

President's Message

by Doug Short

Since the last President's Council of May 2015 we have enjoyed a wonderful summer and have basked in the joy of a refreshed Government here in Alberta. The new Government did not assume office without challenges – primarily fiscal.

ACIFA is pleased that the Government has restored the 1.4% cut to post-secondary funding from the last budget and has committed to a 2% annual increase in base funding over the next two years. A longer term commitment to stable funding would be further welcomed.



Common themes have developed across our sector:

- Institutional Boards of Governors, along with their agents –executive management do not seem responsive to faculty concerns, are not fully representative of Alberta society in their composition, nor fully focused on the educational mission of our post-secondary institutions and instead have sanctioned an increasingly corporate orientation. We have seen two separate votes of non-confidence in institutional leadership and other occurrences of unrest at institutions, related to a lack of genuine consultation with our faculty on important academic initiatives. ACIFA will examine the nature and composition of our Boards!
- There is continuing concern about the Board's sole discretion in designating who are faculty members.
- The continuing growth in administration and administration functions seems to be diverting limited resources away from our classrooms, shops and labs. Teaching is our core mission!
- Bonuses or "pay at risk" for management seem misplaced in public institutions, especially without full disclosure and transparency on their performance objectives.
- Restructuring in our institutions is increasingly isolating teaching from management and diminishing the experience of faculty in decisions. We learn on the shop floor not on the committee floors.

ACIFA will be engaged with the IAE Ministry on:

- An initial "surgical" opening of the PSLA for amendments to deal with the right to strike in the collective bargaining process. The labour relations model for dispute resolution will have to be revised.
- A more comprehensive review of the PSLA in the context of the purposes of Campus Alberta is forthcoming.
- A review of the membership of Boards of Governors at our institutions for diversity is underway.

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The following key meetings have taken place this fall:

- Dr. Glenn Feltham, Chair of COPPOA [Council of Post-Secondary Presidents of Alberta], to discuss common interests of management and faculty. The feeling was that we might share common ground on certain issues (i.e. government funding support for post-secondary education in Alberta) and joint communications from Institutional Presidents, Faculty Presidents and Student Association Presidents could be effective.
- COPPA does not yet have a common position on changes to the PSLA, related to essential services legislation.
- Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education, Lori Sigurdson, on October 13th in a very pleasant exchange of thoughts and ideas about post-secondary education in Alberta. There appeared to be a lot of shared interests and concerns about our sector. [Report on meeting included in agenda package for October President's Council]
- CAFA Council [John Nichols reporting at October's President's Council]
- Peter Leclaire, ADM of IAE, to discuss Campus Alberta initiative.

The ACIFA office congratulates Kerri Green on the birth of her second son and welcomes Ben Turner to assist with Pam Anderson in running our operation. Please direct enquires, thoughts or considerations to the office or contact me at 780-378-1178 or dougs@nait.ca. I welcome your engagement.
Slainte!

ACIFA 2016 Annual Spring Conference

May 15 – May 17, 2016
at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge



Hosted by the Bow Valley College Faculty Association
Stay tuned for further details!



Jasper Park Lodge photo courtesy of <http://www.banffinfo.com/cms/destinations/jasper/fairmont-jasper-park-lodge/>

Meet the New Members of the ACIFA Executive & ACIFA Presidents' Council

ACIFA would like to introduce the newly appointed members of the ACIFA Presidents' Council 2015-2016: **Som Pillay**, Grande Prairie Regional College Academic Staff Association; **Arlana Moskalyk**, NAIT Academic Staff Association; **Janice Kirchner**, Medicine Hat College Faculty Association; **Cecilia Jamieson**, Northern Lakes College Faculty Association. ACIFA would also like to welcome newly elected Executive Council representatives, **Bob Graves**, Vice President Executive and **Nicole Estabrooks**, Vice President Professional Affairs.

New ACIFA Executive

Bob Graves

Vice President Executive, ACIFA Executive



Bob's began his career in post-secondary education at the Alberta Vocation Centre in Grouard, a part of what became Northern Lakes College. He went on to be a faculty member at a number of institutions, including Lethbridge College and Keyano College. Along the way, he completed graduate studies at the University of Manitoba and the University of Tennessee. His primary scholarly interests are marketing and strategic management. Since returning to Alberta in 2005, Bob has been actively involved with faculty associations. For the Keyano Faculty Association, he served as Treasurer and then as President. It was while he was at Keyano that he first attended the ACIFA conference. He moved from Keyano to MacEwan in 2007 and soon became a member of MacEwan's FA board. There he served as VP Finance, VP Dispute Resolution, and is currently the Secretary-Treasurer. From 2009-13, Bob served as ACIFA's Vice-President Finance and Records. Outside of school, Bob is an enthusiastic motorcyclist and a recreational curler.

Nicole Estabrooks

Vice President Professional Affairs, ACIFA Executive



Nicole Estabrooks began teaching at Bow Valley College in 2002. She received an Associate's Of Arts degree in Art from Snow College in 1993; a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Leisure and Tourism and Society in 1996, and a Master's Degree in Educational Research in 2007 specializing in Interpretive Studies from The University of Calgary. Her graduate research focused on the visual representation of teachers in film and in pop culture to further understandings of how representation of teachers influence what happens in the classroom.

Taking from her long-term experience teaching English to new Canadians, Nicole writes about and presents her ongoing research that focuses on the use visualization and new media toolkits in the classroom.

Through presenting at local and provincial conferences (ATESL workshops in Calgary, ACIFA), Nicole remains engaged with teaching methods. Nicole has attended several Labour Law conferences (CAUT, Lancaster House, Labour Law Online) over the years to keep up to date with the nuances of labour law. Recent presentations range from thinking through the implications of images of teachers in pop culture (Hot for Teacher, BVCFA Research Junkies) to facilitating workshops on how to make educational podcasts to improve student engagement.

As well as her role in the classroom and in local and provincial conference settings, Nicole has brought her expertise as an educator and communicator to bear on a wide range of committees and groups in the BVC Faculty Association. Drawing on her interest in conflict resolution and her commitment to having a welcoming spirit and open door policy she joined the Welfare and Grievance Committee in 2005. In 2008 Nicole became VP Welfare and Grievance and subsequently the Faculty President in 2012. Her work on the Faculty Association emphasizes supporting faculty discussions of ideas and concerns. She takes what she learns in these meetings into discussion with management with integrity, representing faculty in cases of discipline as well as in cases of complaints. Bringing her skills in visual communication to the BVC Faculty Association, Nicole has been active in the advertising and encouraging new membership and new forms of participation by active members by spearheading the new branding of the Association in 2014.

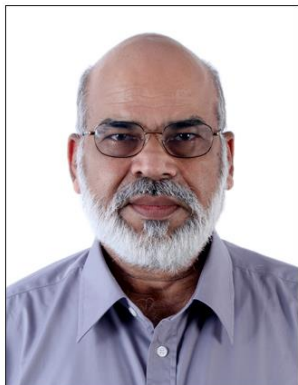
Nicole has participated on ACIFA's Presidents' Council since 2012. She looks forward to the new challenge of being the new VP Professional Affairs at ACIFA.

Outside of the classroom, Nicole is an outdoor enthusiast who enjoys travelling, climbing, snowboarding, and reading. Nicole also pursues her interests in art by drawing and playing the guitar. Nicole rides her bike year round so, please drive closer to the centre line.

New ACIFA Presidents

Som Pillay

President, Grande Prairie Regional College Academic Staff Association



Brief Background:

- Graduated with a Doctorate degree in Chemistry from Simon Fraser University, BC.
- Taught Chemistry as a sessional instructor at SFU, Douglas and Kwantlen before moving to GPRC in 1981.
- Served GPRC in various capacities including:
 - o Chair of the Science Department for over 15 years.
 - o Chair of Academic Council of the College.
 - o Chair of the Negotiations Committee

Janice Kirchner

President, Medicine Hat College Faculty Association



I have been teaching at MHC since 1985 and have been involved in many aspects of the FA over the years: executive positions, committee work, and ISW and SGIF facilitator. When I began at MHC, I was teaching in the ESL program and Academic Upgrading then transitioned to Technical Communications and Information Technology. Married with two grown children, I keep busy with my work at MHC and a safety training business my husband and I own. Medicine Hat has been my home since 1975 when we moved from Calgary, and though it is where I will likely be for many more years, I am also looking forward to spending more time at our condo on Oahu.

A warm welcome back to our **Vice President of Finance & Records**, Neil Napora. Neil was recently re-elected at the Annual General Meeting at the 2015 ACIFA Conference. We'd also like to welcome new ACIFA Administrative Officer, **Ben Turner** who will be filling in as Kerri Green's maternity leave replacement. Welcome Ben!

Welcome!

Annual ACIFA Climate Survey



The annual ACIFA Climate survey, distributed electronically through your faculty association office by mid-November, is a valuable tool for the tabulation and analysis of the views of academic staff members across the province, concerning working conditions and attitudes within their respective institutions.

The Climate Survey asks individual academic staff members to indicate level of agreement on a scale of 1 to 5, with thirteen statements such as:

Senior administration communicates openly with faculty.

I have the resources I need to do my job effectively.

The president of this institution provides effective leadership.

In addition, local academic staff associations may take the opportunity to include further questions specific to their own institutions.

The relatively high response rate from ACIFA members, along with the continuity from year to year of the thirteen core survey questions, provides a strong foundation to assist academic staff associations in discussions with their administration regarding key areas of concern within their institutions.

A comparative, cross-institutional score chart for each of the thirteen system wide questions will be published in the ACIFA Faculty Circuit next spring.

Please fill out your Survey by **5:00 p.m.** on **December 18, 2015.**

Connect using Social Media:

www.twitter.com/ACIFAcA
www.facebook.com/ACIFAcA

ACIFA Conference 2015

(Photos courtesy of the ACIFA Office Staff)

The 2015 ACIFA Conference, which took place at the **Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise**, was a roaring success!

At this year's event, attendees had the opportunity to choose from a pool of 45 well rounded sessions to aid in their professional development and growth. In addition, the conference's Hosting Committee ensured that there was no shortage of activities available for those who wished to experience a little bit of fun and adventure in their free time.

ACIFA is pleased to announce that the Silent Auction, held at the hospitality suites on Monday and Tuesday nights, raised over \$2000.00 for The Alberta Public Post-Secondary Education Trust Fund.

Thank you to all who attended this year's conference, to the presenters for their outstanding sessions, and to the Portage College Conference Hosting Committee for all of their time and effort to help ensure that the conference ran smoothly.



Portage College Hosting Committee

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2014 Scholarship in Teaching and Learning Award Winners

Steve Janz & Cynthia Maier

SAIT

PeerWise: Promoting deeper understanding and sharing of course content

Our research project seeks to measure the effective use of PeerWise on students' knowledge retention. PeerWise is a free on-line tool developed and maintained by the University of Auckland. Students write multiple choice questions and post them to PeerWise. All students have access to the posted questions and can query the student authors about the questions they have written. For our research, we will measure the results qualitatively, through students' perception of usefulness, and quantitatively, through assessment results.

PeerWise requires a minimal amount of an instructor's time to prepare for each course section. It is very intuitive and user friendly. The instructor sets up a new course section with a couple of mouse clicks, selects a name for the section, and enters a unique identifier for each student. Students register with a self-selected user name and password. They do not have to provide any personal information, not even an email address. Only the instructor knows which identifier belongs to which student.

We are interested in this program as a tool to promote deeper engagement in course content. The student must have a good understanding of the material in order to write a multiple choice question. In addition, the students are preparing a database of questions as another tool to assist themselves as well as future students in their process of learning.

We have used PeerWise in our classes since January 2014. Initially, participation was voluntary; beginning in August 2014, participation in posting questions was encouraged by assigning grades to the postings. A pilot study on student perception was conducted in the spring of 2015, leading to a refinement in our process for our formal research project. In the pilot, we found students generally liked the concept. However, students expressed concerns about the quality of some of the questions.

Our current process requires each student to write one question for each assigned topic. Students have been assigned two topics. Each topic has a team of students assigned. Each individual writes a multiple choice question, circulates it through the team for peer review, and then submits the question to the instructor. We assess the questions for technical correctness, the solution choices for plausible distractors, the explanations for depth and most importantly, the overall quality of the question. Once we have approved the question, we authorize the student to post. In addition to creating questions, students are now required to answer all the posted questions (approximately 60 questions per course) and record their learnings in their reflection journals. We have allocated 10% of a student's grade towards their PeerWise efforts.

Overall, our goal is to promote student learning through the engagement and development of a database of quality questions, such that the students will feel that they have learned from composing their questions, answering their peer questions posted, reflecting on their answers and having the answers thoroughly explained by their peers.

For our research, we will qualitatively analyze our research results through the use of a student questionnaire and interview process. For our quantitative analysis, we will analyze our final exam assessment. Our final exam will consist of 10 multiple choice questions based on the PeerWise questions created by the students. We will analyze the effects of students answering the PeerWise questions, their PeerWise reflection journals and their performance on the final exam.

Early feedback from students during the Fall 2015 semester is overwhelmingly positive:

"I think it's helpful for us because to post we need to spend time and read through the modules. This means we get deep knowledge about that module. I learned from my mistakes when I answer the questions others post. Sometimes I think "That was a difficult question". It helps".

"I think PeerWise is certainly valuable. The site is great, easy to use, and I can see the benefits".

Overall, we are very pleased with the positive reception from our students and their recognition of PeerWise as a valuable learning process.



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2016 Award For Innovation in Teaching

The aim of the Award for Innovation in Teaching is to recognize and encourage the use of innovative and creative teaching methods and design which lead to improved student learning.

This province-wide award attracts both recognition and a financial award of \$1,500 for the faculty member or team and \$500.00 for the faculty member's faculty association. Certificates of Commendation will be awarded to the two runners-up.

Eligibility

The Award is open to all ACIFA members. The nomination may be for an individual or a group/team. Nominations for the Award are made by colleagues with the consent of the innovator(s). Nominations must adhere to the *Format for Applications* below.

An innovation which has already received this Award cannot be resubmitted the following year. Innovations which have been unsuccessful but have received a Certificate of Commendation are eligible for resubmission, within the context of the guidelines, the following year.

The Nomination Process

Each participating ACIFA member association will conduct a nomination and selection process at the local level, in accordance with the guidelines in this document, to select **up to two nominees** to be submitted to the ACIFA Awards Committee. The ACIFA Awards Committee, established by the Professional Affairs Committee of ACIFA, will select the winner of the award from nominees put forward by each of the participating local faculty associations.

Selection Criteria

- The extent to which the innovation has had a practical outcome that improved teaching, learning, curriculum design, and/or assessment.
- Evidence of student satisfaction and learning outcomes.
- Evidence that the innovation was successfully integrated into the total learning process for the relevant course of study.
- The potential for the innovation to be applied to different fields of study
- The extent to which the innovation made effective and efficient use of resources.

Format for Applications: 2-3 page limit plus appendices

Please provide information in the following format:

1. Innovator/project team details: name(s), position, and college/institute
2. A description of the innovation
3. The rationale for implementing the change
4. The outcomes of the innovation
5. The wider application of the innovation in post-secondary education
6. Names and signatures of two nominees
7. Any supporting documentation to be attached as appendices

Judging Panels: provincial and local

Five members, elected on an annual basis from and by the Professional Affairs Committee of ACIFA, will select the final award winner and up to two runners-up from the nominees submitted by the local faculty associations. The local faculty association judging committees are to be selected and structured by the local faculty association as they deem appropriate for their association. **Continued on page 9**

2016 Innovation in Teaching Award, Continued from page 8

Mutual Obligations

The ACIFA Awards Committee will award the winner of an Innovation/Creativity Award in Teaching with:

- An announcement in the ACIFA newsletter
- \$1,500.00 made available to the winner and another \$500.00 to the winner's faculty association
- A formal presentation at the ACIFA Annual Conference
- Coverage of expenses for the winner to attend the ACIFA Annual Conference to receive their award.

The Award winner will be expected to:

- Attend the ACIFA Annual Conference to accept the Award
- Agree to submit for publication in the ACIFA newsletter a description of the innovation and its successful implementation before the end of the year in which the Award was won.

Application Dates

Applications must be submitted to the faculty member's faculty association by the date set by the local faculty association. Each Association's selection process must be completed in time to submit their nominee to ACIFA by **February 22, 2016.**

The ACIFA Awards Committee will make the final decision by the third week of April to allow sufficient time to arrange for the recognition of the winner at the ACIFA Annual Conference.

*The 2016 award is sponsored and administered by
The Alberta Colleges and Technical Institutes Faculties
Association
Johnson Inc. Insurance
And
The Alberta Public Post-Secondary Education Trust Fund.*

**How does your ACIFA
membership benefit you?**



http://acifa.ca/?page_id=8

Member Associations

Alberta College of Art and Design Faculty Association
Bow Valley College Faculty Association
Grande Prairie Regional College Academic Staff Association
Grant MacEwan University Faculty Association
Keyano College Faculty Association
Lakeland College Faculty Association
Lethbridge College Faculty Association
Medicine Hat College Faculty Association
NAIT Academic Staff Association
NorQuest College Faculty Association
Northern Lakes College Faculty Association
Olds College Faculty Association
Portage College Faculty Association
Faculty Association of Red Deer College
SAIT Academic Faculty Association

The views expressed in Faculty Circuit are those of individuals and do not necessarily reflect ACIFA's policies and positions.

Please address all inquiries and submissions to:

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Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1N3
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E pam.anderson@acifa.ca W www.acifa.ca

Upcoming ACIFA Dates

October 16, 2015	Executive Council	Edmonton
October 17, 2015	Presidents' Council	Edmonton
January 15, 2016	Executive Council	Calgary
January 16, 2016	Professional Affairs Committee & Negotiations Advisory Committee	Calgary
March 11, 2016	Executive Council	Calgary
March 12, 2016	Presidents' Council	Calgary
May 7, 2016	Executive Council Budget Meeting	Edmonton
May 15, 2016	Presidents' Council	Jasper Park Lodge
May 17, 2016	Annual General Meeting	Jasper Park Lodge
May 15 – May 17, 2016	Spring Conference	Jasper Park Lodge