

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, everyone. I hope this newsletter finds you in the midst of a productive and revitalizing summer. This Summer Edition of the Beacon is the first in a quarterly series that the Communications Committee of the StFXAUT intends to distribute electronically this year. Our communication initiatives will be supplemented by a new and improved website, which we are in early stages of rebuilding; please stay tuned for this exciting transformation. All together, our communication efforts will be geared toward providing you with relevant information, enhancing the voice and visibility of the Association on matters of importance to us all, and developing a stronger sense of community and solidarity amongst our entire membership.

I begin in this position of President with a deep sense of gratitude to the many individuals who give of themselves in service to the Association, who express opinions and ideas, and who participate in our meetings, socials and other events. My thanks in particular are extended to all of you whose terms on various StFXAUT committees just expired, started, or continued. I encourage you all to continue contributing as you are able to the ongoing strengthening of the StFXAUT. I would also like to personally welcome Ms. Susan MacKay into the role of Executive Assistant to the

StFXAUT, and to again thank Ms. Avon Brophy for her many years of dedicated service.

At this time of transition in the life of StFX, I would also like to welcome Dr. Kent MacDonald and Mr. Andrew Beckett to the University in their respective roles as President and Vice-President, Finance and Administration. I look forward to working with the administration in an effort to support the work of our members and strengthen the academic mission of StFX. I also join the voices of many in our community in extending best wishes to Dr. Sean Riley in his retirement.

Since the April 29th Annual General Meeting, the StFXAUT Executive has been busy identifying and commencing work toward our objectives. One of the things I've quickly realized is that there are frequently issues in need of a response, and I have already been busy intervening in a variety of discrete cases to support members and uphold our Collective Agreement. On the relational front, I have had several meetings with the Academic Vice President, have met with the Students' Union Executive, and will be meeting with the new President in the weeks to come. Some of our objectives that will carry us through the Fall include 1) hosting CAUT-facilitated workshops in such areas as equity, grievances, and communications;

2) sharing information with our members on program prioritization processes (PPPs) and responding as necessary to what may come from our own foray into this; 3) obtaining and providing you all with more details about our benefits plan and options; 4) presenting the membership with some constitutional amendments to bring our constitution up-to-date; 5) checking in to support, as possible, the work of our various other committees; and 6) revisiting and improving where required our union management processes. We are also excited to be relaunching our 'Unioniversity' branded series of events to create a space to explore key issues in post-secondary education, the first such occurrence of which is being planned for the Fall. Stay tuned for further details.

One initiative we attempted was a request for comments from our members on the PPP (aka Presidential Task Force). Our hope was to hear more about the experiences and observations, hopes and fears, of our members. This

was a process into which much physical and emotional labour was invested by many of you, and we simply wanted to capture your reflections; to this end, we created a [blog](#), and invited your comments (see May 30th email). We received only a very limited number of responses to our invitation, and so I am again inviting you to share your thoughts via this feedback mechanism. We set this up to be non-anonymous and to prevent entries from beyond our membership; perhaps this was a deterrent. If this is the case, please email your comments to Susan at the StFXAUT office and she will post it anonymously (and will uphold your confidentiality as well). At this time, we have received no information from the administration about the final report and the recommendations it contains.

Best wishes to you all in whatever phase of winding-down or winding-back-up you are at. See you in September.

KEY DATES

Some of the upcoming (late Summer / early Fall) deadlines in the [Third Collective Agreement](#) include:

- **August 1st:** Applications for Sabbatical Leave are due.
- **September 15th:** Letters of intent for Faculty wishing to apply for tenure and/or advancement in rank are due.
- **October 1st:** Faculty members' Personal Dossiers are complete and submitted in support of applications for tenure and promotion.
- **October 15th:** Letters of intent for Librarians wishing to apply for tenure and/or advancement in rank are due.
- **October 31st:** Faculty members' Annual Reports are due.
- **November 1st:** Librarians' Personal Dossiers are complete and submitted in support of applications for tenure and promotion.

THE NEW HOPE FOUNDATION



On behalf of the StFXAUT membership, President Brad Long presents a cheque to Jesús Tecú Osorio accompanied by his wife, Isabel Osorio Chen, and daughter, Isabel.

The Executive received and responded favourably to a request from the [Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network \(BTS\)](#) to support the New Hope Foundation in Rabinal, Guatemala. This organization was established to support descendants of the 1982 government-led massacres in their pursuit of an independent, quality, and culturally relevant education that promotes indigenous knowledge, capacity building, and sustainability.

The [New Hope Foundation](#) was created in 1997 by Jesús Tecú Osorio, himself a survivor of this violence and now a StFX Honourary Degree recipient. StFX has been the direct beneficiary of a 13 year (and counting) partnership between Breaking the Silence and our [Immersion Service Learning Program](#), with over 100 students having participated in the Guatemalan immersion experience and witnessing

first-hand the important work of the New Hope Foundation. Students have been awakened, [career trajectories have been altered](#), and our campus has been enriched (e.g. Fair Trade coffee).

As reported in the [Casket](#), Mr. Osorio and his family recently paid a visit to Antigonish on a fundraising tour. In support of our shared goals of equality, justice, and higher education, and as an expression of solidarity beyond our narrow borders, the StFXAUT is pleased to have contributed \$1,000 from our donations budget toward this worthy cause. Broader still, our hope is that this contribution represents the seeds of a "sustaining fund" to which members may wish to donate further. For more information on how to make a donation of your own, please contact Susan at the StFXAUT office.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Celebrating the Beginning of a New Academic Year

We are pleased to be hosting our annual social for all members at Crystal Cliffs on Saturday, September 6th; this date was chosen to avoid the historical conflict with the opening Mass of the Holy Spirit. The Social Affairs committee is currently planning for what will surely be a fun, community-building way to kick off the new academic year; details will follow by email. We hope you all will make plans to be present!

[Antigonish International Film Festival](#)

Once again, the StFXAUT is a sponsor for this educational event. We have chosen to attach our name to two films: one highlights the subversive mechanisms by which the voices of the scientific community are being stifled in the climate change debate ([Greedy Lying Bastards](#)); the other features the ethnographic work of our own member, Dr. Jane McMillan, in the nearby Paqtnkek First Nation community (Seeking Netukulimk).

REMINDERS

- 1) Article 1.22 of the Third Collective Agreement entitles each member to a Professional Development Expense Account, against which you can claim for reimbursement of PD related expenses. We have repeatedly asked for, but have not yet received, details on the process to be used (i.e. expense claim form); in the meantime, retain your receipts.
 - 2) The StFXAUT provides a [student bursary](#) equal to the cost of one six-credit course for an undergraduate student with demonstrable financial need. In your conversations with students about financial aid, please remind them of this possibility.
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DID YOU KNOW...?

In May 2014 there were 387 AUT members whereas in June the number of members was 268; this is a 31% decrease in the membership.

This data highlights two important features of the academic staff at StFX.

First, the percentage of our members that are on limited term and/or less than full-year contracts is significant (1/3 of the members), and so too is the potential for financial insecurity.

Second, it is a myth to keep repeating the claim that "students at StFX are taught by full-time faculty from the first day they arrive until the day they leave" ([Dr. Riley, "Academic Excellence" video](#)).

YOUR 2014-2015 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Brad Long, President - blong@stfx.ca

Peter McInnis, Past President - pmcinnis@stfx.ca

Chris Frazer, Vice President - cfrazer@stfx.ca

Rita Campbell, Secretary - rcampbel@stfx.ca

Stephen Finbow, Treasurer - sfinbow@stfx.ca

Chris Frazer, Chief Grievance Officer - cfrazer@stfx.ca

Jonathan Langdon, Member at Large - jangdon@stfx.ca

Bruce Sparks, Member at Large - bsparks@stfx.ca

Wendy Panagopoulos, Member at Large - wpanagop@stfx.ca

Cory Bishop, Member at Large - cbishop@stfx.ca

Please also note that Chris Frazer is the interim Chief Grievance Officer for July through December 2014, with Charlene Weaving returning to the role in January 2015.

LOCAL THINGS TO SEE AND DO

[**AHA! Arts & Health Antigonish**](#)

[**Antigonish Culture Alive Calendar of Events**](#)

[**Antigonish Kid's Corner**](#)

[**Experience Antigonish**](#)

[**Municipality of the County of Antigonish Events Calendar**](#)

[**Nova Scotia Tourism**](#)

[**Sustainable Antigonish**](#)

[**Town of Antigonish Recreation**](#)

Have a great summer!

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE STFXAUT OFFICE:

#219-42 West Street (Old Municipal Building) • (902) 867-3368

Email: stfxaut@stfx.ca • Website: <http://stfxaut.ca/>