

SAFAGRAM

President's Message

By Doug Spurgeon



Another year started full of promise; hopefully the current round of disputes and lack of respect will be short lived.

SIR II Evaluation. Regrettably there are still some individuals who do not want to file a grievance when they are given a low rating solely based on the SIR II evaluation form—this typically involves new instructors. Even though the only negative comments found are based on SIR II results and anonymous student comments, it is troubling when “Employee Services” states these are past the time line to grieve. We know the time line is past but apparently the “right to do something” does not mean that the “right thing to do” will ever happen. In talks with the VP Academic over this specific issue, he and I will never agree on Question 40 as it’s the student learning not the instructor teaching that is in question. In a meeting with the VP Academic and the Associate VP Academic, while both state there are many other factors, (see instructor accountability list) they say the fact that some instructors got listed by the SIR II is simply a mistake and due to the Chairs being new. When questioned why the Deans then did not pick it up when they had to sign the PPRs, once again it was considered a training issue. Being a new Chair is used as an excuse not to not perform properly while an instructor who can’t perform at the same level as some of us who have been doing this for nearly two decades or more, requires improvement and further probation while receiving a penalty of not getting an anniversary step increment. It appears that those who are suppose to evaluate our performance and have never stepped into a class while we’re teaching can take the student word as gospel while making a decision that greatly affects employee retention and compensation, and this is considered a “training and performance management issue.”

Four For Five Leave. Presently, we have also found out that those who take the 4 for 5 leave are going to be in for a shock. Apparently if you are on your fifth year when you come back you will not get your anniversary step—a great benefit! SAIT has informed us that since you were off and, therefore, did not have a PPR you cannot move up a step. This one is still being worked on as it appears to be a new interpretation, and no member was told that if you are to receive a grid step, you will not receive it once you’re on year 5 and come back. Now we can understand that while you are off you don’t receive the incremental step, but we do not understand why you do not get the increment when you return. The 4 for 5 program would unlikely

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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.

<http://www.safacalgary.com/>

Labour Relations Officer (LRO) Report



By Al Brown, LRO

Welcome back everyone!

I would like to review the Long Service Allowance (LSA) Section 46.02 of the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement:

46.02 Long Service Allowance:

An academic staff member shall be eligible for an annual Long Service Allowance (LSA) of \$3,000.00 per year provided the academic staff member has:

(a) Completed seven years of current, continuous service, and

(b) Has been paid at the same maximum salary step during the immediately preceding two (2) years, and

(c) Has received in the two prior years and continues to receive a satisfactory performance review.

(d) Effective July 1, 2012 educational Counsellors and Librarians will be eligible for an annual long service allowance of three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) per year in accordance with 46.02(a) and 46.02(b) and 46.02(c) above.

The allowance shall be paid monthly. (\$3,000.00 divided by 12 = \$250.00 per month)

Long service allowances are not part of “annual salary” as defined by section 1.01(d).

Further explanation of the **three criteria** follows:

Seven years of current, continuous service. This is fairly self-explanatory. The years are calculated using your anniversary date—the date you were hired.

You’ve been paid at the same maximum salary step during the immediately preceding two (2) years. This is where the Letter of Understanding contained in the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) defines what that means to those who aren’t at the top of the salary grid. It states that the LSA will be paid to those academic staff members who would have become entitled to receive it during the next four years if additional steps had not been added. So, if no additional steps had been added, step 15 would be the maximum step. For example, if your anniversary date is December 1 and you are currently on step 14, you will advance to step 15 on December 1, 2013. On December 1, 2014, you will have year one of the requirement of having been at the same maximum salary step for the preceding two years. On December 1, 2015, you will have completed the second year requirement and will then be eligible for the LSA. For the example above, I used an anniversary date of December 1. Your anniversary date will vary.

Has received in the two prior years and continues to receive a satisfactory performance review. Failure to get an overall rating of “Expected Performance” on your performance review will result in the loss of your LSA for two years—a substantial financial penalty!

Effective July 1, 2012, Educational Counsellors and Librarians became eligible to receive the Long Service Allowance. They would also have to meet the above criteria.

During the recent Collective Agreement negotiations, we tried

to simplify this section by removing the requirement to be at the top of the salary grid for two years. It is a disadvantage for those who were hired lower on the grid because it will take them longer to get their LSA than someone hired at the top salary step. We proposed that the LSA be based on longevity. If you are employed for seven years and have satisfactory performance reviews, then you get the LSA. However, we didn’t get there during this past round of bargaining. What we did get is the current Letter of Understanding that preserves the status quo during the term of this agreement. This LSA section will have to be a priority during the next round of bargaining.

If you have any questions, please stop by the SAFA office N201 in the Burns Building, or contact me directly at Ext. 4067 or e-mail al.brown@sait.ca. ♦♦

Transfer Options Fair

By Dr. Karen McDaniel, Articulation Coordinator,
Academic Development

“Getting the word out about Transfer Options” is the theme for the 2013–2014 school year! We know that instructors are the key to letting students know about their degree options after they graduate so we are pleased to announce the annual Transfer Options Fair on November 14 in the Stan Grad Centre Atrium from 9–3.

Have a diploma? Now choose a degree...

**SAIT TRANSFER
OPTIONS FAIR**

9 am - 3 pm, Thurs., Nov. 14, 2013

Stan Grad Centre Atrium

Meet with recruiters to learn about your transfer options!



Over 25 universities, colleges and organizations from the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, and Denmark will be sending representatives to talk to students about degree completion opportunities. There will be booths, break-out sessions, and one-to-one advising times available. All students and faculty will be receiving an e-mail invitation and opportunities to sign up for sessions.

Presently, we are sending out real-time announcements of events and new agreements on Facebook and the Transfer Options (TO) website. We are encouraging faculty and students to “like” us. Visit www.sait.ca/transferoptions to see the link or search for us at Transfer Options at SAIT.

Thank you for your continued support and many fine suggestions for future transfer options. We are also being approached by receiving institutions for transfer agreements because our graduates have applied there. Please contact me or encourage your students to do so through transfer.options@sait.ca if you would like more information.

I am always pleased to come to classes to talk to students. As well, please know that there are degree opportunities available for instructors. Presently, we have instructors completing degrees at Royal Roads University and Thompson Rivers University.

Have a great year and remember that together we can make great things happen!

be used if instructors knew they were going to lose a step increment. Of course, this also raises a new question. If you were at the top step when you left and were also collecting the Long Service Allowance (LSA), would you now not move up to the new step in the Agreement in the year it becomes available. Since you're not at the top step any more, would you also lose your LSA until such time as you're back at the top for two years, or do you lose your LSA right away because you didn't have a successful PPR? It appears that the 4 for 5 is more of a financial penalty than a benefit to employees—at least to SAFA employees.

Kearney Award. Jack Kearney is going to be paid—well at least he was supposed to be. At the present time, the originator of the “Kearney Award” whom Employee Services told us they would at least pay still has not received a cheque. He will, however, let us know when he finally does receive it. If you are unfamiliar with this Award, it stems back to 2008. During an abolishment, it was discovered that the educational allowance was not paid as part of the abolishment payment. This was grieved and went to arbitration at which point the arbitrator ruled it was part of pay but not salary. SAIT then applied for Judicial Review of the Award and again SAFA was successful. SAIT then applied to the Court of Appeal to overturn the Judicial Award. This was denied near the end of the last academic year. While this has cost SAIT a few thousand dollars in court costs paid to SAFA as well as whatever it cost them in legal fees, we know the SAFA costs and can only guess at SAIT's costs. While this was going on, I was told by a former VP of Employee Services while we were negotiating the previous Collective Agreement that if I wanted to keep the “Kearney Award” he would see me in Arbitration for the Collective Agreement. Several times, as late as this semester, I have been offered multiple deals to establish a go forward point based on the “Kearney Award” if I agreed to not seek payment for those instructors whose positions had been abolished between Jack's time and the present. At every point, I have refused to just let the people of the past not receive what is their due. At one point I was told that they would pay Jack but no one else. Now they say they will pay everyone else but just the education allowance and not the long service allowance as only the education allowance was in the grievance. While this was all Jack had, SAIT has maintained that an allowance is an allowance and not part of salary while at the same time SAIT argued against both education and long service allowances at the Arbitration and the courts. Since the educational allowance has been deemed part of monthly pay and is owed, it stands to reason that long service allowance follows the same rules. However, Employee Services still stands on the ground that the long service allowance was not part of the Award and, therefore, is not payable but will pay it going forward if I agree not to force the LSA payment to the dozen or so individuals whose positions were abolished during and since Jack's position abolishment in 2008. Does it make you wonder about the application of SAIT's ethics FIRST principles?

Workload Study Team. Our team has met only once with the SAIT side as the October meeting was cancelled with no reason given. Thanks to some of the Academic Chairs who worked with me and the member(s) to rearrange schedules to ensure they were available to meet. For an important issue that Faculty had indicated as their #2 issue just behind pay, I had hoped that the members from SAIT management would

also make their best effort to work on these issues. Our team is still ready and prepared to meet.

Results Based Budgeting. At a recent ACIFA meeting, we were privileged to have a couple of representatives from the Provincial Government join us to give some insight on “results based budgeting.” After a few hours of more colloquialisms than I thought humanly possible to squeeze into a meeting to explain a piece of legislation, the following are the highlights: What is going to be measured has not yet been identified. Are they going to track students right after graduation or three to five years after? In short what we learned is that the Government has brought out “Resource Based Budgeting” but has no idea how or what to measure. Once all these unknowns are finally compiled, I guess we will know what budget impacts take place when actually nothing is done.

SAFA Elections. This year is an election year for SAFA. All positions on the SAFA Executive including the President and Treasurer will be up for election. I hope that more Faculty will step forward to get involved. We have had some great involvement in the past few years from members, and I would like to see it continue. If anyone is interested in running for President or any other SAFA position and would like to gather information, this is the year to get some. I would be happy to meet with any interested candidate, and if schedules allow, you are welcome to attend meetings to get a glimpse of what goes on. Anything we can reasonably do to help Faculty members become more aware and assist those who would like to step forward on behalf of their fellow Faculty we will attempt to achieve. In particular, any individual who would like to put forward his/her name for the role of President, please contact me and we can discuss what's involved. Our Faculty has become stronger and more united over the past several years, and I thank all those who have stood up and brought the issues forward to be dealt with. I also want to thank all Faculty for everything they have done in helping our Association grow and become an advocate for the Faculty.

This will be a year of change at SAIT. Throughout this academic year, we will see changes come as new plans are put in place and the institute takes on the vision of the new helmsman. I, like all of you, hope for positive changes and a workplace where the respect returns and the excuses dissipate as the consultative process begins and this institute once again becomes a place where I hear Faculty laugh more and cringe less about an anonymous survey. ☘

SAIT HISTORY

Have you ever explored the SAIT Archives?

Recently, Chris Savage spent four months working in the Archives and was able to digitize and make available online all the SAIT calendars and yearbooks since 1921. Yearbooks can be browsed page by page or by searching for a specific person or program within each document.

Some SAIT's ALIVE members are actively involved with interviewing former employees and preserving some of their SAIT memories.

To explore all the archive collections, please visit <http://cdm16130.contentdm.oclc.org/>

Well, on a positive note, the employees seem to be consistent in their opinions ...



News Item: 2013 Employee Survey Results by SAFA members indicate an overall decline in satisfaction