Loyalty Points & the Taxman

Good news: The Canada Revenue Agency has recently dropped a requirement for people who earn personal loyalty points (e.g., AirMiles, Aeroplan, etc.) through business transactions to report their “fair market value” on their annual tax returns. Like me, you may not have been aware of this requirement anyway, so there is in effect no change (except in our legal status!). But it now means that loyalty points now truly do belong to us, even if we accrued them through official transactions.

The program was deemed unwieldy because of the difficulty in determining the fair market value of benefits such as free flights.

For full details (there are some caveats) see:

Alberta Research & Innovation Act (Bill 27)

The Alberta government has passed legislation designed to restructure the province’s research and innovation system to make it “less complex, more focused on the government’s strategic priorities, more consolidated, with less overlap and stronger links between the players.” According to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology, researchers, entrepreneurs and other key stakeholders will benefit from “more clearly defined roles” and better access to support and information services.

In specific terms, the Act creates the Alberta Research and Innovation Authority (ARIA), an appointed body which will provide strategic advice to the Minister of Advanced Education & Technology and monitor and report on the overall performance of the province’s research and innovation system. The Act also enables the government to establish four new, board-governed provincial research and innovation ‘corporations’ focused respectively on the bio-industries (agriculture, forestry, and life sciences), energy and the environment, health, and technology commercialization. These new corporations are intended to ‘facilitate initiatives that support the Alberta government’s strategic priorities, as well as industry development initiatives in areas where Alberta has the opportunity to be a leader or enhance its current standing in the global economy.’

Taken together, these changes signal a significant realignment of the research and innovation system in Alberta. In the initial phase, this will involve the ‘transitioning’ of existing bodies.

- The functions of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute, Alberta Forestry Research Institute, and Alberta Life Sciences Institute, will be merged into the new bio-industries corporation.
- The Alberta Energy Research Institute will be transformed into the new energy and environment corporation.
- The Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research will continue as the new health corporation, with a stronger focus on strategic health research.
- The key functions of iCORE, the Alberta Research Council, Alberta Ingenuity, and related programs and initiatives from the province’s ICT strategy, will be merged into the new body focused on technology commercialization.

The transition will not happen overnight. Officially, the new corporations will come into existence only when the Act has been proclaimed, the regulations come into force, the boards are appointed and the transition plans are complete, probably sometime later this year. The Ministry is currently seeking nominations to the boards of the four corporations and ARIA.

The Minister of Advanced Education & Technology, Doug Horner, has been at pains to
Alberta Research & Innovation Act (Continued from page 1)
emphasize that this as a ‘stakeholder-driven’ initiative, and that stakeholders want the government to set strategic directions, not get involved in making individual funding decisions. According to the Minister, it will be up to the new corporation boards to make funding decisions and ensure excellence ‘within a more collaborative and integrated environment.’ Ultimately, the boards will be answerable to the Minister, but peer review will continue to be fundamental.

How the new set-up will affect researchers at Alberta universities remains to be seen. The CEOs of the AHFMR, Alberta Ingenuity, the Alberta Research Council, and iCORE have issued a joint letter warning stakeholders that the full impact on specific funding programs may not be known for some time. With respect to the existing endowment funds, the government has indicated that the AHFMR Endowment Fund will continue to operate as per its original mandate, whereas the focus of the Alberta Heritage Science & Engineering Research Endowment Fund will shift to technology commercialization.

The realignment and tighter integration of research and innovation activities in Alberta, with an expanded role for the government, has raised questions about the future of basic research at the universities. In reply to criticism of its handling of the AHFMR transition in particular, the Ministry has issued the following statement:

“...The excellent work achieved by AHFMR-funded researchers for almost 30 years will continue. The Alberta government also remains strongly committed to the principle of excellence and rigorous peer review that has characterized AHFMR research. The Alberta government has invested heavily in this research and infrastructure, and would not contemplate compromising Alberta’s successes in these areas. This important work will continue through a new provincial research and innovation entity dedicated to strategic health research. Basic research is our foundation. It’s one of the reasons that Alberta enjoys an international reputation for excellence. It’s one of the reasons that top-level researchers from around the world have chosen to come here to pursue their important work.”

Such assurances notwithstanding, the government’s ambitions might be thwarted, at least in the short term, by the ballooning provincial deficit and the need to cut spending. The transition to the new research and innovation framework is expected to go ahead in any case.

John Nicholls,
CAFA
CAFA (Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations) is a professional organization of faculty and faculty associations in Alberta universities (Alberta, Athabasca and Lethbridge). The objectives of the confederation are “to promote the quality of education in the province and to promote the well-being of Alberta universities and their academic staff.”
Message from the Out-going President in Iran (No, Not That One!)

Dear AASUA members,

Please welcome with me the new members of Council, Directors, and Officers, and especially in-coming President Walter Dixon and Vice-President Don Heth. They were elected with little (reported) opposition or violence, through an avowedly democratic process ably overseen by our out-going Past President Bob Campenot. There, I believe, similarities to recent events in Iran end, and there was no need to storm Lister Hall or for Chancellor Hughes and the entire Chemistry Department to resign.

I am, as it happens, in Iran as I write this, and although the BBC Web site has been blocked, the hotel at which I am staying in Birjand (eastern Iran) has BBC World on in the lobby, and I am assured that everyone (except me) knows how to circumvent the web censors. In fact, the hotel just installed Wi-Fi yesterday, and everyone has a cell phone (again, except me — strangely Rogers doesn’t have a roaming contract in Iran), and calls are so cheap that the hotel sometimes doesn’t bother to charge for them (thanks to massive subsidies from the government). So the reality is that everyone knows very well what just went down, and there is a real buzz on the streets. No one can remember anything like this since 1979, and the veil has truly dropped from the theocracy. I could tell you more but I’m here on a business visa not a press visa, and I still have some fieldwork to do! Suffice to say that the reform movement is far from over, and has won many new members over the last few weeks.

As for real life in Iran: well, those chemistry professors have probably foregone a minimal salary by resigning, because most have to have other jobs and businesses to survive (academic salaries are very low — in Iran, I mean). Pity the students though, although I suspect many weren’t in their chemistry classes anyway. There were indeed a few martyrs for the cause, although thankfully far fewer than might have been the case. But those few have made a lasting impression, and the mood here is one of quiet hope for the future.

I personally wish this country and its people well, and look forward to coming back many more times to enjoy the unbelievable mangoes (actually I just heard they are imported from Pakistan — but the melons are great!) and the alcohol-free beer (you can make it at home with beer kits — just don’t add yeast!).

Oh, and by the way, like Ahmadinejad, the AASUA hasn’t completely gotten rid of me yet — I’ll be filling in as Interim Executive Director for the coming year while we go about the process of searching for a new Executive Director.

Jeremy Richards
Past President and Interim Executive Director
AASUA COUNCIL 2009–2010

Agriculture, Life, & Environment:
Agriculture, Food, & Nutritional Science
- | Heather Bruce (AFNS)
Rural Economics, Renewable Resources, Human Ecology
- | Scott Chang (Renewable Resources)

Arts:
Art & Design, Drama, Music
- | Howard Bashaw (Music)
English
- | Vacancy
History & Classics, Philosophy
- | Jennifer Jay (Hist. & Class.)

Economics, Political Science, Women’s Studies
- | Ian Urquhart (Political Sc.)

Sociology, Anthropology, Linguistics
- | Kathleen Lowrey (Anth.)

Modern Languages, East Asian Studies
- | William Anselmi (Mod. Lang.)

Business:
- | Robert Gephart (Strategic Management & Organization)

Campus Saint-Jean:
- | Sadok El Ghoul

Education:
Education Policy Studies, Library & Information Studies
- | George Richardson (EDU International Initiatives)

Educational Psychology
- | Lia Daniels

Elementary, Secondary Education
- | Anna Kirova (Elem. Educ.)

Engineering:
Chemical & Materials, Mechanical
- | Rajender Gupta (Chemical & Materials)
Civil & Environmental, Electrical & Computer
- | Thian Yew Gan (Civil & Env.)

Extension:
- | Robert Burrows (Government Studies)

Law:
- | Chris Sprysak

Medicine:
Clinical Departments
- | Alan Thomson (Gastroenterology)
- | Mark Joffe (Infectious Dis.)
- | Trina Uwiera (Surgery)

Other Departments
- | Steve Harvey (Physiology)
- | Kevin Kane (Med. Microbiology & Immunology)
- | Vivian Mushahwar (Cell Biology)

Dentistry
- | Loren Kline

Native Studies:
- | Pat McCormack

Nursing:
- | Beverly O’Brien

Pharmacy:
- | Mark Makowsky

Physical Education & Recreation:
- | Lisa McDermott

Public Health:
- | Louis Francescutti

Rehabilitation Medicine:
- | John Misiaszek (Occupational Therapy)

Science:
Biological Sciences
- | Colleen Cassady St. Clair
Chemistry
- | Mariusz Klobukowski

Mathematical Sciences
- | Gordon Swaters

Physics
- | Jan Jung

Earth & Atmospheric, Computing Science
- | Ehab Elmallah

Psychology
- | Vacancy

Administrative/Professional Officers:
- | Lisa Christensen (Human Resources)
- | Terra Garneau (Research Services Office)
- | Cynthia Henderson (Oncology)
- | Tracy Hetman (Spec. Support & Disability)
- | Louise Jenkins (History & Classics)
- | Sandra McFadyen (Chemical & Materials Engineering)
- | Joanne McKinnon (Anthropology)
- | Joan Schiebelbein (CAPS)
- | George Thomlison (Facilities Management)

Faculty Service Officers:
- | Richard Uwiera (AFNS)
- | Rachel Milner (Biochemistry)

Librarians:
- | Anne Carr-Wiggin
- | Fred Ziegler

Contract Academic Staff:
- | (Five vacancies to be filled in Fall 2009)
- | Annette Rivard (Occupational Therapy)
- | Caroline Haverkort (Anthropology)
- | Helen Gerritzen (Art & Design)

Trust/Research:
- | Ricardo Acuña (Parkland Institute)
- | Kathy Belton (Public Health Sciences)
- | Cameron McGregor (Chem. & Materials Engineering)
- | Lisa Tanguay (Alberta Diabetes Institute)
- | Vacancy

Augustana Faculty:
- | Shauna Wilton

Members At Large:
- | Ted Allison (Biological Sciences)
- | Douglas Gingrich (Physics)
- | Cameron Hutchison (Law)
- | Lorenz Sigurdson (Mechanical Engineering)
- | John Tulip (Electrical & Computer Engineering)
- | Russell Cobb (MLCS)

Board of Governors Representative (Non-voting):
- | Bob Campenot (Cell Biology)
Workload/Work-life Task Force Report

An outcome of the 2005 salary settlement was the establishment of a joint Task Force to investigate workload/work-life issues affecting academic staff on campus. At that time, AASUA was completing its own survey of the membership, the full report of which can be found on the AASUA Web site at:


Written comments from that survey were also made available to the Task Force.

The Task Force met with numerous groups and individuals, and surveyed the relevant literature. The first draft of their report was sent to the Provost and the AASUA President in October 2008, and the final version was released in May 2009. It can be downloaded at:


AASUA welcomes the Task Force’s report, which makes numerous important observations and recommendations. Key among these is a recommendation for AASUA and Administration jointly and proactively to work towards addressing workload/work-life issues, with appropriate allocation of administrative resources to support change and transition. This process has been set in motion with the striking of a joint committee to work with Dr. Chris Cheeseman (Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Human Resource Services) and Health Promotion and WorkLife Services (HPaWS).

The report also recommends promotion of programs to support individuals in dealing with workload/work-life issues, promotion of collegiality, creation of more social space, development of mentorship and leadership programs, and a greater transparency and alignment of job expectations and reward systems.

We need your feedback

The AASUA is interested in hearing from members on a number of issues, including the service we provide. In order to find out what our members are thinking, we will be sending out electronic surveys throughout the year. Please take the time to complete the surveys. Your feedback is important!

Be involved!

Do you feel that your voice is being heard? Do you have ideas about improvements to your workplace? Do you want to help develop relationships that enhance your work life? The AASUA is always looking for new members for its Committees and for member involvement. Anyone interested in serving on an AASUA committee should contact a Committee Chair or the AASUA President, Walter Dixon.

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Report from the APO Committee

On June 24, the APO committee, including new members for this year’s committee, met to develop a plan of action for this year.

We had the assistance of two graduates of the Facilitative Leadership initiative assist us with the process of brainstorming and prioritizing areas for the committee to focus our attention. Twenty-six ideas were put on the table, and after a great discussion the committee came up with thirteen initiatives of importance to the APOs around the table. Of these, we agreed to five strategic priorities for 2009–10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Item Sub Committee</th>
<th>Committee Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| APO School                   | Brad Wuetherick (brad.wuetherick@ualberta.ca)  
Tony Lake (tony.lake@ualberta.ca) |
| Profile                      | Tracy Hetman (tracy.hetman@ualberta.ca)  
Cynthia Henderson (cjh1@ualberta.ca) |
| PREP D                       | George Thomlison (george.thomlison@ualberta.ca)  
Liz Berends (lberends@ualberta.ca) |
| Engage other APO Communities | Terra Garneau (t.garneau@ualberta.ca)  
Louise Jenkins (ljenkins@ualberta.ca) |
| Communications Strategy and Tools | Marion Vosahlo (marion.vosahlo@ualberta.ca)  
Leanne Rosinski (leanne.rosinski@ualberta.ca) |

There is still a lot of work to be done to develop the above into successful projects. We are now at the point where we would like to engage all interested APOs to assist in the development of plans to support these priority areas.

If you have questions or are interested in participating with the development and implementation of any of the above strategic priorities, we ask that you contact the sub committee leads identified for more information and to volunteer to take these to the next level.

Terra Garneau  
Chair – APO Committee
CAFA Distinguished Academic Awards, 2009

The Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA), the provincial organization representing academic staff associations at the University of Alberta, the University of Lethbridge, and Athabasca University, is pleased to announce the recipients of the CAFA Distinguished Academic Awards for 2009.

Dr. Reginald Bibby, a Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Lethbridge, has been chosen to receive the CAFA Distinguished Academic Award for 2009.

Dr. Sara Dorow, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta, and Dr. Candace Nykiforuk, Assistant Professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta, will each receive a CAFA Distinguished Academic Early Career Award this year.

A media release providing further details of these Awards is forthcoming. This year’s Awards will be presented at a reception and dinner in Edmonton, on Thursday, September 17, 2009.

The annual CAFA Awards are specifically designed to honour excellence and raise awareness of the many ways in which the scholarly or creative work of university academic staff serves the wider community outside our universities.

The Selection Committee this year faced a particularly difficult task in choosing among a number of outstanding nominees, across a wide range of disciplines. CAFA wishes to thank all who participated in the nomination process.

John Nicholls,
CAFA Executive Director

Bullying In The Workplace
Dr. Angelo Soares
A seminar hosted by AASUA

Dr. Soares is a professor at the Universite du Quebec a Montreal and describes bullying behavior as “psychological harassment that results in a harmful work environment”

Tuesday, September 22, 2009; 4–6 pm
Faculty Club – Saskatchewan Room
Light refreshments will be served

Limited Seating: Reserve your seat by calling Linda at 780-492-5321 or by e-mail at aasuarec@ualberta.ca

Congratulations!

John Hoddinott (Past President 2002–2003), who retired effective July 2009, was recognized at the Annual AASUA Barbeque on June 16 for his many years of distinguished service to the AASUA and the University.

www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/aasua