

# FACULTY CIRCUIT

September 2003

Alberta Colleges & Institutes  
Faculties Association

acifa

Serving college and technical institute faculty

## Post-Secondary Learning Act: Bill 43 Gets First Reading

The Alberta government's proposed Post-Secondary Learning Act was introduced in the Legislature this past May. As Bill 43, it received First Reading, but further debate was postponed until the November sitting of the House, to allow time for consultations with stakeholders and the public over the summer. Amendments to the legislation are expected before it is passed this fall.

The new Act is intended to amalgamate and update four existing statutes: the *Colleges Act*; the *Technical Institutes Act*; the *Universities Act*; and the *Banff Centre Act*. This is more than just a housekeeping measure; according to the Ministry of Learning, the revised legislation is designed to "support a seamless learning system and benefit students through increased access to degree-completion opportunities and greater flexibility for institutions to respond to student needs."

The Minister, Dr. Oberg, emphasized that Bill 43 is meant to underpin the Campus Alberta concept of "an accessible, responsive, and flexible learner-centred system," and to set the stage for future developments. In specific terms, the Campus Alberta initiative aims to promote collaboration between post-secondary institutions in education delivery, "while protecting the unique differences between the sectors" enshrined in existing legislation.

The proposed Act, as it stands, provides for the establishment of a *Campus Alberta Board of Accreditation and Co-ordination* "to facilitate the development and expansion of degree completion opportunities." Details of the new board's com-

position, responsibilities, and working methods are left to policy regulations, which are currently being developed to support the legislation.

To ensure system-wide coordination, public post-secondary institutions will be required to have their mandates approved by the Minister, and will be prevented from carrying on activities which do not fall within their mandates. However, at the same time, under the new Act, the boards of the institutions will also be given greater flexibility to conduct their activities, "so they are better able to respond to the needs of their learners."

Of particular interest to college and institute academic staff is section 88 of the Bill, which expressly prohibits strikes and lockouts in all public post-secondary institutions. Currently, the Mount Royal Faculty Association is the only association in the system with the right to strike, but academic staff associations at other colleges, having given up the right to strike in collective bargaining, are free to negotiate it back. The new legislation curtails the freedom of academic staff associations and the boards to choose strike/lockout as a dispute resolution mechanism. (See ACIFA's response to Section 88, below.)

Other controversial provisions of the new Act include a section (64) giving the boards the power of final "settlement of questions" concerning the "powers and duties" of officers, employees and bodies (such as academic and non-academic staff associations, and students associations and councils). There is also new language on the "ownership of intellectual property" (section 69).

Consultations on these and other provisions of Bill 43 continue between the Ministry and stakeholders, including ACIFA. An amended version of the Act is expected to pass in November.

### INSIDE

ACIFA Protests Section 88.....	p. 2
ACIFA 2003 Conference.....	p. 2
MORGEX Award 2003.....	p. 3
ACIFA Executive 2003/04.....	p. 3
The Labour Scene.....	p. 4

## ACIFA Protests Section 88

Section 88 of Bill 43, the proposed new Post-Secondary Learning Act, will prohibit strikes and lockouts in public post-secondary institutions. ACIFA's Presidents' Council has taken a strong stand against this provision, which it interprets as an unwarranted attack on the collective bargaining rights of every member association.

The following are excerpts from a letter from the President of ACIFA, Bert Giles, to the Minister of Learning, Dr. Lyle Oberg, dated June 4, 2003, urging him to withdraw Section 88:

*Section 88, which imposes arbitrary restrictions on existing collective agreements freely negotiated in good faith, represents an unprecedented and unwarranted attack on the collective bargaining rights of faculty in our system*

*In our view, Section 88 constitutes a clear violation of international conventions on freedom of association principles, as set out as recently as March 2003, in a series of rulings by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on complaints concerning several pieces of legislation passed by the government of British Columbia. [.....]*

*A legislated prohibition of strike action by academic staff members can only have a negative impact on the labour relations climate in our sector. No other jurisdiction in Canada has enacted such a drastic measure, which will do significant and lasting damage to the reputation of Alberta's post-secondary system, and create a bar to the recruitment of world-class scholars and teachers to our province.*

*Moreover, we are unaware of any actions or circumstances which necessitate or justify the inclusion in the proposed Post-Secondary Learning academic staff members of an express prohibition on strike action by academic staff members. [.....]*

*We do not accept that Section 88 can be justified by the need for consistency or uniformity throughout the post-secondary system, where currently only one academic staff association retains the right to strike under the terms of its collective agreement. Other associations have bargained away this right freely, and, consistent with principles of free collective bargaining, should remain free to bargain it back again.*

*ACIFA is united in its opposition to the provisions of Section 88 of Bill 43. The right to strike of academic staff associations in our sector is fundamental, and should not be legislated away. We view this Section as unnecessary, unjustified, and damaging to the integrity of the post-secondary system in Alberta, and again we urge you to withdraw it before Bill 43 is passed.*

Section 88 is not yet law; ACIFA continues to lobby the government to delete it from the amended Bill. Member associations have been encouraged to take up the issue, too, in a concerted campaign to this end.

## ACIFA 2003 Conference at Kananaskis

### “Talking About Teaching” Packs Them In

Over two hundred enthusiastic college and institute educators from ACIFA member associations across the province attended the ACIFA 2003 Conference, “Talking About Teaching,” at the Delta Lodge Kananaskis, May 13 – 15. Co-hosted by the faculty associations of Mount Royal College, Lethbridge Community College, and Bow Valley College, our nineteenth annual conference featured a provocative keynote address from Dr. David Noble of York University, as well as a full programme of stimulating sessions conducted by colleagues, in the spectacular surroundings of the Kananaskis resort. As in years past, conference-goers also made the most of opportunities to socialize and network.



Bert Giles, the President of ACIFA, notes: “What an excellent conference! The theme “Talking About Teaching” provided a valuable focus for the formal sessions; the reception, the BBQ at Boundary Ranch, and other informal social events were most enjoyable; and the keynote certainly got everyone talking. On behalf of ACIFA, let me extend warmest thanks to the three sponsoring associations, and especially to the members of the organizing committee under Elaine Mullen, for their hard work in putting it all together. We hope to see you all next year in Jasper, at ACIFA 2004.”

## MORGEX Award for Innovation in Teaching

Gordon Gilchrist, an instructor at Olds College, is the recipient of the 2003 MORGEX Award for Innovation in Teaching, which is accompanied by a cheque for \$1,500. An additional \$500 was awarded to the Olds College Faculty Association, which nominated the winning entry to the ACIFA Awards Committee.



Gordon Gilchrist (right), of Olds College, receives the 2003 MORGEX Award from Jack Basterash of MORGEX, at ACIFA 2003, Kananaskis.

Sponsored by MORGEX Insurance Group Ltd., this Award recognizes and encourages the use of innovative and creative teaching methods and design, leading to improved student learning. Each participating member association within ACIFA undertook a selection process at the local level, and nominated an individual or group/team for consideration by the ACIFA Awards Committee, which made the final choice.

From a number of excellent entries received this year, the ACIFA Awards Committee singled out Gordon Gilchrist's creation of *Independent Study Video Learning Resource (.avi files)*. According to Gilchrist, the basis of this innovation was the awareness of the diversity of student learning styles:

*Many of our students do not learn well from text based or lecture/note-taking learning formats. Many of our students learn better from visual, auditory, or repetitive tactile delivery. In the Windows-based computer world, much of the learning is visual and tactile, and yet we still try and teach with long, thick, print-based manuals as the primary resource after instruction. Many of my students*

*need to see a procedure more than once, and practice the procedure many times to understand and fix it into their memory....Manuals were expensive, hard to keep up to date, and not very effective for many of our learners.*

It was in response to this problem that Gordon Gilchrist called on technology:

*I am creating short video clips called .avi files to supplement the resource material for my classes. The clips couple images, video, or screen demonstrations with a voice track to add to the in-class delivery. Live demonstrations of software can be recorded along with the instructor's commentary or explanation of the procedure. Still images can be recorded with the instructor's comments, and a pointer to identify features in the image.... The .avi files allowed me to record my demonstrations, complete with commentary, and the students could access them on demand.*

The .avi files "can be served from an intranet, the internet, or burned to a cd for distribution with a note package," notes Gilchrist.

The impact of Gordon Gilchrist's .avi files has been striking, but he is careful to point out that he does not use them as a replacement for good teaching, "but as a supplemental resource for good teaching." As he says, "If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video has got to be worth a chapter! My students no longer have to wait for me to answer their question in a lab; they can use the cd to view the demonstration that relates to the topic giving them grief."

## ACIFA Executive Council 2003 -2004

The membership of ACIFA's Executive Council will remain unchanged for 2003 – 2004, following elections conducted during ACIFA's AGM in May.

President.....Bert Giles (GMC) - to 2004  
 VP Negotiations.....Paul Hawthorn (Portage) - to 2004  
 VP Professional.....Rocky Wallbaum (Lakeland) Affairs - to 2005  
 Treasurer..... Pat Asplund (LCC) - to 2005  
 Secretary.....Ed Logue (SAIT) - to 2004

Members of the ACIFA Executive Council can be contacted through the ACIFA office, telephone (780) 423-4440, or through the new ACIFA website at <http://www.acifa.ca>.

## The Labour Scene

as seen by Terry Sway,  
Labour Relations Officer, ACIFA

Not surprisingly, there hasn't been a great deal of activity with respect to collective bargaining over the summer vacation period.

Two settlements have been reached since the last ACIFA newsletter:

At Medicine Hat College, the Board and the faculty association reached a ratified agreement for the next two years commencing July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2005. Effective July 1, 2003, the faculty will receive an increase of 4%, and an additional 1% on January 1, 2004. For the second year, the salary increase is 4% effective July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005.

The long-awaited award from the November 2002 interest arbitration at Red Deer College has been released. Arbitrator Sims awarded a two-year term effective July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2004. The award was almost a full year retroactive. The salary increase for year one is 4.8%, and for year two 4.3%.

There are several negotiations that are still unresolved from the last bargaining sessions. In no particular order, they are Grande Prairie Regional College, Portage College, and Fairview College. Arbitration dates for Grande Prairie Regional College and Portage College have not been confirmed to this point. Fairview College faculty are negotiating for 2003 to 2004 only. It is almost a certainty that transferring faculty from Fairview College will be under the collective agreement between NAIT and NASA effective July 1, 2004.

Although not yet ratified, there is a tentative settlement at Bow Valley College. The terms of the settlement have not been released to the members at large, and will be made public after the ratification vote has been conducted.

Many of the associations will be entering into collective bargaining in the upcoming year. The status of these, and of the "leftovers" from last year, will be provided for you as the parties conclude their agreements.

Should you have any questions, please e-mail me at [swayt@acifa.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:swayt@acifa.gmcc.ab.ca), or phone me at 780-423-4440.

## ARTA Benefits Available

ACIFA has an arrangement with the Alberta Retired Teachers' Association (ARTA), whereby retired college and institute instructors can purchase group benefits through ARTA. These benefits include extended health, dental, life, travel, and hospitalization insurance.

**Retirees or those considering retirement can obtain an information package by contacting the ACIFA office at (780) 423-4440 or by e-mail.**

Further questions about specific details of the benefit plan may be directed to the contacts provided in the information package.

## New ACIFA Website Coming This Fall

The ACIFA office is pleased to announce the forthcoming launch of the re-designed ACIFA website at <http://www.acifa.ca>. Information. Directory. Resources. Links. More. Watch for it!

### 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:

John Nicholls, Research and Liaison Officer,  
Alberta Colleges & Institutes Faculties Association,  
#412 10357 – 109<sup>th</sup> Street  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1N3  
voice: (780) 423-4440 fax: (780) 423-4515  
e-mail [nicholls@acifa.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:nicholls@acifa.gmcc.ab.ca)  
web: <http://www.acifa.ca>

### Member Associations

Alberta College of Art and Design Faculty Association  
Bow Valley College Faculty Association  
Faculty Association of Medicine Hat College  
Fairview College Academic Staff Association  
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