



President’s Message



By Blair Howes

Hello Faculty,

I am writing the spring message in the hope that everyone is well and that negative impacts of COVID have left everyone guarded but able to see some light at the end of the tunnel as this terrible virus becomes an

endemic rather than a pandemic.

I cannot stress enough that along this entire bumpy road that has been two long years now, how you the Faculty have stepped up to ensure your students’ success throughout these troubling times.

You may not hear a thank you from your Academic Chair or Dean, but this President wants to thank each member for going above and beyond during these times, without you there would be no student success.

I still can’t seem to find the off button—I find myself sitting in front of the computer from 6:00 a.m. to about 7:00 p.m. daily. Luckily as the campus reopens and as SAFA attempts to return to this new normal (we should be back to full SAFA on campus days in April) it will mean the off button will be hit as I walk to my vehicle to head home from campus. I imagine most of you find yourselves in the same boat, but to that point we are in this together.

continued on page 2

In This Issue:

President’s Message	Page 1
LRO Report	Page 3
Library Report	Page 4
Cam’s Corner	Page 6
Cartoon	Page 6

Editorial Board

- Pat Squibb
- Wendy Strashok
- Jeffrey Logan — Cartoonist

Layout

Luda Paul

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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/>

Conversations with your colleagues are very important these days. This is not only to help your well being but also to ensure a two-year absence of direct management from academic chairs will tend to make them think a collective agreement is a set of guidelines instead of a rule book. I assure you it's the latter.

Although some “shop talk is required,” I would encourage other conversations of mutual interest other than work to help everyone's return to well being. Please be respectful and mindful of everyone's right to personal safety on campus.

In my previous SAFAGRAM article I stated, “I remain to you the Faculty members as the guardian and enforcer of our Collective Agreement but caution that we are in a unique storm and as the wind blows, the tree must bend a bit or it will break.” This has never been a truer statement as we see things unfold on a Provincial level in post-secondary: the 11-day strike at Concordia University, the 40-day strike at the Faculty of the Lethbridge University, the mediated settlements with Mount Royal University and the University of Alberta, and, of course, a huge settlement from the court system in Manitoba for the Provincial Government's interference in collective bargaining (secret mandate letters) to the tune of \$19 million settlement for the U of M Faculty Association. If you throw the recent 2-day shutdown at CP Rail into the mix, there is what amounts to significant labour actions throughout several labour sectors in the Province. Add to that the peace unrest in Ukraine and it will amount to several yet undiscovered issues for the latter half of 2022. I want to expand a bit on the previous statement. As you the members know we must negotiate a Collective Agreement that fairly represents the interests of you the members, and to that end SAFA and SAIT have agreed to and are about to engage in informal mediation in April. This is by no means a warning flag to prepare for a strike or lock out by the employer—we are indeed a long way from those outcomes.

This merely puts the two teams on a path to move forward. Please continue to watch for Monday morning updates and bargaining updates.

On a happier note, the ACIFA Conference in May this year is live and in person at the Jasper Park Lodge, and I look forward to seeing as many SAIT Faculty as possible to attend this year's event. Congratulations to our very own Heather Setka, the 2021/2022 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award winner, for her **“We're Gonna Need Backup Here”** paper.

On that note, Ken Heather the ACIFA President has announced his retirement so as one chapter closes another one opens; I have thrown my hat in the ring and am running for the presidency of the Provincial Association.

Sadly, something important to me slipped under the radar last year due to the stressors of the pandemic, but I want to remind everyone again this year that April 1, 2022, is also The National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured while on the job.

I am very proud of you the Faculty members for stepping up to the challenges that have been thrust upon us in the pandemic situation and to your dedication to the students we serve.

Please see Al Brown's article on bargaining and that process. Watch for Town Hall meetings and e-mail communications from both of us on these very important issues.

Again, my message is short as my days are long, but I remain dedicated to you the Faculty and remind everyone that I continue to meet with the other Faculty Association Presidents throughout ACIFA to ensure we have current and up-to-date information as to what is happening at the other institutions.

As well, we are meeting with the Government of Alberta officials in our sector.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy spring work term as the semester winds down.

On behalf of the SAFA executive team and me, be well and stay safe.

Always, in service of membership.

Labour Relations Officer Report



By Al Brown (LRO)

SAIT Must Invest in Faculty Working Conditions and Student Learning Conditions

By Al Brown

Why does a student apply to a college? What factors do they consider? Cost of living? Tuition fees? Prestige of the institution? Above all else, the majority of students and learners pursue one program credential over another for one reason—the pursuit of a brighter future. They have faith in the opportunities that the knowledge and credentials will bring them. What if we told prospective students that they would be paying significantly more tuition than their predecessors but without equivalent improvements in the quality of education offered?

That is exactly what is happening in many post-secondary institutions, especially SAIT. Since 2020, SAIT has increased student tuition each year.¹ We know that Faculty working conditions are our students' learning conditions. Yet, student's investment via increased tuition is not reflected in student learning conditions or instructor salaries. The instructor-to-student ratio continues to trend upward with more students in a course. When full time/permanent instructors retire or leave, they are replaced with part-time instructors or other precarious forms of employment. These instructors often work a heavy course load with few benefits and supports. Moreover, as these precarious contracts have limited scope, instructors are restricted from professional development, student interactions outside the classroom, and administrative work that would benefit students and the institution. All of these trends in faculty working conditions decrease the student's learning experience through no fault of their instructors. SAIT can choose to reverse these trends by hiring permanent instructors who are able to do the relationship-building, mentoring, and instructional skill development that will benefit all parties (instructors, students, and the institution).

Where is the money from tuition going you might be thinking. To start with, the average SAIT executive is paid about \$270,000 annually in salary and cash benefits²—an amount nearly 4 times the average instructor's salary. As well, SAIT consistently reports a yearly budget surplus. Last year, they announced the surplus had reached \$300 million.³ This surplus shows that while operating expenses may increase and government grants may decline under the UCP government, these changes have not had an overall net negative impact on SAIT's Budget. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that SAIT will remain in good financial health in the near future and there is no financial argument for SAIT not to provide a cost-of-living adjustment for its employees. SAIT can choose to invest in the future by investing in their Faculty.

In 2020, SAIT adopted a strategic 5-year plan, *New World. New Thinking.* with goals such as Responsive and relevant programming,⁴ Sustainability,⁵ and Well-being Mental Health and Safety⁶—all great goals on paper, but what does this mean in practical supports for Faculty? To create a responsive and relevant learning environment would mean that SAIT was willing to increase investments in instructors' professional development. **Sustainability** would imply that SAIT would invest in more permanent appointments, and all instructor contracts would be less precarious. **Mental Health and Safety** would require a work environment that includes benefits and a good work-life balance instead of overworking its staff. Unfortunately, SAFA has not seen these practical supports being put forward in SAIT's bargaining proposals.

SAIT has all the building blocks to truly support its instructors and students in creating and sustaining a mutually beneficial learning environment. SAFA is calling on the SAIT administration to invest in the future through improving our members' working conditions and students' learning conditions.

In solidarity,
Al Brown

¹Stroobant, R. (2021). "SAIT: 7 percent tuition raise for 2021/2022 school year," [RTBN](#).

²SAIT. (2021). [Annual Report 2020/2021](#), page 102.

³SAIT. (2021). [Annual Report 2020/2021](#), page 73.

⁴SAIT. (2021). [Annual Report 2020/2021](#), page 19.

⁵SAIT. (2021). [Annual Report 2020/2021](#), page 25.

⁶SAIT. (2021). [Annual Report 2020/2021](#), page 14.

The Library Report

Open Educational Resources at SAIT

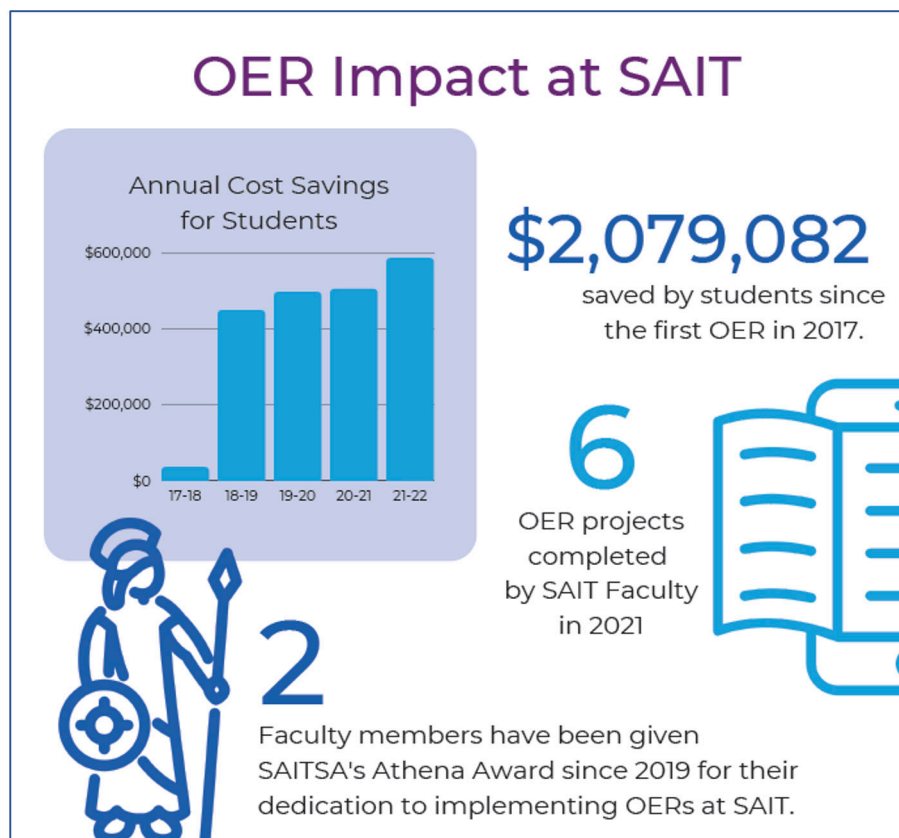


It seems fitting to provide an update on OER at SAIT as we come to the close of the International Open Education Week. This annual event sees institutions from across the globe celebrate the work that is being done with these open-licensed, freely accessible learning materials. I've been able to watch SAIT instructors embrace OER creation and use in classes and boy, it is impressive!

Why OER at SAIT?

Did you know that “90 percent of our student base have concerns about textbook costs” according to a 2021 Saita report? That's probably not surprising to you, as we've all experienced the impacts of increased food, housing, and transportation costs. One benefit of OER is that the materials are free online or can be printed for a very low cost.

OER is more than just free, it's also flexible, accessible, and customizable. The content, with an open licence, can be modified by the Instructor to fit the SAIT curriculum and resonate with SAIT students. The materials are also easier to align with accessibility standards than a print textbook.



A shout-out to Jaci Lyndon (Athena Award Winner '20) and Jennifer Dunn (Athena Award Winner '21) for all their hard work!

Want to Know More about OER?

Contact me if you'd like to learn about open educational resources, open licensing, and [how to get started with an OER project](#). As well, all of the librarians provide support with locating and evaluating OER in their [liaison areas](#). You can also visit the library's guide ([libguides.sait.ca/OER](#)) for videos, handouts, and links to OER collections.

Jessica Norman, MLS
OER Librarian
Reg Erhardt Library



Proofreading is a dying art, wouldn't you say?

Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says

No crap, really? Ya think?

Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers

Now that's taking things a bit far!

Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over

What a guy!

Miners Refuse to Work after Death

No-good-for-nothing' lazy so-and-so's!

Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant

See if that works any better than a fair trial!

War Dims Hope for Peace

I can see where it might have that effect!

If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile

Ya think?!

Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures

Who would have thought!

Man Struck By Lightning: Faces Battery Charge

He probably IS the battery charge!

Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead

Did I read that right?

Cam's Corner

Cameron Gall

The Highlander Wine and Spirits Liquor Store has always been a strong supporter of SAIT and our teaching staff. They offer SAFA members a discount based on a cost-plus percentage. Simply show your ID when purchasing any of their fine products.

If you know of other companies who might like to offer discounts to SAFA members, please have them contact me at cameron.gall@sait.ca.

After two years of teaching online from her kitchen table, Narita thought it was important to make the in-person experience memorable for her students... while showing off some new skills she acquired in the lockdown!

