

# FACULTY CIRCUIT

November 2005

Alberta Colleges & Institutes  
Faculties Association

acifa

Serving college and technical institute faculty

## Minister's Forum Wraps

Action Promised in Three Key Areas  
Three Subcommittees to Develop Plans  
Tuition Fee Policy Delayed Until Spring

The Minister's Forum supporting the 'Learning Alberta' initiative was held in Edmonton on November 1 - 2. The 250 invited delegates, including four from ACIFA, represented a wide range of stakeholders, interest groups and individuals, and brought diverse viewpoints to the plenary sessions and small group discussions focused on the priorities for change, the draft policy framework and draft policy directions proposed by the Learning Alberta Steering Committee. No single theme emerged, but it was clear to all participants that, at a minimum, building the 'learning society' in Alberta will entail major changes in the advanced education system.

The Minister of Advanced Education, Dave Hancock, pledged immediate action in three key areas:

*\*Learning foundations – taking more education opportunities to communities, addressing the needs of diverse groups of Albertans, and setting clear targets for improving literacy rates.*

*\*Support for Aboriginal learning – getting on with action and establishing a new Aboriginal educational division within the Advanced Education department to lead Aboriginal education strategies.*

*\*Transforming the advanced learning system – defining roles and responsibilities for institutions, allowing them to become world-class in specific areas; putting top priority on research and innovation; expanding the number of*

*graduate students in all areas including social sciences and humanities; and focusing on new ways for tradespeople to learn in their communities.*

Three new sub-committees will be formed from the Steering Committee to address these three policy areas, and will report back to the Minister by the end of March 2006.

Specific initiatives announced by the Minister include the implementation of a common student application system for public PSE institutions; the adjustment of funding formulas to promote collaboration among institutions; and the development of a new tuition fee policy by spring 2006.

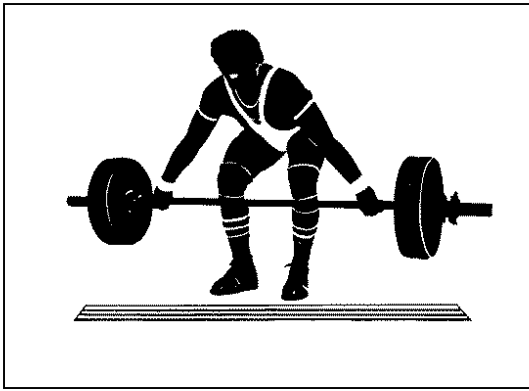
There was no immediate commitment of money from the government to support the improvements to access and quality which were the focus of the Forum. Mr. Hancock indicated that the government's funding review will be completed in the next few months, "with the possibility of funding adjustments to reinforce the strength and vitality of all components of the publicly-funded advanced learning system."

In the immediate aftermath of the Forum, the Minister warned PSE students to prepare for tuition increases in 2006, but his remarks were later clarified by Premier Klein, who insisted that the tuition freeze will be extended. Whether this means that the freeze will be fully funded by the government, rather than by already hard-pressed institutions themselves, was not made clear.

The official news release is available at <http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/news/2005/November/nr-LearningForumCloses.asp>.

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## **The Labour Scene** **As seen by Terry Sway** **Labour Relations Officer, ACIFA**

Does the level of funding matter? It would appear from recent salary settlements that the increase in government funding to the publicly-funded institutions isn't finding its way into faculty pay envelopes. During the period of 2% annual increases in funding, increases for average salary settlements were slightly in excess of 4% per annum. Faculty's position was "we don't control the funding, pay us a fair salary." In fairness, with the funding increase of 6% a year, I suppose we are bound by the same principle. We do, however, need to determine how much of the increase in funding ought to be directed to compensation for faculty.

There have been two salary settlements since the announcement of the new and improved funding:

At Medicine Hat College, a three-year agreement, as at July 1, 2005, of 4.5%, 4.5 % and 3.2%. In addition to the grid increases, there were significant internal adjustments made to the existing grid.

At the Alberta College of Art and Design, a three-year agreement, as at July 1, 2005, of 4.25%, 4.25% and 4.25%. In the second year of the agreement, the salary grid will expand by an additional service increment. The most significant amendment to salaries was parity between "sessionals" and "replacements." Although the different classifications are often occupied by the same individual, the rates of compensation have been noticeably different. To achieve parity, the "replacement" grid was increased approximately 23% over the three years.

Mount Royal College settled a two-year agreement, retroactive to July 1, 2004. The agreement, which expires on June 30 2006, sees increases of 4.0% for each year of the two-year term.

Negotiations for the same time period are ongoing at MacEwan College.

An interest arbitration hearing has been held to resolve the issues in dispute between the Board of Governors and the faculty association at SAIT. The current collective agreement expired on June 30, 2004.

The faculty association at Bow Valley College served notice to go to arbitration as talks broke off in May of 2005. The arbitration hearing is schedule for December 20-21, 2005.

It appears that it will be a busy year in negotiations. The following associations will enter into collective bargaining during the 2005-06 academic year: (in no particular order) Mount Royal, Olds, Portage, Northern Lakes, Keyano, Grande Prairie and NorQuest.

If you have any questions or opinions regarding the above, please contact Terry Sway at the ACIFA office.

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### **Brett Bergie Named ACIFA RLO**

ACIFA welcomes a new staff member, Brett Bergie, who has been hired as Research and Liaison Officer. Brett brings to the job an array of research and political advocacy skills and valuable experience in the post-secondary education policy realm. Brett will assume responsibility for our research, liaison and government relations initiatives full-time in January 2006; until then, he will be in the office part-time.

John Nicholls, outgoing Research and Liaison Officer, will be leaving ACIFA at the end of December. We would like to thank John for the excellent service he provided to ACIFA over his three and a half years with our organization. John has been appointed Executive Director of the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations, effective January 1st. Best wishes, John!



# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

## Alberta Colleges & Institutes Faculties Association 2006 Conference

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**Tell Me More...**

- } Insights into ACIFA
- } Inspirations in Teaching
- } Innovations in Technology
- } Imagining the Future

*(Your session proposal must address one of these strands.)*

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**Submission DEADLINE is Monday, February 6th, 2006**

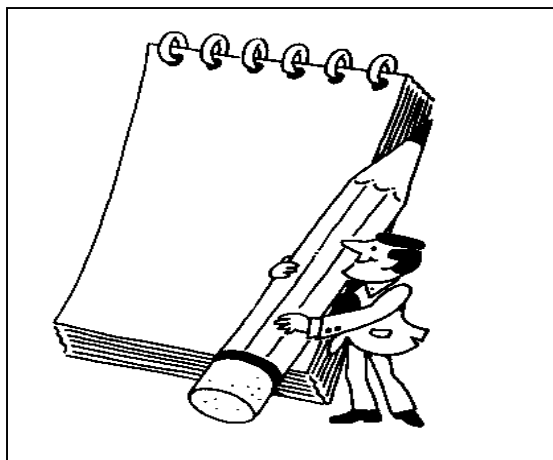
Session Presenters will be provided with one night of accommodation at:



**TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL :**

Please complete a Session Proposal FORM for ACIFA 2006, available from your academic staff association office OR on our website at [www.acifa.ca](http://www.acifa.ca).

**RETURN TO :** Lynn Devlin, Executive Officer, ACIFA, #412, 10357 – 109 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 1N3  
or email to: [devlinl@acifa.ca](mailto:devlinl@acifa.ca).



## Annual ACIFA Climate Survey

The annual ACIFA Climate Survey, now available from faculty association offices, is a valuable tool for the tabulation and analysis of the views of academic staff members in colleges and technical institutes across the province concerning working conditions and attitudes within their respective institutions.

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

*Senior administration communicates openly with faculty.*

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

*The president of this institution provides effective leadership.*

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

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

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

### 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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### Member Associations

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