



## Stawowski/SAFA Scholarship

Stan Stawowski, CA, has been the SAFA Auditor since 1987. Stan was instrumental in putting in place financial by-laws and guidelines for the Association.

In January 2001, Stan approached SAFA with the idea of establishing a scholarship at SAIT whereby each year he would donate his audit fee to the endowment fund. He contributed his audit fee over four years and SAFA contributed about \$3,000. When the scholarship was established, Stan said his reason for doing this was "... to do something that provides a longer term benefit which can be done by supporting the education of someone who does not have the financial ability to accomplish their goals. Education really is the only way for people to help themselves ..."

In June 2005, Stan made a significant contribution to the Scholarship and the endowment is now at \$60,000. The Stawowski/SAFA Scholarship will be administered by SAIT Alumni & Development. In 2005/2006, there will be three \$1,000 scholarships awarded to students.

The criteria for selection are that

- Students be enrolled in any program that offers a two-year diploma or more.
- Students demonstrate a financial need.
- Preference be given in order of priority to
  - single parents,
  - married students with children,
  - married students,
  - single students living away from their parental home,
  - single students living at home.

The SAFA Executive Committee will select the award recipient based on the criteria outlined.

The Association acknowledges not only Stan's invaluable contribution as the Auditor over the past 18 years but also his generosity to future SAIT students in establishing the Stawowski/SAFA Scholarship fund. ♦♦

## Against Grade Inflation

*Reprinted with permission*

*Nature, 14 October 2004 Volume 431 Issue No. 7010*

### How to counter declining rigour in US university courses.

Call it Moore's law of US higher education: the quantity and quality of work that undergraduates must do to get top grades halves every decade. This is an exaggeration, of course, but many readers will recognize the sentiment. Is it just the jaded perception of cynical academics? On the contrary: the evidence suggests that there is a real problem of grade inflation in degree courses, especially at private universities. And the assessment of teachers by students, as well as parents' demands that they get what they think they've paid for, are making the problem worse.

Course evaluations were intended to give the instructor feedback about how well he or she was doing. But they rapidly became a favoured tool of deans, tenure and promotion

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committees because they were quantifiable. Now there is an implicit understanding that if instructors give good grades, they will not be judged too severely by students. New faculty often grade more harshly than other members of the department, only to be "punished" by students. Deans who believe that this doesn't happen are deluding themselves.

Also worrying is the idea—particularly evident at costly private universities—that students and their parents believe they are paying for a degree that will lead to a good job, rather than for a good education that will help them to think independently. The pressure on teachers to appease demanding students and parents by awarding high grades is obvious.

The consequences are all too clear. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a general unwarranted upward creep in grades (<http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/index.shtml>). More objectively, the fact that graduate schools rely for admission criteria almost exclusively on the results of standardized tests, rather than on universities' individual grading, points to a systematic failure to ensure that grading standards are being maintained.

What to do? More universities should focus seriously on improving the instructional abilities of their faculty in programmes—mandatory for new instructors—to videotape classes and analyse them with the faculty member to highlight strengths and weaknesses. And evaluations should take note of thoughtful individual comments by students, rather than relying on scores, or be abandoned. ♦♦

## 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.**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Ceril Kenny

Welcome back for the 2005/2006 Academic year.

Since early in the summer, I have had the pleasure of attending a number of orientation sessions, meeting new faculty, and talking about the Association. I'd like to extend an invitation to everyone to come to the SAFA office in N201 to say "hello" to Heather Sagan and our new office assistant, Kathie Dunn.

The campus looks so busy right now. Each year there appear to be more students than ever before congregating in the Heart Atrium in the first few weeks of the Fall semester. I suppose that it may be just the difference between seeing the relatively few people in that area during the summer months and the masses of people there when September comes. However, with increased numbers of students, we need more instructors—right?

The biggest item of interest right now seems to be the Collective Agreement. The Interest Arbitration Hearing took place in June, and we don't expect the decision until late in the Fall semester. A number of sections of the Collective Agreement were taken before the Arbitrator, but the one that will probably be the most noticeable and have the fastest impact for most of us is Section 46, the salary grid. Don't spend any increase yet because we certainly don't expect any changes to be implemented until later in the Fall semester at the earliest—after the arbitrator's award.

Again, I'd like to repeat—"Welcome back." I hope that everything is going well for all faculty and wish everyone a successful year. For the times when there may be questions, or the going may not be so smooth, remember where we are and pay us a visit. ♦♦

## Sayings for Teachers

by David C. Jones

**A Teacher's Mission** Nothing, but nothing, can stop you from rendering the service for which you were born into this world. *Silver Birch*

**A Teacher's Power** The highest manifestation of power is the deliberate refusal ... to abuse it. *Elberl Hubbard*

**A Teacher's Love** Do not cause injury to anyone's self-respect intentionally or unintentionally. *Sathya Sai Baba*

**A Teacher's Stress** Burnout occurs when well-meaning teachers overextend their true responsibility, overcontrol the learning environment, and attack themselves for their student's mistakes. *DCJ*

*David C. Jones is a professor of education at the University of Calgary, where he offers a course on the spirit of teaching excellence. He has won several teaching awards. ♦♦*

## Ask Your Association

**Q: Is the vacation period considered to be part of the notice period? (Section 34—Attendance and Resignation)**

**A:** Yes. An Instructor in a permanent position is required to give the Employer six (6) weeks prior written notice of resignation to resign in good standing. The vacation period is part of the notice period.

Temporary salaried and permanent probationary Instructors are required to give the Employer two (2) weeks prior written notice.

A permanent or probationary academic staff member in other than the Instructor classification (Educational Counsellor and Librarian) is required to provide the Employer with ten (10) work days prior written notice of resignation.

**Q: If I go on general illness leave during the academic year, are the instructional hours deducted from my USCCH (Unit Standard Class Contact Hours)?**

**A:** No. When an Instructor goes on general illness leave, the class contact hours are not deducted from the USCCH.

**Q: If I go on vacation during the time I have a teaching load, are the instructional hours deducted from my USCCH?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: When I substitute for another Instructor, do I receive credit for those hours?**

**A:** Yes. When one Instructor substitutes for another Instructor, the hours are added to the USCCH for the Instructor teaching the substitution hours. Depending on the reason for the absence, the Instructor being replaced may or may not be deducted those hours. In the case of general illness, the hours are not deducted from the USCCH. In the case of vacation time, the hours will be deducted from the USCCH.

**Q: Is it possible to direct bill Sun Life for prescriptions?**

**A:** The employee has to pay the cost of prescriptions and submit an Extended Health Claim form to Sun Life for reimbursement.

**Q: How much can I claim if my spouse has extended health benefits through employment?**

**A:** The Sun Life extended health plan reimburses employees for 80% of the cost of prescription drugs. For the remaining 20% that is not covered, submit a receipt to your spouse's benefit plan to recover the other 20% of the cost. ➔

## Privacy Commissioner Orders SAIT to Disclose Records

Pursuant to Section 9 of the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement, the Employer provides copies of letters of appointment to the Association. Sub-section 9.09 provides that upon request from the President of the Association, the Employer shall provide a copy of the letter of appointment concerning a fee-for-service appointment.

In October 2002, the Association put forward a FOIPP request for copies of fee-for-service contracts.

In May 2005, the Privacy Commissioner published Order F2004-014 for SAIT to disclose fee-for-service records in their entirety as requested, to the applicant, the SAIT Academic Faculty Association.

**Order F2004-014**

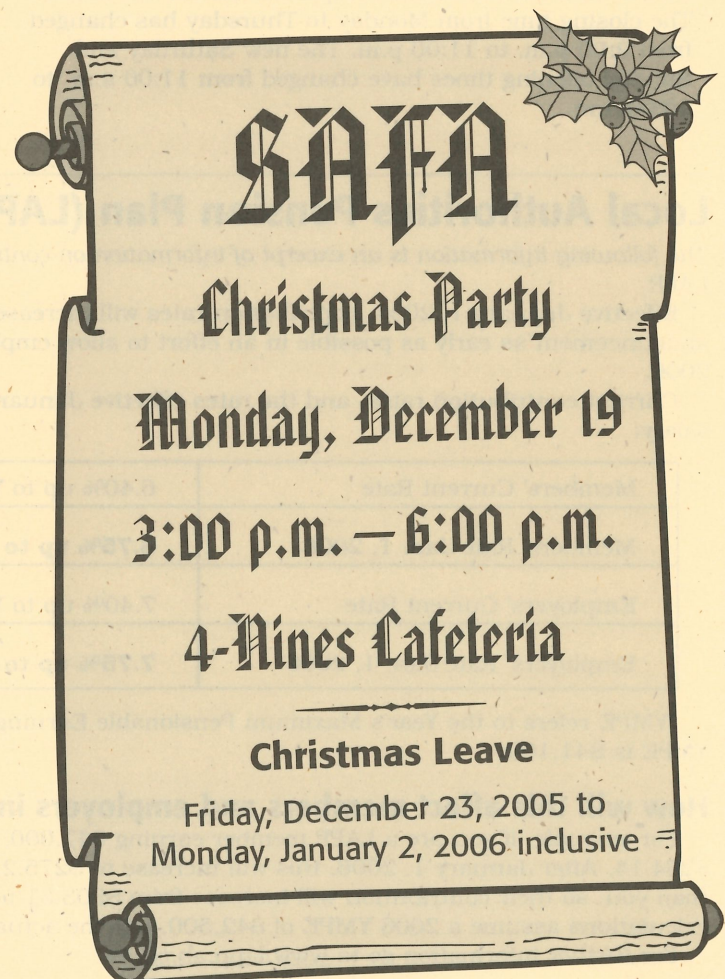
## Privacy Commissioner Upholds SAIT Decision to Sever Minutes

The Association submitted a FOIPP request to the Privacy Commissioner for access to minutes of Board of Governors meetings and minutes of its various committee meetings.

The office of the Privacy Commissioner found that SAIT properly applied sections of the FOIPP Act to withhold the records. The Commissioner did not have to consider whether other sections of the FOIPP Act applied, and he further found that under the FOIPP Act, SAIT is not required to disclose information in the public interest.

**Order F2004-012**

The Orders from the Privacy Commissioner can be viewed in their entirety on the Alberta government website [www.gov.ab.ca./FOIPP/commissioners\\_orders](http://www.gov.ab.ca./FOIPP/commissioners_orders). ➔



**LIBRARY REPORT**



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

⇒ The Library is in the process of adding two new staff to help handle its expanded service hours and its growing and diversifying information resources that include more E-Resources such as electronic books. Audrey Farch, Library Technician and SAIT Library Information Technology grad, joined the Library in September and will be working evenings and weekends at the Information Desk. Interviews for a new Instructional Services Librarian are scheduled for October 3 with an appointment date scheduled for November. Michelle Racine-Stacey, Knowledge Management/Research Library Technician, gave birth to a baby girl (Penelope) in August and will be on maternity leave until the summer of 2006. Kristian McInnis, one of our sessional evening/weekend staff, has accepted the cover-off position for Michelle.

⇒ **Library Expands Service Hours**

In response to requests from students, staff, and instructors, the Library has expanded its service hours. The closing time from Monday to Thursday has changed from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The new Saturday and Sunday opening times have changed from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

⇒ **Wireless Access In The Library**

The SAIT Library has installed wireless technology on both the main and the lower levels of the Library. This service is designed to match laptops issued to SAIT students. Laptops issued in 2005 will experience the easiest connectivity. Laptops issued prior to 2005 could possibly connect with assistance from the Heart Help Desk (MB004). The Library also has three wireless kits that it issues at the Information Desk for students with older laptops. Students with personal laptops will not receive Help Desk assistance, and the Library-issued wireless kits do not always provide connectivity. The Library provides carrels with power/network connections for students who do not wish to use wireless.

⇒ **Library Renovations**

To facilitate better sightlines toward the Level 1 northside feature bay window and to create a more comfortable reading area, several 2-metre high magazine shelving units have been shifted and replaced by several 1.5-metre units. Several 2-metre shelves have also been shifted to a North/South orientation. High shelving near the Level 0 Information Desk has been replaced by low shelving to provide better sightlines from the base of the stairway to the classroom. These new low shelves now contain the English as a Second Language and Children's Literature collections. ♦♦

**Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) Contribution Rates Increase**

The following information is an excerpt of information on contribution rates increase that was forwarded to SAFA from LAPP.

Effective January 1, 2006, contribution rates will increase by 0.77% of total pensionable salary. LAPP is making this announcement as early as possible in an effort to allow employers and members time to budget for the increases in 2006.

Current contribution rates, and the rates effective January 1, 2006, are shown below, as a percentage of pensionable salary:

Members' Current Rate	6.40% up to YMPE*	9.14% over YMPE
Members' Rate Jan. 1, 2006	<b>6.75% up to YMPE</b>	<b>9.64% over YMPE</b>
Employers' Current Rate	7.40% up to YMPE	10.14% over YMPE
Employers' Rate Jan. 1, 2006	<b>7.75% up to YMPE</b>	<b>10.64% over YMPE</b>

\*YMPE refers to the Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings level determined by the Canada Pension Plan. In 2005, the YMPE is \$41,100.

**How will this affect members and employers in dollars and cents?**

For example, if you are a LAPP member earning \$47,000, your monthly LAPP pension contribution is currently \$264.14. After January 1, 2006, this will increase to \$275.21. Your employer contributes 1% of pensionable salary more than you, so their contribution will increase from \$303.31 to \$314.38. (Note: YMPE has not been set for 2006 yet. These calculations assume a 2006 YMPE of \$42,500, but the actual figure could be different.)

For further information go to [www.lapp.ab.ca](http://www.lapp.ab.ca). ♦♦

# Cadmus Foundation Trades Teaching Chair

by Jack Firth

*Jack has been an Instructor at SAIT since 1988 and teaches in the Machinist and Millwright apprenticeship programs, as well as some of the engineering technology programs. Jack is the first recipient of the Cadmus Foundation Trades Teaching Chair at SAIT.*

As the recipient of the Cadmus Foundation Trades Teaching Chair, my plans for the fall semester are to promote and advance apprenticeship training. My intention is to promote apprenticeships in the schools and to study other apprenticeship systems in various countries. Also, I want to improve my own skills because as a trades instructor, one teaches by doing, and that is where the mutual respect between instructor and student begins.

Polytechnic institutions and industry should not be two separate entities. They should be encouraged to work hand-in-hand, each helping the other. One of the colleges I intend to visit not only teaches but also problem-solves for industry. Industry in return helps the college financially to keep on the leading edge of technology, much like John Aldred, through the Cadmus Foundation has done at SAIT.

## Schedule—September to December 2005

September & October 2005

### CNC Training

My plan is to gain experience in the SAIT CNC Lab F104 working on both CNC lathes and mills. I have also made arrangements to work at Ermeltek International, Foremost Industries, and Stryker Canada for experience on CNC machines in industry.

October 24, 2005

### Industry Network Workshop

I have been invited to speak by Alberta Advanced Education, Apprenticeship and Industry Training to an Industry Network Workshop. The purpose of this workshop is to elevate the profile of trades in Alberta.

After visiting different colleges and learning about apprenticeship systems in the various countries, my plan is to report back to the Apprenticeship Board and SAIT upon my return. The report would give them my impression and information on each country's trades training.

September, October and part of November 2005

### High School Visits

I will be contacting high schools to promote apprenticeships as a career choice. Mike Brown from the Manufacturing and Automation Department and I will be coordinating this effort.

I have already surveyed 600 apprentices as to their opinion on making a trade their career choice while they were at high school. I was helped by Tim Huston, Transportation Department; and Roger Wilhelm, Tom Goodwin, Tom Cavanagh and Randy Croft, Construction Department. Brian Hughes, Manufacturing & Automation Department, helped with collating the results.

*Jack's activities will be continued in the Nov/Dec and Jan/Feb issues of the SAFAGRAM. ♦♦*

## Know your SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement (excerpts from Sections 18, 19, 23 & 24)

### Section 18

#### Performance Reviews

Performance reviews are an informal and continuous process for academic staff members serving probationary periods in permanent and temporary salaried positions. ... An academic staff member who has been evaluated as unsatisfactory must be given reasons in writing for the action, along with a description of expected improvements. (Sub-section 18.02)

### Section 19

#### Disciplinary Action

When disciplinary action is taken against an academic staff member, that academic staff member shall be informed in writing as to the reason(s) for such action. The academic staff member will be provided with a copy of all written reprimands or written notices of other disciplinary action or correspondence pertaining to the conduct or performance of the academic staff member. (Sub-section 19.01)

An academic staff member who is to be interviewed on any disciplinary action shall be entitled to have an Association Representative present at the interview. The

Employer shall notify the staff member of that right in advance of the meeting. (Sub-section 19.02)

### Section 23

#### Supplies and Equipment

The Employer in consultation with academic staff members shall make available to all academic staff members the books, texts, software, and other instructional materials deemed by the Employer to be necessary to the performance of their duties. (Sub-section 23.01)

### Section 24

#### Protective Clothing

Where the Employer determines that uniforms, coveralls, smocks, or other such items should be provided for the protection of the academic staff member's personal garments, such items shall be provided, cleaned, and replaced upon written authorization by the Employer. (Sub-section 24.01)

Protective clothing and safety equipment shall be supplied by the Employer as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act including the Regulations thereto. (Sub-section 24.02) ♦♦

