SAFAGRAM

President's Message

By James McWilliams

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts." This short quote from Sir Winston Churchill illuminates for me the underlying role that SAIT instructors undertake annually within their Departments and Schools. For Faculty, the reality of another academic year begins to pick up momentum, and once again September slowly fades into the abyss. Faculty will continue to rekindle their courage to enter into their classrooms and ensure their audiences that failures are not always negatives, and successes are dependent upon commitment—and so the fall semester begins.

The commencement of the school year has brought some change to SAFA. New representatives on the Faculty Council, the Executive Council, and the Board of Governors are a welcome addition. I recently exchanged hats: semi-retiring my Chef's chapeau for the mantra of President of the Academic Faculty Association. I want to take this opportunity to thank the past members of Faculty and Executive Councils and the Board of Governors. Thank you to the Past President Doug Spurgeon for his dedicated service over the past seven years.

As we wait for the unveiling of the new Strategic Plan and the direction that SAIT will endeavor to move the Institution forward with, we are optimistic that Faculty, as much as learner engagement, will be a prominent priority. It is encouraging to hear SAIT's enrollment numbers have exceeded their target, and projections for 2016 FLEs are ahead of schedule. It is also uplifting to hear that there have been 13 new program expansions and the registration of 600 more Apprentices within the institution. This is a reassuring factor when it comes to Faculty stability and possible full-time employment opportunities for contract and Fee for Service Instructors. Combined with the news that SAIT received substantial Government funding that ranked them about second highest in the Province and coupled with the infusion of a one-time $8 million funding incentive this puts SAIT in a comfortable financial position.

In this Issue

Labour Relations Officer (LRO) Report

By Al Brown, LRO

Welcome Back Everyone!

Since my last article, in addition to the usual inquiries regarding benefits and the Collective Agreement, I've been busy with a couple of investigations, a grievance presentation, two grievance arbitrations, and have reached a positive settlement of grievance arbitration through informal resolution meetings.

In a recent SAFAGRAM article, I referred to the importance of timelines in relation to the filing of grievances. The SAFA Collective Agreement, 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. If it isn't done within that time, there is a risk that a grievance may be denied simply because it is "out of time."

Because of the significance of maintaining timelines, the definition of a "day" 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 calendar days. If it is divisible by 5, then it is work days. In our case, we can look to Section 1 (Definitions) in our CBA to find that a *"day" means work day unless otherwise specified; and "work day" means any day on which an academic staff member is normally expected to be at his place of employment. Saturday and Sunday are not normally days of work.*

At the time of writing that article, we had a dispute as to whether a vacation day would count or not. The Association's position was 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 place of employment." This dispute has now been concluded through arbitration.* The Arbitration Panel, in a split decision—2 to 1—have decided that vacation days do count toward the timelines. Typically, this has little impact on most grievance situations; however, in the case of Performance Reviews (that are typically done in late May or even later into June), we need to be mindful of the potential for having a grievance denied based on being "out of time" in the event that vacation days intercede.

Remember that the grievance "time clock" begins counting *"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 always, if you have any questions, please stop by the SAFA Office N201 in the Burns Building, contact me directly at Ext. 4067, or e-mail me at al.brown@sait.ca. 🎃

The overall climate throughout the Institution appears to have shifted from its historical air of ambiguity to a more hopeful and optimistic collegial environment. I look forward to the coming year and the continued open relationships with upper management and Employee Services. It will be my goal over the next academic year to visit and introduce myself to all the Departments and Schools at SAIT's main campus as well as at our satellite campuses. The Academic Association is committed to fair representation for its members under the provisions of the Collective Agreement. Stop by to say hello. I look forward to meeting all of you. 🎃

Library Report

By Alison Hart

We Have a Course Text Collection

The Library has a new Course Text Collection (CTC). We want to have the required textbooks for your classes available in the Library! If there is a course textbook that you know will be in high demand, please contact the Library.

The CTC is a growing collection that has been established to provide students with equitable access to materials that are in high demand and are considered primary resources related to course curriculums. Materials in this collection include textbooks, required and supplemental readings, articles, and videos spanning across all SAIT schools and currently taught courses. These resources are now available for short-term loan periods and conveniently located at the Library Information Desk.

The Reserve collection is a separate collection that is filed with the CTC. Instructor, department, and Library-owned items can still be placed into the Reserve collection. The materials in this collection have short-term loan periods that are established by instructors.

SAIT Faculty can donate copies of required textbooks to the Library or recommend new titles that can be purchased for these collections. The Library also wants suggestions for new e-book titles. E-books are desirable for both faculty and students because they are accessible remotely by multiple users and can be easily embedded into D2L. Our long-term sustainable plan is to provide, create, and maintain a permanently accessible e-book collection which can be embedded into SAIT's distance and blended learning environments.

All of these collections will be expanding according to student need. So far, we have seen a **207 percent** increase in CTC/Reserve usage!

Feedback and input about these collections from Faculty would be very helpful as it will allow us to continue to develop special collections that are heavily used by students and instructors alike. If you have any questions, please get in touch with your Library Liaison contact, the staff at the Information Desk, telephone us at (403) 284-8616, or e-mail us at library@sait.ca. 🎃

Remembrance Day—Cassino War Cemetery

By Eugene Blanchard

This past summer, we received a notice from Air Miles that informed us that our Air Miles reward miles were going to start expiring. We phoned to ask where we could go for 16,000 Air Miles. We found that we could go to New York City or Italy. Well that was a no brainer, so off we went to tour Italy on a tour bus adventure.

We had the opportunity to visit Rome, Vatican City, Assisi, Venice, Florence, Pisa, Tuscany, Pompeii, Lake Como, and more. All are wonderful places showcasing the birthplace of modern civilization, but the one place that brought the most emotion to me was the visit to the Cassino War Cemetery honouring the Commonwealth soldiers who fought to free Italy during World War II.

The Cassino War Cemetery is divided into two sections with the West section dedicated to the soldiers of Australia, New Zealand, and England. The East section is dedicated to the Canadian soldiers.

As I walked along the rows, I was struck by the young ages of the soldiers: 17 years, 22 years, 19 years—just boys—barely men who died fighting for our freedom. It really hit me when I realized that they were the same age as the students in my classes at SAIT. These young men gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, our country, and for the liberation of Italy and Europe.

This is what Remembrance Day is for—remembering those young men who gave their lives so that we can live the life we have today. They forfeited the most important things that we take for granted. They never had the chance to fall in love, get married, raise a family, build a career, or grow old.

At the end of the movie, "Saving Private Ryan," an older retired James Ryan stands at the grave of Captain Miller and says, "I've tried to live my life the best I could. I hope that was enough. I hope that at least in your eyes, I've earned what all of you have done for me." That is how we should honour those young soldiers: to live our lives the best that we can and to remember their sacrifice.

Cassino War Cemetery

Faculty Development Services (FDS) Report

By Jen Marran, Faculty Development Facilitator

Faculty Development Services (FDS) has had a busy start to the fall semester. A successful Teaching Excellence Foundations (TEF) in August welcomed nearly 100 new instructors to SAIT. It was followed up with a September Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) and an October offering of Distance Education Foundations (DEF). Upcoming workshops are available to all instructors at SAIT, and more information can be found at citd2.sait. ca. To register, e-mail faculty.development@sait.ca.

Instructional Skills Workshop: Nov. 22 - 29

Distance Education Foundations: Nov. 24 – Dec. 15 (online)

FDS also welcomes Brad Ackroyd as Academic Chair. The FDS team is here to support faculty in any way possible. You can contact us by e-mailing faculty.development@sait.ca.

SAIT/SAFA Workload Committee Report

By Donna Campbell

The SAIT/SAFA Workload Committee met in May and June, took a break for July and August, and continued its meetings in September. The Committee will be meeting more often during September and October to ensure its recommendations are ready for the SAFA and SAIT Executives before the end of the year. The Committee completed its review of the scheduling concerns raised in the SAFA survey of 2013; work is continuing on 36.10 (Development and Preparation) as well as checking that all points discussed over the course of the past 11 months have been dealt with.

The SAFA Committee members are Richard Thompson (Construction), Earl Simpson (M & A), Roger Duckworth (Business), and Donna Campbell (ICT).

Cloud Computing – Exciting Times!

By Eugene Blanchard

Exciting times are ahead for the Information Technology world as cloud computing arrives. Cloud computing is where shared resources are provided to computers and other devices as a utility over the network or the Internet. A good example of one type of cloud computing is Desire 2 Learn. It is a service that is hosted in Ontario and provided to SAIT and our students through the Internet.

The services provided could be Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), Software as a Service (SaaS), or Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS). This article discusses how and why we incorporated Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) into the CMPN-313 Introduction to Voice over IP course for the IT Network Systems and IT Telecom Systems program for the School of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Voice over IP (VoIP) is replacing the traditional legacy phone system which we grew up with. Subscribing to Shaw's telephone service or using Skype are examples of VoIP. Two main factors are driving the change: cost savings and extensibility. Dollars are saved because we can use the Internet to make free long distance calls. VoIP equipment is run on existing servers and uses the existing network. Legacy telephony equipment was hardware-based and took a lot of time and money to modify or add new features. VoIP equipment is software-based and can be easily and quickly modified to add or create new features. For these reasons, VoIP is extremely extensible.

In the CMPN-313 lab, we have a world class lab dedicated to VoIP. Warning! Technical info following: We had 8 HP servers running 2 Quad core Xenon processors with RAID 1 arrays. Each server had 6 bootable partitions where each partition was assigned to a CMPN-313 cohort. This would provide facilities for up to 48 groups of students. It was loud, took a lot of power to run, got hot, and took two weeks to reconfigure each year.

The crunch came during the Fall semester last year when a software upgrade came in the middle of the semester, and the boot partition became corrupted! Three of the eight servers were down before the problem was identified. That meant 24 student groups had lost their semester's work and were not able to continue!

Fortunately, after two days of collaboration among instructors, we managed to restore the boot partition and bring the three servers back to life without loss of data. This adventure pointed out a significant weakness in our lab infrastructure: the potential loss of student data and the time it took to recover.

Cloud computing using the Infrastructure as a Service model provides a solution that the lab needed. We built a simulated Internet Service Provider (ISP) hosting a virtual Proxmox server in the cloud. The virtual server would host the students' servers, and they would connect to the ISP using network tunnels. Periodic backups of the students' configurations are sent to a Network Attached Storage (NAS). This allowed a real-world environment to be created so that the student s could connect their "company" networks to the simulated cloud service.

VoIP-Cloud (See diagram below)

The cloud allows us to host DNS, ftp, DHCP, tftp, web server, e-mail server, NAS, and the students' IP phone system in it. It allows us to bring up a server in minutes compared to days and to backup students' work reliably. The advantages to using the Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) cloud method turned days of work into minutes. We retired the two racks of servers and replaced it with one virtual server and a backup server. Our power and air conditioning requirements were significantly reduced and the added bonus was that the noise level dropped considerably with the absence of the 8 legacy servers.

This example was for a highly technical application. However, I can see how cloud computing can be a practical solution for other server-based computing. 🎃

By Eugene Blanchard June 2014
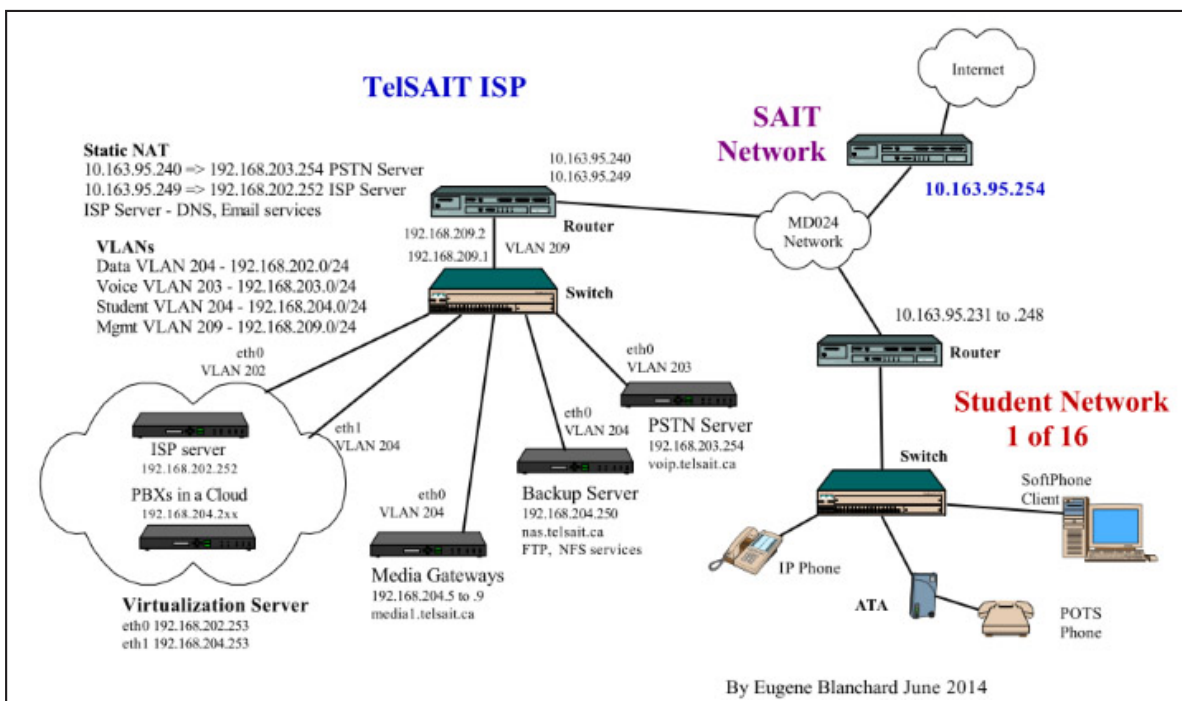
Transfer Options (TO)

By Dr. Karen McDaniel, Articulation Coordinator
Academic Development

"Getting the word out about Transfer Options" is the theme for the 2014-2015 school year! We know that SAIT credentials are very valuable and that instructors are the key to letting students know about their degree options after they graduate. To that end, we are pleased to announce the sixth annual Transfer Options Fair on November 13 in the Stan Grad Centre Atrium from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Have a diploma? Now choose a degree…

SAIT TRANSFER OPTIONS FAIR

9 am - 3 pm, Thurs., Nov. 13, 2014
Stan Grad Centre Atrium

Meet with recruiters to learn about your transfer options!

Over 49 universities, colleges, and organizations from the USA, Canada, Australia, Scotland, England, Ireland, Wales, Sweden, 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 with opportunities to sign up for sessions.

Presently, we are sending out real-time announcements of events and new agreements on Facebook and the 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 at 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! 🎃

Upcoming Events

SAFA Social

Thursday, November 13, 2014

4 p.m. – 6 p.m.

The Odyssey

Annual Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

4:00 p.m – 7:30 p.m.

4Nines

See the SAFA website at http://www.safacalgary.com/ for information about SAFA membership, Collective Agreement, Committee Members, General Information, FAQs, SAFA Events, and an informative letter from your new president …and much more.

Thinking out loud

- The secret of happiness lies, not in doing what you like but in liking what you do.
- When teachers and other school authorities have fixed ideas about poor children's inability to succeed, the children will respond by failing.
- Even perfect people buy pencils with erasers.
- The fellow who thinks he knows it all has missed the most important part of his education.
- There was a time when people who wore blue jeans, worked.
- Some folks are like wheelbarrows—they only start rolling when they're pushed.
- Worry takes more time than work and doesn't pay as well.
- Managing your time is like going on a diet. Talking about it gets you nowhere; you must start doing something and keep doing it!
- A practical politician is one who finds out which way the crowd is moving, then elbows his way to the front and yells like blazes.
- He thought it wouldn't—it did—he is!
- Use your head; your brains are in it.