

# SAFAGRAM

## President's Message

By Blair Howes



Hello Faculty,

The cold snap seems to have ended, and we are now heading into warmer days (hopefully). Reading week has come and gone, and it seems as if final exams are around the corner. The last two apprenticeship intakes for the year are about to start. Where has the time gone?

I would like to send out congratulations to two instructors who have received an award or honourable mention from the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) at the Alberta Annual Leadership Awards Night.

The Inspiring Educator Award winner is Cheryl Fryers and Honourable Mention for the same award is Dr. Azzeddine Oudjehane. Both winners are from the School of Construction at SAIT. I have had the pleasure of being a guest lecturer in Cheryl's AT classes from time to time over the years and have always enjoyed the opportunity to speak with her students. If you see either of them in your daily travels at SAIT, give them a wink, a wave, or a nod to say hello and congratulate them for the awesome work they do for students and Faculty.

We are midway through the winter semester, and the Easter long weekend is approaching fast. This year it causes a problem for SAIT's final exam scheduling. I had spoken briefly with the Registrar around Halloween about the issue. She had mentioned that a plausible solution was to include Saturday exams. I believe this will present a problem with students and instructors alike.

The student issues with a Saturday exam are outside the scope within which SAFA operates. However, the instructor issues are within the scope. The Collective Agreement has a few options for Saturday work.

### Definitions

- v. "work day" means any day on which an academic staff member is normally expected to be at their place of employment. **Saturday and Sunday are not normally days of work.**

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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



## The Problem with Student Instructor Reports (SIR)

In light of the current search for a new assessment tool to replace the SIR, I'd like to revisit and update an article that was published in the SAFAGRAM a few years ago.

How often have you heard the following when discussing the SIR II results?

"I do what I do every year. I teach the way I teach every year. [My] first year got me pats on the back; [my] second year got me kicked in the butt, and year three, my scores were off the charts. I got a 'role model'. What did I do differently? I have no clue."

SAIT is currently in the process of finding a replacement for the SIR and has engaged Faculty in this search. Whether the replacement is another external program like the SIR or an "in-house designed" tool, there are questions regarding the validity of these types of "tools" to assess the instructors.

SIR II Evaluations are Voluntary. Students do not have to complete the SIR II evaluation, but instructors are held responsible if a significantly large percentage of the students do not complete the SIR II. Does lack of participation by a student indicate poor teaching, lack of interest in the course, or lack of confidence in the outcomes of the evaluation? "What's the point of these questionnaires and writing comments? They're never acted on!" is a commonly heard student comment. Academic Chairs are free to interpret the lack of participation by the entire class any way they choose. There is no assurance that any Academic Chair will be consistent in his/her judgment on this issue.

SIR II Evaluations are Anonymous. Under a system of anonymous evaluations, students don't need to take any responsibility for their opinions. With no possibility for follow-up, students don't need to think through their decision. They don't have to carefully consider all facts in order to come to a valid and justifiable conclusion that is supported by facts. An evaluation could be based solely on dissatisfaction resulting from a lower than expected grade received on an exam or from a single negative in-class experience with an instructor over the course of an entire semester.

Another potential problem is lack of ability to follow up on the results. No details can be gathered as to why an evaluation was positive or negative. Do all students with low grades give low evaluations? Do students with poor attendance records give low evaluations to an instructor they may have only rarely had contact with in class? Are low SIR scores simply due to an instructor's attempt at a new or different approach to a course?

In a recent Expert Report for the Ryerson Faculty Association (RFA) and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) on Student Evaluations of Teaching (Ryerson's equivalent of the SIR), Richard L. Freishtat, Ph.D. said the following:

Students should not be used to rate the adequacy, relevance, and timeliness of the course content nor the breadth of the instructor's knowledge and scholarship (Scriven, 1995). Most students lack the expertise needed to comment on whether the teaching methods used were appropriate for the course, if the content covered was appropriate for the course, if the content covered was up-to-date, if methods of student engagement used were appropriate to the level and content of the course, if the assignments were appropriate for promoting and assessing their own student learning, if what they learned has real world application, if what they learned will help them in future classes, if the type of assistance, help or support given to students was appropriate to the learning goals of the class, if the difficulty level of the course material was at an appropriate level, and if the course or the instructor was excellent, average or poor overall.

In another Expert Report on Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET is a generic term for SIRs) prepared for the Ryerson Faculty Association and The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, the author, Philip B. Stark, Ph.D. said the following:

There is substantial evidence that SET have large biases. Sources of bias include students' grade expectations (e.g., Boring et al., 2016; Marsh and Cooper, 1980; Vasta and Sarmiento, 1979); the nature of the course material (for instance, instructors who teach courses with mathematical content tend to get lower ratings, Uttl et al., 2013), the level of the course and whether the course is required (e.g., Marsh and Roche, 1997), the course format (Lake, 2001), the size of the course (Bedard and Kuhn, 2005), instructor gender (Arbuckle and Williams, 2003; Basow et al., 2013; Bianchini et al., 2013; Boring, 2015; Boring et al., 2016; MacNell et al., 2015), instructor age (Arbuckle and Williams, 2003; Bianchini et al., 2013), instructor attractiveness (Ambady and Rosenthal, 1993; Wolbring and Riordan, 2016), instructor expressiveness (Ambady and Rosenthal, 1993; Williams and Ceci, 1997), instructor race (Archibeque, 2014, and citations therein; Basow et al., 2013), whether the instructor speaks with an accent or is a native speaker (Subtirelu, 2015), the physical condition of the classroom (Hill and Epps, 2010), and so on. Many of these factors are protected characteristics under employment law: relying on student evaluations may have disparate impact on protected groups. Other factors may not be in the control of the instructor.

The Problem of Survey Data. SIR II evaluations are a result of survey data. While the survey results may give an overview of student feelings concerning a faculty member, they don't provide an in-depth picture of what happened in the classroom. The use of numerical ratings and then averaging these ratings across different courses, different departments, and different instructors within the same School—and in SAIT's case—across the whole campus is fundamentally flawed. This is further compounded when using this "data" to compare one instructor to another.

In the report noted above, Philip B. Stark, Ph.D. said the following: "Averaging such numbers is meaningless as a matter of statistics. For the average to be meaningful, the difference between "1" and "2" would need to mean the same thing as the difference between "4" and "5." A "1" would have to

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## Random Acts of Kindness Network—A SAFA Morale Booster

By Candace Van Apeldoorn

There is a lot of change happening at our little institution, and sometimes that can lead to higher stress levels than we'd like. The Random Acts of Kindness Network is a simple program to help spread smiles and goodwill across campus. If you would like to be surprised by a thoughtful note, card, or gift appearing in your office mailbox, you should join the RAK Network!

All Faculty are invited to participate. You must register to participate.

To register, please forward this email to [Candace.vanapeldoorn@sait.ca](mailto:Candace.vanapeldoorn@sait.ca) with the following information completed:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Number (or Department office): \_\_\_\_\_

Favourite Colour: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies/Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Safety Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Participants will be assigned another RAK Network member, not as a pair, just a one-way connection—it's a secret! All participants are asked to send something at least once a month to their designated recipient through inter-office mail. (Cost to be kept below \$10.)

The Network Administrator will know who has been assigned to whom, so if there are any problems about lack of or abuse of participation, they can be addressed.

New participants will be accepted monthly, and participants can opt out of the network at any time (just let the Administrator know so your recipient can be reassigned). The program will refresh each semester. The Administrator will send out a quick monthly reminder to all network members.

Let's all share a little kindness!

*Al Brown, LRO Report  
Continued from Page 2*

balance a "5" to be the equivalent of two "3"s. Adding or subtracting labels from each other does not make sense, any more than it makes sense to add or average postal codes. Reporting the averages to several significant digits gives the illusion of scientific precision when in fact the result is not valid."

What do Labour Arbitrators say? In a very recent (June 2018) and extremely relevant Interest Arbitration Award concerning Ryerson University and the Ryerson Faculty Association, Arbitrator William Kaplan observed: *"That evidence, as earlier noted, was virtually uncontradicted. It establishes, with little ambiguity, that a key tool in assessing teaching effectiveness is flawed, while the use of averages is fundamentally and irreparably flawed."*

He went on to say: *"As set out above, the assessment of teaching effectiveness is critical, for faculty and the University, and it has to be done right. The ubiquity of the SET tool is not a justification, in light of the evidence about its potential impact, for its continuation, or for mere tinkering. The evidence is dispositive that some of the questions do not elicit*

*any useful information about teaching effectiveness and are subject to bias, while the use of averages—individual, Departmental, Faculty and University—provides no relevant information about teaching effectiveness."*

In his award, Arbitrator Kaplan directed the parties to: *"In particular, I direct the following: The collective agreement is to be amended to ensure that FCS results are not used to measure teaching effectiveness for promotion or tenure. A necessary corollary of this direction is that the numerical weighting system in the FCS be replaced with an alphabetical one. Question 15 should be struck."*

An important note is that Question 15 (above) is the Ryerson equivalent to Question 40 on the SIR.

I believe there is a consensus, within SAIT academic staff, regarding the value of student evaluations. They can—if used fairly and carefully—provide valuable feedback to Faculty. You may read the full Arbitration Award and supporting documents on the SAFA website: [safacalgary.com](http://safacalgary.com) ➡



# Student Professionalism

By Eugene Blanchard

I am a strong proponent of assessing student professionalism in my courses. In 2007, I was a member of the ICT Engineering Technology (EngTech) Committee. Our duty was to revise seven programs which had poor Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and were on the edge of being terminated. During the research process, we were told repeatedly by Advisory Board members and industry spokespersons that SAIT graduates were technically proficient but seriously lacked professionalism.

This led to an area of research: “What exactly is professionalism?” The results of the research produced a method for evaluating professionalism. This Core Abilities Rubric (attached) covers six important areas: communication, participation, classroom conduct, respect, organizational skills, and responsibility. On the rubric, the instructor assigns a score of 1 to 4 where 1 = Insufficient, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory and 4 = Exemplary. There is no hard rule that says you can't give partial marks like 3.5. I tell the students that to get a 4 means that you have to “walk on water”—it is possible, but you have to be very good. Many students do indeed receive a mark of 4. Their professionalism mark is the total of the six areas. Although the mark is out of 24 it is worth 15 percent of the course grade.

The process that I use for professionalism is to have the students do a self-evaluation at the beginning of the semester using the Core Abilities Rubric. At mid-semester (it takes this long to figure out who the students are!), I evaluate each student's progress: attendance, work ethic (work completed and on time) and performance (grades). Then I review their self-assessment for the six areas and adjust their marks for each area based on my evaluation:

## 1. Communications

I am concerned with how well the student communicates both through the written word and orally. Can the student follow directions? Can I communicate with the student at a high level? I don't care if the student's English is not perfect. I do care that the student understands what I've said technically. I care that the student uses the proper terminology when describing problems or asking questions.

## 2. Participation

This section concerns two major items: attendance and when the student is present, is the student mentally present. I am concerned if the student is missing classes, assignments, deadlines, etc. I am concerned if the student is attending class but watching videos, playing games, checking Facebook, etc. on the class PCs instead of paying attention. I am concerned if the student attends lab class, and with plenty of time left to do another lab, the student leaves early.

## 3. Classroom Conduct

This section identifies how the student conducts himself in the classroom and the student's interaction with others and equipment. I am concerned:

- If the student is frequently the centre of discord in the lab.
- If the student is involved in verbal or physical altercations with others.
- If the student has anger issues.
- If the student is physically careless with equipment.

## 4. Respect

This section is about how the student treats others, instructors, and equipment. I am concerned with how polite the student is. Does the student barge into existing conversations? Does the student treat other students as equals? If the student makes a mistake, does the student inform the instructor promptly? If the student damages equipment or discovers broken equipment, does the student inform the instructor or do nothing?

## 5. Organizational Skills

This section is concerned with how well the student is organized. Does the student submit assignments on time, complete lab work within the scheduled time, and attempt quizzes during the scheduled period. I am concerned that the student comes to class prepared with the proper course and lab notes.

## 6. Responsibility

This section is concerned with how responsible the student is. Is the student reliable and trustworthy? Is the student someone who when they say they are going to do something, they do it? If the student misses a class or an assignment, does the student inform the instructor promptly?

## One-on-One Meetings

I briefly meet with each student to discuss their professionalism evaluation and inform them that at this point (mid-semester), the marks do not count for anything and that it is just to provide positive feedback on how they can improve. The students have until the end of the semester to improve if any area requires improvement. The vast majority of students will have a very positive evaluation and are surprised to learn that they are doing well. For some students, it is a wake-up call that they have to get the gears in motion. The meeting is very brief and usually lasts about 3 to 5 min.—we have the conversation out in the hall during lab time. At the end of the semester, I re-evaluate the student's professionalism and assign an appropriate grade.

## Professionalism Grade

There was a lot of spirited discussion by the EngTech Committee on determining the 15 percent professionalism grade portion. Five percent was felt that it would turn into an attendance mark and not be taken seriously. Ten percent was still not enough to be taken seriously by both instructors and students. Fifteen percent was one letter grade, and it would be taken seriously.

I feel strongly that professionalism must be included in the first semester. This sets the bar for what SAIT expects of students in their conduct in industry. The current professionalism assessment is not perfect, and as everyone agrees, it needs to be revised, especially for semesters 3 and 4.

For semesters 2 – 4, I offer the following opportunity for students to provide value to real life skills that I consider part of professionalism:

If the student has any of the following real life skills (with proof), they will receive a 5 percent bonus immediately taken off the top of the professionalism grade up to the maximum 15 percent:

*Continued on Page 5*

- First Aid Certificate
- Mental Health First Aid Certificate
- CPS training on what to do if someone drug overdoses
- Lifeguard Certificate
- Volunteering experience
- Mentoring
- Blood donor
- Other pertinent life skills

It does take time to evaluate the students, but if professionalism is worth 15 percent of their mark then I must spend a proportionate amount of time evaluating them.

I've also included a document: the "Student Contract" (*see page 6*) that I give to the students during the first week of classes. This outlines what is expected of the student and what their responsibilities are during their time at SAIT. The Student Contract is an accumulation of many documents by several unknown authors that I've gathered over the years. ♦♦

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: CPNT-220 \_\_\_\_\_

Date: Winter 2019 \_\_\_\_\_

Core Abilities						
Performance Criterion	Attributes	Exemplary 4 points	Satisfactory 3 points	Needs Improvement 2 points	Insufficient 1 point	Score
<b>Communication</b> Listening and questioning skills are an important part of classroom discussion.  How you express yourself in both oral and written form.	<input type="checkbox"/> Listening / Questioning  <input type="checkbox"/> Writing  <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking	You have exceeded in the following areas and become a positive example for the class.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You are an effective listener and have the ability to paraphrase the statements of others.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your questioning generates a higher level of discussion.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You present information in a well-organized and enthusiastic manner.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You communicate on a highly interactive level.	You maintain a level of competency and demonstrate a high level of performance in the following.  <input type="checkbox"/> You are able to maintain attention in class. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your questions are well thought out and relevant to the discussion  <input type="checkbox"/> Your thoughts and material are presented in a concise and organized manner. <input type="checkbox"/> Your written skills are effective and clear.  <input type="checkbox"/> Your oral skills are effective and clear. <input type="checkbox"/> You are able to effectively interact with your audience.	The following are the areas that require improvement.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You are having difficulty staying attentive to the material presented in the classroom.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You need to present your thoughts in a more concise and organized manner. <input type="checkbox"/> Your written skills have a number of errors with spelling and format.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your presentation skills require further development (voice, eye contact, audience interaction, etc.)	You are required to work with the instructor to develop the following skills.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You require additional assistance with your listening skills. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You require additional assistance with your writing skills  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You require additional assistance with organizing your thoughts and material.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You require additional assistance with your oral skills.	/4
<b>Participation</b> How you collaborate and contribute with classroom activities including giving and receiving feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Feedback	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You accept a leadership role in classroom activities  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You initiate meaningful dialogue in the classroom.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You encourage others to participate.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You assist others in providing positive feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> You contribute and collaborate in all classroom activities <input type="checkbox"/> You work effectively with everyone in the class  <input type="checkbox"/> You offer ideas and share information with others. <input type="checkbox"/> You consistently engage in relevant discussion without conflict.  <input type="checkbox"/> You accept and give positive feedback.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You are required to contribute and collaborate more in classroom activities. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You are having difficulty offering ideas and sharing information. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You are having difficulty engaging in relevant discussion without interpersonal conflict. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty accepting and giving positive feedback.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty being involved in classroom activities.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You require assistance in working effectively with others.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> You require assistance in giving and accepting feedback.	/4
<b>Instructor Comments</b>						
<b>Attendance:</b>		<b>Labs:</b>				
<b>Theory Quizzes:</b>		<b>Lab Quizzes:</b>				
<b>Assignments:</b>						

Core Abilities						
Performance Criterion	Attributes	Exemplary 4 points	Satisfactory 3 points	Needs Improvement 2 points	Insufficient 1 point	Score
<b>Classroom conduct</b> How you perform and respond to change in a classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive outlook  <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability  <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation	<input type="checkbox"/> You have taken on a leadership role in the classroom.  <input type="checkbox"/> Your constructive attitude adds to the success of the class.  <input type="checkbox"/> You provide thoughtful support and assistance to your classmates.	<input type="checkbox"/> You consistently display enthusiasm in the classroom.  <input type="checkbox"/> You consistently demonstrate adaptability in the classroom  <input type="checkbox"/> You display a constructive and helpful attitude in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty maintaining a positive attitude in the classroom.  <input type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty adapting to major changes in the classroom.  <input type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty being cooperative in times of change.	<input type="checkbox"/> You need to address your attitude and behavior in the classroom if you are to be successful.	/4
<b>Respect</b> How you exhibit consideration towards the feelings, opinions, property and ideas of others.	<input type="checkbox"/> People  <input type="checkbox"/> Property  <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> You promote the acceptance of opinions and ideas of others in the classroom.  <input type="checkbox"/> You demonstrate the need to value the property of others.	<input type="checkbox"/> You consistently demonstrate appreciation towards the opinions and ideas of others.  <input type="checkbox"/> You consistently value the property of others.	<input type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty accepting the feelings, opinions and ideas of others.  <input type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty demonstrating respect for the property of others.	<input type="checkbox"/> You require assistance in developing respect for the opinions and property of others.	/4
<b>Organizational Skills</b> How you prepare yourself for class and stay on-task when working individually, collaboratively, or with a computer.	<input type="checkbox"/> Preparation  <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuality / Attendance  <input type="checkbox"/> Attentiveness	<input type="checkbox"/> You encourage others to be prepared for class and meet assignment deadlines.  <input type="checkbox"/> You encourage others to be punctual and attend classes.  <input type="checkbox"/> You demonstrate to others the importance of staying on task.	<input type="checkbox"/> You are consistently prepared for class and meet all assignment deadlines.  <input type="checkbox"/> You are consistently punctual and contact the appropriate persons when late or absent  <input type="checkbox"/> You consistently stay on task with individual and group assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty being prepared for class. <input type="checkbox"/> You miss assignment deadlines. <input type="checkbox"/> Your difficulty with punctuality and attendance is affecting your performance. <input type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty staying on task with individual and/or group assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/> You require assistance in developing your organizational skills. <input type="checkbox"/> You are required to discuss strategies for improving your punctuality and attendance issues.  <input type="checkbox"/> You are required to discuss strategies to improve your attentiveness in the classroom.	/4
<b>Responsibility</b> How you manage yourself within the established policies and procedures of SAIT.	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety  <input type="checkbox"/> Policy  <input type="checkbox"/> Procedure	<input type="checkbox"/> You consider the well-being of others and you comply with all safety requirements in the classroom.  <input type="checkbox"/> You encourage others to follow all policies and procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> You comply with all safety requirements in the classroom.  <input type="checkbox"/> You consistently follow all policies and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty demonstrating certain safety procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> You have difficulty complying with certain policies and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> You are required to discuss strategies to better follow safety procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> You will be required to discuss strategies to follow SAIT policies and procedures.	/4
<b>Student Comments</b>						

Total Score \_\_\_\_/24

# Student Contract *By Eugene Blanchard*

**Attendance and Punctuality** – You are expected to be on time for the start of each class. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you are not in attendance at the beginning of the class, you will be marked down as being absent. There is a 10 minute grace period before being marked absence.

Note: It has been proven that if you miss 20% of classes, you have a 50% chance of passing.

**Responsibility** – You are responsible for your learning. The instructor will provide you with a variety of tools and methods for learning the course material, but you are ultimately responsible for learning the material.

**Communications** – You are going to be taught a standard of communicating in your Technical Communications course. You are expected to apply the communications standard in this course as well.

**Participation** – You are expected to participate in the class and schedule time to do the following:

1. Writing quizzes.
2. Submitting assignments on time.
3. Ask questions during class if you need further clarification. If you do not ask any questions then it is assumed that the topic has been clearly understood.
4. Participate in class discussions when questions are asked.
5. Reading and following the instructions in the lab activities.

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## Section 45 overtime

45.01 An academic staff member occupying a position in any classification covered by this Collective Agreement shall receive overtime compensation, at time and one-half, (1 1/2) for all authorized hours worked in excess of the normal hours of work specified under Section 31 of this Collective Agreement. Such overtime hours shall be paid in the month following the one in which they were reported.

## Section 36 workload

36.09 Instruction on a Saturday or Sunday or after 6:00 p.m. will be by mutual agreement between the Dean or designee (non-academic staff member) and the instructor.

## 36.11 Assignable Work:

- (a) Assignable work shall include all instruction scheduled to take place up to 6:00 p.m. Assignable work shall also include **evaluation, supervision**, consultation, preparation, program, and course updating and maintenance, and other related activities.
- (b) Instruction which takes place after 6:00 p.m. may be taught by an adjunct instructor. Such instruction shall be by mutual agreement between the instructor and Employer. Instruction after 6:00 p.m. shall not count as part of class contact hours without mutual agreement between the instructor and Employer.
- (c) Qualified permanent academic staff members shall have first right to participate in instruction given after 6:00 p.m.

**Accountability** – You will be held accountable for:

1. Any work or course notes that you miss if you are unable to attend a class.
2. Completing the quizzes and assignments prior to the deadline. You will be given ample time to complete the work. Once a quiz or assignment closes, it will remain closed.
3. Completing the lab activities in a timely manner.
4. Adhering to all of SAIT's Academic Policies.

**Behavior** – You will be accountable for:

1. Your interaction with your fellow classmates.
2. If you are disruptive to the classroom environment, you will be asked to leave the class.
3. You are expected to behave like a professional. Gaming or other distractions in the educational environment are not acceptable. If you are found to be causing a distraction, you will be asked to leave the class.
4. You are expected to pull your weight (do your share) of the work in a team environment when working on group projects, labs and assignments.
5. You are expected to give 100% commitment to performing to the best of your abilities. Anything less is not acceptable.
6. Submissions that do not meet minimum quality standards will not be accepted or you will be asked to resubmit them.

**The Danger of Side Deals and the Collective Agreement.** From time to time, the employer has a unique issue and, with proper consultation with the Association, can come to resolution with the parties involved. These so called "one offs" are the exception to the rules and not the norm.

However, once an instructor goes down that path without proper representation or consultation of the Association (exclusive bargaining agent) is when the union is powerless to take any corrective measures.

An example of this would be if your chair or manager came to you and said "***I need this one time favour and in return I will grant you a day off of your choice.***" When the day off comes along and the chair or manager says, "***Well I thought this would work but today is a six hour long teaching day and now I can't give you the day off;***" the Association has no power to help you. The lesson in this is to contact the SAFA office or your division rep to get advice before you commit to the deal. If too many of these "DEALS" occur they become the norm and not the exception, and it reduces the bargaining agent's power at the negotiation table.

So, getting back to the Saturday final exam issue in April, the fact is that there are provisions in the Collective Agreement to handle the exception of a "***one off***" situation. The Association's stance on the matter is to simply follow the Collective Agreement. Instruction occurs Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., and anything outside of those days and hours is handled by the Collective Agreement.

Wishing everyone a happy spring and looking forward to warmer days.

Always, in service of membership. ♡

# The International Centre at SAIT

By Moira MacLoughlin

This is the first in a series of supports for SAIT learners and instructors.

SAIT International student enrollment has increased in recent years. As such, our instructors and support personnel are seeing more international students in their classes and offices. Our staff may not be aware of the unique difficulties that international students can face. Even an international student's path to SAIT and the specific language and program proficiency requirements for international students may be a bit of a mystery. The very first thing to know is that the International Centre supports all International Students studying at SAIT on a study permit. Their support team offices are located in AA206, and their recruitment office is in MB 201.

Where do our International Students come from? I had an opportunity to sit down with Stacey Barefoot, Associate Director of the International Centre, to get the answer and also to learn how the Centre supports international learners and the Faculty who teach them.

Recruiters from the Centre travel 12–14 weeks per year to countries that support International education in Canada. However, it is also important to maintain a balance of diversity within the international student numbers. For example, Barefoot adds that this year due to changes in Canadian immigration programming, Indian students are free to apply to and attend all Canadian post-secondary institutes. That means there are more Indian students this year, so recruitment will focus on other countries to ensure international student diversity. Recruiters participate in Edu-Canada events, student recruitment fairs, and high school presentations. They meet with authorized agents, Trade Commissionaires, and school counsellors in order to market SAIT's opportunities. Some students choose to work with an Authorized Agent (see <https://www.sait.ca/international-students/agents>) who responds to program and application inquiries, submits applications, and assists with immigration applications for study permits and visas. Agents also organize housing. Barefoot adds that many international students do not stay on campus, preferring to stay with family or friends.

Prospective students must meet the academic requirements of the program they are applying to as well as “additional selection criteria (that may be) in place to determine program suitability.” All applicants must also demonstrate English proficiency. There are six assessment tests listed on SAIT's website along with their equivalencies in test scores and program requirements at <https://www.sait.ca/admissions/admission-and-selection/admission-requirements>. If a prospective student does not meet these standards, they can enroll in English Language Foundations (ELF) or Academic Upgrading before entering a program. ELF, Level 5 (the final level) is the equivalent of English 30-1 or Grade 12. The website also lists other recognized alternatives and their equivalencies. It is important to note that the assessments listed clearly show the English Proficiencies evaluated/gained through the assessment test/program. These proficiencies are equivalent to one another. For example, a score of 8 in each section of the Canadian Language Benchmark is the Equivalent of an English 30-1 as is a score of 6 in each category on the International Language Testing System (IELTS) or a Level 5 in ELF.

Before arriving at SAIT, the Centre provides applicants with an extensive pre-arrival package, and on arrival, students receive an in-person orientation that prepares them for life in Canada, the SAIT classroom, and cultural understanding and awareness. An effort is made to create a rapport with students from the first point of contact upon arrival. Students are urged to visit the Centre with any questions or concerns throughout their program.

Four advisors support International students at SAIT. They specialize in different areas:

- Community Outreach – Bringing the Calgary community to the student
- Student Engagement – Providing activities and events for International students
- Immigration – Assisting with the renewal of permits
- Transitioning and Retention – Assisting in transitioning to life at SAIT and ensuring support is continued

All International Students receive a bi-weekly newsletter covering developments in the above areas. English Language Foundations students are also provided information sessions to prepare them for their Academic Programs. These sessions cover next steps and the “need to knows” about their specific programs. Barefoot says that on occasion the names of SAIT programs may not always translate into a student's language; the student may then find a misalignment with what they thought the program entailed. In that case, moving the student is dependent upon seat availability, but efforts are made to reduce student course load or to help the student apply for another program the next semester. If a student has trouble in a program, advisors triage the concern: is it academic? Do they require a learning coach, counselling, or an external resource? Once the difficulty is determined, appropriate SAIT resources are accessed.

Barefoot believes there is an opportunity to provide even more support to students and their faculty. The central question is what does faculty need to support International students? Answering this question is a priority in this year's planning. A simple first step is a focus on inclusive practices. International students sometimes report feeling discomfort or isolation within the classroom, so Barefoot notes, an inclusive classroom environment is very important. SAIT is richer with the diverse and authentic perspectives of our International Students, and Barefoot advocates involving international students in class discussions. They are often well-educated in their home countries, and they often have significant work experience. Instructors would do well to tap into that experience during discussions of Canadian ways and mores to demonstrate the students' experiences in their own countries and to add richness to the curriculum.

Each year the number of International students at SAIT has increased and will continue to do so. Making the effort now to learn about SAIT's International student supports and to practice modes of inclusion will improve the classroom experience for students and faculty alike. If you would like to discuss inclusive classroom practices, please contact the Centre for Learning and Teaching at [CLT@sait.ca](mailto:CLT@sait.ca). ➡



## Costly Typos

Here are 2 costly typos that give the phrase “economy of words” new meaning.

### 1. NASA'S MISSING HYPHEN

The damage: \$80 million

Hyphens don't usually score high on the list of most important punctuation. But a single dash led to absolute failure for NASA in 1962 in the case of Mariner 1, America's first interplanetary probe. The mission was simple: get up close and personal with close neighbor Venus. But a single missing hyphen in the coding used to set trajectory and speed caused the craft to explode just minutes after takeoff. 2001: A Space Odyssey novelist Arthur C. Clarke called it “the most expensive hyphen in history.”

### 2. THE CASE OF THE ANTIQUE ALE

The damage: \$502,996

A missing 'P' cost one sloppy (and we'd have to surmise ill-informed) eBay seller more than half-a-mill on the 150-year-old beer he was auctioning. Few collectors knew a bottle of Allsopp's Arctic Ale was up for bid, because it was listed as a bottle of Allsop's Arctic Ale. One eagle-eyed bidder hit a payday of Antiques Roadshow proportions when he came across the rare booze, purchased it for \$304, then immediately re-sold it for \$503,300.

# Inverse Relationship Between an Instructor's Desktop and Brain

