

SAFAGRAM

President's Message

By Doug Spurgeon

It is my hope that everyone has a great summer and comes back refreshed and recharged.

I am sure there will be many changes in the new academic year, not the least of which is you will have a new Faculty President for the first time in seven years. Congratulations to James McWilliams for his successful bid to lead you in the upcoming rebuild and revitalization of the Association.

There are probably 1.2 million things I could write for my last article. One example is I recently had an incident which reminded me of why I had fought so hard over the past decade and why seven years ago I decided to put my name in to lead you. This same incident has shown the change that I was hoping for. There is more change coming, and I believe it will be for the better.

I want to thank all faculty for their support and encouragement. The e-mails, chats, and notes left by you thanking me for my service have meant a lot.

I wish everyone the very best for the summer. You all have earned the respite, and I hope to see you all again in the fall.



Doug Spurgeon
SAFA President (2007- 2014)

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SAFAGRAM is published by the SAIT Academic Faculty Association (SAFA) five times a year usually closer to the end of the months of October, December, February, April, and June. Deadline for submissions is the 10th of the month preceding publication. Send submissions to SAFAGRAM, care of the SAFA office, N201 or e-mail submissions to kathie.dann@sait.ca. Please keep submissions under 300 words, double-spaced. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length, or content.

SAFAGRAM editorial policy, as approved by the SAFA Executive on June 14, 1995, is as follows:

1. The Editorial Board has the final say as to what is included or deleted from the newsletter.
2. Editorial Board decisions about newsletter material must be agreed to by consensus.
3. The newsletter will include a disclaimer stating that the views expressed in its content do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.
4. All material included in the newsletter must
 - be signed by the author when submitted to the editors, but anonymity may be requested and granted for printing.
 - be based on "reasoned argument" if personal criticism is used.
 - not involve name-calling.
 - not include sexist, racist, or homophobic comments.
 - be related to SAIT, although this will be interpreted broadly.

The views expressed in SAFAGRAM do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.

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

Labour Relations Officer (LRO) Report

By Al Brown, LRO



We will soon be in the annual performance review season, and I thought it may be an opportunity to refresh you with your rights under the Collective Agreement and to remind you how we can support you. Performance reviews are covered in the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement in Section 18.

You have a couple of entitlements in this section. On an annual basis, your Academic Chair will review your performance with you. You may respond in writing and that response will be attached to the performance review in your personal file. This provides you with the opportunity to have your opinion included for future reference in your personal file. Assuming your overall performance is determined to be satisfactory, you will advance one step on the salary grid.

However, in the event your overall performance is deemed to be less than satisfactory—"requires improvement"—Section 18.01 (b) of the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement entitles you to receive the reasons in writing and to appeal through the grievance procedure. The reason for this process is that there is a significant financial penalty attached to a "requires improvement" performance review. If your overall performance review results in a "requires improvement" evaluation, you may not receive your annual salary grid step increase. Keep in mind your "long service allowance" is also tied to a "meets expectations" performance review.

In addition, there are time limits you need to be aware of. Section 20.05 (a) requires that an academic staff member must submit the grievance within ten (10) days of the date upon which the staff member had the first reasonable opportunity of knowing that a grievance had allegedly occurred. In the case of a performance review, I think that would be the date the PPR document was signed, acknowledging the contents. As soon as possible following the PPR meeting with your Academic Chair, it's very important that you contact the SAFA office or me directly if your overall performance is deemed "requires improvement."

Because of the significance of maintaining timelines, the definition of a "day" also becomes important. Is it a calendar day, a work day, or what? The "rule of thumb" is that if the number of days is divisible by 7, then it is a calendar day. If it is divisible by 5, then it is a work day. In our case, we can look to Section 1 (Definitions) in our Collective Agreement to find that a "day" means a work day unless otherwise specified; and "work day" means any day on which an academic staff member is normally expected to be at his/her place of employment. Saturday and Sunday are not normally days of work. Currently, we have a dispute as to whether a vacation day would count or not. The Association's position is that it does not count when considering timelines because it doesn't meet the definition of a "day on which an academic staff member is normally expected to be at his/her place of employment." This dispute has gone to arbitration.

While we can always ask for an extension to the time limits to allow us to meet for an informal conflict resolution meeting with Employee Services and your Academic Chair in the event that vacation days intervene, I would prefer to begin the process as soon as possible to avoid any further complications.

Last summer, I worked with several instructors who had received a "requires improvement" on their overall performance review evaluation. I was able to work with Employee Services and several of the schools on campus to reach a mutually satisfactory outcome for most of the complaints.

The recently completed cycle of collective bargaining contained a letter of understanding regarding "Performance Management and Teaching Excellence" in which SAIT confirms that Student Instructional Reports (SIRS) will not be the sole criteria used for the purpose of conducting performance evaluations. Further SAIT has agreed to work with SAFA to outline the performance management and evaluation process. SAIT also agrees to provide SAFA with an annual report, by July 31, of the total number of instructors who did not receive a satisfactory performance review for the previous academic year.

I know there is a lot more that could be discussed when it comes to PPR meetings, but I wanted to make you aware of your rights to dispute an overall rating of "requires improvement" on your annual performance review.

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

As you may know, Doug Spurgeon decided not to seek re-election and has stepped down from the position of President of SAFA.

I want to pause for a moment to reflect on Doug's seven years of service to the Association as its President. I've had the honour of working closely with Doug for the past three and a half years. During that time Doug has always placed the good of the Association ahead of himself. Even though Doug had a teaching load—full-time for the last two semesters—as well as his duties as SAFA President, he always found the time to meet with SAFA members, take their calls, read their many e-mails, and help wherever he could. For me personally, he has always been there if I had a question or needed advice.

Doug is a passionate defender of SAFA and advocate for all academic instructors here at SAIT, and because of that, SAFA and its members have greatly benefited. I hope that if you see Doug around campus, you'll take a moment to wish him well and thank him for all he's accomplished.

Library Report

By Alison Hart

Meeting the Standards!

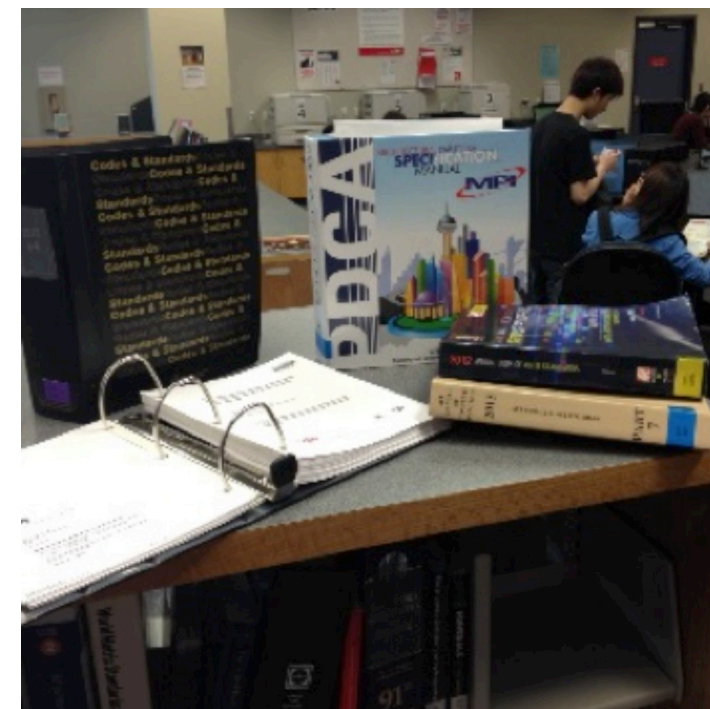
The Reg Erhardt Library is a very technical library. While books, e-books, and streaming videos are wonderful resources, many programs at SAIT rely on standards as essential building blocks to their courses.

We currently have one of the best standard collections in the city. This special collection is assessed and updated annually, and it will continue to evolve just as SAIT's programs and curriculum do. In the past two years, we have spent over \$70,000 improving this collection.

We now have 26 different sets of industrial standards. We have added a new set for the School of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) called **Information Technology Infrastructure Library (STD ITIL)**. We also recently acquired some new international standards.

The demand for online access to our Library resources continues to grow and more of our apprentice students will be doing their training remotely. We want to be able to provide them with access to these standards. In the Fall of 2014, we will be able to provide online access to the complete collection of CSA and ASTM standards as well as the 2010 National Building Code through a single platform! We will continue to find new ways to acquire standards that are only available in .pdf or other online formats.

The entire standard collection has been relabelled and colour coded by subject areas to make it easier to locate specific standards. We have added colourful signage and helpful guides to help our patrons find the resources they need. Our staff has been trained to use these standards to support our students and faculty.



This special collection is heavily used by our patrons, our Library, and business affiliates. We will continue to deliver the highest possible levels of service and collection development to our clientele. ➡

TRIVIA for Pondering over the Summer

Glass takes one million years to decompose, which means it never wears out and can be recycled an infinite amount of times!

Gold is the only metal that doesn't rust, even if it's buried in the ground for thousands of years.

Your tongue is the only muscle in your body that is attached at only one end.

If you stop getting thirsty, you need to drink more water. When a human body is dehydrated, its thirst mechanism shuts off.

Zero is the only number that cannot be represented by Roman numerals.

Kites were used in the American Civil War to deliver letters and newspapers.

The song, Auld Lang Syne, is sung at the stroke of midnight in almost every English-speaking country in the world to bring in the new year.

Drinking water after eating reduces the acid in your mouth by 61 percent.

Peanut oil is used for cooking in submarines because it doesn't smoke unless it's heated above 450°F.

The roar that we hear when we place a seashell next to our ear is not the ocean, but rather the sound of blood surging through the veins in the ear.

Nine out of every 10 living things live in the ocean.

The banana cannot reproduce itself. It can be propagated only by the hand of man.

Airports at higher altitudes require a longer airstrip due to lower air density.

The University of Alaska spans four time zones.

The tooth is the only part of the human body that cannot heal itself.

In ancient Greece, tossing an apple to a girl was a traditional proposal of marriage. Catching it meant she accepted.

Warner Communications paid \$28 million for the copyright to the song Happy Birthday.

Intelligent people have more zinc and copper in their hair.

Employee Services (Human Resources) or SAFA?

By Eugene Blanchard and Al Brown

Who do you go to when there is a problem: Employee Services (Human Resources) or SAIT Academic Faculty Association (SAFA)? That basic question leads to others such as the following:

- Have you ever wondered where SAFA fits into SAIT's big picture?
- What does the Employee Services Department do when there is a union involved?
- Who represents the instructors at SAIT in a disagreement with management?

First some background on SAFA:

- SAFA is an association governed by the Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act. We do not follow the Alberta Labour Act. We are excluded from the Alberta Labour laws. All of our rights are negotiated through our Collective Agreement with SAIT's Board of Governors. We are limited in what we can do and can't do by the Collective Agreement.
- While we don't have access to the Alberta Labour Relations Code, we do have all the functions of a union. In particular, we bargain collectively and regulate labour relations in the workplace as per the SAFA Constitution Sections 4.05, 4.10, and 4.11. These are what the Alberta Labour Relation Board would use to define whether an Association falls under the definition of a "trade union."
- SAFA, by law, represents all Academic Faculty at SAIT for the terms and conditions of their employment. This means that SAFA is the advocate for Academic Faculty at SAIT.

When a union or association such as SAFA is present, they are the advocates for employees. This replaces the duties of Employee Services. If no union or association is present, then Employee Services is the advocate.

If there is a problem or issue in the workplace between an Academic Faculty member and SAIT, it is SAFA who legally represents the member not Employee Services. If you have an issue with SAIT, your SAFA representative is the one who you should talk to.

So who does SAIT's Employee Services represent? They represent SAIT's management. For example, when you are first hired, you negotiate your starting wages and position on the salary grid based on your experience and education. You negotiate with the Employee Services representative who has the job of finding the best candidate.

In addition to hiring, retirement planning, and termination, Employee Services deals with the benefits that SAIT offers such as health, pension plans, life insurance, and four for five leave. When it comes down to who represents whom, it is as simple as looking at who is paying for the representation. SAFA representatives are paid by the member dues. SAIT Employee Services representatives are paid by the employer—SAIT. So, when push comes to shove, Employee Services represents the interests of the Employer and SAFA represents the interests of the Employee. SAFA provides the voice and advocacy for settling disputes, contract negotiations, and for making SAIT a better place to work for its members. ♦



Enjoy the break - See everyone in the fall!