 36 weeks of instruction to 32 weeks, the same number remained with no allowance given for a reduced amount of contact with the students. In a previous interest arbitration (one where the collective agreement went before an arbitrator as it could not be settled at the bargaining table), SAIT had argued that all CCH numbers had to be easily divisible by 16 so that the averaging could work out. The Association feels that since we are moving to a 15-week block, then the numbers should be divisible by 15; hence the 1/16th CCH reduction.

Currently the Collective Agreement specifies the amount of time that an instructor may be in front of a class. There is a clause that specifies that it shall be 3% of CCH or 20 hours, whichever is greater (of course, averaged over 16 weeks) unless the instructor agrees otherwise.

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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 Dave Weber and Nora Robinson

⇒ ArchiEXPO 2009

The Library, once again, hosted the architectural and design exhibit from January 12–30. Over 20 digital media and model/poster presentations interpreted major architectural movements of the work of noted architects. Library staff and Architecture instructors, Ykje Piera, Robert Scott, and Janos Dvorzszak organized the exhibit. A reception for the students and instructors and invited guests was held on January 29.

⇒ Photojournalism 2009

Works by the photojournalism students will be on display in February. This annual display is very popular with students visiting the Library. We're sponsoring a "best of show" vote this year—drop by and ask for a ballot.

⇒ Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibitions

We are again hosting a series of art displays. In January, we had the works of Dan Hudson, an Alberta photojournalist, on display. His work blended paintings and photographs that highlight the themes of adventure and travel.

Our next exhibit is in March. Watch the Business Notices for additional information.

⇒ Group Study Room Upgrades

Group Study Room 2 on Level 1 is the first of eight library study rooms to offer upgraded digital/media equipment. The temporary computer desk has been replaced by a reconfigured study table and equipment rack. The keyboard/mouse is now positioned at a more comfortable distance from the wall-mounted flat screen monitor. Students also have easier laptop access to the monitor and network cables. New equipment in the room includes a DVD and video player. The Library plans to upgrade all seven other group study rooms this year.

⇒ New Staff

Jim Gray and Danica Dixon started in full-time library technician positions January 2. Jim will be supervising the evening and weekend staff. Danica joins the Library's instruction and communications team. Rosie Bruinsma and Winnie Siu will be working evenings and weekends.

⇒ Legacy '88 Funding Approved

In December, we received word that our request for \$27,000 from the '88 Legacy Fund had been approved. The funding will be used to create five additional student laptop group work tables. The tables, which will be located on Level 1, will have network and electrical connections. We have two wired tables in the front area of the Library and they are very popular with students. Work will start in February. ♦

*President's Message
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The following is a breakdown of CCH and 3% of instructional hours with a maximum that can be taught unless you, as the instructor, agree otherwise.

CCH	3% of CCH	Max wkly hrs
576	17.28	20
592	17.76	20
608	18.24	20
624	18.72	20
656	19.68	20
688	20.64	21
720	21.6	22
752	22.56	23
784	23.52	24

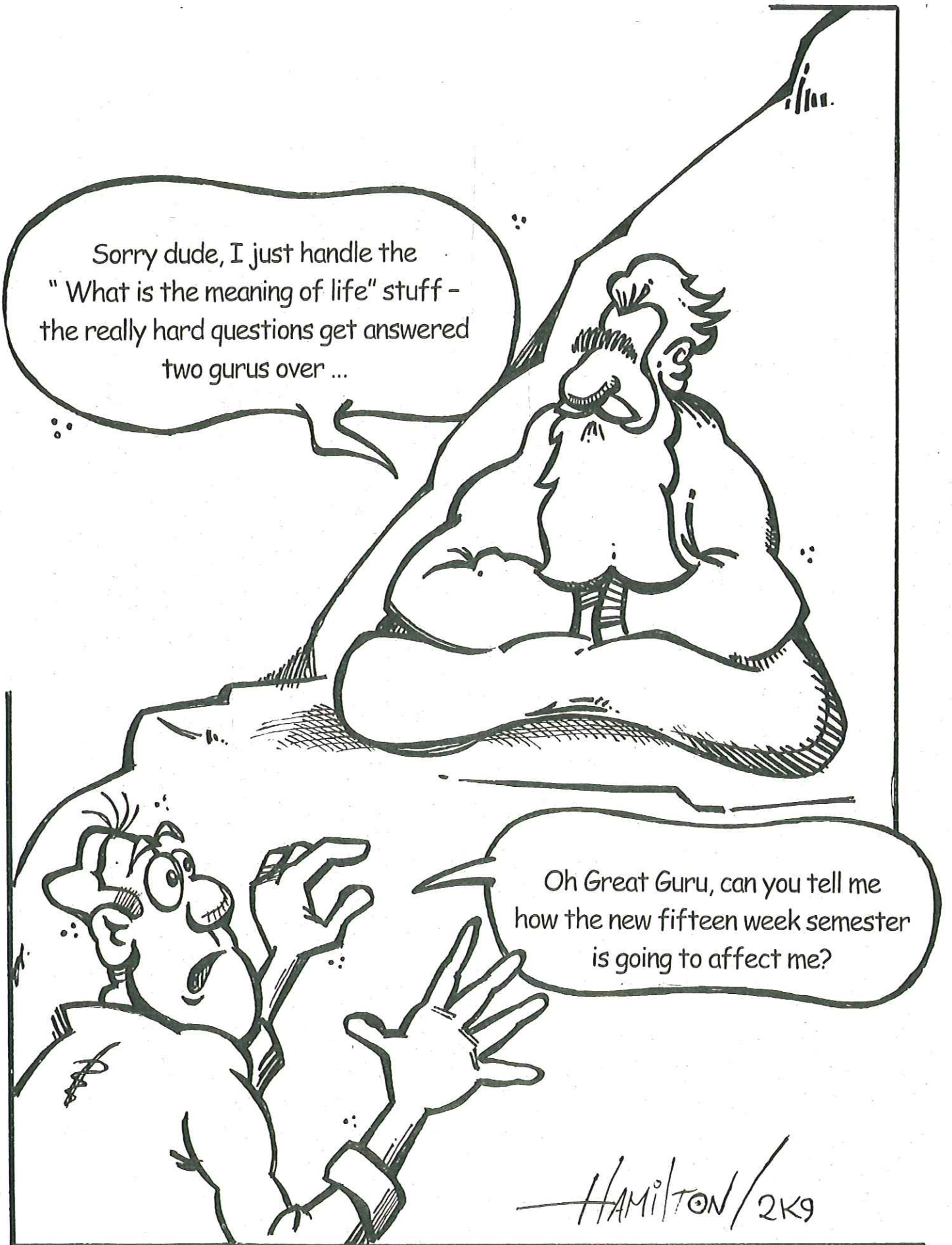
As has happened several times in the past, typically the number of weeks is selected (32) and that number is divided into the CCH. If you had 656 as your CCH number, for example, this would result in 20.5 hours a week or 21. Effectively, if you use the nominal rule of 1:1 (one hour class preparation per one hour class contact), that would mean that you are over the number of hours for a work week, which is up to 40 hours. Please keep in mind that these extra hours are and can be averaged over the year. That would mean that any time your

1:1 work is over 40 hours per week, if the excess hours can be made up in non-teaching times, then your net result would be a 40-hour work week. If these hours cannot be averaged due to other commitments which may arise, then at that time a serious discussion and look at overtime should be initiated with your supervisor.

Remember that the CCH assigned is for an academic year (July to June). This means that if you teach only the maximum weekly class contact hours allowed under the collective agreement (which is your right) and if that results in a CCH underload, then if a course were to come up during the normally unscheduled time of May and June, you can be asked to teach that course, and management has every right to expect that you will do so.

As well, not all of our work is done entirely in front of a class. Members may also be performing tasks of course development, student consultations, and any number of classroom and student/instructor support activities. These tasks are included in your weekly work, and while they might not be counted as CCH (some receive offload), they are nonetheless important.

If anyone would like further details on this subject, please stop by the SAFA office. ♦



The Cost of Your Rights: Dues

by Sean O'Flynn, SAFA LRO



One of the most important ways members of SAFA support their Association is through dues. These dues are used to ensure that you are receiving all the rights that you are legally entitled to. Whether enforcing your rights based on the Collective Agreement, the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, or labour relations case law, SAFA is here to fight for your rights.

When disagreements arise between SAFA and SAIT on specific issues, whether regarding a policy or how a member has been treated, SAFA will try to come to a resolution with management. If no resolution is worked out, then SAFA will start the formal grievance procedure. It is this formal process, with the power to go to arbitration if a resolution is not worked out, that is the backbone of SAFA power. It is arbitration, and more often the threat of arbitration, that can force management to give employees all the rights they are entitled to.

Unfortunately, arbitration is a very expensive process, and it is this process that accounts for a large part of how the money from your dues is spent. While this is an expensive process, it is extremely important to the enforcement of your rights. It is the possibility of going to arbitration that gives SAFA its power to defend your rights. Having enough money to make management take the possibility of going to arbitration seriously, and going to arbitration when necessary, is why dues are a cost of your rights. ➡



Faculty Development Services: Newest Offerings

Faculty Development Services (FDS), in the Centre for Instructional Technology and Development promotes teaching, curriculum, and technical excellence at SAIT. Our team supports the ongoing development and enhancement of teaching and learning for all programs.

Whether you are a new instructor or have years of experience, the facilitators from FDS can explore ways with you to enhance your teaching practice. We offer a wide a range of services including seminars, workshops, and individualized consultations on a wide variety of topics related to instruction. Some topics include Motivating Students, Presentation Skills, Assessment, and the Use of Clickers as a Classroom Tool. Customized topics to meet the needs of your specific program are also available. As well, we provide confidential individual consultations to faculty such as classroom observations and small group instructional feedback sessions that are customized to the specific areas of emphasis suggested by the instructor.

Our support includes best practices in teaching and learning, curriculum development, and e-learning. We are your resource for instructional innovation, as well as for help in developing new ideas and putting them into practice. We also like to hear about the exciting new strategies you have in the classroom; we can share your discoveries with other instructors.

If you have ideas for other workshops or seminars, please let us know! To learn more about how we can assist you, contact Moira MacLoughlin (7071), Doug MacLachlan (8376), Marjorie Contenti (8432), or Marie Krbavac (8696), or email

faculty.development@sait.ca. You can also visit our website at <http://citd.sait.ca> or just drop in to MB026 in the Heart Building for a meeting. ➡

Investigations and SAFA Representation

Sean O'Flynn, SAFA LRO



Investigations by management into issues that may result in discipline are an important part of their rights, but during the process of the investigation you also have rights. In most circumstances, you will have the right

- to know the intent of the investigation and why it is being conducted
- to have SAFA representation
- to be informed of your right to SAFA representation prior to the investigation

SAIT is committed to the Ethics First principles, including transparency. Why an investigation is being conducted is an essential part of conducting an investigation that is ethical and consistent with the principles of natural justice. You should always ask for the reasons why an investigation is being conducted, and expect a clear, concrete answer.

While speaking to management about issues that could lead to discipline for you or others, it is important to know the implications of your comments and to know your rights, including your right to SAFA representation. When management is conducting an investigation in response to a complaint, concern, or something that has been brought to their attention, and the outcome of the investigation could result in discipline to you or others, you have the right to SAFA representation.

If you decide to have SAFA representation, you are required to inform whoever is conducting the meeting that you will be bringing representation. A SAFA representative will support your rights, provide you with advice, and generally ensure the process is fair. If you are asked to attend a meeting, ask for the intent of the meeting and what the implications could be from that meeting. Once you are informed that a meeting is going to be conducted that could result in discipline to you or others, contact the SAFA office to either set up an appointment or stop by to discuss your rights and any other concerns. ➡

Academic Probation

By Student Development and Counselling Services

One of SAIT's main objectives is student retention. According to research published in a recent issue of *Recruitment and Retention in Higher Education* (May 2008, Vol. 22, No. 5), the primary factors in student attrition are personal issues such as poor study skills or lack of funding. Two institutional factors were found to be relevant: student fit with the institution and the availability of financial aid. It is important to customize help for struggling students, and that is what we are attempting to do when addressing Academic Probation.

The Counselling Centre and the Learning Skills Centre cooperate in providing assistance to students on Academic Probation. You may be aware that we offered a workshop called *Back on Track* in previous semesters. We are preparing to continue this workshop and to expand it in the future.

Probation does not necessarily mean that those students are unfit to complete college; many of them can be successful with the appropriate assistance. While we continue to develop the *Back on Track* workshop, some basic components remain the same, and they include the following:

- explanation of Academic Probation rules, including explanation of GPA (calculating it and monitoring one's performance)
- self-assessment of factors that contributed to the low GPA
- review of options such as tutoring, improving study skills, personal counselling, career planning, obtaining financial help, or others
- motivating students to make positive changes
- making a preliminary plan of action

Ideally, there is a follow-up that elaborates on the above and improves the initial plan of action.

This is not meant to replace the assistance you may already offer through your department, but to supplement it. We would be happy to hear what you are already doing to help students on Academic Probation. To discuss it, please contact Marta Edgar in Counselling at 284-8900 or marta.edgar@sait.ca. ☛

NO NON\$en\$e

Dear Dad,

School is really great. I am making lot\$ of friend\$ and Studying very hard. With all my \$tuff, I \$imply can't think of anything I need. \$o, if you would like, can you \$end me a card, a\$ I would love to hear from you.

Love,
Your \$on

The Reply

Dear Son,

I kNOW that astroNOmy, ecoNOMics, and oceanOgraphy are eNOugh to keep even an hoNOur student busy. Do NOt forget that the pursuit of kNOWledge is a NOble task, and you can never study eNOugh.

Love, Dad



Whiskey Jack Cohousing — Designing Community

Imagine a new way to design your day: you can walk or cycle to work at SAIT, you get home and a nutritious, home-made dinner is waiting for you and your children are playing outside in a safe, child-friendly environment. And, imagine a home which is really part of an inclusive community of people dedicated to working together and helping each other out, a home where utility costs are much lower than the average Calgary home, using "green" technology to create a lower ecological footprint.

Too good to be true? Not really.

Some forty years ago, a group of Danish people started the first cohousing community, a type of intentional community. Since then, cohousing communities have become extremely popular around the world and are gaining recognition in North America as desirable alternatives to present building practices. While cohousing sounds a lot like a cooperative, there are some key differences. Like cooperatives, cohousing focuses strongly on individual involvement in the community. However, the cohousing concept combines the advantages of shared resources and community living with privately owned (not rental) dwellings, homes which are designed by residents themselves. The social, economic, and environmental benefits of cohousing are numerous: resource sharing can reduce costs and create a smaller ecological footprint, children grow up in a safe community, not to mention spontaneous opportunities to socialize. Central to the idea of cohousing is common space, where residents can meet for meals or other activities.

At present there is only one (built) cohousing group in Alberta — Prairie Sky here in Calgary (www.prairiesky.ab.ca/) — but that is about to change. Whiskey Jack is a new cohousing group moving towards creating the next such community here in central Calgary. In addition to community building, Whiskey Jack has a strong focus on green building technology and inclusivity. For more information, contact Jana Vander Kloet (jana.vanderkloet@sait.ca). ☛