



President's Message

By Blair Howes



Hello Faculty,

Well I guess we can say winter has officially arrived and with that, all the associated activities: back breaking wet snow shovelling, walking like a penguin on icy sidewalks, (please report incidents around campus as they occur), the mad rush to get winter tires installed before the next big snow

storm, traffic delays, and general winter highway travelling conditions to list a few of many items the winter season brings. All and all it comes without fail every year. 😞

First and foremost, I would like to thank those who attended the First SAFA rally about the Government of Alberta's (GOA) unprecedented use of the "notwithstanding legislation."

There were many options the GOA could have used but they chose to take the path of least resistance rather than working through very complex issues in public education. We in the post-secondary world see in real time those very issues with students once they get to our institutions.

Craig and Jessica, thank you for your commitment to both SAFA and me over the past year.

continued on page 2

In This Issue:

President's MessagePage 1

LRO ReportPage 3

Building Bolder: Meet Marcel Longpre,
InstructorPage 4

CartoonPage 5

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SAFAGRAM is published by the SAIT Academic Faculty Association (SAFA) three times a year usually closer to the end of the months of Fall, Winter, and Spring.

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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/>

Now on with the rest of the updates:

July and August were somewhat quieter than in years past but not without a few challenges.

The Presidents Council of ACIFA is not actively meeting monthly anymore (the choice of the new and current ACIFA president) as bargaining has all but wrapped up. There are still three institutions without a Collective Agreement: Red Deer, Medicine Hat, and NAIT. Hopefully the new year will see that change.

There is yet another new Advanced Education Minister of the Province. That portfolio still remains unfocused on setting a meeting with the Association Presidents of the poly-tech/colleges sector. Hopefully there will be some signs of improved relations in the new year.

As we round the corner of 2025 and brace for 2026, I want to remind everyone of the need for all SAFA members to send an alternate e-mail address to Kathie in the SAFA office in case of a communication breakdown between SAFA and SAIT. Also, visit the SAFA website often in the new year for regular updates.

I want to bring this to the membership's attention again as the winter schedules are well in the works by now, and we have had a change in our Collective Agreement language around Section 36 "workloads." We would like to advise all members that if your schedule doesn't look right (with the addition of weekend and evening work) and there was no mutual agreement form presented, please bring it to SAFA's attention. We are unable to fix things that we don't know about.

As there has been no funding increase from the GOA, this will be of great importance in regard to SAIT's need to make up the funding lost from the international student pool of funding imposed by the federal government.

As a reminder from last December's message see below:

*That brings me to a very important update for all Faculty members concerning mutual agreement. As we all know, SAIT, in the last academic year and with a large influx of foreign students has scheduled classes for Faculty outside of the four corners of our Collective Agreement **without obtaining the proper mutual agreement** with those affected members. That was a serious breach of the Agreement. Please ensure your Academic Chair is not proposing a blanket mutual agreement to cover off the entire academic year but is in fact obtaining your agreement for each and every exception of the Collective Agreement. Please reach out to the SAFA office to set up a meeting to discuss if you think this is happening. (I have no issues with being a bull dog to your Chair and will quickly correct these issues.)*

Again ... I will list the descriptors (supplied by Employee Services) of the new form below and add my comment in bold. Please note that the part on the form that provides a fence of protection for you the **Faculty members (comments section)** has completely disappeared from the form.

The descriptors **from SAIT Management on the mutual agreement form and remain unchanged** are:

- a. **Instructor conflict** – SAIT has courses where there is only one instructor who can teach the class—there may be a time when this causes a course to be scheduled outside of Section 36.
- b. **Resource constraint** – In some courses the room is the constraint—it could be a specialized lab etc.
- c. **Student scheduling conflict** – This is mostly in LAS, the core courses are sometimes difficult to schedule.
- d. **Program requirement** – **This should be a discussion at JAC—I am working with the associate deans to communicate what program requirements are in advance of using this as a reason. Still No reasonable explanation has been made to SAFA on what program requirements are.**
- e. **Scheduled overload.**
- f. **Instructor request** – This is to capture when the request has come from the instructor themselves.

My message again this year still rings true, and I cannot stress enough that maintaining your conversation and social contact with your colleagues is very important these days and through the holiday season. Although some "shop talk" is required, I would also encourage other conversations of mutual interest other than work.

I remain dedicated to Faculty and remind everyone that I continue to meet with the other Faculty Association Presidents throughout ACIFA and CAFA (universities in Alberta) and CAUT on the national front to ensure we have current and up-to-date information as to what is happening at the other institutions not only in Alberta but also across Canada.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a very safe work from home and work from campus experience in 2026 and,

WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES THE VERY BEST FOR THE UPCOMING HOLIDAY SEASON

On behalf of the SAFA Executive Team, be well and stay safe.

Always, in service of membership.

Blair

Labour Relations Officer Report

By Craig Coolahan (LRO)



With the Fall Semester just about in the rearview mirror and Christmas right in front of us, it's a perfect time to reflect on some of the events that took place this Fall Semester.

There are still a few ACIFA institutions at the bargaining table. They will likely continue bargaining into the new year. I will be meeting with the ACIFA Negotiation Action Committee in person in late January to get a complete update and begin strategizing for the next round of bargaining that will be upon us before you know it.

The two new committees (Education Allowance and CCH Table Headings) that emerged from SAFA's last round of bargaining have been active, and we all look forward to reading the reports that are due in June 2026.

As SAIT informed all SAFA members earlier in the year, several casual and temporary salaried members did not have their contracts renewed. This is the direct result of low enrollment, particularly international students. This year there were also a couple of programs abolished, and the affected SAFA members chose retirement as their option.

SAFA has been working hard to get the Executive and the membership at large to be more engaged with SAFA and its business. A meeting was held in September with several Executive members in attendance. This meeting included a deep dive into important articles in the Collective Agreement, as well as an understanding of the importance of unions in post-secondary education and society as a whole.

In reaction to the Provincial Government's use of the notwithstanding clause to push through four pieces of legislation, including ordering K-12 teachers back to work and forcing an agreement on them. SAFA held its first ever rally in protest of the use of the notwithstanding clause. Around 70 SAFA members and Faculty from other institutions, as well as students, marched along 16th Avenue carrying signs, waving flags, and making noise. We were greeted with many honks of support from passersby.

We are hoping to take this momentum into the new year and continue building strong support within the Association.

With this said, we are all in need of a nice break to spend time with family and loved ones.

I want to wish everyone a safe and Happy Holiday Season.

Building Bolder: Meet Marcel Longpre, Instructor

Marcel started teaching at SAIT in 1975 — 50 years ago.

➔ What was a major turning point in your life that got you here?

It was 1975. At that time, I was employed by the Saskatchewan Technical Institute, now called Saskatchewan Polytechnic. I was with two friends, driving through to go to Banff and Lake Louise during the July long weekend.

When we got to the intersection of 10 Street and 16 Avenue NW, I noticed SAIT. Before I went to Saskatchewan Technical Institute, I was a high school teacher, and I had promoted SAIT to many of my students back then. I hadn't been to SAIT at the time, but I knew of it.

I said to my friend who was driving, "Hey, hang a left here. I want to go look at the Institute."

I walked onto campus and ran into someone I'd known from the University of Saskatchewan by the name of Reg Erhardt.

Editor's note: Yes, that Reg Erhardt.

He asked what I was up to, and I said I was looking to see if SAIT needed any instructors. He said, "follow me," then dropped me off with the Director of Human Resources.

I asked if he was looking for an instructor in math or physics, and he said, "How did you know?"

One of their instructors had taken some leave to teach abroad. He sent me to the head of the then Math Physics Department, and I had an hour-long interview with him.

I arrived on campus at 11 a.m. By 1:30 p.m., I was under contract with SAIT. My friends and I shortened our trip, and three weeks later, I moved to Calgary and haven't left since.

💡 **Who is someone you'd like to learn from?**

Michelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci — my favourite geniuses. They both had a profound awareness of the Golden Ratio and the Divine Proportion.

*Editor's note: The Golden Ratio-slash-Divine Proportion is a mathematical ratio. Its proportions, when applied to many things, are thought to be beautiful and balanced, such as in nature (like the spiral patterns of shells), art (like Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam*), architecture and more.*

🌟 **What are you most proud of?**

I take shifts as a starter on two different golf courses now, and I'm very happy when someone shows up on the first tee and says, "Hey, I know you. You taught me Calculus in 1982."

I'm proud when I talk with past students and find out they're successful now in their lives and careers.

🌟 **What is something that never fails to get you excited?**

Visits from my family when they come to Calgary. I have four brothers and four sisters, and they're scattered all over the country.

😊 What is the most beautiful thing you've ever seen?

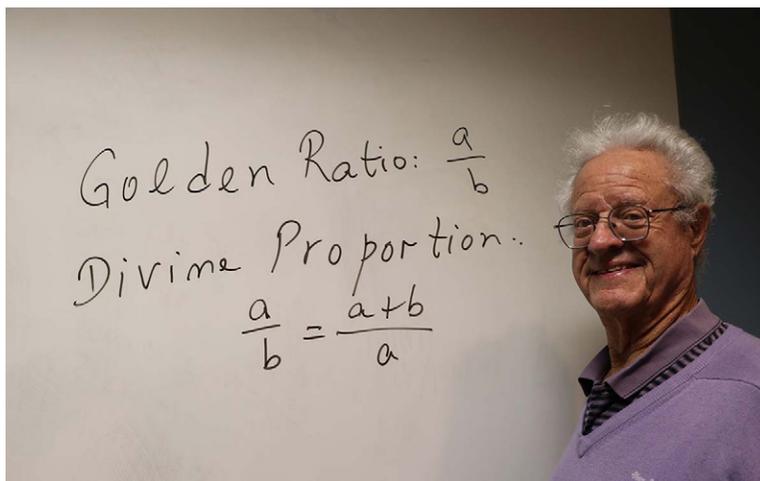
The Grand Canyon in Arizona. It is a spectacular and amazing sight. I visited several times on my way to Phoenix for the winter months in the 1990s.

🚀 **How do you live the SAIT brand?**

In the classroom. It's all about learner success. I've always enjoyed working with young people and helping them learn material, especially mathematics.

Because some of our students at SAIT already have degrees, and many already know their Calculus from high school, I get to know the class and see who's comfortable. Eventually, I learn, and then I can concentrate on the ones who really need the help. This is also why I've done a lot of tutoring and academic coaching. I feel I don't really teach just subjects, I teach individual students.

SAIT is building bold futures. Recognizing excellence and rewarding innovation strengthens our OneSAIT mindset — an all-in approach to hands on learning. Learn about [SAIT's 2025-28 strategic plan](#).





I want to extend my gratitude to the Auto Body Team as we have persevered through many changes within our team from our new Academic Chair, Carl Lukas, to our new (returning) hires Kristen and Ashley, and the existing Faculty. We work well leveraging our differences and uniting over our shared goal toward student success. Thank you!

*Benjamin Hart, RSE, MEd
Auto Body Instructor
School of Transportation*

Thank you to everyone who attended the Artisans of SAIT Holiday Market last Wednesday (November 19). We are also planning a Spring Market before Mother's Day. If anyone is interested in being a vendor, you can contact me at lori.cucheron@sait.ca

*Lori Cucheron
SAIT Instructor, MLT and MLA Programs*

