

FACULTY CIRCUIT

March 2005

Alberta Colleges & Institutes
Faculties Association

acifa

Serving college and technical institute faculty

Bill 1 'Access to the Future Act' Creates PSE Endowment Fund

The March 2nd Speech from the Throne presented some details of the provincial government's proposed initiatives on post-secondary education, notably the 'Access to the Future Act' (Bill 1), which establishes an endowment fund of up to \$3 billion from future provincial surpluses to support innovation and excellence in the post-secondary system in Alberta.

Premier Klein, who had earlier announced that, as a 'centennial gift' to students, the Alberta government would assume the cost of this year's tuition increases at post-secondary institutions across the province, was again quoted as saying that 'strengthening the post-secondary education system' is the government's highest priority. 'Albertans have told us that now that the debt is gone, they want part of future surpluses directed to higher learning in the province. That's exactly what we're going to do,' Mr. Klein said.

Apart from anything else, Bill 1, as tabled, is remarkable for the language of its Preamble, which echoes recent public advocacy campaigns in committing the government to ensuring 'that all qualified and motivated Albertans have the opportunity to participate in high-quality advanced education,' while supporting innovation 'to enhance access, to remove financial and non-financial barriers to participation, and to make the learning experience more successful and rewarding.'

The proposed PSE endowment, to be called the 'Access to the Future Fund,' will be allocated from future surplus revenues 'as considered appropriate by the Minister of Finance,' to a maximum of \$3 billion, with 4.5% of the total allocation available annually for expenditure by the Minister of Advanced Education, on the advice of an 'Access Advisory Council' set up under the new Act.

The purpose of the Fund, as Bill 1 makes clear, is 'to support innovation and excellence that enhances and

expands opportunities for Albertans to participate in accessible, affordable and high-quality advanced education opportunities.' To that end, the Fund will provide innovation seed money, as well as matching grants, intended to foster and promote quality learning and instruction, as well as the development, attraction and retention of faculty, staff and graduate students, among other initiatives.

Accessibility and affordability are highlighted in the new legislation. As previously announced, an 'affordability review' will re-visit the tuition fee policy, as part of a larger, 'comprehensive' consultation on access and affordability issues. The 'Access to the Future Act' makes specific reference to the identification and establishment of enrolment targets and minimum entrance requirements, in addition to a single-point application system for the whole system, a simplified application system for scholarships, bursaries and other financial assistance, as well as plans to increase participation in PSE of 'disadvantaged' individuals.

The new Act also earmarks up to \$1 billion more from future unbudgeted surpluses for the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund, which is designed to encourage excellence by recognizing outstanding achievement. Also, over time, a further \$500 million will be injected into the Alberta Heritage Science and Engineering Research Endowment.

Other post-secondary initiatives announced in the Throne Speech include: a new graduate and fellowship program, which will award about \$3 million to some 300 Masters and Ph.D. students; support for development of the 'Lois Hole Campus Alberta Digital Library,' which will make holdings of individual PSE institutions available to all students and faculty across Alberta; and investment in new apprenticeship certification programs and apprenticeship training initiatives, particularly for aboriginal people, with a focus on areas experiencing skills shortages.

Meanwhile, it is expected that much-anticipated increases to the government's base operating grants to PSE institutions will be announced in the provincial Budget in April.

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The Labour Scene

as seen by
Terry Sway, ACIFA Labour Relations Officer

It's a quiet year provincially with respect to collective bargaining. That is, only three of the ACIFA member associations (Bow Valley College, Medicine Hat College and Alberta College of Art & Design) are going to, or have, served notice to bargain for the new agreements to replace those that expire on June 30, 2005.

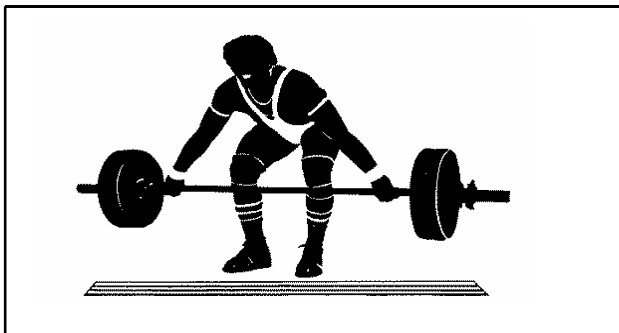
One explanation for the "quiet" period may be the death of the one-year agreement. It doesn't seem that long ago that one- and two-year agreements were the most popular, and three-year agreements were quite rare. Currently there are no one-year term agreements, and there are as many three-year terms as there are two-year terms. There could be any number of reasons to explain the shift to longer terms, but the length of term does not appear to affect the overall outcome. In other words, two-year agreements are averaging slightly better than 8% salary increases cumulatively, and three-year terms are slightly better than 12%.

Another factor influencing longer terms might be increased workloads. Obviously the longer the term of the agreement, the less often faculty must go to the table. It's becoming increasingly more difficult to get "volunteers" to step forward and represent their associations at the bargaining table. For those of you that have been there, I'm sure you'll agree, it isn't as much fun as you were led to believe. Due to limited resources, most members of faculty bargaining teams are forced to participate in addition to their instructional responsibilities, not instead of. As all of you know, the days are already full with teaching loads and out of classroom activities.

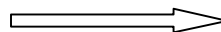
In addition to the three associations commencing bargaining this year, there are three associations still going since last year. The collective agreements of Grant MacEwan College, Mount Royal College and SAIT all expired on June 30, 2004. So far, only SAIT - SAFA have set the dates for interest arbitration. The dates are June 14, 15 and 16, 2005.

If you have any questions or comments on the above or any labour issue, please forward your correspondence to me at the ACIFA office.

-- Terry Sway



2004 Climate Survey Results



Each year, ACIFA conducts a survey of its members across the province to obtain their views on working conditions and attitudes within their respective institutions.

The relatively high response rate from our members, and the continuity from year to year of the thirteen questions asked system-wide, provide a strong foundation for staff associations in their discussions with administrations regarding key areas of concern.

The survey asks academic staff members to indicate their level of agreement with thirteen statements (see below), on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. A score of 5 indicates strong agreement; a score of 1 indicates strong disagreement; while a score of 3 is considered neutral.

A cross-institutional chart of the results of the 2004 Climate Survey appears opposite. Mean scores for two previous years are provided for purposes of comparison.

Province-Wide Climate Survey Questions

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.

ACIFA 2004 Climate Survey Results

Institution	Year	%	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
ACIFA	2004	29%	3.4	3.0	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.5	2.4	3.1	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.1
Provincial averages	2003	33	3.3	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.4	3.2	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0
	2002	34	3.4	3.1	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.5	3.3	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.2	3.0
ACAD	2004	41%	2.7	3.0	2.9	3.5	3.1	3.5	2.8	3.5	2.4	2.6	3.3	3.9	2.9
	2003	33	2.2	2.5	2.6	2.1	2.5	2.6	2.1	3.0	2.1	2.4	3.0	1.8	2.5
	2002	38	2.2	2.4	2.7	2.3	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.8	2.2	2.3	3.2	2.6	2.3
Bow Valley College	2004	28%	3.3	3.1	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.5	3.2	2.6	2.6	3.1	3.2	3.4
	2003	50	3.3	3.2	2.8	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.5	3.5	2.8	2.7	3.2	3.6	3.6
	2002	40	3.2	3.1	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.6	3.2	2.6	2.7	3.1	3.5	3.3
Grant MacEwan	2004	24%	3.8	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.6	3.2	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.4
	2003	20	3.6	3.2	2.8	2.9	3.1	2.8	2.7	3.4	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3
	2002	24	3.9	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.4	3.5
Grande Prairie	2004	56%	2.4	3.0	3.2	2.7	2.9	2.4	2.4	2.9	2.3	3.1	2.5	2.5	3.3
	2003	73	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.6	2.7	2.3	2.2	2.8	2.2	3.0	2.9	2.6	3.1
	2002	56	3.1	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.4	3.0	2.3	3.0	3.1	3.5	3.2
Keyano College	2004	58%	3.3	3.3	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.3	3.1	2.2	2.8	2.9	2.7	3.2
	2003	44	3.1	3.2	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.4	3.1	2.4	2.7	3.0	2.9	3.2
	2002	33	3.4	3.3	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.6	3.5	2.7	2.7	3.3	3.4	3.2
Lakeland College	2004	41%	3.7	3.6	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.2	2.5	3.0	2.9	3.1	2.9
	2003	64	3.8	3.7	2.7	3.0	3.1	2.9	3.0	3.1	2.6	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.1
	2002	74	3.7	3.6	2.9	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.0	3.2	2.6	3.2	2.9	3.4	3.2
Lethbridge College	2004	32%	3.2	2.8	2.3	1.8	2.4	2.0	1.7	2.8	2.6	2.2	2.8	1.8	2.3
	2003	39	3.1	2.6	2.3	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.7	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.8	1.9	2.2
	2002	44	3.4	3.0	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.1	3.3	2.9	2.6	3.0	2.4	2.4
Medicine Hat Coll.	2004	19%	3.2	3.2	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.3	3.3	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.3
	2003	32	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.3	2.8	2.6	3.2	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.4
	2002	44	3.2	3.2	3.1	2.8	3.0	2.7	2.6	3.1	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.3
Mt Royal College	2004	17%	3.5	2.6	2.1	2.2	2.5	2.2	1.9	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.9	3.1	2.9
	2003	16	3.7	2.5	2.2	3.1	3.1	2.7	2.3	3.5	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.7	3.0
	2002	22	3.7	2.7	2.3	2.6	2.8	2.3	2.1	3.3	2.5	2.7	2.9	3.6	3.0
NAIT	2004	20%	3.6	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.8	3.4	3.0	3.1	2.9	3.5	3.2
	2003	28	3.2	2.8	2.6	2.7	3.0	2.6	2.5	3.4	2.8	2.9	2.8	3.3	2.9
	2002	14	3.2	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.4	3.5	3.0	3.0	2.7	3.2	2.8
Northern Lakes	2004	34%	3.2	3.0	2.6	3.1	3.3	3.2	2.9	3.7	3.3	3.8	3.0	3.4	3.7
	2003	54	3.4	3.3	2.7	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.7	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.7	3.4
	2002	53	3.4	3.2	2.6	3.2	3.4	3.2	2.9	3.7	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.2
NorQuest College	2004	53%	3.5	3.4	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.9	3.5	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.6	3.4
	2003	49	3.6	3.5	2.9	3.4	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.5	2.7	3.1	3.1	3.8	3.7
	2002	57	3.7	3.5	2.9	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.8	3.5	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.6	3.4
Olds College	2004	63%	3.9	3.7	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.3	3.3	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.6	2.6
	2003	46	3.8	3.7	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.6	3.5	3.3	3.8	3.3	3.8	3.0
	2002	47	3.9	3.5	2.7	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.2	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.5	2.7
Portage College	2004	89%	3.4	3.3	3.1	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.4	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.7	2.6	3.4
	2003	77	3.5	3.5	3.2	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.6	3.2	2.9	3.0	3.2	2.6	3.6
	2002	91	3.2	3.1	3.1	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.5	3.3	3.1	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.5
SAIT	2004	25%	2.9	2.5	2.2	2.1	2.3	1.9	1.8	2.8	2.1	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.6
	2003	26	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.9	2.1	1.8	1.7	2.7	1.9	2.1	2.4	2.1	2.4
	2002	28	2.9	2.4	2.2	1.9	2.2	1.9	1.8	2.9	2.2	2.2	2.5	2.3	2.5

Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board Top Instructor Awards

The eighth annual Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board Awards were presented at a ceremony at the Hyatt regency Hotel in Calgary on 17 February. The Awards honour and celebrate the commitment of apprentices, employers and instructors in our province's apprenticeship and industry training system.

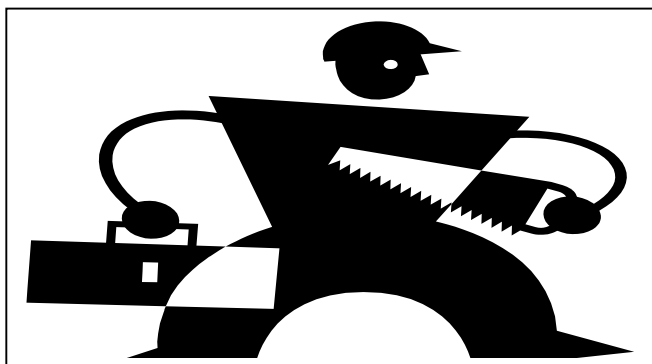
Brian Bickley, Chair of the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board, commented: "In Alberta, we pride ourselves on our world-class apprenticeship system, which wouldn't be what it is without the thousands of apprentices, employers and instructors who demonstrate their commitment to the trades each and every day... This awards ceremony is our way of saying congratulations and thanks for a job well done."

The Top Instructor Award recognizes instructors for their excellence in delivering technical training to apprentices and their dedication to, and support for, apprenticeship. Two awards are presented annually – one for the North Region, and one for the South Region.

Top Instructor Awards this year were presented to David Pare, an electrician instructor at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, and Frank Pawlak, a carpenter instructor at Lethbridge Community College.

This year, 54 individuals from across Alberta were recognized with Top Apprentice Awards, for achieving the highest combined mark during the final period of apprenticeship training, together with a strong employer recommendation. Two employers – Cycle Works Ltd., of Edmonton, and Quinn Contracting, of Blackfalds – were also honoured, for their commitment to training and their investment in the apprenticeship and industry training system in Alberta.

According to the official Government of Alberta news release, the province's apprenticeship system, providing on-the-job and technical training in more than 50 trades and occupations, currently serves more than 40,000 registered apprentices (up from 27,000 in 1997).



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Editorial Content

The views in the *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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