

Release date: June 8

President's Message: Request for Board of Directors' Investigation

On Sunday June 3, I provided all faculty with a letter addressed to the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Board of Directors. That letter, intended for internal distribution only, requested that "... the Board of Directors conduct an immediate and comprehensive investigation into all the details, circumstances and processes related to the lay-off of faculty in Recreation Services at Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Moose Jaw campuses."

That letter and the request was approved by both the SPFA Executive Council and the SPFA Bargaining team. To this point, SPFA has benefited from a positive working relationship with human resources leadership. That relationship has facilitated the quick settlement of numerous disputes and concerns. In spite of the risks to that relationship and the collective bargaining process, SPFA found it necessary to raise our, and your concerns to the Board, regarding the closure of recreation services and abolishment of seven faculty positions. I have received numerous comments that vividly indicate the depth of concern and the impact on our Sask Polytech community. Some of those comments are inserted below. All identifying information has been removed/altered to protect the senders.

- I worry that honest venting of my concerns would jeopardize my job.
- The closure of the fitness center affects me on a day to day basis. It was such a great stress reliever for me, especially after a long morning in the classroom.
- The manner in which this was handled was; at best, unjustifiable, unethical, ruthless...
- I feel terrible for the staff who lost their jobs so suddenly.
- This has been like a death on campus.
- While I appreciate all the news about the Athletics program being cut, I think the biggest travesty here is the elimination of the positions all together.
- I was shocked to find this out on Thursday - please do all you can to keep this essential service available to all staff and students.
- I found this very demeaning, the way they handled it.
- I always felt so much more positive and alert during the afternoon classes if I had a chance to work-out during my lunch break. It truly was something that I believe made me a more effective instructor.
- In my opinion, the decision to cut Recreation Services is just one more counter-intuitive decision, for an institution that is purportedly moving in a "Wellness Strategy" direction.
- I really appreciated having experts in the fitness center as they were able to put together a work-out plan for me to overcome my back injuries and stay healthier to prevent new injuries.
- The actions last week have sent shockwaves through the Saskpoly community.
- I would be devastated if I lost my job in a similar manner.
- Those who lost their jobs on Thursday and are in no way a threat to security or another human being. That was so cruel.
- I think that having a fitness center and a fitness expert would actually save the organization money by having employees in better shape and needing less chiropractic work, doctor visits, and sick days, etc.
- On the day of the layoff there was a retirement social for a colleague that I had worked with for many years. It really, really bothers me that I was not allowed to go to her retirement.

In spite of all the discussion, we have few answers to offer. Readers are encouraged to study the information provided by Management: <https://ourcollaborate.siastr.sk.ca/sites/studentservices/Wiki/Recreation.aspx>.

And also, information provided by the Students Association at: <http://spsa.ca/>

So, what is the future for fitness and recreation opportunities for students and employees?

We can only speculate - but faculty should be prepared for certain themes: revenue generation, increased costs, reduced services and possible contracting out of services.