

FACULTY CIRCUIT

October 2004

Alberta Colleges & Institutes
Faculties Association

acifa

Serving college and technical institute faculty

ACIFA Joins Public Interest Alberta

Last May, Presidents' Council unanimously approved ACIFA's founding membership in Public Interest Alberta (PIA), a broadly-based network of non-governmental associations, unions, professional associations, student and seniors groups, and concerned individuals, working together to explore ways of protecting and advancing the role of public institutions, public services and public spaces in Alberta.

The new organization has been incorporated under the Societies Act, and is currently operating under an Interim Board of Directors, which will continue to guide the work of PIA until a first AGM and elections can be held (no later than June 2005).

In the start-up phase, PIA has been relying on logistical assistance from the ATA and AFL, but with the recent appointment of Bill Moore-Kilgannon as Executive Director, and the acquisition of office space in downtown Edmonton, PIA has begun to establish an independent presence. Mr. Moore-Kilgannon knows the Alberta scene well, having served as the Executive Director of the Parkland Institute

With the looming provincial election very much in mind, PIA, which has an office in Edmonton, has begun to build an effective network linking committed groups and individuals across the province, and to initiate projects designed 'to focus public opinion and debate on issues relating to the public interest'.

In practical terms, this has meant launching PIA in the media, and placing with Ipsos-Reid, for inclusion in its omnibus survey, a number of questions concerning Albertans' attitudes to public services. The results of this poll, which show very strong support for investment in public services, rather than tax cuts, were released on September 7th at a press conference at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Edmonton.

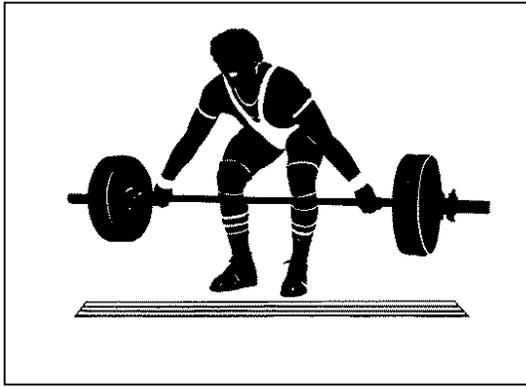
In late October, PIA will inaugurate a campaign designed to arm Alberta voters with information on a range of public interest issues which all candidates in the upcoming provincial election must be called on to address. Promoting 'A Fair Deal for Alberta Families', the campaign will ask candidates to commit to a series of specific measures aimed at improving the public healthcare and education systems in this province, supporting seniors, and reducing poverty.

One key proposition of the 'Fair Deal' is that the provincial government should 'invest significantly more in higher education', and PIA has developed fact sheets to support this demand with input from ACIFA, CAFA, and ACTISEC, which represents Alberta college and technical institute students.

Further details about PIA and the 'Fair Deal' are available at www.pialberta.org.

INSIDE

Labour Scene.....	p.2
Opinion.....	p.3
ACIFA 2005 Call for Proposals.....	p.4



The Labour Scene

As seen by Terry Sway
Labour Relations Officer, ACIFA

The status of collective bargaining falls into several different categories. There is my personal favourite, the second year of a three agreement. It means that there were no negotiations last year and there will be not be any this year. The associations enjoying this benefit are those at Northern Lakes College, Olds College, and Portage College.

Associations which settled an agreement through ratification last year (2003 -2004) are Keyano, Lakeland, NorQuest, and NAIT. In addition to those settling through a memorandum of agreement, Grande Prairie Regional College went to interest arbitration. Monetary settlements (increases to the salary grid) continue to come in at slightly better than 4.0% per year. Keyano 4.0% - 4.0% ; Lakeland 4.0% - 4.0% - 3.0%. For the third year at Lakeland faculty will receive minimally 3.0% or a provincial average based on at least six other college settlements for that time period. NorQuest 5.5% -4.0%, NAIT 4.0% -4.0% -4.0%. Grande Prairie received through an arbitrated award a three-year term retroactive to August 15, 2003, 4.75%, 4.50%, 4.25%.

There are a few associations still bargaining this fall which started last academic year. They are SAIT, Grant MacEwan, Mount Royal and Lethbridge Community College. The Board of Governors at Lethbridge served notice to arbitrate as talks stalled last spring. The parties have agreed to have the issues in dispute arbitrated on January 4 & 5, 2005. At SAIT, the Board's bargaining team and representatives from the association continue to negotiate, but

arbitration dates have been set for June 14, 15 and 16, 2005. At Grant MacEwan and at Mount Royal the parties continue to attempt to reach a memorandum of agreement.

Going into collective bargaining in 2004-05 with collective agreements ending June 30, 2005, are Bow Valley College, Alberta College of Art and Design and Medicine Hat College. As always, there will be much speculation regarding economic factors, previous settlements, comparable institutes, funding, and of course the upcoming provincial election. The above and other issues will certainly influence the outcomes of negotiations.

-- Terry Sway

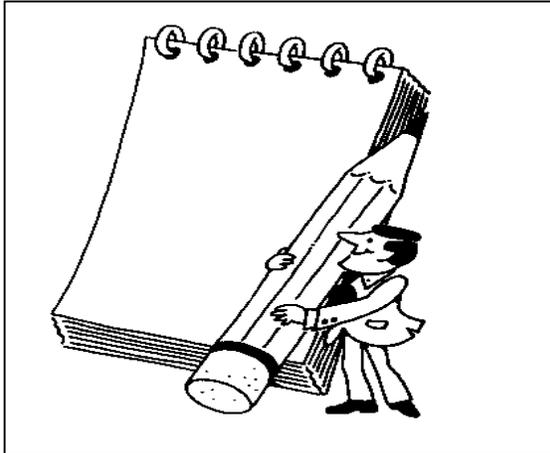
Alberta Learning Releases Learning & Technology Policy Framework

Alberta Learning has released its *Learning and Technology Policy Framework*, which is intended to guide the application of technology across the learning system in this province. According to the Deputy Minister, Maria David-Evans, the Framework, which was developed with input from K-12, post-secondary, and apprenticeship and industry training stakeholders, is designed to "optimize benefits to learners, and will help ensure that investment in technology is consistent with learning system objectives and priorities."

Priorities set for fiscal 2004/05 include:

- ✓ Learning and technology research, with a major focus on videoconferencing research.
- ✓ Continued implementation of the LearnAlberta.ca and SuperNet initiatives.
- ✓ Identification of industry standards and solutions to improve access to technology within the learning system.
- ✓ Partnerships to support the professional growth of educators in the use of technology.

See www.learning.gov.ab.ca/reading/policy/techframework/.



Annual ACIFA Climate Survey Coming Soon!

The annual ACIFA Climate Survey, which will soon be distributed to academic staff association offices around the province, is a valuable tool for the tabulation and analysis of the views of academic staff members on 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 associations may also include 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 cross-institutional comparative score chart, giving mean scores, by institution, for each of the thirteen questions common to all, will be published in the ACIFA Faculty Circuit next spring.

OPINION

Open Letter to The Hon. Clint Dunford Minister of Human Resources and Employment

Dear Clint:

Last week, your party announced that it was going to ask Albertans what to do with the surplus now that the debt is paid off. The items listed were no brainers like health care, education, and infrastructure. Everybody knows that these areas need rebuilding after a decade of neglect. Your party is the one that tore down and sold two perfectly good hospitals in Calgary and we lost 1000 beds, many of which were acute care and emergency beds. Within months 143 million dollars had to be spent expanding Rockyview and Foothills because all of a sudden there were no beds and the waiting lists went into their death spiral. Now, suddenly we need a new hospital in Calgary.

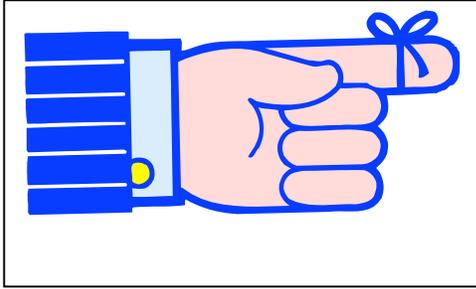
I originally voted for Ralph Klein and the Conservative party because I wanted the debt paid down so that we could put the interest to good use. However, the plan was too aggressive. It took 14 years of bungling by the previous premiers to get us to where we were and Ralph was part of the cabinet at that time when many poor decisions were made.

The party should have extended the time period to remove the debt and made some kind of visible plan which could have been put forward so that taxpayers could see the goal and where we were going. The best description of the plan that I have heard, is Ralph walking down hallways and throwing hand grenades in open doors, in fact I think the Sun had a political cartoon of the same at the time. Little did we know that the cartoon was extremely accurate.

When the debt reduction was announced, the government said that they needed help to reduce the debt and they asked for and imposed a 5% reduction in salary for all provincial employees. At the time, they said that when we got out of debt they would remember the sacrifice of public employees. Well, the time has come, not only have we lost ten years of reduced salary, but for most of us it has had a drastic effect on our last 5 years of pensionable salary. If Ralph wants to know where to spend the surplus, he can start by repaying the debt that he owes to Alberta's own employees.

Yours Truly,
Roy McMurren

Roy McMurren is a member of LCCFA and lives in Clint Dunford's Lethbridge-West constituency. This letter was e-mailed to the Minister on September 13, 2004. The contents do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of ACIFA



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**ACIFA Annual Conference
2005**

**100 Ways to / 100Years to
Celebrate Alberta**
Showcasing Education:
Stimulate * Create * Agitate

**Radisson Hotel and Conference Center,
Canmore
May 29 – June 1, 2005**

**We invite submissions from prospective
presenters for Conference sessions
related to one of the following themes:**

- ✓ **Historical perspective on post-secondary education in Alberta: where have we been? where are we now? where are we going?**
- ✓ **Creating a classroom that stimulates and agitates students.**
- ✓ **Ensuring that post-secondary education is showcased in a way that celebrates our successes and helps to create a culture of life-long learning and appreciation for knowledge.**



TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

**Please complete a Session Proposal
Form for ACIFA 2005, available from
your academic staff association office
or on our website at www.acifa.ca.**

RETURN TO:

**Lynn Devlin, Executive Officer,
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Edmonton, Alberta
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devlinl@acifa.ca**

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

January 7, 2005

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