

SAFAGRAM

President's Message



by Doug Spurgeon

Over the past year, numerous issues have come forward. These issues have ranged from disability management and accommodation to terminations and abolishment.

Workload is always an issue that has faculty at odds with management. Once again, this issue is in grievance. Following are some of the issues that we are currently focusing on:

Position Abolishments

There were 10 position abolishments in the month of April. Will there be more coming? Quite possibly. I anticipate there will be more abolishments in June, but I do not know how many and which departments. Will we as faculty be expected to do more with less? Again, the expectation may be there, but I would remind everyone of what has been bargained and now resides in the Collective Agreement. If you are unsure, I would encourage you to discuss it with your Chair and consult the SAFA office, as areas of "interpretation" can quickly lead to disappointment, hurt feelings, and grievances.

An item of interest relating to position abolishments is an "Abolishment Checklist," which clearly states that SIRs are to be used as a criterion for maintaining your position; however, interestingly enough, it is the PPR that affects things such as the salary step increment and Long Service Allowance.

PPRs

PPR season is once again upon us. I would like to remind everyone that the "overall rating" has financial implications. If you receive a rating of "needs improvement" as an "overall rating," then you would be held at your current pay step. If you are at the top of the pay steps, then this rating would remove your entitlement to the LSA (Long Service Allowance). As a member of SAFA, you are entitled to make use of the grievance procedure for PPR ratings but only if the "overall rating" is "needs improvement." If your PPR is "satisfactory" overall but individual areas are marked as "needs improvement," the PPR rating would not be grievable, nor would it have any financial penalty imposed.

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Editorial Board

Joan Newman
Pat Squibb
Wendy Strashok
B.J. 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 Dave Weber and Nora Robinson

⇒ New Staff

On June 1, we welcomed Ewa Piorko as our new Coordinator of Library Technical Services. She will also be involved in the Library's instructional program. Ewa has her Master of Library and Information Services from Dalhousie University as well as her Master of Arts in European Studies from the University of British Columbia. Her undergraduate degree is a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Political Science and German studies from Saint Mary's University in Halifax. Prior to joining the SAIT Library, Ewa worked at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business Library.

We are also happy to announce that we have two students working with us for the summer under the STEP funding program. Jonathan Wainwright and Andrea Mancuso have both completed the first year of the Library and Information Technology program. They will be working on a variety of projects and will also be assisting library users at the Information Desk.

⇒ Conferences and Workshops

Dave Weber, Nora Robinson, and Kat Marlowe gave two sessions during the recent Faculty Development Workshop series. Both sessions dealt with finding and using electronic materials – one on using databases and one on e-books. The Library has over 22,000 electronic journals and 75,000 e-books in the collection for use by students, faculty, and staff both on and off campus. If you'd like more information about how you can use e-journals and e-books in your courses, please contact Nora, Dave, or Kat.

Nora Robinson, Kat Marlowe, and Kristian McInnis attended the Alberta Library Conference in Jasper in April. Kat and Kristian gave a presentation about the usability of the SAIT Library web site. Their presentation was based on a study they recently completed. Nora Robinson, SAIT Library, and Marg Anderson, instructor in the ICT Library Information Technology Program, were presented with the Library Association of Alberta's Outstanding Contribution Award for their commitment and long-term support for the Association – this was only the third time the award has been given.

Alison Hart, Kristian McInnis, Jennifer Peters, and Peggy Williams attended the Alberta Association of Library Technicians Annual Conference in Edmonton in May. Kristian gave a presentation called "Look Before You Leap: Implementing Communications Technologies in the Library."

In May, Nora Robinson attended the Workshop on Library Instruction for Users (WILU) and the Canadian Library Association Annual Conference. Kat Marlowe attended the Chair Academy.

⇒ ArchitEXPO 2009 Redux

In January, we hosted ArchitEXPO 2009, the annual architectural and design exhibit which features the work of students in the Architectural Design program. We usually host this display only once a year but, for the first time, the program had a January intake. We are delighted to host a display of the work of the students from this intake and invite you to drop in to see the architectural models. ♦♦

New SAFA Logo



The SAFA Executive decided it was time to update the association logo, which originated in 1982. Projects Instructors Brenda Klassen and Christine Coffin, of the Digital Graphics Communication (DGC) program, were asked if the second year DGC students (who had designed the previous SAFA letterhead and envelopes), would be able to design a new logo for our association. The DGC Projects class submitted three different logos for the Executive to consider. The new logo is now on SAFA letterhead, envelopes, and business cards and will soon appear on the SAFA website, which has also been updated. ♦♦



From the staff of the
SAFAGRAM Editorial Board

Your Schedule: The 40-Hour Work Week



by Sean O'Flynn, SAFA LRO

Section 35.01 of the Collective Agreement reads:

“The normal work week for academic staff members in the instructor category shall not exceed 40

hours per week or the equivalent on a monthly or annual basis and for the academic staff members in the Librarians and Education Counselors categories shall not exceed 36 ¼ hours per week or the equivalent on a monthly or annual basis.”

Academic staff members should not be spending more than their maxi-

mum hours per week working for SAIT. If you are, then you are entitled to overtime pay or time off in lieu. Your hours of work are already high compared to other polytechnics, such as NAIT, where full-time instructors work a maximum of 36 ¼ hours per week.

Relying on class contact hours (CCH) as the sole way to regulate your workload is not effective at SAIT. As well, overload pay usually leads to less total compensation than if overtime was paid instead. Overload pay can also be problematic because it is based on CCH worked in

excess of your instructional unit CCH for the year. You can collect pay at the overload rate only when the CCH you actually worked exceed your instructional unit CCH for the year.

Overload pay can be manipulated by the assignment of non-instruction duties so that you end up not meeting the overload threshold and, therefore, not receiving overload pay. Furthermore, with the change to the 15-week semester, it will

become even harder to reach overload thresholds. While the current Collective Agreement allows the weekly hours to be averaged over the year, therefore not providing a firm limit

“Academic staff members should not be spending more than their maximum hours per week working for SAIT.”

on the number of hours an academic staff member can be assigned in any given week, your insistence on overtime pay or time in lieu will provide an incentive for Management to give you a more manageable schedule.

I suggest you go through your schedule for the 2009/2010 Academic Year on a weekly basis. When you anticipate that you will work over 40 hours a week, write down how many hours of overtime you will work each week. This time can then be used to provide you with time off in the weeks when you anticipate

working less than 40 hours. It is best to have a discussion with your Chair and get him/her to sign off that your calculation is correct. If you cannot reach an agreement with your Chair, note his/her explanation, and then come talk with the SAFA office; it is best to deal with these problems as soon as possible. Remember, at the start of each week that you anticipate working over 40 hours, get authorization from your Chair prior to working those hours. Otherwise, work the hours and then talk to SAFA about either arranging a meeting with your Chair or filing an overtime grievance as a last resort.

Your decision on whether to press the overtime issue should come down to how many overtime hours you believe you will work in an academic year and whether you feel that your Chair provides you with a work week that averages 40 hours a week. Another good option is to approach your Chair as a faculty group, and then ask the Chair to work out the overtime issue. This could then turn into a group grievance, which helps to bring attention to the problem of overworked academic staff members. Please contact the SAFA office if you have any questions regarding your schedule or the calculation of overtime. sean.oflynn@sait.ca. ♦♦



Health Spending Account—July 2009

Introducing the Health Spending Account for academic staff members!

A Health Spending Account (HSA) is a tax-effective complement to your regular group benefit plan that provides you with additional dollars and flexibility for managing your health-related expenses. You can use these dollars to reimburse health-related expenses belonging to you, your spouse, or other eligible dependants.

Here is some important information about your HSA:

- All salaried employees of SAIT who are actively working and who are covered under SAIT's Extended Health Care plan are eligible.
- Starting July 2009 and each benefit year (July – June) after, a new balance of \$550 will be automatically credited to your HSA.
- **Your unused account balance will be zeroed out on June 30 of each year.**
- You can check your account balance by going to Plan Member Services at www.sunlife.ca/member

- Employees can claim reimbursement for eligible medical services provided on or after the date the coverage is effective.
- HSAs can cover a wide range of expenses. If an expense qualifies as a medical expense under the federal Income Tax Act, then it would qualify for payment from your HSA.
- Claims can be submitted online at sunlife.ca/member or by mail on the appropriate claim form. Claim forms are available on mysait or at sunlife.ca/member.

When contacting SunLife, please specify:

Contract Number 25393

Member ID SAIT Employee number

Complete details can be found on mysait. If you have questions about Health Spending Account claims, contact SunLife at 1-800-361-6212. ♦♦

Vacation Usage

Vacation usage has been a hot topic of late. This is mainly due to the current push to have all unused vacation taken by June 30 of the current fiscal year. While the employer has the right to tell you to take your unused vacation, there must also be a “reasonableness” attached to the request. Telling you to take every Tuesday morning but to work all other days until the end of June would not be reasonable. I have heard from some members that even though they are on vacation, they are back on campus finishing work or marking projects. This would indicate that an instructor is not truly on vacation. If you are in this situation, you should have a discussion with your Chair about the return of some vacation days.

15-Week Semester

In September the new 15-week semester will start. This will mean a change to how some courses will be conducted this year. It also impacts your Class Contact Hours (CCH), which are calculated for only the time you are actually in front of a class. For some individuals this would mean a $\frac{1}{16}$ th reduction in the amount of CCH that can be achieved during the 30 weeks (2 semesters) of instruction. This can mean that you will be expected to teach classes during the May-June period next year. CCH is not restricted to teaching just registered students; it could also include teaching other faculty, as is done by those faculty members in CITD. Another area where CCH can be obtained is through the teaching of Earned Revenue courses; of course, this would have to be agreed to by the instructor and management, but the Collective Agreement does allow for this.

Some faculty have indicated that they have been told they will have to teach more during the 15 weeks to make up for the lost time. This is not the case; the requirements are outlined in the Collective Agreement. The difficult part going forward will be the averaging of a 16-week workload over 15 weeks. The Association feels that this section of the Collective Agreement will become more unworkable as the 15-week semester unfolds.

The new semester length has presented complications for those who teach industry or apprentice trades, as their courses can vary in length. Some apprentice trades run on 6-week or 8-week intakes; the 8-week intake may have been easier to

work into a 16-week rotation, but the 6-week intake presents a particular challenge.

It has been stated that, although instructors will be loaded as though it was a 16-week semester, they will teach only 15 weeks. Some programs are taking this a little more literally; they feel that, since instructors will not have classes during the first of 16 weeks, their hours can be “averaged” over the remaining 15 weeks, thereby increasing the amount of class contact hours in the 15 weeks. The Association will not accept that argument. This approach would, I believe, force the instructors into overtime during the 15-week semester. If the employer wants to argue the 16-week average, then the individual instructor should have received time off in lieu during the first week to compensate for the coming overtime. No matter which way this is viewed, there has to be the limit of a workable 40-hour work week. I believe that once October arrives, the Association will be dealing with complaints of overtime and interpretation of the “16-week average.” I encourage everyone to review their schedule. If you have any concerns, you must bring them to the attention of your Chair and attempt to get them resolved. You cannot refuse to do the work, as this would most likely be seen as “insubordination,” which would take both you and an Association representative down a path that is never fun and quite often leaves a bad taste for all those involved, no matter what the outcome is.

Conclusion

During the summer months, I would ask that we all reflect on what makes our chosen field special. Typically, the answer to that question is the ability to share one's knowledge and to know that we have made a difference, even in the smallest way, for a successful and rewarding life of another individual. No matter what happens in the coming months, the ability to transform lives will provide the momentum we need to continue.

Use your vacation time to start a new hobby, to re-energize yourself, and to just enjoy the time that you have worked hard to earn.

Have a safe summer. ♦♦

SAFAGRAM – The “Backroom” People

Q: Who produces the SAFAGRAM?

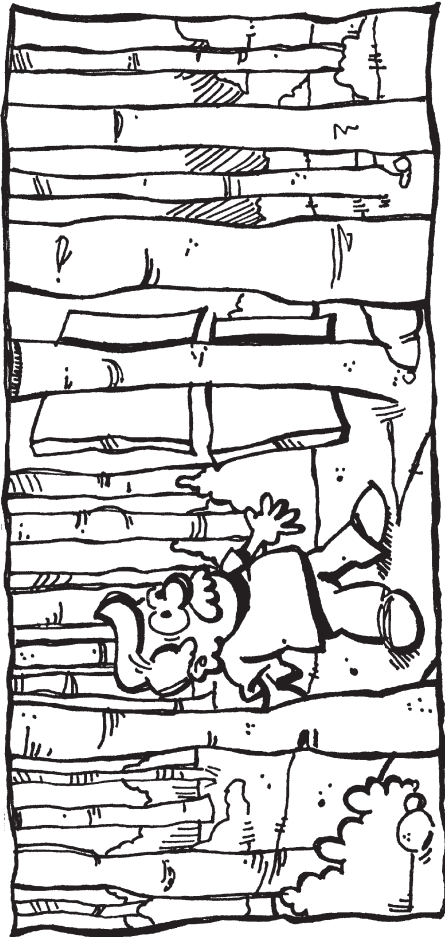
- A:
- 2 super-busy full-time instructors in the School of Information and Communications Technologies, one who prepares the document for publication and the other who creates the cartoon
 - 3 super-busy retired faculty who act as editors and teach part-time

Has the Association helped you or a colleague with an issue that impacted your teaching? Have you wondered how you can help out but not be on the “front line”? If English is your expertise, a role on the SAFAGRAM Editorial Board could be a way for you to contribute.

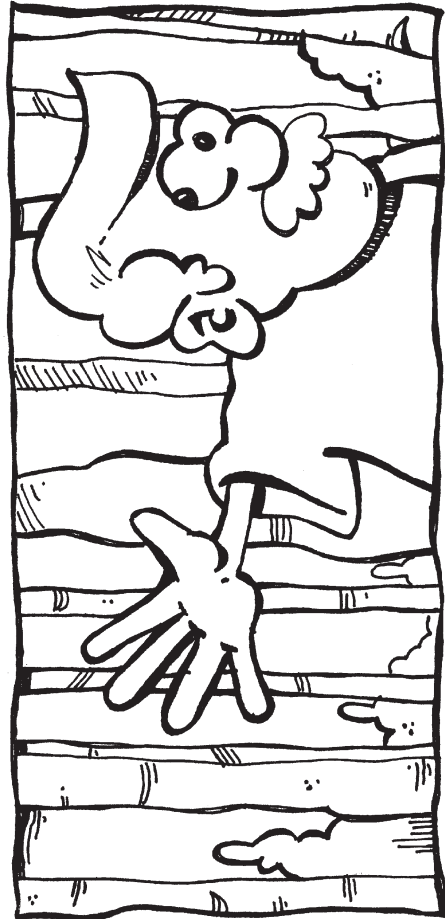
In order to keep our faculty publication going, we need more hands on board to take over from those who will be leaving their volunteer roles. Why not take on an editing role while the experienced SAFAGRAM editors are here to help? The time involvement for editing is about 2-3 hours per issue (5 per year).

If you can share your time and expertise, please contact the SAFA office at 403-284-8321 or safa@sait.ca. We will be pleased to answer your questions. ♦♦

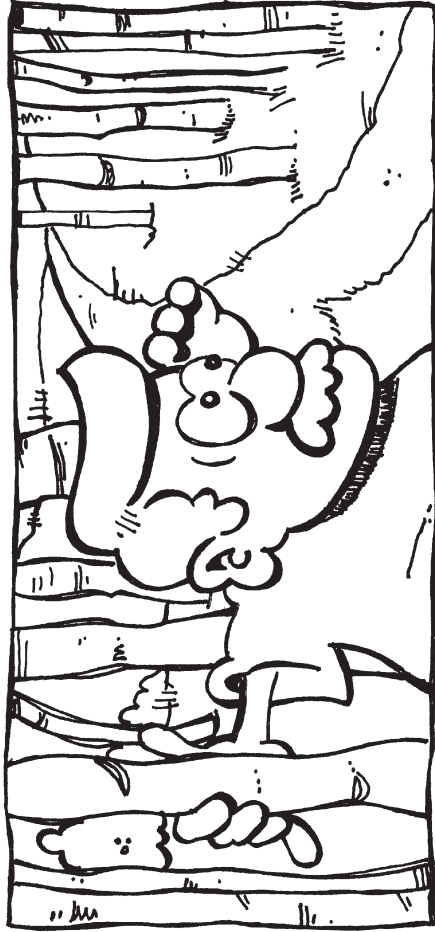
TWO ROADS DIVERGED IN A YELLOW WOOD,
AND SORRY I COULD NOT TRAVEL BOTH AND BE ONE TRAVELER,
LONG I STOOD AND LOOKED DOWN ONE AS FAR AS I COULD
TO WHERE IT BENT IN THE UNDERGROWTH;



AND BOTH THAT MORNING EQUALLY LAY
IN LEAVES NO STEP HAD TRODDEN BLACK. OH, I MARKED THE FIRST
FOR ANOTHER DAY! YET KNOWING HOW WAY LEADS ON TO WAY,
I DOUBTED IF I SHOULD EVER COME BACK.



THEN TOOK THE OTHER, AS JUST AS FAIR,
AND HAVING PERHAPS THE BETTER CLAIM, BECAUSE IT WAS GRASSY
AND WANTED WEAR, THOUGH AS FOR THAT THE PASSING THERE
HAD WORN THEM REALLY ABOUT THE SAME,



I SHALL BE TELLING THIS WITH A SIGH
SOMEWHERE AGES AND AGES HENCE: TWO ROADS DIVERGED
IN A WOOD, AND I - I TOOK THE ONE LESS TRAVELED BY,
AND THAT HAS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE. - Robert Frost



- ENJOY YOUR SUMMER, EVERYONE!