

Timetables and Class Schedules

In response to a request sent to faculty, the Editorial Board received a significant response from faculty members as summarized in the following article.

“A few observations—this year after three decades of teaching at SAIT, I have been timetabled to teach a class that is scheduled for one hour early in the morning and a second hour in the afternoon for the same subject and the same group of students; and then different subjects directly following each other to the same students in two different buildings. It just doesn't get any better!”

The feedback from faculty members overwhelmingly indicates that with classes scheduled any time between 8:00 and 6:00 that their days and work weeks have been lengthened. The widespread imposition of 4–6 p.m. classes has become a major constraint on life in general. It is difficult to get home and participate in family activities. It has ruled out face-to-face evening classes and volunteering for such things as community sports coaching because it is impossible to commit in advance of classes starting when a schedule is unknown. It is also difficult to commit to professional development activities that are required in some disciplines for professional status.

Class Scheduling

- Class scheduling is very erratic. One day has only one single class scheduled. The next day is booked so solidly, there is no time for a break. Often there are three or more classes in a row with each class in a different building. It seems instructors are scheduled as though they are random numbers that a computer program can place anywhere at any time. The element of human reason seems to have been removed. SAIT has lost its sense that employees are humans with lives and families, and it has replaced that sense with employees as numbered objects. This also applies for students. Some instructors find the process of being scheduled to be the most stressful thing that happens at SAIT. It's almost like a game of roulette where you hang on the edge until you find out what you get and then when you get a bad schedule, you're ignored by timetabling. A year's schedule becomes one's life, and this is allowed to be decided and set in stone by a computer that has no human reasoning capability.
- It appears problems result because those making the timetabling and class-scheduling decisions are too far removed from the front line where the action really is—in the classroom.

- It seems that schedules are not released early enough each semester. It would be wonderful to know the scheduled classrooms and times a few weeks before teaching begins. This would allow time to request appropriate changes, if necessary, and make arrangements to manage one's personal life.

Faculty Experiences

- One instructor arrived back from vacation to find that he was scheduled to teach classes one day from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. with no breaks. After several attempts, the situation was rectified at the 11th hour within the department.
- The scheduling of classes between 4 and 6 p.m. is unwarranted in many cases. In some cases, the students and instructor have three or more hour breaks before the 4 p.m. class.
- In some departments, even though the instructors submitted information on time, their schedules still came out 3 MONTHS late with major problems. Instructor concerns for constraints were not considered significant by Customer Services which led some faculty members to resign.
- Instructors have three 2-hour classes (total of 6 hours) with no break and all classes in different buildings. Instructors are not particularly effective by the last class, and it is unreasonable to expect anyone to teach effectively without a break for six hours.
- An additional concern is having labs scheduled before lectures. Content needs to be covered in the lectures that is essential to labs. It is very difficult having critical lectures scheduled on Mondays when you lose two or three Mondays in a term—try to work around that.

Equipment

- Equipment in classrooms and the size of rooms must meet the needs of the students and instructor. An instructor who has the skills to use the SMART Board doesn't know for sure until the semester has started whether he will actually have a classroom with a SMART Board. Hence, development of materials done specifically for the SMART Board can be total waste of

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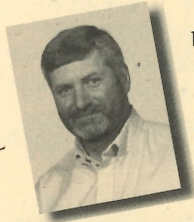
SAIT
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Ed Logue

Well, summer's over and it's the start of a new academic year. I find that as I get older July and August have become the two shortest months of the year!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ceril Kenny, who has served as Association President for the past two years, for all her hard work and dedication. Thank you, Ceril, for a job well done.

Rumour has it that SAIT may be financially challenged during the upcoming academic year. If this is true, the Association expects the Employer to continue with the myopic policy of using position abolishments to make up for any monetary shortfall. It would appear that this process is already underway in the Centre for Academic Learner Services where the Counsellor for Disabled Students and two instructors had their positions abolished. A cynic would say that these positions are in fact still there, and this is just a move on the Employer's part to reduce costs by having casual employees do the jobs at much less cost to the Employer—and there are ample grounds for cynicism at SAIT.

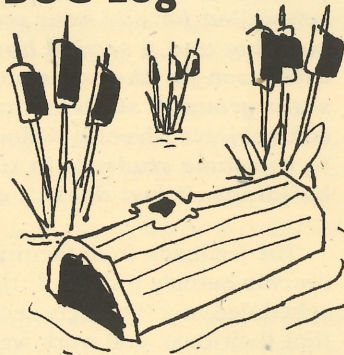
The Association is also monitoring SAIT's new Defined Contribution Pension Plan. You may have seen e-mails over the last few weeks referring to this plan. In a conversation with LAPP, the Association was assured that this plan will not have an effect on permanent academic staff members who are still required to be members of LAPP.

The 83:17 Letter of Understanding states that 83% of instructional hours taught for regular programming be taught by permanent faculty members. The Association is

skeptical of the figures given to it by the Employer, and as a result, there will be an arbitration hearing in October to try to resolve this matter.

In the coming months, the Association will make every effort to keep you, the members, informed about these and all other matters affecting our lives at SAIT. ♦

BOG Log



The Board is the permanent, governing body of SAIT. It "shall be visionary and vigilant in its pursuit of educational excellence, accountable and responsible for the educational and financial governance of SAIT, and responsive and sensitive to the needs of the communities it serves. The Board shall promote an environment that is

positive, open and participatory, and it shall strive to maintain the highest integrity in its relationships with SAIT's personnel, students and community members and with all other stakeholders." (Board of Governors Mandate)

Greetings from your BOG faculty representatives, Doug Chudleigh (Construction) and Marcel Carpenter (CALs). A new year is upon us and it is our intention to highlight BOG activities for you throughout the Fall and Winter semesters.

This year's board is comprised of:

1. Doug Mitchell (Chair)
2. John Aldred (Vice-Chair)
3. Irene Lewis (CEO)
4. Ruth Ramsden-Wood (Public member)
5. Beth Reimer Heck (Public member)
6. Al Browne (Public member)
7. Robert Pierce (Public member)
8. Brent Altwasser (Public member)
9. Blaine Favel (Public member)
10. Frank Duffin (Public member)
11. Michael Rott (AUPE rep)
12. Stu Sherry (SAITSA President)
13. Clarisa Wagner (Student rep)
14. Marcel Carpenter (Faculty rep)
15. Doug Chudleigh (Faculty rep)

Resource (non-voting) members are:

1. Gord Nixon (VP Academic)
2. Michael Dyer (VP Student & Employee Services)
3. Keith Pedersen (VP Finance)
4. Guy Mallabone (VP External Relations)

The events on our calendar for September include the Board retreat at SAIT on September 19 & 20 and a regular Board Meeting (in camera) on September 30.

Look for details on a variety of BOG events in your next issue of the SAFAGRAM. ♦

SAFAGRAM

Editorial Board

Hilde Clovechok
Stewart Hall
Heather Sagan
Pat Squibb
Wendy Strashok
B.J. Hamilton—Cartoonist

Layout

Luda Paul

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SAFAGRAM is published by the SAIT Academic Faculty Association (SAFA) five times a year on or about the first days 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. Please keep submissions under 300 words, double space, and, if possible, submit on floppy disc (Mac or DOS) with an accompanying hard copy. 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.

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Timetables and Class Schedules

time if a classroom in the Heart Building with a wall-mounted SMART Board is not assigned. This problem is accentuated by the fact that current laptops no longer have serial connections which are required to connect with a portable SMART Board—even if an instructor is willing to spend the extra 10 minutes to set up a portable SMART Board, it's not possible.

- Instructors teach some courses where an overhead VCR/computer projector is essential. On the flip side, the "elite" classrooms in the Heart Building are assigned where equipment is not required and it sits idle. There needs to be a system for distributing those classrooms on a per-need basis.

Classroom Sizes

- No correlation exists between classroom sizes and class sizes. Classes in some programs are quite large and well attended; and the classrooms in the Clayton Carroll Building don't have enough seats and are very crowded, especially if computers are being used in class. For example, one class of 38 students has only 24 seats!
- Running from building to building—with only ten minutes between classes—does not allow instructors to interact with students as they would like to. There are always questions before and after a class. Not only is the instructor rushing, but also the students. When winter hits, it will be even more difficult. Instructor offices should be in close proximity to their classrooms.

Constraints

- Why are constraints not being considered by Customer Services? The constraints that were requested by some of the Deans have been ignored. It is important to have timetabling constraints for a variety of activities; i.e., instructors maintaining industry contacts, coordinator meetings, curriculum meetings, student progress, section meetings. Curriculum, retention, and student progress are becoming more and more "someone else's problem," and "someone else" is not doing a good job! With classes scheduled until 6:00 p.m., it is difficult for instructors to attend industry and technical meetings which, in some cases, are a requirement by professional organizations. In some disciplines, professional status may be at stake.
- Is it true that timetabling documents given to coordinators specifically state that temporary, contract instructors are allowed constraints to suit their personal lifestyle timetables? These instructors are also given multiple sections of the same course to reduce their prep time. In contrast, permanent, full-time staff cannot have constraints for personal reasons. They must take what is given.

Benefits to Students

- The impact directly on instructors is significant, but the biggest issue is the impression it leaves on our students. Many students express frustration over timetable-related problems and leave here thinking SAIT is poorly managed. The schedules in other schools are well organized so that Math is in the same room at the same time each day it meets, etc. Such tidy schedules leave the impression that the school is run in an efficient and proper fashion. Our schedule has both students and instructors racing from building to building meeting some classes twice in the same day in different rooms or having all lectures one day in the week. Four or more lectures in a row without a break is fairly common. This leaves students and instruc-

tors exhausted; and damages performances of all involved.

- The time between classes WAS often the most productive time between students and the instructor. The individual student could ask on a one-to-one basis a question that led to a better or more understandable explanation. These questions also indicated to the instructor where the students were having trouble and, therefore, often led to material that needed to be reviewed by the instructor for the total class. Now instructors are too busy hooking up and unhooking computers and rushing to other buildings to allow that 10-minute informal question time. Going from the Senator Burns Building to the Clayton Carroll Building with a computer and two sets of material for different classes is also very physical. When the snow and cold weather arrives, it will be a real challenge to make this trip!

Is this a typical day for you at SAIT?

- An instructor has a class from 12 – 1:50 in the Heart Building on the 3rd floor and then has a 10-minute window to head off to a TEO lab in the Crandell Building. This may seem adequate to timetabling, but the instructor has to carry a laptop to the Heart Building where he/she may not need it along with class materials for two separate classes (textbooks, reference materials, etc.); and then make a mad dash to attempt to get the laptop set up and everything working to conduct the class. Now, all things being equal with everything (the equipment) working, this entire process takes a minimum of 20 minutes. This means that one of the classes will be shorted a minimum of 10 minutes of class time. Over a time frame of 15 weeks, this would mean losing 150 minutes of classroom time or 3 classes. In addition to the rush and a minimum requirement of 10 minutes, we (students and instructors) are losing some valuable class time and the stress threshold is also elevated to a higher degree. Do instructors need this? Do the students need this?

On the Other Hand

- At least one instructor has no problem with classes in different buildings and believes that's life in a post-secondary institution. College instructors should expect to have classes backed up against one another in different buildings and that carrying a laptop computer (hooking up and unhooking) is not such a hardship. In industry, various professionals shuttle around the city, from office to home, and to airport and other cities with laptops and other paraphernalia in tow. But do they have only 10 minutes between classes; and are they evaluated by their students if they are late or if their equipment fails?

In Summary

- Some of the issues were dealt with efficiently after timetabling was informed. Fortunately, some of these problems have been resolved, but it has taken considerable human resources (instructors' time, department support staff time, and Customer Service staff time). If the timetables were set up properly in the first place, significant time and money would be saved!
- There is so much talk about increasing faculty morale. Well, this is the place to start. Until things like timetables that touch our daily work lives are dealt with effectively, no amount of effort in any other area will help. If the SAIT Executive cares about faculty morale, its members should deal with the basics. ♦♦

Benefits & Services Extended to SAIT Faculty and Staff

by Marla Firby, Alumni Relations

To bring added value to the entire SAIT community, SAIT Alumni Relations is pleased to announce that the following benefits and services are also available to SAIT's faculty and staff. We hope that you'll take advantage of some of the great rates offered by the following partners.

Discounts of Vehicle Purchases:



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Faculty Development: Still Here!!



by Jane Duncan, Teaching & Learning Centre

With the recent reorganization here at SAIT, many of you are left wondering: What's happened to faculty development and "ye olde" Teaching and Learning Centre?

Let me clarify: With the reorganization, training that pertains to all SAIT staff is now coordinated by Human Resources. This includes programs such as the Performance Excellence Series and computer training. Lynn Kelly-Sabasch is the main contact in H.R.

All training that pertains specifically to faculty is now housed in the Centre for Learning (watch for a name change) and is clearly situated under the academic umbrella. This would include such programs as the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) and the Instructional Skills Program (ISP). Tim Loblaw, Tammy Forest, and I, Jane Duncan, are the main contacts for faculty training in CfL.

"What about all that other training that used to happen?"

you ask. Good question! The reorganization provides us with the opportunity for a new beginning, so we have been conducting needs assessments with Academic Coordinators and some faculty to ensure that the training we offer meets your needs. The early fall has been a time of reassessment for faculty development, but watch for new training opportunities soon and a full roster of training events in January. As well, we are still available for one-on-one instructor support, small-group analyses, or just for a chat.

Other things to watch for soon include Academic Coordinator Training and the redesign of the myFaculty Resource Centre. The myFaculty Resource Centre will be housed in mySAIT.ca and will provide important information to support instructors' day-to-day activities. We'll let you know when it's up and running. In the meantime, don't be stranger—come and visit us in MB026 or give us a call at 8856. ♦♦

LIBRARY REPORT



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

- ⇒ This summer the Library and Chinook Lodge officially became part of the Centre for Academic Learner Services.
- ⇒ The Library's busy summer was dominated by the library system software upgrade. This upgrade is the first that we have undertaken in nearly ten years, and it is still in progress.
- ⇒ Many improvements to library services have resulted from the software upgrade. One of the most notable public improvements is the catalog search screen. Search capabilities such as periodical title search and power search provide better access to library resources.
- ⇒ The software upgrade has prompted improvements to collection access also; for example, the Library has transferred some of its video collection from the restricted classroom/in-library-use collection to the new home-use, lending collection. In addition to transferring part of the existing collection, the Library is actively purchasing videos for home use.
- ⇒ Other library resource additions include more electronic resources accessed via the library home page (www.sait.ca/library). Examples of new subscriptions include two automotive repair databases, *ALLDATA* and *Mitchell On Demand*, and a Canadian legal resource called *LawNow OnLine*.
- ⇒ As with the trend of collecting fewer print resources in favor of more electronic resources, the Library is making format changes in audiovisual materials. The Library has decommissioned its 3/4" video collection and is studying the feasibility of also decommissioning its 16mm film collection. Instructors and students have expressed interest in the DVD format. The Library will be investigating the availability of AV learning materials in that format.
- ⇒ We have listened to feedback from the spring student library service survey. For the first time in over a decade, the Library will be open on Sundays during the fall and winter semesters. Sunday hours match the Saturday hours of 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Students also wanted more computer workstations, so the library classroom is now equipped with desktop workstations with flat screens. The workstations are used for library skills instruction and will be available for drop-in use at times when the classroom is not booked for instruction.
- ⇒ Library staff are involved in two knowledge management projects: the Learning Objects Repository Proof Of Concept project and the Faculty Resource Centre. The second project is scheduled for release on mySAIT in November or December.
- ⇒ The Library works hard to implement service recommendations received through many avenues of feedback. Some of the best ways to tell us about your information needs include talking to our Information Desk staff, completing client surveys, providing comments on our library talk-back board, or participating in the library collection development liaison system. ♦

Trivia

Did you know that:

- **Typewriter** is the longest word that can be made using the letters only on one row of the keyboard.
- The words **racecar**, **kayak** and **level** are the same whether they are read left to right or right to left (palindromes).
- No word in English rhymes with **month**, **orange**, **silver**, or **purple**.
- **Dreamt** is the only English word that ends in the letters mt.
- A **jiffy** is an actual unit of time for 1/100th of a second.

2003-2004 SAFA Executive Committee

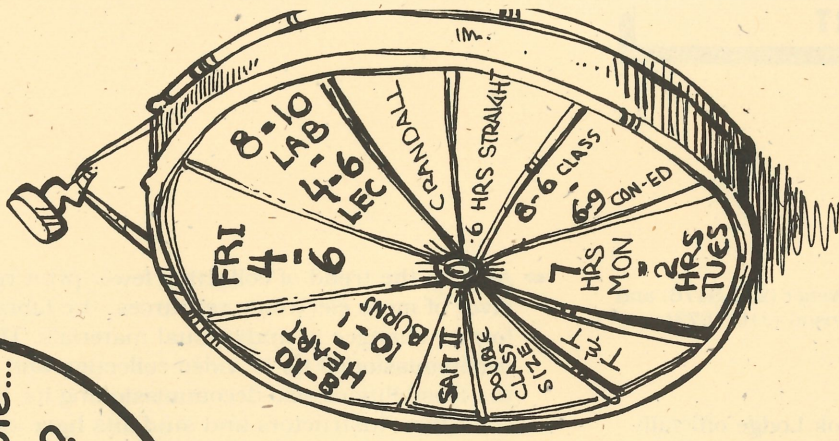
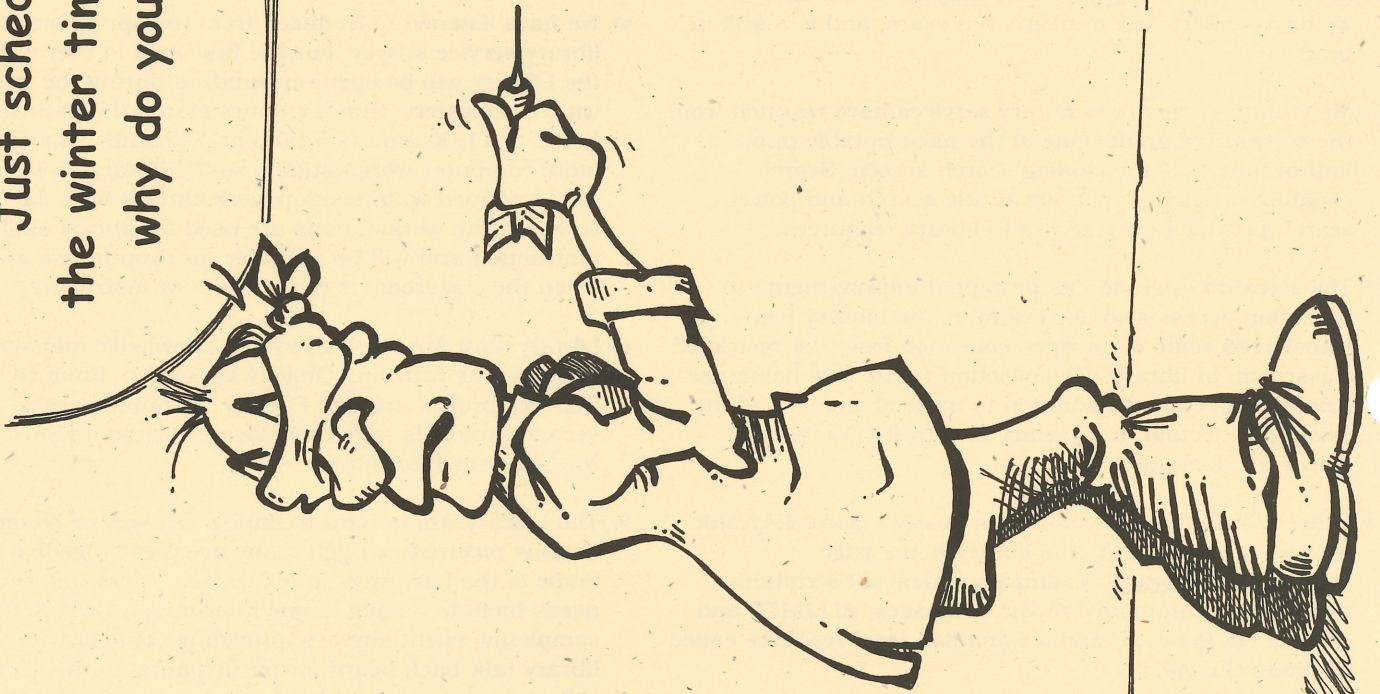
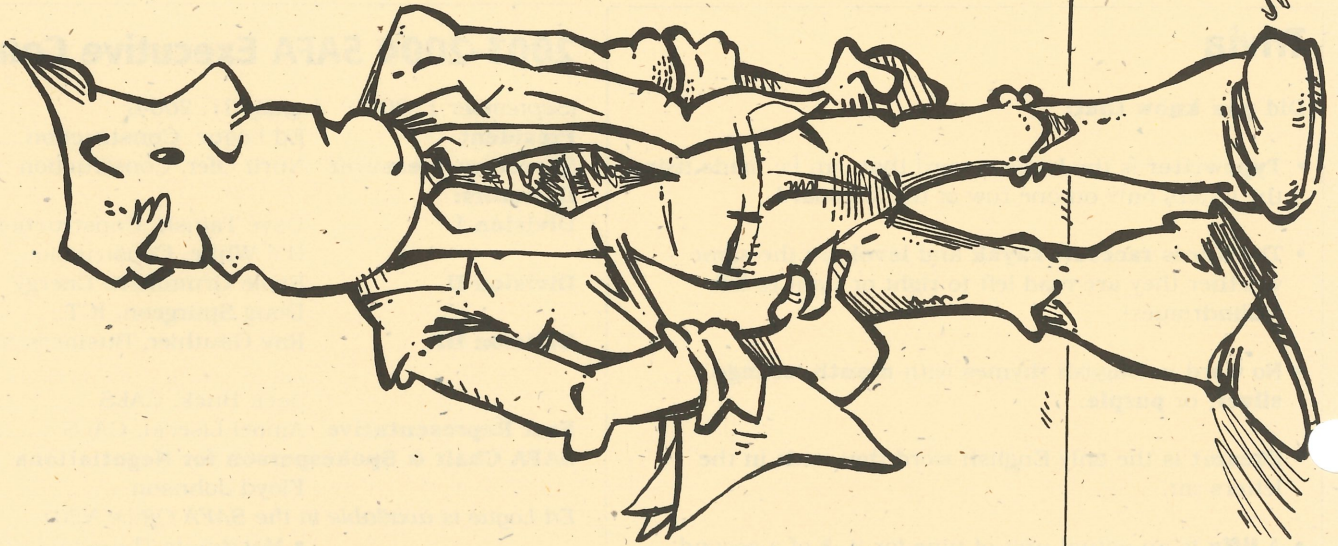
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Ed Logue is available in the SAFA Office N201:

- Monday to Thursday – afternoons
- Friday – all day

Just scheduling
the winter timetable...
why do you ask?



~~HAMILTON~~
SPINDLING