



President’s Message

By Blair Howes



Hello Faculty,

Well here we are at the end of March 2026 with a mixed bag of weather conditions. Spring is clearly in sight as we approach the end of the winter semester and about to begin the spring summer semester.

March 2026 has definably left like a lion, and we are all waiting for answers to very important issues not just at SAIT but civic issues, provincial issues, federal issues, and even global issues that have certainly led to a lot of “watercooler talk” so to speak.

These issues have impact on all of us in the SAIT community.

Now on with the rest of the updates:

This year again has been very busy for SAFA, and it doesn’t look as if there is any daylight at the end of the tunnel. SAFA is taking on additional work to ensure that our new Collective Agreement (that maintained about 98 percent of our hard fight for existing language) is being followed by the employer, but there have been several “hiccups” along the way.

As I expected and predicted last March, new and old Academic Chairs alike will struggle with this language, and in recent days we have seen this to be a true statement. Those Academic Chairs for the most part would like to see their own interpretations of the Collective Agreement language take precedence; however, this simply is not the case. It has become

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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.

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clearly a lack of training by their direct leadership. Again, from last March **if you encounter this sort of heavy hand, let SAFA know right away so we can take the appropriate actions on the perceived language by SAIT's operations group within the Academic Division.** As always, somehow those members of management not only have failed to understand that there is a new Collective Agreement between SAIT and SAFA Faculty but also have appeared on the surface to have not read the document and assume it is simply suggested guidelines. In fact and in a matter of law, these are the rules of your contract of employment.

At this point in time, there are no other colleges in our sector still bargaining, with NAIT and NASA ratifying their collective agreements. No other table in our sector (colleges and polytechs) in Alberta has been offered more on the monetary side than we have.

I am looking forward to seeing new and familiar folks at the ACIFA Conference in May at the Jasper Park Lodge, as this is really a time of decompression and of new learning for me.

All attendees please be aware that the ACIFA/Fairmont hotel contracts have changed effective for this year's conference and moving forward into the future: if you can't make your hotel booking (for unforeseen reasons), if you don't give the Fairmont 30 days' notice to cancel, you will be charged the full amount of your hotel booking.

As this is an election year for ACIFA Executive roles, please see Kathie's and Jessica's latest ACIFA update messages. Those positions are open to all members of ACIFA in good standing at their home institutions.

I would dare say, and I am rather proud of all of our Faculty members who have gone far above and beyond any normal expectations to ensure this Province's youth, who attend post-secondary education at our institutions, are successful and can embark on their own journeys of lifelong learning.

As we turn to a very real new reality of threats such as: American tariffs, changes to Federal legislations that changed the post-secondary world in regard to foreign student enrollments, and of course global conflicts. It will undoubtedly leave many of us a bit confused and perhaps bittersweet on summer travel plans and life expenses which are rapidly increasing dramatically.

Finally, also still true (sadly) a year later, *if you haven't heard a "Thank you" or "You're doing a great job" from your Deans, Associate Deans, or Academic Chairs, then let me be the first to say those words to you in 2026.*

In 2026 again, 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. Also, visit the SAFA website for regular updates.

I know this message is not comforting, but I want to assure you as of today's date (March 27, 2026) there has not been any 10 day advance notice (as per our Section 13 language) to any Faculty position in any school other than the TLC group for position abolishment.

As a final reminder and closing statement, this is also an election year for SAFA. I want to thank all Faculty who have answered the call for candidates and congratulate those who have been acclaimed to their positions. You make a difference and you are appreciated by me for your service--you help make the President's role a bit easier.

As in all elections, I encourage you the membership to vote. It is your democratic right and your ability to make your voice heard.

I remain dedicated to you the Faculty.

Always, in service of membership. 🖋️

Blair



Labour Relations Officer Report

By Craig Coolahan (LRO)



It has been a tough start to 2026 at SAIT. There have been abolishments of SAFA members' positions. Many temporary-salaried and casual contracts have not been renewed or won't be renewed. In addition, SAIT Management announced that many 60-hour courses will drop to 45-hours. This has caused concern for Faculty about the number of courses that they will have to teach each year and the efficacy of these courses for the students.

Without question, the reduction of Faculty and the changes to course hours will mean a rise in workload for remaining Faculty. Fewer hours per course potentially means more courses to teach and more time required for restructuring and prepping for courses.

With that said, SAFA still has a Collective Agreement that puts parameters around hours of work and CCH. We also have the workload complaint process. SAFA is encouraging all Faculty to monitor and record their workloads and contact SAFA if they feel that they need to file a workload complaint.

While SAIT has run into some financial shortfalls as a result of a decrease in international students and provincial budgets, this does not exempt them from adhering to the agreed-to articles in the Collective Agreement. This includes hours of work. The agreed-to work week remains 37.5 hours per week. While this can be averaged over a week/month/annually, the averaging has to work both ways. That is if you put in 45 hours in one week, you should be discussing with your AC how that extra time will be honoured.

CCH must still remain four hours of teaching in a row or no more than six hours per day of teaching. To go beyond this requires the signing of a mutual agreement form, which as September gears up to an historical shift in course delivery is something Faculty may want to think carefully about before signing.

These are certainly challenging times at SAIT. All Faculty must remain diligent and on top of their hours and be aware of their rights in the Collective Agreement.

Let's hope that SAIT's budget begins to improve in the near future, which will allow more Faculty to be hired and take the burden off our current amazing Faculty. 🍷

