

# SAFAGRAM

## President's Message



by Doug Spurgeon

**Where has all the Prep time gone?** Currently instructors work under the belief that for each hour of class they have one hour of preparation. While for the majority of instructors this is how the work week is planned out, it is becoming too obvious that for an increasing amount of academic staff this is no longer the “unwritten golden rule.”

At one time if you had 18 hours of class time, you also had 18 hours of preparation time, resulting in 36 hours per week with 4 hours left over for other duties to reach the magical 40-hour work week.

**What is included in preparation?** Without a clear definition of “prep time,” it is left to wide variations of interpretation. Some faculty are having difficulty maintaining a social and family life as the time required creeps past the 40-hour work week. The view of the Association is that prep time includes time spent preparing for class, meeting students, and marking papers. It is recognized that this also has high and low periods, but the average amount of time works out to a 1:1 ratio.

**What is not included in preparation?** Without a clear definition, we have to rely on what has happened in the past and what has happened recently as both SAIT management and SAFA try to work this out. From the Association's view; for example, course development and maintaining equipment are not considered as preparation.

**What makes up the work week?** This is a combination of events: class time, preparation time, meetings, research, development, and professional development. How much of each depends on the number of classes you currently have on your schedule.

**It is important to note how we look at a 1:1 ratio of instruction to prep.**

**Casual Contracts.** The individual signing a casual contract is given 1 hour of prep for each hour spent in front of a class.

**Permanent Faculty.** Some faculty are asked to perform curriculum development as offload. To administer the offload and for it truly to be offload, the faculty member is physically removed from some classes and is told that for every hour of class removed there is the expectation of two hours of work (1:1). This comes by removing 1 class hour and also removing the associated preparation time needed, thereby

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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

### ⇒ Renovations

The Reference area on Level 1 has been transformed into a new combined reference/leisure reading/comfortable seating area. The counter level shelving units have been repositioned to form a square. The leisure reading collection, which includes paperback fiction, graphic novels, and nonfiction, is shelved on the interior of the square. The reference collection has been reduced in size and is shelved on the exterior of the square. Many of the reference books were transferred to the circulating collection and are now available on Level 0. The interior of the square has a variety of study tables and chairs plus soft upholstered chairs.

The current magazine display shelves have been repositioned to maximize study space and light from the bay window at the north end of Level 1. New counter level shelving has replaced the old two-meter high-back file shelves. The once cramped northeast corner of the main floor is now brighter and more inviting.

We are installing newly-wired (electrical and network ports) study desks on Level 1. The majority of the tables have privacy screens that will contribute to a quieter study area.

### ⇒ Staff

We have a new part-time library technician joining us on October 1. Becky Potvin has eight years of experience working in circulation at Guelph Public Library. Becky has

her Library and Information Technology Diploma from Mohawk College and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Guelph. Becky is filling a position left vacant when Peggy Williams retired in mid-September.

Janis Rapchuk is moving from an evening position in the Library to a temporary day position. Prior to coming to our Library, Janis worked 14 years with Field Aviation in Calgary. She is also heavily involved in the Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WAfghan). Janis has her Diploma in Library Information Technology from SAIT as well as a Bachelor of Science from the University of Saskatchewan.

### ⇒ Discards for Sale

To keep our collection current, Library staff spent time this summer culling older materials and replacing them with newer editions or replacements where possible. We are selling our discards. If you are interested, the materials we culled are shelved in the hallway on Level 0. It's \$1.00 for a catalogued book and 25 cents for a paperback. The books will be available until late October.

### ⇒ Nora's Note

This is my last SAFAGRAM column as I am retiring from the SAIT Library. My last day at the Library is October 30. While I will miss my faculty and Library colleagues, I am looking forward to "life after SAIT." I thank SAFA for the opportunity to share the Library's news with all of you. I hope you have enjoyed reading the columns.

Goodbye! ☛

## RETIREMENT

The editorial staff would like to recognize Nora Robinson for all her work on the Library column, which has appeared in every issue of the SAFAGRAM for many years. The updates have provided all of us with regular, valuable information about our Library. Thanks for a job well done. Congratulations on your retirement, Nora. You will be missed.

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freeing up 2 hours of your week. In discussions with the Academic Vice President, it was agreed that overtime hours associated with course development were any hours above 40 hours per week. To calculate this amount, the number of class hours was doubled. It was then determined how many of the 40 hours were on "SAIT time," and the remainder was assigned to overtime. This led to the creation of the "Letter of Commitment" for curriculum development, which clearly identified how much time was "SAIT time" and how much was overtime.

It has been argued by SAIT in arbitrations that the recommended amount of preparation is one hour for each hour of class. In 2006 during an arbitration, it was part of SAIT's argument that if an instructor were to have their USCCH (Unit Standard Class Contact Hour)—the predecessor to the CCH (Class Contact Hour)—reduced by 80 hours, the preparation time would also be reduced by 80 hours using the same 1:1 ratio.

Currently, SAIT is taking the approach that there is no men-

tion of a 1:1 ratio in the Collective Agreement and, therefore, it does not exist. While it may not be written specifically into the agreement, at least for now, it does not negate how this Institute has operated. The 1:1 ratio is firmly embedded in the culture of instruction at SAIT.

**Q.** Can this ratio (1:1) be changed?

**A.** Of course, it can through consultation.

Through consultation between the instructor and Academic Chair any variance to this ratio, up or down, can be calculated for each class that is being delivered. Failure to have this discussion should automatically default to the 1:1 ratio.

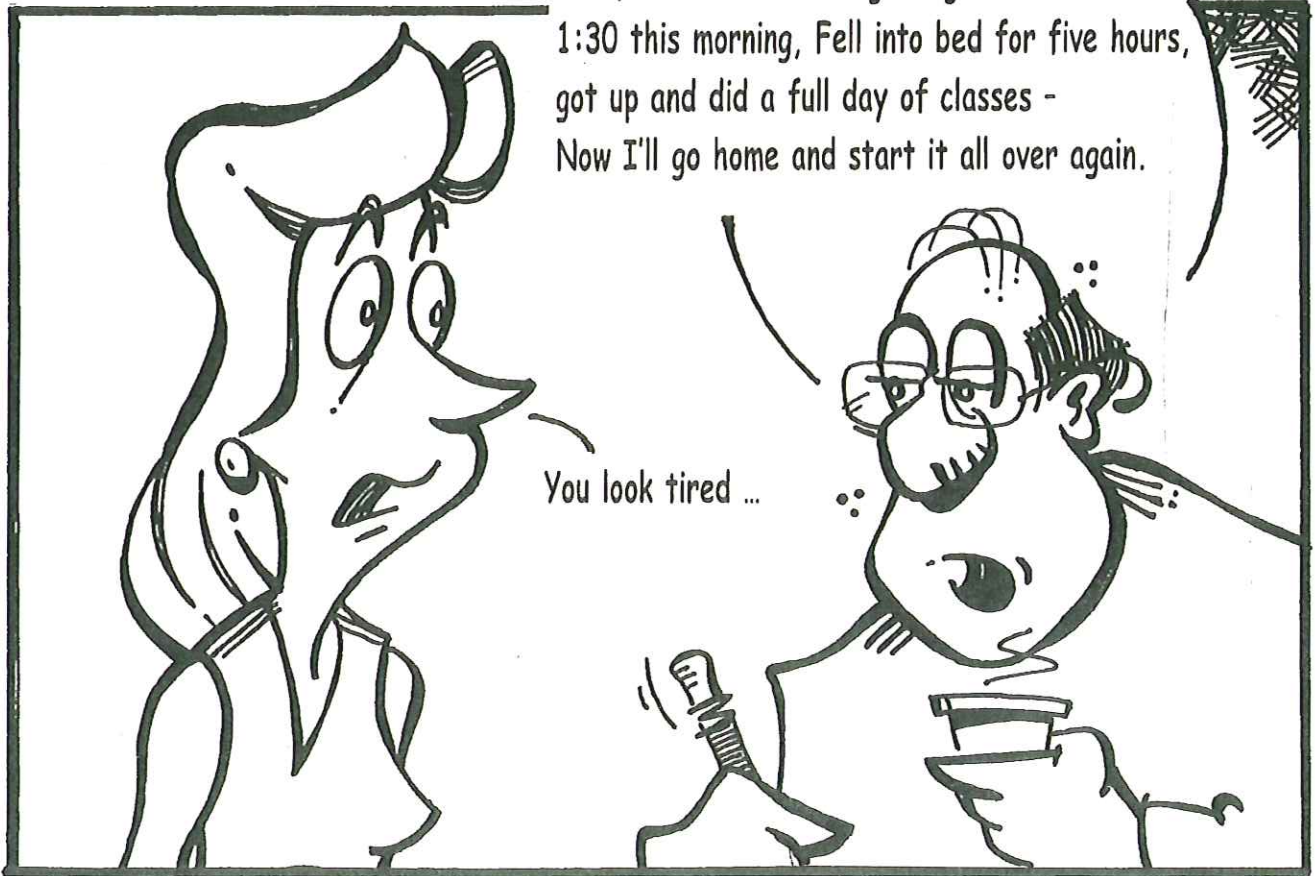
Management has often stated that new instructors are to be given more preparation time, which does happen in some cases. Several new instructors have reported that they are being loaded with the same number of class hours as instructors who have been teaching for several years.

Remember the statement that was previously made "... we do what we say. . ."

**Now it is time to live up to that statement. ☛**

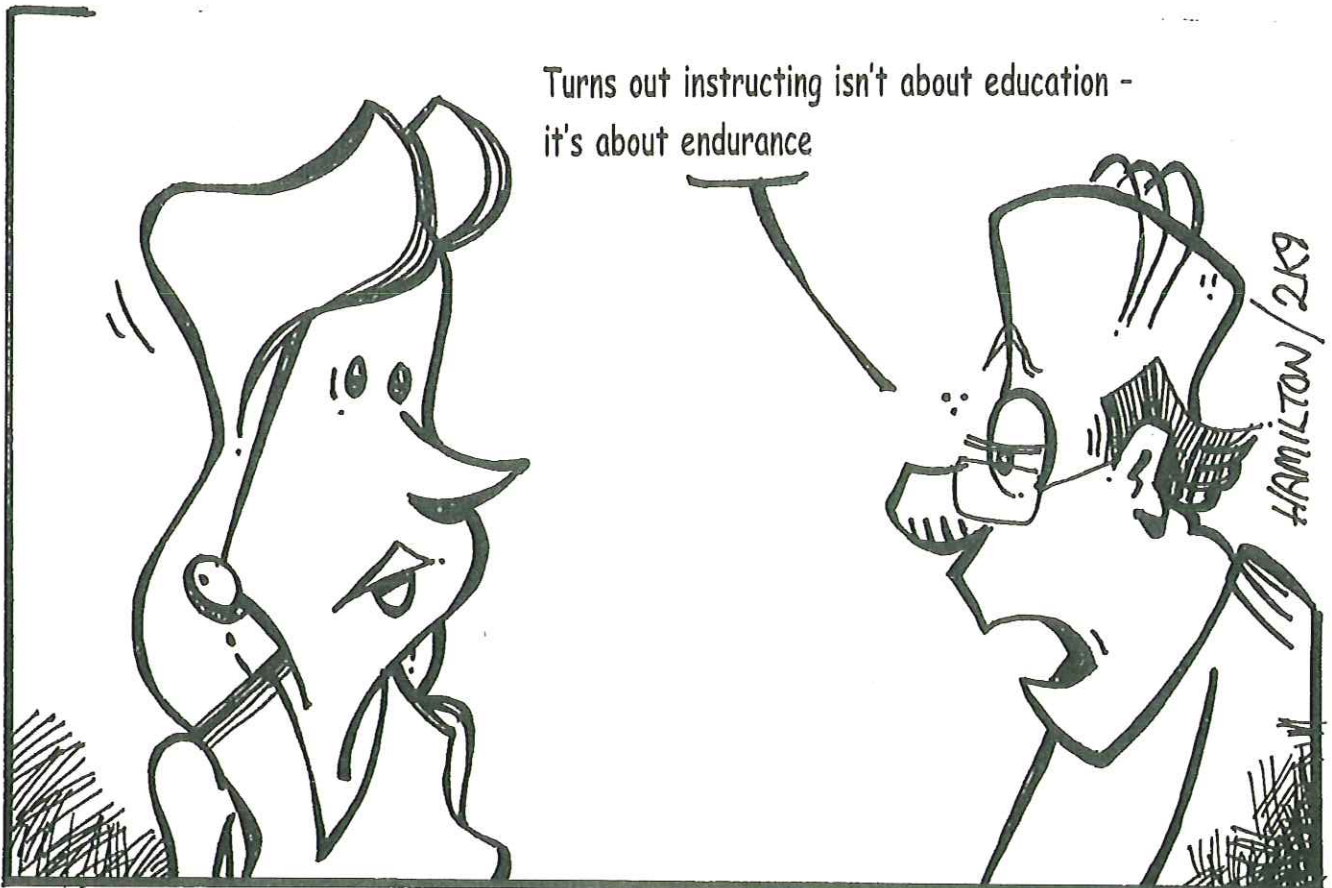
Well, I finished marking assignments around 1:30 this morning, Fell into bed for five hours, got up and did a full day of classes - Now I'll go home and start it all over again.

You look tired ...



Turns out instructing isn't about education - it's about endurance

HAMILTON/2K9



## Education Outside The Classroom – the Fijian Experience

by Roxanne Wheaton, School of Information Technology

Roxanne Wheaton has just returned from a Four-for-Five Leave. The following article describes one of her experiences.

Balmy temperatures, white sandy beaches, breathtaking sunsets, lovely accommodations, food and drink = PARADISE. Does this fit the pictorial image that you have of Fiji? Resorts are marketed to our fantasies and dreams; it is an escape from reality. I escaped reality on a different level when I lived with a Fijian family for two days. My learnings of the true Fijian culture were interestingly steep.

I made basic assumptions before arriving; i.e., running hot water, electricity, stoves, etc. Their wood-fuelled cooking surface was merely a sheet of metal

placed across two bricks housed just outside the house which meant smoke billowed throughout the modest home. Cooking over direct fire in 27° C with 100 percent humidity puts a new face on sweat shop. I know because I offered to make pancakes BEFORE I saw the setup. We all ate together, as is the custom, and all I could think (as the sweat continued to run down my back) was how wonderful and refreshing the cold “jerry-rigged” shower will be—being very thankful that they at least had a shower.

Children are also raised and disciplined (a child of three had his ear pinched when he did not listen) by the extended family; one member does not overrule another. They have a very open and trusting culture among themselves, yet they have locks on their gates and bars

on their windows. Discrimination is rampant between the “true” Fijian and those of Indian descent.

Placing my backpack from the floor to the bed I discovered hundreds of tiny bugs on the bedsheet when I removed it. In the evenings cockroaches came out to play; mosquitoes were plentiful because of the afternoon rains; plus a plethora of other bugs. I had to totally zone out and remember that these people are alive and healthy; therefore, I did not have to worry about death by bugs—just surviving the culture shock.

Been there—done that—No Regrets!  
Now, give me back my resort vacations in paradise. ♦

## Negotiations



by Sean O'Flynn

The SAFA team has been preparing for the forthcoming round of contract negotiations.

We have great hopes and many goals for this round, and we will need

strong faculty support as we attempt to make improvements to the Collective Agreement. We will be entering into negotiations with the optimism that management is willing to work with us to fix the problems which clearly exist. With over ten grievances currently ongoing, and many more issues in the mix, it is painfully obvious that there are problems that need to be addressed in collective bargaining. Recently SAIT has been dealing with more grievances than all other Alberta colleges combined. Given this situation, we are preparing to make changes, whether by working them out with management at the table or by convincing an Arbitrator of our plight.

To win at Arbitration will require strong evidence to support why SAFA's proposed changes are essential for creating a decent working environment. Faculty will need to come forward with evidence to support each clause that may go to Arbitration. We must prove the following:

- that many faculty are working beyond 40 hours a week

- that faculty need more protection from abolishment, and
- that we need a stronger Collective Agreement with language that spells out our rights

This is within our grasp but will require strong support from faculty to prove that our proposed changes are absolutely necessary.

Wages and Benefits are an area of great concern to academic staff members and have been identified as an area of weakness on the Hay's survey. In keeping with management's commitment to addressing our concerns, we are awaiting their proposals on wages and benefits to see if this is a genuine commitment.

The long-term goal of SAIT is to provide a high-quality education to the students year after year. To have a positive impact on the lives of students is a goal of all instructors. Faculty present and run programs with a high degree of integrity and that is what keeps students coming back to SAIT. Hopefully SAIT is willing to work out a Collective Agreement that will ensure the long-term viability of SAIT and will recognize the impact that academic staff members have on the students who will ultimately decide if SAIT is where they choose to further their education. ♦

## DID YOU KNOW? . . .

There is a form—Rating Template—Faculty Positions—which designates eleven faculty competencies. The template has three categories: Performance, Flexibility, and Qualifications. This form lists the criteria used when considering faculty position abolishments. If you would like more details, inquire at the SAFA office, N201. ♦

## SAIT's Alive!

SAIT's Alive is an association open to former employees and the spouses of former employees of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. Its objectives are

- to preserve and promote the spirit of friendship formed by members while employed at SAIT
- to provide a helpful social bond, while disseminating information beneficial to those who have retired
- to provide a vehicle by which members may assist each other in retirement
- to support the interests and objectives of SAIT

Any former SAIT employee (not restricted to retirees) is eligible to become a member. For more information visit <http://saitsalive.googlepages.com/> ♦

## Cultivating Healthy Boundaries with Students by Making Healthy Referrals

by Danica Heidebrecht, SAIT Student Development & Counselling Services

These days, being an instructor involves wearing many hats. It is no longer just about providing instruction within your area of expertise; it's also about being a mentor for your students, evaluating their abilities in a diplomatic way, building positive, professional relationships, as well as identifying which of your students might be "at-risk" —all of which are no small feat!

Sometimes, in the process of building relationships with your students, the lines between what your role is and isn't can get murky. Knowing how to cultivate and maintain healthy boundaries with your students can be a useful tool. It helps you enjoy your relationships with them and, ultimately, helps to minimize the risk of burnout by clarifying what is reasonable for you to do within your role. Making referrals to appropriate campus resources when necessary is also important so you can maintain your role as instructor and not slip into role conflict ("friend" or "counsellor").

Believe it or not, you are a significant person in your students' lives. You have a lot of influence over their experience as a learner, their post-secondary experience as a whole, and their perceptions of themselves as learners. You also have a significant role in terms of assisting them in connecting with the resources that can support them in their success at SAIT. Because you interact with students regularly, and may develop a rapport with them, some students might reach out to you in times of need, and confide in you about personal concerns, which are negatively impacting their studies. Sometimes, these disclosures can be overwhelming as it can be hard to know how to best help them. Having a way of referring to someone with the appropriate expertise, can provide them with the resources they need, model healthy professional boundaries, and take the stress off you in terms of feeling like you have to solve their problems.

### So how might you facilitate a referral to a campus resource?

1. Communicate warmth, care, and concern to the student.
2. Acknowledge and reinforce the student's courage in disclosing the concern to you.
3. Share your desire to be supportive with the academic component of the student's learning, while also communicating the potential helpfulness of connecting with the appropriate resource(s) that can best address the particular concern.
4. Normalize that they are not alone. Sometimes students suffer in isolation thinking no one else has similar difficulties or challenges. It can be important to normalize that the resources on campus are in place because there are other students struggling with similar concerns.

An example of how you might communicate this:

"Joe, you've shared with me some serious concerns. I'm sorry to hear that you have so much on your plate right now. I appreciate the risk you took in sharing this with me. I imagine that wasn't easy. I'd like to help in connecting you with a resource on campus \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in appropriate campus resource here) that can be helpful with the specific concern you raised. How does that sound? Sometimes these concerns can get in the way of your studies. This resource \_\_\_\_\_

has staff with expertise in this area who can help you stay on track (or get back on track). Would you consider consulting with someone from that department? I can walk you over if you'd like, or we could call them now and arrange a time for you to meet with them. I would also like to check in with you tomorrow after class to see how things are going. Would that be okay with you?"

If you are unsure where to send students, you might want to refer to the new Student Resources Directory, (available on [sait.ca](http://sait.ca)), which outlines and describes some of the important and helpful resources on campus.

Dealing with individuals can be complex and sometimes very challenging. There may be times when you get stumped and don't know how to handle a situation. During these times, consulting with other instructors or your Academic Chair can help in terms of exploring ideas on how best to proceed. You are also welcome to consult with a Counsellor at Student Development and Counselling Services, 403.284.7023. ☛

## Work Strategies



by Sean O'Flynn

Resolving conflicts at SAIT can be a challenging task. The following three tips will provide you with some strategies to help you avoid conflicts:

1. **Save all e-mails and any other correspondence.** Any information you have will be vital should a disagreement arise.
2. **Plan ahead.** By planning ahead, you can minimize problems and maximum the chance that your academic year will run according to expectations. Planning should also make you aware of potential problems and give you the time needed to address them. Starting pre-emptive discussions with your Chair should keep the conversation constructive, even if SAFA is also involved in the discussion. Should the need for a grievance arrive, planning ahead and consulting SAFA early will increase the chances your dispute will ultimately be resolved successfully.
3. **Get prior approval for all activities.** Ensure that you fill out the applicable form as far in advance as possible. Many activities such as vacation, medical appointments, overtime, overload, professional development, and travel time require prior approval from your Chair. Once you have filled out the applicable forms, it is much harder for management to change your plans without mutual agreement. All approvals should be documented in writing on the applicable forms, in an e-mail, or in a signed note.

By incorporating a few good habits into your work routine, and by seeking advice from SAFA in advance when you have questions, most conflicts can be avoided or quickly resolved if they develop. ☛