

President's Message

By Ken Heather

2020 was a difficult year in post-secondary education. It began with budget cuts and layoffs, and continued into a global pandemic that impacted every aspect of higher education.

If we all stay vigilant and adhere to the guidelines, perhaps by spring of 2021, we will start to turn the corner to get back to some kind of normalcy.

Let me start by saying it is an honour and a privilege to be elected to the position of ACIFA president.

We will need to be strong and united more than we ever have before to assure that our voices are heard when it comes to the welfare of faculty in all the associations we represent.

Post-secondary 2020/21

2020 has been difficult for postsecondary as a whole and, unfortunately, 2021 is not shaping up to be much better. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic and as we all know, things changed drastically at that moment. Classes were moved online or suspended...and not enough praise has been given to all of you for the tremendous work that you did in a period of three days, sometimes onto platforms that were not intended for education, allowing your students so they could continue their education and finish their term. I commend all of you for your dedication to your students and your teaching.

As the term completed, the colleges and institutions announced that all programs would be delivered online except for some practicums and face-to-face labs for the fall term of 2020. This meant a lot of you spent summer holiday time preparing for the fall term, once again showing your dedication to students and your programs. For those of us who did not have offices or workspaces at home, the creation of these became a necessity. I know this has been a challenge for some and continues to be a challenge. Unfortunately, some of the colleges and institutions have passed on the costs of operating home offices or workspaces to faculty.

In early November, most colleges and institutions announced that the winter term would have more students on campus in certain programs, leaving the rest of the programs to remain online. Just recently, it was announced that face-to-face classes would be pushed back until January 11, 2021, at most post-secondary institutions.

We will have to wait and see how this proceeds.



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Collective Bargaining

With 12 of our 13 member institutions at some point in bargaining, we will work together at all the negotiation tables to be strong for our members and their working conditions.

Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs

Another troubling development that is on the horizon is the *Alberta 2030* post-secondary review.

This review is to be completed, by January 2021 and the recommendations made to the minister shortly thereafter.

I have been ACIFA representative on the guiding coalition of this review. I can safely say it has been an interesting process and concerning at the same time. There were 22 people appointed to this coalition, but only three faculty from across the province, which made it difficult to have our concerns heard. The consulting firm made it very clear through the whole process that every decision had to be made within the financial restraints that the province finds itself at this time. This made it very difficult to plan for the future without a greater investment into post-secondary now. Without proper and sustainable funding now and in the future for post-secondary in this province, I am very concerned for the future of students' education. ACIFA will need to continue to have a strong voice at all levels of government to assure they continue to hear our concerns regarding post-secondary education in the province of Alberta.

CAUT Parliament Hill Days

I participated in the CAUT Parliament Hill Day's campaign. This is a campaign through which CAUT and its associated members speak to MPs from across the country, regarding post-secondary. The purpose of these meetings is to enlighten MPs from across the country about some of the concerns that post-secondary institutions have, i.e. sustainable funding, a national post-secondary education strategy, adequate research funding and accessible education for low and middle income Canadian.

Meeting with the Demetrios Nicolaides (Minister of Advanced Education)

11 association presidents met with the minister on December 2, 2020. We discussed a number of topics with the minister. The minutes of this meeting are within this newsletter.

Moving Forward

The start of the 2021 academic year will be challenging on many on fronts, as a number of things will start to unfold that will affect post-secondary in the province of Alberta, and ACIFA will continue to be the voice of its members' concerns that affect post-secondary education in the province.

I will continue to work collaboratively with all the associations, big or small, to represent the concerns of their members.

Academica's Year in Review: Higher Ed in 2020

[**READ THE YEAR IN REVIEW**](#)

Academica's Year in Review: Indigenous Education in 2020

[**READ THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION YEAR IN REVIEW**](#)



I must take this moment to recognize the outstanding work that our previous executive members did for this association.



Lisa Saxby, Chair of Negotiation's Advisory Committee

Lisa served as chair of this committee for four years (2016-20). Under her leadership, the chairs of all our negotiations teams were able to meet, discuss, and share information, which assisted the negotiations around the province to be better-prepared and informed. She was also instrumental in bringing the CAUT negotiation chair to Edmonton to provide a workshop for association negotiation teams.

Lisa was very thoughtful and gave great insight to any discussion at the executive table. I want to thank Lisa for her outstanding work and years of service on ACIFA executive.



Keith Smyth, Chair of Professional Affairs Committee

Keith served as chair of this committee for three years (2017-20). Keith was instrumental in streamlining the nomination process for the ACIFA's outstanding instructor's awards, which are recognized each year. His enthusiasm for this committee work was second to none! Keith's can-do attitude will be missed at the executive table.

Thank you, Keith, for your time and effort.



Les Sayer, Interim President (July – October 2020)

Because ACIFA was unable to host our annual general meeting in May, due to COVID-19, Les Sayer, ACIFA VP Executive, assumed the role of interim president until our AGM in the fall.

During this time, Les was instrumental in orchestrating ACIFA's ability to host an AGM and assuring the operations of ACIFA continued to operate as smoothly as possible.

I want to thank Les for taking on this role and the great job he did in the interim.



Anna Beukes, President ACIFA

Last, but definitely not least, Anna was the ACIFA president for the last four years (2016-20).

During her four years as president, she had many achievements. I would like to list some of the tremendous work that she did for this association.

She responded to major consultations that government was seeking input on:

- changes to the Post-Secondary Learning Act
- tuition freeze
- the funding model
- the budget review
- performance-based funding
- changes to the Labour Code

Among other things, she was instrumental in bringing in CAUT, OPSEU and CUFA to help ACIFA better understand the impacts of Bill 7; brought leadership and guidance in the development of the ACIFA defence fund; brought forward a motion to CAUT Council for their support in the event of a strike/lockout, which was supported unanimously by the CAUT Council; and was instrumental in hiring Brian McCulloch (labour relations officer) and Victoria Kirchner (executive assistant) to ensure the ACIFA functions are running efficiently and effectively.

I know I have big, funky shoes to fill (Anna always wears funky shoes!). She has given me great guidance and insight to the role as president of ACIFA; for that, I cannot thank her enough. ACIFA is a much stronger organization because of the leadership of Anna Beukes.

We sincerely thank you for all the work that you have done for ACIFA. Thank you, Anna.

In solidarity,

Ken Heather, ACIFA President



MEETING WITH ASEC



On October 29, 2020, Ken Heather met with the Alberta Students Executive Council. ASEC extended the invitation to ACIFA regarding the opportunity for consultation with the ASEC student delegates for their “ASEC Advocacy Week”. ASEC shared with him their Advocacy Priorities:

- Economic Recovery Through Education
- Meaningful Consultation
- Healthy and Safe Campuses
- Non-Traditional Learner Accessibility

They engaged in open and meaningful conversation regarding the Alberta Colleges Economic Recovery Task Force Document which was created by a number of college presidents, business leaders, and government representatives.

Some of the topics they discussed were

- work-integrated learning (WIL) model of delivery
- micro-credentialing
- volunteer work recognized as part of education
- on-line learning materials (textbooks) and copyright laws

ASEC believes that faculty are an integral part to provide the best educational experience possible for students in the province of Alberta.

ASEC wants to continue to collaborate with ACIFA to raise concerns, regarding students’ learning needs and to bring forward solutions and ideas that would help these needs.

We look forward to continuing to work with them, as well.



Ken Heather
President, Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculty Association
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November 3rd, 2020

Re: Thank You

Dear Ken,

On behalf of the Alberta Students’ Executive Council, I would like to offer my sincere thanks for taking the time to meet with Alberta’s college, trade, university, and polytechnic post-secondary student leaders.

We are extremely grateful for the robust conversation we had regarding the challenges post-secondary students face and our policy priorities, especially our vision for the economic recovery through post-secondary education.

We are looking forward to continuing to work with you in our mission to improve Alberta’s post-secondary education system.

Thank you again,

Emmanuel Barker
Director of Public Relations and Advocacy
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MEET OUR NEW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ken Heather - President



Ken continues to teach in the Apprenticeship Welding program at Red Deer College where he has been an instructor for the last 24 years.

In addition to teaching, Ken has dedicated time to representing faculty in multiple roles within The Red Deer College Faculty Association and Provincially as a member of Presidents Council and VP External for ACIFA. For the last 6 years, he has been the President of the Faculty Association of Red Deer College.

Ken values deeply the work and dedication of all faculty members and fundamental value of Post-Secondary Education locally, provincially and nationally.

Ken's dedication to community is seen in his pride and dedication to working with the SkillsAlberta Canada organization, representing Canada as the Welding Expert for Team Canada at the WorldSkills competitions.

Whenever it is possible, you will find him on a golf course.

Gail Hiar – VP External



Gail has been an adult educator for over 20 years working with students in many different college programs. Within that time, she has worked as an English instructor, curriculum designer, student writing support, and program administrator; she has an extensive background working with diverse student populations, including non-traditional, at-risk, and ethnically diverse students. Gail has been using a blended model of online and face-to-face classes, as well as on-line synchronous and asynchronous courses for over 14 years.

Her Doctorate of Education specialized in College Teaching and Learning, and focused on non-traditional college students' on-line engagement. She has also actively worked with faculty to support their face-to-face, blended, and online teaching practice.



Brooklin Schneider- VP Professional Affairs Committee



Brooklin has been teaching writing skills at colleges since 2006 , starting at what was formerly Humber College in Toronto. In 2012, her career took her to Olds College, and then in 2015, further north to NorQuest College, where she is an instructor in the University Transfer department.

When she's not grading essays, Brooklin enjoys gardening, paddle boarding, and spending time with both her resident and foster dogs.

Ryan Kaupp- VP Negotiations Advisory Committee



Ryan is a true Southern Alberta boy. Born in Lethbridge and growing up on the farm 40 kilometers south of Lethbridge was great. After graduating from High School, he took up the trade of Heavy Equipment Technician, getting his training at SAIT but finishing his fourth year at Lethbridge College. He was in the trade from 1980 till 1999 when he retired and started his career teaching Heavy Equipment Technician at Lethbridge College.

Since the start of his teaching career, he has served on the negotiating committee, of which he has been the longest standing member of that committee in the history of the College. He has been the Chair for six contracts, and now we will negotiate his seventh.

It has been a very rewarding adventure, and he has learned a lot along the way, working with very special individuals over the years. He was also ACIFA NAC chair for two terms prior to Lisa Saxby taking over and commends Lisa on her outstanding job.

Ryan looks forward to working with ACIFA as well as all memberships over the next term as the NAC Chair and thanks all in advance for their support. We are all going to go through these tough times, and we will be stronger working and collaborating together.



NOTES FROM THE MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF ADVANCED EDUCATION



On December 2, 2020 at 4:45 pm, seventeen ACIFA delegates had a meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education, the Hon. Demetrios Nicolaides.

What follows are the notes from that meeting. On the agenda were the following topics for discussion:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Bill 7 | 6. Faculty Mental Health |
| 2. Labour Code | 7. Alberta 2030 |
| 3. Bargaining Mandates | 8. PSLA Changes |
| 4. Performance-Based Metrics | 9. Modernizing Apprenticeship |
| 5. Budget Cuts | |

Discussion

1. Please update us on whether there has been any change in position on Bill 7 and our ability to retain sole bargaining rights. (Ken Heather)

Minister Nicolaides said that he's confirming with the minister of labour on this topic. He said that it's not an issue that they've lost sight of, but it is moving forward slower than they had originally anticipated and would like. He is moving it forward and moving it down through the policy process which may take a little while given the dynamics that they have in front of them with respect to COVID-19, the need restart the economy, and other priorities. However, it is moving forward, and it is his intent to implement changes that would allow the associations to maintain their status as statutory bargaining agents. They are working on securing a spot on the legislative calendar for the upcoming spring session which would begin in February and go until May. That would be the window that they can capitalize and bring forward changes to the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, and also bring forward changes to the Apprenticeship Act to modernize apprenticeship education, so there might be a window to do it there as well.

Ken Heather said that he's happy to hear that it's moving along and that we definitely look forward to that piece of legislation to peruse when it gets to that point in time. He asked, "With the *Alberta 2030*, do you believe that there will be other legislation that comes out in the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* with that, too?"



Minister Nicolaides responded, “Absolutely. When we finalize the *Alberta 2030* strategic plan that will undoubtedly contain elements of change to the post-secondary landscape, we will need to bring forward legislation to implement. I don’t know whether the strategy will be to bring forward amendments simply to the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* or whether we might need more of a post-secondary omnibus style of bill that touches on various pieces of legislation within the context of post-secondary change. There will undoubtedly be legislation that we’ll need to bring forward to amend and modify the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*.”

2. Is there any proposed legislation being tabled to remove institutions from the provisions of the labour code? This is of particular significance to us now that the labour code has changed to allow government interference in bargaining. (Alex Caldararu)

Minister Nicolaides said that he does not believe there are any plans to make any changes to the labour code and the relationship of faculty associations with how they sit and exist within the labour code. The only thing that they are exploring and moving along is related to the authority of faculty associations as statutory bargaining agents and maintaining that authority.

3. Can you please share with us the context of the mandate letters being sent to our institutions. It is difficult to engage in fair bargaining when we are unable to see government’s mandate. (Blair Howes)

Minister Nicolaides said that he’ll have to ask his staff to follow up with us. As was mentioned at the beginning, there are changes to how government conducts bargaining and what that looks like. Collective bargaining across the public sector is being led by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury Board, and primarily through the provincial bargaining coordination office. Therefore, he would have to defer to them to get a precise answer as to whether or not they intend to make those mandate letters public. He will ask his staff to circle back to them and get a specific answer to that question and get us an answer at a later time.

4. Regarding performance-based metrics, can you provide us with an update?
 - a. Which metrics will be implemented first?
 - b. What are the timelines?
 - c. What changes are there to the metrics from the original ones?
 - d. Is the government considering looking at the faculty:administration ratio as we previously discussed as a metric? (Blair Howes)

Minister Nicolaides replied, “Which metrics will we use? That is still undetermined, largely because of COVID-19 and all of the other issues we have on our plate. As you know, because of the pandemic, we’ve delayed the implementation of performance-based funding, and now we are at a time where we will be finalizing the *Alberta 2030* strategic plan. I want to make sure that we do this in a thoughtful manner, and not move forward implementing performance-based funding if we will soon have the *Alberta 2030* strategic plan, and they are misaligned. I would like us to be able to move forward with, and implement, performance-based funding for the upcoming fiscal year. In the new fiscal year, we’ll be redistributing the Campus Alberta Grant to all institutions, and I would like performance-based funding to be in place for the distribution of the grant. Perhaps we take a bit of a



different approach just given the pandemic and the 2030 strategic plan. Perhaps we do a one-year test and look at the implementation road map of the 2030 strategic plan and then finalize the metrics and enter into the investment management agreements. I do want to have at least one or two metrics in place for the upcoming distribution of the grant which will occur on April 1 and the new fiscal year. In terms of metrics, if we have just one or two as a little bit of a testing phase, perhaps we have one around enrollment or work-integrated learning, one that is straight forward and easy to administer. In terms of changes from original, I would say one of the biggest changes is I would like us to have fewer rather than a larger number of metrics. I think within this context, less is more. I don't want to create an environment where we have a scattered variety of metrics that all point to different priorities that then create consternation for the institution. I think it's better to have a smaller number of very focused metrics that evaluate two or three key priorities, and move from there. I really love the faculty to admin ratio, brought forward by this group. There is still concern as we build the performance-based model. For me, I would like to see a metric that accurately captures a cost-effective environment for our institutions. What is the best one to do that? Is it cost per FLE? Cost per student? Is that a right metric that we can use? One could argue that doesn't really address cost efficiency because as an institution, I can aggressively drive enrollment, which isn't a bad thing, but then I can get my cost per FLE down and maybe not address inefficiencies in my cost structure. So, then I think maybe the faculty to admin ratio is more appropriate because now we're really getting at the core of potential inefficient spending. How much are you spending on administration vs faculty and teaching resources? I can't say one way or the other, right now, whether it will be a metric, but as I think I've just demonstrated, it is certainly front of mind in terms of thinking and decision making as we put this together."

Blair Howes said that ultimately it's the dollars in the classroom. That's what the grant is earmarked for, and that's where it should be going. The minister agreed.

5. What budget cuts to institutional funding do you anticipate in the next budget? (Natali Rodrigues)

Minister Nicolaides responded, "As of last year, we've given institutions a good snapshot of what they can expect over the next three years in terms of their funding. That being said, the dynamics have changed quite a bit, and I think there is still a lot of discussions and thinking within government about how we're going to get ourselves out of this fiscal situation and mess that we're in. One thing is clear: we can't cut our way out. The magnitude of what we are facing as a province is too significant. We need to look at all sides of the equation here. Nothing has been decided, but we are under some immense pressure. We need to find the right approach to get our finances on track. In 2014, the government of Alberta brought in approximately \$6 billion in revenue from oil and gas royalties, and today we are bringing in about \$700 million. Overall, revenue for the government is down \$11 billion. We have to figure out how we are going to manage through this. We may have to look at further reductions. There will be some very difficult decisions and continued discussions we need to explore."

Natali Rodrigues said that we all understand that this is a long term issue, and as she looks at some of the studies around education and the return on investment to the province and taxation base, she finds that education is one of the key tools to pull us out of this and to make other kinds of economic opportunities possible.



Minister Nicolaides responded, “I agree, and again I think in that context and in that environment, it kind of strengthens the importance of performance-based funding or other mechanisms to ensure tax payers’ investment and money that is being spent in post-secondary is helping achieve intended outcomes that are going to help facilitate economic growth and GDP activity to help pull our province out of this hole. We have to get a lot more precise about what we are spending, what we are spending it on, and what return is on those dollars.”

6. There has been a significant investment in student mental health over the past few years. What funding commitment to faculty mental health issues can we expect? (Gail Hiar)

Minister Nicolaides said, “I think that’s a very important question, and I think we all understand the mental health challenges that this pandemic and this environment are placing on all Albertans. The government, at this stage, isn’t planning or thinking about a targeted mental health funding for post-secondary faculty members. That being said, the government does recognize the mental health challenges that all Albertans are undergoing during this time, and we have supplemented the amount of money that we are spending on mental health across the province by \$25 million, and I think the ministry of mental health and addiction may still have open proposals to access that new injection of the \$25 million. It’s on an application basis for different organizations to apply and access some of those dollars. I can have my chief of staff double check that to see that that application process is still open, and I would encourage you to apply and access some of those dollars that are available to support the mental health of your members.”

7. At this time, we are waiting anxiously for the *Alberta 2030* townhall announcements. Do you know when those are to take place, and as this moves forward, what are the timelines that you believe that the government will be ready to share the findings with public? (Ken Heather)

Minister Nicolaides said, “We haven’t tried to keep the findings or thinking confidential. We’ve had over 40 round table discussions, and we have encouraged student organizations and faculty organizations to have discussions about *Alberta 2030*. In more recent round tables, there have been discussions over the draft vision for the post-secondary system. There have been discussions around the draft goals for the post-secondary system. Your point is taken, and it’s good to see draft and preliminary ideas, but it’s a lot more effective to be able to provide feedback and commentary when something is a little more further along. We were originally planning and anticipating to have the townhalls in December, but we’re not quite there yet in terms of the *Alberta 2030* strategy. We’ve decided to push those townhalls until January so that we can give the oven more time to bake the 2030 plan and we can come to the townhalls with the roadmap and strategy that’s more complete and presents a much more complete picture. Further timelines to that: I believe we are still planning a final post-secondary summit later in January to tie the effort to a close. We will need to then, from a government standpoint, work on some of those findings, recommendations, and policy implications that will lead us to legislation in the spring. Exactly when, I’m not sure...could be March, April, or May when we can implement the first steps of the 2030 roadmap.”

8. Minister Nicolaides, you mentioned that there will be other changes to the PSLA. I’m wondering if you could shed a little insight into what are some of the leading proposals that we might be able to see. I’m wondering, in the interest of transparency and openness, if there’s going to be any sort of disclosure on how much consultation there will be on the McKinsey report and all of the other cognitive reports that have gone on into this? If we are going to be held to the account of being told there is cost restructurings, I think it’s only fair to expect the provincial government to lead by example. There hasn’t been a whole lot of disclosure on that front, so I’m wondering if that’s something that



might be shared with us. You'd mentioned earlier that there could be funding or reductions or restructuring of funding over the next three years. I'm wondering if you could shed some light on, generally speaking, what that could look like for the entire sector. (Alex Caldararu)

Minister Nicolaides responded, "One of the things we've explored in a lot of detail as part of the 2030 discussion is governance of our post-secondary system. We've asked a lot of questions both through interviews, townhalls, and surveys about how our post-secondary system is structured. We've also looked at examples from other jurisdictions. I anticipate the legislation will bring forward changes to the governance structure of our system. Right now, we operate under a six-sector model, and all institutions have a home in that particular sector. I would anticipate some significant revisions to the sectors that create more streamlining. There has also been a lot of conversation about coordinating and strategic oversight bodies that can help govern and manage our post-secondary system. In our system, at the moment, some of the challenges that we recognize and are trying to address, are instances of strengthening institutional collaboration and effectiveness by working together. In environments where institutions have mandates that are very similar, it makes sense that we are bringing a higher degree of coordination between those institutions so that we are not creating unnecessary duplication, and we are using resources as effectively as possible. Those would be some of the legislative changes that I would anticipate will come forward as relates to how many sectors do we have, how are those sectors governed, and potential other governance changes. Legislation also stipulates how boards are appointed, and the degree of control that government has over institutions. I anticipate there may be changes in that regard as well. I don't know if government appointing the significant majority of individuals on a board makes a lot of sense. There is some financial constraints within the legislation; government has to approve institutions to engage in certain activities, and so there could be changes there that would reduce red tape and allow institutions to get on with their affairs without needing to go through government.

In terms of the McKinsey Report, all of the details are public and completely transparent. We issued an RFP to find a consultant to help us undertake this work. As part of that process, we awarded McKinsey the successful contract. I believe a lot of those details are available online, and I'm pretty sure you can see that RFP government issued and all of the price tags and details associated with that.

As for budget 2019, we are aiming to bring consolidated expenditures of our system down by about 12% over 4 or 5 years. Things may change in that regard given how the financial situation of the province is changing. I don't know if we need to continue to have the financials of our institutions consolidated with government. I think that presents some of our institutions with some challenges in engaging entrepreneurial activity and managing their own affairs."

9. Minister Nicolaides, you'd said that one of the metrics could be work-integrated learning. This is something that institutions are certainly considering, and I'm curious what that means to you. Are you looking at a broader coop or internship program? (Cheryl Meheden)

Minister Nicolaides said, "On that note, I think we all understand the value and benefit of work-integrated learning and the value it creates for our students. I believe that we need to take steps to give as many students as possible opportunities to participate in work-integrated learning. One of the metrics could be the proportion or percentage or number of students that engage in work-integrated learning prior to graduation. Through performance-based



funding, setting targets inside institutions to work with employers and other groups to increase those numbers so that we have more and more students participating in work integrated learning before they graduate.”

Could you define what you mean by work-integrated learning? I know some institutions use a case study as work-integrated learning and some institutions use an internship. There’s really a broad spectrum. Maybe it’s based on points, maybe it’s as simple as has to be direct employer. A definition of work integrated learning would be very helpful. My second question was about the ratio of teaching cost to admin cost. I think that is a brilliant idea, and I would just like to caution that teaching costs are often padded with other costs, and it would be interesting to look up the amount of money spent on direct teaching vs the amount of money spent supporting direct teaching vs the amount of money spent on admin. (Cheryl Meheden)

Minister Nicolaides responded, “This is one of the challenges, especially with the faculty to admin ratio as a potential metric. It can be defined and reported very differently, and what one institution considers faculty or admin could be very different from another’s. Trying to get the right baseline and standardization across reporting may be tricky, but I do conceptually like the idea of that metric, so I’ll leave it to the experts in my department to see how they can square it away with some of those nuances. I absolutely agree that we need to agree on a definition for work-integrated learning. I don’t think it should be too difficult. I think we can look at other organizations and groups that have a standardized definition that is third party and mutually recognized that we could adopt as a definition. The baseline needs to be agreed upon and established.”

10. You mentioned earlier about an omnibus bill including some changes around apprenticeship and about modernizing apprenticeship. I’m wondering if you could share any insights with us about what that might look like. (Kevin Wiber)

Minister Nicolaides said, “As you may know, last year the Government of Alberta convened an apprenticeship task force to look at apprenticeship education and modernizing it. That final report was delivered to me in October, and as of yesterday, the cabinet approved the report to be publicly released. It should be posted on the government website very shortly, and when it is, I’ll have Jesse send you the link so you can look at the report and see the recommendations that I believe would answer your questions in more detail. Broadly, there are a number of things. There’s a recognition that we need to modernize apprenticeship education. We need to look at a standard definition. We need to look at a mechanism that will allow us to expand the apprenticeship model of education to other occupations. Right now, under the legislation, apprenticeship education is only delivered for skilled trades. I believe more occupations can be taught through apprenticeship learning, so we need to make some legislative changes to make that clear. There’s going to be a lot of legislative changes and reform that’s going to modernize apprenticeship education. Subsequent to that, we will begin an apprenticeship expansion project. I’m not quite sure of the details quite yet, but I think we may look at a model by where we invite employers and post-secondary institutions to bring proposals to government to create new apprenticeships, and then we would provide funding to get those off the ground. I think that we could look at apprenticeships in areas of coding, finance, marketing, and graphic design. You look at a lot of other jurisdictions around the world, and they have hundreds of occupations and professions that are taught by apprenticeship education. In Alberta we have 47, so there’s more that we can do.”



In conjunction with that, do you see the current administrative model for apprenticeship moving to a different office, or do you see it being managed in a different way? (Kevin Wiber)

Minister Nicolaides responded, “I see it remaining with Advanced Education, but I think we can look at and make some changes as to how apprenticeship and trades are governed. I’d be interested in looking at modernizations to the AIT board and other improvements there, so there could be some changes in that regard.”

11. The final question would be, do you have any questions of us? (Ken Heather)

Minister Nicolaides asked, “From the group’s perspective, as we continue or work of building *Alberta 2030*, and a strategic roadmap for the future, what might be the most important elements for you, as ACIFA, that we must make sure is embedded and manifested in the strategic plan?”

Ken Heather replied, “For our member associations, the biggest thing is the autonomy to bargain in good faith with the institutions that we are at, and that both parties are able to sit down and come to some kind of agreed contract that allows us to train and teach the students of Alberta and beyond in a manner that works for both parties.”

Kevin Wiber said, “What my faculty asks for is stability. We want an opportunity to have people work full time in continuing jobs and not have the precarious employment that we have for a large number of our membership right now. We want an opportunity for planning to occur that’s going to reach for a couple years and give us the opportunity to establish programing, and to establish the outcomes that we have to identify as well as the reputation so that the students come to it the way we’d expect it to. Stability for funding, employment, and students so that we can move forward.”

Alex Caldararu said, “One of the things that we would caution against is that a nurse is not a nurse is not a nurse. Tied to that notion of autonomy, is that there are unique characteristics to post-secondary training and education and the labour market within Alberta itself. For example, learning to be a nurse and practicing to be a nurse in Fort McMurray would be very different than downtown Calgary or Edmonton. We urge the government to recognize that while duplication is something that will be looked at, to also recognize that it’s not as simple as just saying we have an accounting program and one in Lethbridge and therefore we can just scrap it. There are nuances to the way the programs are done.”

Ali AL-Asadi replied, “Accessibility is really important. Many students have left us to other institutions outside of Alberta. If we have the numbers, and we can prove that we have the numbers, that program should be offered locally. It pumps money into the economy, it helps students to stay where they are, and it helps students to reinvest themselves into jobs locally.”

Gail Hiar said, “I think I can speak for the majority of my faculty when I say that our faculty would really like to see the money that is earmarked for teaching goes to teaching as opposed to other expenditures that perhaps are not direct to classroom. The majority of the dollars given to post-secondary should be going to making the best learning environment for our students.”



12. Ken Heather concluded by thanking the minister for his time. He wished him well and said that he looks forward to continuing in conversation with him. He suggested we have another meeting when the *Alberta 2030* plan gets finalized.

Minister Nicolaides agreed and said that he is always available for conversation. He said he'd be happy to circle back when the *Alberta 2030* plans are a little clearer, but we don't have to wait until then. He said he'd be very happy to have any conversation in between.

ACIFA 2021 CONFERENCE



The tentative dates for this year's conference are May 9th-11th. We are waiting to confirm with Fairmont Banff Springs as to whether they will be able to host us because of AHS and governmental COVID guidelines. At this time, we ask you to register if you plan on attending, but we will not be taking any registration fees until we know the conference will move forward (we hope to have a final decision by mid-February). We are continuing to receive presentation submissions from all who are interested in presenting at the conference.

Download the submission form [HERE](#).



acifa

Alberta Colleges & Institutes Faculties Association

Annual Spring Conference May 9-11, 2021

Themes for this year include:

Breaking Through to the Top

Explore, participate, and become informed on how you might emerge from the current environment as the best you, while making your students and your classes the best they can be. Learn how to avoid death by zoom, screen fatigue, and develop skills that make the new normal an opportunity for growth!

Getting Through without Breaking Down

Meet the challenges of the environment by discovering ways to recover, renew, and rewire. Explore resiliency, humour, change, growth mindset, and more!

Breaking Ground in Teaching & Learning

Sessions designed to invigorate, inspire, and inform you on both traditional and emerging methods of engaging and inspiring learners. Considerations for this conference theme include best practices, meeting the challenges of a new learning environment, building academic integrity, and more!

Lethbridge College
Faculty Association

Organized by Lethbridge College Faculty Association, and presented by the Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association.



Nominations for ACIFA Awards are Now Open!

Nominating is easier than ever! Information and nomination submissions are now available online at acifa.ca. Nominate your colleagues for the 2020/2021 awards!

Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) refers to taking a systematic look at a teaching and learning practice and recording what was done, why it was done, collecting data, analyzing the data and reflecting on how the results might influence future teaching endeavors. If done carefully and thoughtfully, this type of research can improve an individual's teaching and provide guidance for improvement for others.

Research has the potential to generate genuine and sustained improvements in our colleges and institutes. It gives educators new opportunities to reflect on and assess their teaching; to explore and test new ideas, methods, and materials; to assess how effective the new approaches were; to share feedback with colleagues; and to make decisions about which new approaches to include in their curriculum, instruction, and assessment plans.

The Edmonton Millwoods Lions Club will fund one grant of \$1,000.00 annually for research projects related to improving teaching and learning conducted by members of ACIFA. The award is intended to assist with materials and/or study costs associated with the research project.

Eligibility

This award is open to all members of the Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association (ACIFA). The research project may span part or all of the current academic year but must not exceed that time limit.

Proposal for Research Guidelines

The following information must be included as part of the proposal:

1. Name, address, phone number and e-mail address of researcher(s). If more than one researcher, please identify lead researcher.
2. Name of college or institute you are a member of.
3. Designated teaching assignment and employment category.
4. Title of research project.
5. A description of the plan to share the results with the educational community beyond the requirement of the award.
6. A copy of the research proposal, including the following components:
 - Title of project
 - Purpose
 - Materials to be used in study
 - Data collection plan
 - Process used to analyze and evaluate data
 - Implementation plans
 - Project start and end date
7. Copy of approval from ethics board OR your institution



The Selection Process

Four members, selected on an annual basis from and by the Professional Affairs Committee of ACIFA, will select the final award winner 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.

An effort will be made where possible to avoid assigning committee members to adjudicate applications from members from their own institution in the event of a perceived or real conflict of interest. To protect fairness and impartiality of the review process, committee members have a responsibility to recuse themselves from the process in the event of a perceived or real conflict of interest. In the event of a member recusing themselves, the remaining three (3) members will be permitted to make the final selection, with the input of the PAC Chair (if required).

Mutual Obligations

ACIFA will

- Award the winner of the ACIFA Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award with \$1000 on behalf of the Edmonton Millwoods Lions Club.
- Fund the winner's conference registration, accommodations, and travel expenses for the year in which the research project presentation is given.
- Make an announcement regarding the award in the ACIFA newsletter and on the ACIFA website.

The Award Winner will be expected to

- Attend the ACIFA Annual Conference to accept the Award.
- 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.
- Present their winning submission in a session at the ACIFA Annual Conference the year following the research project's completion.

Application Dates

January 15, 2021 - Applications must be submitted electronically to ACIFA by midnight.

February 2021 - The ACIFA Awards Committee or ACIFA Office will notify the award winner.

The award is sponsored and administered by:

ACIFA
and

The Edmonton Millwoods Lions Club





Distinguished Instructor Award

The aim of the Distinguished Instructor Award is to recognize teachers who exhibit commitment to teaching, learners and learning through a variety of measures. This province-wide award attracts both recognition and a financial award of \$1500 for the faculty member or team and \$500 for the faculty member's faculty association.

Eligibility

The award is open to all ACIFA members who instruct at least one course. The instructor may be someone who instructs learners in any learning platform. A learner is considered any individual who is enrolled in a credit or non-credit course at an ACIFA institution. The nomination may be for an individual or a group/team. Nominations for the award are made by colleagues with the consent of the nominee(s). Nominations must adhere to the *Format for Applications* below. An instructor who wins the award is not eligible for the award for 5 years following the winning of the award. An instructor who has been nominated, but has not won the award, is eligible for resubmission the following year.

The Nomination Process

Upon determining that a faculty member is a qualified candidate for this award, a nominator or nominators will prepare a two to three-page document expressing the nominee's skills and qualities that make them a distinguished instructor. 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

An instructor may qualify for the Distinguished Instructor Award if they demonstrate commitment to learners and learning through a variety of measures:

- Responds to the individual needs of learners in and out of the classroom by respecting the diverse talents and ways of learning.
- Promotes a quality, respectful and positive learning environment by encouraging cooperation among students, and by giving prompt feedback.
- Demonstrates effective and inclusive instruction and learning strategies, including communicating high expectations and encouraging active learning.
- Demonstrates a thorough knowledge of subject matter and strives to keep current in their field of expertise.
- Explores professional development opportunities with interest and enthusiasm.
- Models professional attitudes and values.

Other Qualities. A nominee may possess other qualities that the judging panel may consider in determining the winner:

- Cooperative spirit
- Professional
- Reliable
- Open to new challenges

Supporting Documentation

Nominations may be supported with a collection of resources to showcase the skills and attributes of the nominee:

- Letter of support from colleague(s) (to a maximum of two)
- Name, position, and place of work of nominee



- A description of the nominee's instructional qualities (as described in the selection criteria)
- A description of other qualities
- Student testimonial(s) (to a maximum of three) (Note that students need not be currently enrolled in the nominee's course(s).)

Format for Applications:

Please provide information on the nomination form that includes:

1. Up to two supporting letters describing the nominee's instructional qualities and other qualities (as described in the selection criteria). 2-3-page limit plus appendices.
2. Up to three student testimonials supporting the nominee's instructional qualities and other qualities (as described in the selection criteria). Up to 2 pages.

The Selection Process

Four members, selected on an annual basis from and by the Professional Affairs Committee of ACIFA, will select the final award winner 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.

An effort will be made where possible to avoid assigning committee members to adjudicate applications from members from their own institution in the event of a perceived or real conflict of interest. To protect fairness and impartiality of the review process, committee members have a responsibility to recuse themselves from the process in the event of a perceived or real conflict of interest. In the event of a member recusing themselves, the remaining three (3) members will be permitted to make the final selection, with the input of the PAC Chair (if required).

Mutual Obligations

The ACIFA Awards Committee will undertake to award the winner of Distinguished Instructor Award with:

- an announcement in the ACIFA newsletter,
- \$1500 for the winner and another \$500 to the winner's faculty association,
- a formal presentation at the ACIFA Annual Conference, and
- an announcement on the ACIFA website.

The Award winner will be expected to:

- Attend the ACIFA Annual Conference to accept the Award and present a conference session. ACIFA will cover the conference registration, accommodations, and travel expenses for the winner.
- Submit for publication in the ACIFA newsletter a description of the commitment they have made to learners and learning.

Application Dates

January 15, 2021 - Applications must be submitted electronically to ACIFA by midnight.

February 2021 - The ACIFA Awards Committee or ACIFA Office will notify the award winner.

*The award is sponsored and administered by:
ACIFA
and Johnson Insurance*





Innovation in Teaching Award

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

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 instructor who wins the award is not eligible for the award for 5 years. An instructor who has been nominated, but has not won the award, is eligible for resubmission the following year.

The Nomination Process

Upon determining that a faculty member is a qualified candidate for this award, the nominator(s) will prepare a two to three-page document in accordance with selection criteria in this document. The nomination forms are to be submitted to the member's association.

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:

Submit a 2- to 3- page document 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. Name and signature of a nominator
6. Any supporting documentation to be attached as appendices



The Selection Process

Four members, selected on an annual basis from and by the Professional Affairs Committee of ACIFA, will select the final award winner 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.

An effort will be made where possible to avoid assigning committee members to adjudicate applications from members from their own institution in the event of a perceived or real conflict of interest. To protect fairness and impartiality of the review process, committee members have a responsibility to recuse themselves from the process in the event of a perceived or real conflict of interest. In the event of a member recusing themselves, the remaining three (3) members will be permitted to make the final selection, with the input of the PAC Chair (if required).

Mutual Obligations

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

- an announcement in the ACIFA newsletter,
- \$1500 for the winner and another \$500 to the winner's faculty association,
- a formal presentation at the ACIFA Annual Conference, and
- coverage of expenses for the winner to attend the Annual ACIFA Conference to receive their award.

The Award winner will be expected to:

- attend the ACIFA Annual Conference to accept the Award,
- 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,
- present their winning submission in a session at the ACIFA Annual Conference.

Application Dates

January 15, 2021 - Applications must be submitted electronically to ACIFA by midnight.

February 2021 - The ACIFA Awards Committee or ACIFA Office will notify the award winner.

The award is sponsored and administered by:

ACIFA

and Johnson Insurance





ACIFA CLIMATE SURVEY

We have extended the climate survey deadline to January 29th, 2021. If you have not received your link, please contact admin@acifa.ca.

It is a highly valuable tool for your Association:

- It enables your local FA to hear members' views concerning working conditions and attitudes within your institution.
- This knowledge provides your FA with a strong foundation to assist them in discussions with administration regarding key areas of concern.
- The continuity from year to year of the 13 core questions allows associations to track changes.
- The comparative, cross-institutional score chart shows system-wide results from across the province.

The survey is **SECURE**:

- We use SurveyMonkey.com, a leading survey tool on the Web.
- The survey is completely anonymous. IP addresses are NOT being logged, nor are any personal identifiers.
- The survey is SSL protected so that data is collected in a totally encrypted environment.

When you receive the link from your Association, please take the time to complete the survey and let your opinion be heard. For your reference, here are the core survey questions; your Association may choose to add some of its own:

1. My institution demonstrates a strong commitment to improving my teaching skills.
2. My institution demonstrates a strong commitment to improving my discipline-specific knowledge.
3. I have enough time to attend to my professional development needs.
4. Senior administration communicates openly with faculty.
5. I am informed in a timely manner about important changes that affect me.
6. Input from faculty is sought AND seriously considered in decision-making at my institution.
7. Senior administration understands day-to-day challenges faced by instructors.
8. When making decisions, this institution refers to one or all of: a mission statement, a statement of goals, or a statement of values.
9. Outstanding performance by instructors is rewarded.
10. My institution demonstrates a strong commitment to my health and well being.
11. Academic council has a meaningful impact on academic decisions.
12. The president of this institution provides effective leadership.
13. I have the resources I need to do my job effectively.

There are an additional 5 COVID-19 related questions on this year's survey.





ACIFA IMPORTANT DATES OF 2021

2021

January

29 (Friday)	Executive Council Meeting	Online Meeting
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March

12 (Friday)	Executive Council Meeting	Online Meeting
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13 (Saturday)	Presidents' Council Meeting	Online Meeting
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April

17 (Saturday)	Executive Council Meeting	Online Meeting
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2021 Annual Conference, Banff Springs Hotel

May 9 (Sunday)	Presidents' Council Meeting	Banff Springs Hotel
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	Negotiations Advisory Committee	Banff Springs Hotel
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	Professional Affairs Committee	Banff Springs Hotel
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May 11 (Tuesday)	Annual General Meeting	Banff Springs Hotel
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May 9-11	ACIFA Spring Conference	Banff Springs Hotel
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(Sunday to Tuesday)		
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Future ACIFA Annual Conferences 2022 – 2024

2022	May 8	Hosted by Lakeland College Faculty Association at Jasper Park Lodge
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2023	May 7	Hosted by Alberta University of the Arts Faculty Association at Chateau Lake Louise
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2024	May 11	Hosted by NAIT Academic Staff Association at Jasper Park Lodge
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ACIFA MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Alberta University of the Arts Faculty Association

Grande Prairie Regional College Academic Staff 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

Contact ACIFA at admin@acifa.ca, or 780-423-4440

Website: www.acifa.ca

Come visit us at our office in the Alberta Teachers' Association building:

317, 11010 142 St. NW

Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1

Did you know you can find the following on the ACIFA website?

Association Newsletters

Collective Agreements

Information about ACIFA Awards

Copies of Submissions to the Government from ACIFA

and much more



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Alberta Colleges & Institutes Faculties Association



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Alberta Colleges & Institutes Faculties Association

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