



acifa

Alberta Colleges & Institutes Faculties Association

Faculty Circuit

October – November 2017

President's Message

Dr. Anna Beukes



A New Year

As the new school year gains momentum, ACIFA reflects on another hugely enjoyable and highly successful conference held in Canmore in the spring. It was well attended with 255 attendees. A shout-out to the Olds College FA hosting committee for all their hard work to pull off the conference without a hitch. The theme for the conference was “Cultivating Connections” - a very timely theme. Many of the conversations at the conference, both during the excellent formal presentations and in the informal exchanges over coffee and meals,

unpacked how to cultivate connections in the new legal landscape we find ourselves in. In addition to basking in the warm glow of the memories of the conference, ACIFA is looking to the future and the work ahead of us.

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One of the major tasks in the coming year is to help Faculty Associations (FAs) prepare for the reality of living under the labour code. Residing under the labour code, as opposed to the Post-Secondary Learning Act, brings with it many changes and challenges. For instance: FAs have to file their constitution and bylaws with the labour board. To ensure language compliance to the labour code, ACIFA's Negotiations Advisory Committee (NAC) worked through the bylaws and constitutions of each Association during a special NAC meeting held on Saturday October 21, 2017. Under the skillful guidance of Al Brown, acting LRO for ACIFA, FAs were assisted in aligning their documents with the requirements of the new legislation.

Another major task ahead of all of us is to start building up **defense funds**. You may recall that under the Post-Secondary Learning Act we did not have the right to strike, but neither could our employers lock us out. Binding arbitration used to be our conflict resolution

mechanism.

Under the labour code, however, we have the right to strike and are vulnerable to being locked out. In order to protect ourselves in case the worst happens, we have to build up defense funds, and do so quickly. The most cost-effective way of doing so is to do it collectively. The possibility of establishing an ACIFA defense fund to which all our members would contribute, was discussed at our last Presidents' Council meeting on October 21, 2017 in Calgary. Building up an ACIFA defense fund is comparable to buying insurance; one hopes you never need it, but if you do, it is a very good thing to have. Similar to insurance, it is preferable to spread the cost over as broad a base as possible as that lowers the unit cost. If each individual faculty member contributes only \$5 per month (the cost of cup of coffee) to an ACIFA defend fund, that fund will grow by almost half a million dollars per year. Without a province-wide ACIFA fund, each individual FA will have to increase dues substantially to build up their own defense fund.

I am very pleased to announce that **ACIFA was successful in retaining the services of an LRO** with experience in both the labour code and the post-secondary environment. Please say hello to Brian McCulloch (see page 5). Welcome onboard Brian!

We have also appointed a **highly skilled Office Administrator**, Pamela Lazo, to help reorganize our office operations. Pamela's office hours are: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm Monday to Friday, with a half an hour lunch break from 12:00 noon to 12:30 pm. Feel free to give Pamela a call at the ACIFA office (780-423-4440) and welcome her onboard. As she is likely often to be alone in the office, please leave a message if you happen to call the moment she stepped out.

In conclusion, I would like to **sincerely thank members of ACIFA's executive** Janice Kirchner (VP Finance and Records), James McWilliams (Executive VP), Lisa Saxby (VP NAC), Ken Heather (VP External) and Keith Smyth (VP PAC) for their dedication and service. Your determination to let this organization succeed is inspiring, your sense of humour is refreshing and your selflessness admirable.

In service,
Anna

Message of support to Ontario College Teachers

As fellow College teachers we hereby wish to send a message of strong support to all the Ontario College teachers currently on strike. At our ACIFA Presidents Council meeting this weekend in Calgary, a motion of support and encouragement for Ontario College teachers in their action was passed unanimously.

We stand in solidarity with you. The issues you are emphasizing are serious and of growing concern across the country. Thank you for your principled stand on fairness and equity. Thank you for pushing back against the casualization of academic work. Thank you for caring enough about quality education that you are willing to take job action to protect it.

Please know that you are not alone. We stand with you. We understand and share your concerns about the continuous diversion of resources away from the classroom, the erosion of academic freedom and the explosion in administrative oversight. We stand with you not only in understanding and sharing these concerns, but also in supporting your strong action to safeguard quality post-secondary education for students.

You can count on our continuous backing as you stand firm,

Anna Beukes
President ACIFA

If you, as individual Alberta College teacher, would like to send a message of support, please click on this link below:

www.collegefaculty.org

Q&A from the Minister of Advanced Education on Changes to the Funding Model



The Honorable Minister Marlin Schmidt – Minister of Advanced Education in Alberta

We put 5 questions to the Minister of Advanced Education, Mr. Marlin Schmidt. Here are his responses:

1. **Where and how do you see collaboration occurring across the system?**

I see collaboration occurring across the system every day! Whether it be two faculty members working together on a research project, institutions sharing curriculum to ensure that students have access to the best possible education, or the offering of joint degrees, collaboration occurs everywhere. That said, I continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that collaboration is enhanced across the system. Moving forward, collaboration will be key to ensure that our system is able to deliver the high quality educational outcomes Albertans expect in the most efficient way as possible.

2. **What risks do you see in deriving more revenue from fundraising activities?**

It is important to ensure that risks are well managed. Government is currently reviewing how the system is resourced and, as part of this review, we are looking at how institutions are funded and the role that self-generated revenue plays across the system. The department's goal is to ensure that fundraising endeavors are appropriate for post-secondary institutions, that they do not distract from the primary purpose of the institution and that the board has the capacity to properly manage and oversee them.

3. **Where do you see the role of academic staff associations in institutional governance as a result of the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) changes?**

The PSLA envisioned academic staff associations as an integral and legislated part of the institution's fabric. The recent changes to the PSLA were about extending constitutionally protected rights to academic staff members and does not change the integral role that academic staff members play in our system.

4. **Does the "holistic" student experience compromise funding for quality and effective teaching and scholarly activities, seeing that administrative complements in institutions have increased significantly over the years?**

It is important that we take a holistic view of the student experience to ensure students are provided with the supports that they need to succeed in their studies. I am concerned about rising administrative expenses at institutions. Government is committed to addressing executive compensation through the ABC review and the funding review will also look at administrative expenses. It is important to me that as many dollars as possible are directed toward the classrooms across our province.

5. **If the basic funding model is to be built on enrolments, what other factors could be used to supplement the funding, based on other criteria derived from institutional mandates?** In most jurisdictions enrolment measures are influential within the funding model, but they are not the only factor considered in determining funding. The current funding model review is examining many factors that could be used to better determine funding allocations to institutions including the mandate of the institution.

ACIFA's Contribution to the Funding Review

One of the meaningful consultations the Alberta Government launched this year was a comprehensive review of the way post-secondary schools are funded. At the moment, funding is done as a block transfer to each school. That means the government signs over a large check to each institution. How the money is spent internally is then up to the management of each institution.

A consultation meeting to discuss potential changes to how funding is done was held on July 26th, 2017. Lisa Saxby (VP NAC), Ken Heather (VP External) and Keith Smyth (VP PAC) attended on behalf of ACIFA. Different funding models were discussed. Models such as individualized funding models; performance-based funding models; volume/utilization-based funding; cost-based funding; community needs/socio-economic-based and regional distribution funding were looked at. There are many factors to consider before choosing a new funding base - such as cost, government revenue, student profile, program characteristics, socio-economic conditions and more.

ACIFA's two main recommendations are: First, that the government recognizes the long-term contributions a well-funded post-secondary education system makes to the prosperity and overall well-being of individuals and society. Second, that funding should be tied to the core mandates of each school in order to prevent the diversion of resources away from classrooms, shops and labs.

ACIFA is not in favour of outcomes-based funding. International research has shown that outcomes-based funding is not effective in motivating institutions to behave in line with their mandates, nor does it lead to greater responsiveness to labour market needs. No fewer than 34 States in America have performance-based funding in some form or another. The design of these performance-based funding models varies greatly and the percentage of overall funding linked to performance criteria varies between 6 percent of total funding in Indiana, to 80 percent in Tennessee. However there is no evidence that outcomes-based funding achieves any of its intended results. It also creates financial instability for institutions. The bigger the percentage of an institutions' annual budget tied to annual performance indicators, the greater the uncertainty that institutions have to contend with. To function optimally, post-secondary institutions need stable and predictable funding. What is more, the incentives to steer in the direction of what is financially rewarded - if pure numerical indicators like enrolment numbers, pass rates, or retention rates are used as funding parameters - is huge. There is little that prevents institutions from seeking "good" performance in these dimensions, often at the expense of quality education. Especially in difficult economic conditions, pressure to perform on numerical indicators for the sake of simply surviving, may lead to institutions increasingly "doing what is necessary" for that purpose while giving less attention to what they are actually there for, namely providing quality education.

Outcomes-based funding (called performance envelopes) has been tried in Alberta before and found to be unsustainable. The intent was to provide a mechanism to award annual performance and introduce mandate-specific indicators, external benchmarks and third-party performance assessments. Performance envelope funding was discounted, after only three years, because it was found too difficult to administer.

Please see ACIFA's full response on the funding model changes on our website at <https://www.acifaweb.com/government-relations-advocacy>

Meet our New Labour Relations Officer



I am pleased to announce that Brian McCulloch joined ACIFA as Labour Relations Officer on Monday, October 16, 2017. Brian will provide Labour Relations support and capacity building to our member associations.

Brian is a seasoned Labour Relations Specialist with 15 years of experience in diverse environments and with many different unions and associations. Some highlights of his career include collective bargaining, experience with the Alberta Labour Board and grievance handling up to arbitration. His passion for continual learning is evident from his many accreditations including a coaching certification, six sigma certification, mediation and negotiation training through the Alberta Arbitration and Mediation Society, as well as a project management certification.

Brian has found ACIFA to be an organization that fits with his values and he is very excited about transferring his skills to the well-being of college and institute faculty across Alberta.

Meet our New Office Administrator



Pamela Lazo (or Pam) graduated from MacEwan University with an Office Administration Certificate in 1999. She worked at various companies since then. This allowed her a comprehensive set of office management skills.

Pam is excited about the opportunity to serve as office administrator for ACIFA. We look forward to utilizing her skills set to help reorganize the office operations in order to ensure a well-run, well organized, efficient office that will support ACIFA's work.

Pam enjoyed meeting ACIFA Presidents at the Presidents' Council meeting this month in Calgary. She found everyone to be friendly and supportive and she felt she learned a great deal about the post-secondary system in Alberta. When asked about her priorities for this position Pam is clear that after she got to know the rhythm of the office, she would like to set up templates for activities which repeat at regular intervals to ensure greater efficiency.

Fair Employment Week

ACIFA is proud to participate in [Fair Employment Week](#). CAUT has declared October 23 – 27, 2017 as fair employment week. The purpose of this designated week is to highlight the contributions of contract academic staff and draw attention to the challenges faced by them such as insecure work, low pay, limited or no benefits and little support for their teaching.

Though the number of academic staff hired on temporary contracts has increased by 200 percent since 1999, there continues to be no official, publicly-available data on the working conditions of contract academic staff.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) is undertaking the first ever national study on the experiences of contract academic staff. The survey will gather data on a range of objective qualities of contract positions, such as wages, hours of work, office space, and teaching loads, as well as on the experiences of a contract academic.

If you taught in the 2016-2017 academic year in a non-permanent position, please fill out the survey by November 1. The survey consists of approximately 60 questions—some multiple-choice and some open-ended—that should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The survey can be accessed at survey.caut.ca.

If you have any questions, please contact the lead researcher, Dr. Karen Foster at 902-494-6751 or Karen.Foster@dal.ca (email is most reliable).

In addition to the survey, you can also join the campaign. Here is a link/site for the campaign pledge: <http://makeitfair.caut.ca/pledge>. For other resources such as some tips for organizing a successful Fair Employment Week event and printable posters, go to: <http://makeitfair.caut.ca/resources>.

CAUT also hosted a Contract Academic Staff Conference in Toronto on October 20th and 21st. A description of the conference is available at http://act.caut.ca/contract_academic_staff_conference.



Upcoming ACIFA Dates

October 20, 2017	Executive Council	Calgary
October 21, 2017	Presidents' Council & NAC Meeting	Calgary
January 26, 2018	Executive Council	Calgary
January 27, 2018	Negotiations Advisory Committee & Professional Affairs Committee	Calgary
March 16, 2018	Executive Council	Edmonton
March 17, 2017	Presidents' Council	Edmonton
April 13, 2018	Executive Council	Via Conference Call
May 13, 2018	Presidents' Council	Jasper
May 15, 2018	Annual General Meeting	Jasper
May 13-15, 2018	Negotiations Advisory Committee & Professional Affairs Committee	Jasper
May 13-15, 2018	Spring Conference	Jasper

The upcoming ACIFA Spring Conference is at Jasper Park Lodge

Find Your North STAR



The call for presentations has gone out. **If you are interested in presenting a paper at the conference, please submit your proposal at the ACIFA website: [Call for submissions](#)**

Registrations are open too! Register today at: [ACIFA 2018 Registration and Payment](#)

Looking forward to seeing you there!