Good Morning Faculty Colleagues:

I know that there has been inconsistent messaging coming from Management in various Schools across campus regarding vacation usage. I encourage you to reach out to me (SAFA) if you have questions. If I don’t have the answer, I’ll be able to either get the answer for you or point you in the right direction.

 I want to share the answers of the questions I’ve received over the past week:

Q.: When am I to start my vacation? What date?

A: The LoU states: *“Employees will be provided with two (2) weeks written notice of the commencement of their Vacation Leave.”*

Q: When does the “two weeks written notice” commence?

A: The two weeks notice commences on the day that you received written notice from your

School – Dean or AC (designee).

Q: My AC has said I have to start my vacation next week. Is that two weeks notice?

A: No. The LoU was signed April 27 – this past Monday. Therefore, the earliest you could be required to commence vacation would be two weeks from that date. But, again, the two weeks notice commences on the day that you received written notice from your School – Dean or AC (designee).

Q: My vacation balance seems to be wrong. How do I get that sorted out?

A: If there appears to be a discrepancy in your vacation balance, please send an e-mail to employee.questions@sait.ca This will generate someone contacting you to walk you through your vacation leave balance. It may be that SAIT will to verify by going back into Banner 8.

Q: Will SAIT “claw back” any vacation if I retired or resigned?

A: No. The LoU states: *“For the purposes of this LOU, should an employee resign or retire from SAIT or have their position abolished, any negative balance shall not be deducted from any final payroll payment nor will it be required to be reimbursed.”*

Q: Do I include my 2 “personal days”?

 A: No. The 2 “personal days” are special leave – not vacation days. The same goes for Christmas Leave, the Christmas Float Day and Stat days. They are not vacation days.

Q: I see the FAQ’s on SAITnow talks about taking my vacation days in half day increments?

A: SAFA has consistently said we do not endorse taking your vacation days in half day increments. You do not have to do this. Whatever plan you agree to with your AC has to be by mutual agreement.

Q: I’m on a temporary salary contract position. Does this LoU apply to me?

A: Yes – but because you wouldn’t have any carried over vacation days from previous years, you would only have to use your vacation that has been accrued during this contract period.

Q: I’m on a temporary salary contract position. Will I get two weeks notice to commence using my vacation?

A: Yes. SAIT is going to request that you use your accrued vacation days during the term of your contract.

Q: I’m still not clear on why SAIT is requiring me to use up my vacation now?

 A: Please see my explanation below.

Q: I’ve got more vacation days available than I can fit in between now and August 15 – what do I do?

A: The LoU states: *“…. If a balance remains after August 15, 2020, it shall be taken in accordance to an agreed upon plan between the employee and their leader and, where possible, shall consist of a block of consecutive work days."* For a more detailed explanation, please see below.

In Roy Daykin’s email, he outlines why SAIT wants to reduce the vacation liability:

*...” for fiscal 2020/21, the general expenditure target has been set at approximately $25 million below the planned expenditure budget for 2019/20. If SAIT does not meet the general expenditure target, as per the IMA, approximately $10 million is at risk for the institution and funding will be reduced.*

*At the end of fiscal 2019/20, SAIT had a vacation liability of $17 million — it has been growing consistently over the last five years. When an employee does not take all of their annual vacation entitlement, the expense of their employment increases during the year when it is not taken contributing to that vacation liability. Conversely, when they take more than their annual vacation entitlement, the annual cost of their employment decreases and there is a reduction in the vacation liability. SAIT’s previous policy of earning vacation in a year for the upcoming year is no longer in place. Vacation is allotted annually and is to be used within that same year.”*

During the negotiations that resulted in this Letter of Understanding, SAIT indicated they are going to move their fiscal year into alignment with that of the GoA – April 1 to March 31. Additionally, SAIT wants to change the way vacation is allotted to Faculty. Currently, you earn vacation this year to be used next year. SAIT wants to change that to having a full 43 vacation day entitlement deposited in your “vacation bank” at the start of the “new” Fiscal year - April 1 to March 31. Further, in order to reduce the “vacation liability” that Roy mentioned, SAIT wants Faculty to use all of their accrued (carried over) vacation from previous academic years, vacation accrued this academic year and vacation that would be accrued to March 31, 2021. This will result in some Faculty having more vacation days available to them than can be used prior to August 15, 2020.

That’s why Point #4 states:

*"Subject to operational requirements as determined by SAIT, employees shall be scheduled to take their banked accrued Annual Leave (calculated to June 30, 2020) and future earned vacation entitlements (calculated to June 30, 2021), during the period of May 1, 2020 to August 15, 2020**. If a balance remains after August 15, 2020, it shall be taken in accordance to an agreed upon plan between the employee and their leader and, where possible, shall consist of a block of consecutive work days."*

The reason it references “*and future earned vacation entitlements (calculated to June 30, 2021)”* instead of to March 31, 2021 is because it made sense to keep this aligned with the current academic year until we address it in bargaining. Because of the complexity involved in doing these changes – the academic year and vacation entitlement has tendrils throughout the Collective Agreement – we’ve advised SAIT that these changes must come to the bargaining table. So, assuming we move to the new vacation model that SAIT is proposing, you would have a full 43 vacation deposited in your “vacation Bank” on April 1, 2021.

I hope this helps clarify things a bit – but feel free to email if you have any questions. Also, feel free to relay this info to any colleagues who have questions.

In Solidarity and Service to Members,

Blair Howes, SAFA President