



President’s Message

By Blair Howes



Hello Faculty,

Here we are at the last SAFAGRAM of the academic year on a day when I have reflected back to the 2013 floods and the dealings of a city under prepared to now with things in balance to mitigate any worst-case scenarios.

In my reflections today, I am also looking back to recent history when the country opened enrollments for foreign international students, and it leaves me wondering if that was simply a band-aid fix to the systemic problem of continued under-funding to the public education system from all levels of government.

Although some of the institutions across the country used some common sense with self-imposed checks and balances, others were driven by pure greed and the need to find huge profit margins.

Ultimately, I believe the students (foreign and domestic alike) have suffered with the “greed driven pass them and collect the money” attitude of some of those colleges, poly-techs, and universities and am ever fearful there were no “lessons learned” at the administration level at the institutes.

If there is a ray of sunshine (and only a sliver), it is that we have learned a hard lesson about “Putting all the eggs in one basket” and that the administrations need to diversify how the “business of education” looks in the future.

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Editorial Board

- Pat Squibb
- Wendy Strashok
- Jeffrey Logan — Cartoonist

Layout

Luda Paul

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 - 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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<http://www.safacalgary.com/>

On behalf of me and those members recently elected or acclaimed, I wish to thank you the SAFA members as well as those who put their names forward to run for positions. These are not easy times for Faculty and hold a bit of uncertainty for the near future.

This has been an extremely challenging year for all Instructors at SAIT with changes that at times really don't make any sense looking from the inside out, but changes happen and will always happen historically because they are typically reactionary and not spun as a positive.

My hope is that SAIT will take great care and time to plan for some of the shared governance of the Institution in September provided by the new Collective Agreement. I don't have a crystal ball as to what that will look like. With the proper diligence of SAFA, this will ensure the successes of SAIT and its membership of employees moving forward. As we have discovered, Faculty are very resilient and more so than the Administration of this Institution. We as Faculty have always found the way to make it the best experience that we can for our students.

I brought this message to the members in the past, and I am reaffirming it today: Instructor fatigue and burnout are real and should not be taken lightly. I encourage anyone who is feeling the pressure to reach out to family and friends, share a virtual coffee and conversation to help ease the tensions, or seek assistance through the SAIT EFAP Program.

I again want to remind everybody for September that there is a Mutual Agreement Form for you to fill out for any instructional hours outside of the Collective Agreement, including evenings and weekends and any potential overload. It is imperative for you the Faculty members to make sure that your Academic Chair has completed the form correctly for those instructional hours including the following details: who, what, where, when, and how long.

The spring has brought many changes for both Faculty and the Administration of SAIT. This has brought changes to the way that we as Faculty spend our vacation, how we teach our programs, and the pressure to adapt change may not be a need for the good but rather a need for the "emergency of the now."

Please make sure you visit the SAFA website often for messaging and updates to the Collective Agreement implementation. If you are unsure of any of the details, then reach out to your SAFA Division Reps, the SAFA LRO (Craig) or me.

As a reminder, Legislation has now ensured that both the Employer and the Faculty Association have rights and obligations under the Labour Code. This includes strike and/or lockout options for both the employer and the union. As such SAFA has formed a job action committee and the work that committee has put in and will continue to put SAFA in a better position than any of our ACIFA counterparts and will resume again in September.

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.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy summer and, of course, a warm one as well.

On behalf of the SAFA Executive Team, the Table of Officers, and me, we hope you will be well and will take time to recharge the batteries for the fall.

Always, in service of membership. 🖋️

Best Regards,

Blair



Labour Relations Officer Report

By Craig Coolahan (LRO)



Heading into the summer, there is already a lot on Faculty members' minds regarding changes coming in September.

Much of the prep work reducing 60-hour courses to 45-hour courses is underway, but some of that work may spill into September, at least in terms of class prep-time.

Some of this work is going to be deemed Professional Duties and, in some cases, this is accurate. However, if this work is beyond the hours being allotted to you by your Academic Chair (AC) for Professional Development (PD), it's time to have a conversation with your AC about how these additional hours are going to be addressed—in terms of compensation and or time off in lieu.

Documenting time spent on this PD work will help provide context and evidence to the conversation. If you can't agree on the hours being worked, please contact SAFA about filing a workload complaint.

It has come to the attention of SAFA that some ACs are refusing to provide Faculty with estimated hours from Classroom Management Activities (CMA) and PD. This not only is a violation of the Collective Agreement, but also negates the work that Management is doing to reduce overload throughout the Institution.

If your AC is refusing to give you CMA and PD hours along with your scheduled Class Contact Hours (CCH), please contact SAFA as we are currently monitoring this violation.

With all this said and the new work world on the horizon, it's important that you do take some time off to rejuvenate.

It's been an interesting academic year to say the least--Several position abolishments and many changes to programming and scheduling. It appears that SAIT is in a bit of a transition as it works toward dealing with holes in its budget left by the absence of international students.

While SAIT weathered this fairly well, it has impacted Faculty and increased workload is the result.

Here's wishing you some rest time over the next few months, and a great return in September that is focused on students' success and Faculty success in managing an ever-increasing workload. 🍷

