

**Academic Liaison Committee Annual Report
MRFA Annual General Meeting
9 May 2014**

Membership 2013-14

Name	Representative of ... (Academic Unit)
Andreas Tomaszewski, Chair	MRFA, Academic Liaison Officer (Justice Studies)
Terry Field (Sept to Dec '13)	Faculty of Communication Studies (Journalism)
Janet Hamnett (starting Jan '14)	Faculty of Communication Studies (Public Relations)
Martin Haworth	Bissett School of Business (Business)
Jessie Loyer	Library
Alexis Morris	Faculty of Science & Technology (Mathematics, Physics, & Engineering)
Melanie Rathburn	Faculty of Teaching & Learning (General Education & Biology)
Sharon Smulders	Faculty of Arts (English)
Stephanie Zettel	Faculty of Health & Community Studies (Nursing & Midwifery)

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge and thank Terry Field and Patricia Kostouros for their many contributions to the committee during their tenure. Although Pat Kostourous, who chaired this committee previously, was no longer a member, we are grateful for the advice and support she provided me with before and during my first year as Chair. Terry Field left the committee at the end of the fall semester and gratefully continued supporting the committee's work thereafter, whenever we asked for his advice.

Activities

Caucus

We continued the encouraging of an active Caucus in each Faculty on campus, a process started by ALC under Pat Kostouros' leadership in early 2012. Thanks to the engagement of committee members, we now have an active Caucus in each Faculty. ALC members facilitate their respective Faculty's Caucus to meet prior to GFC meetings and, generally, after the GFC agenda is distributed, to discuss agenda items and other and issues of importance to members of their Faculty. Although ALC members intensified their efforts throughout the academic year, attendance at Caucus meetings varies from meeting to meeting and Faculty to Faculty. This is something we will continue to work on next academic year. The rationale behind Faculty caucusing lies in their potential to improve faculty members' informed participation at GFC meetings and increased impact of faculty members on discussions at GFC, as well as the GFC agenda. A caucus also allows for faculty members who are not on GFC to provide opportunities for involvement and input.

Open House

To encourage faculty members to get involved in university-wide academic governance and provide information on what it can entail, as well as emphasize its importance, we organized the first-ever ALC Open House. It was held on January 10, 2014, from 2 to 3 at the Faculty Centre. To encourage attendance, we scheduled it prior to the start of the first Social Event of the calendar year. It was advertised via email and flyers and led to the attendance of almost two dozen faculty members who discussed important and timely academic matters, including GFC topics like program prioritization. We are planning to hold one open house per semester in the future.

Pre-GFC Drop-In

ALC held drop-in sessions for GFC councilors and other interested faculty members at the Faculty Centre from 2:30 to 3:30 on the Thursdays GFC met. Although ALC members applied various strategies to encourage attendance, the turnout was consistently disappointing. In last year's Annual Report, ALC expressed the hope that offering two different opportunities for faculty members to get involved – Faculty Caucus meetings and drop-ins – would increase participation rates. We similarly subscribe to this and will continue to offer both. We further hope that ALC Open Houses will elicit some interest that will turn in higher attendance at Caucus meetings and Pre-GFC Drop-Ins.

Meetings

ALC met monthly throughout the year, prior to GFC meetings and after the GFC Agenda was distributed. At the meetings, ALC members identified and shared information on issues of wider concern on upcoming GFC, GFC-subcommittee, and Faculty Council agendas. We also discussed experiences regarding Faculty Caucuses and strategies surrounding increasing faculty participation.

ALC members plan to attend the Committee Transition event on August 22, 2014, and the Chair will attend the Department Communicators meeting on August 28, 2014, to share information regarding opportunities for faculty members to get involved in academic governance.

Respectfully submitted by
Andreas Tomaszewski
Academic Liaison Officer

Advocacy Committee Annual Report
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The Advocacy Committee of the MRFA has met on at least on a monthly basis throughout the year in order to implement the Political Activity Policy of the Association. As it was only our second year of operations, we began the year by discussing our activities from the previous year, our priorities for the upcoming year, and possible ways to best distribute tasks amongst the members of the committee. We feel it is important to work in consensus and equity. Roberta Lexier acted as the official chair of the committee, but only to ease communications with the MRFA Executive and the membership. Each of the committee members took turns chairing the committee, compiling meeting agenda and completing the meeting minutes.

Listed below are some of our key accomplishments for this year:

1. In September, committee members worked with students to organize a protest rally timed to coincide with the visit of then-Premier Allison Redford and Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education Thomas Lukaszuk. In early September 2013, we learned that Premier Redford was going to visit MRU on September 25. Since the Premier had not delivered on her election promises to increase funding for post-secondary education in Alberta, and since her visit was being stage-managed so that dissenting voices would not be heard, we decided to organize a rally to ensure our displeasure with her government's education policies was made known to her and to the general public. The Premier hastily canceled her appearance, claiming she had a scheduling conflict. About 100 students and faculty assembled near the East Gate Lawn on September 25, to show that even though the Premier did not wish to meet those affected by her policies, we remained outraged by cancellation of several programs at MRU and the cutting of dozens of jobs. We designed and distributed posters and placards, continued the red felt campaign from the previous year, and disseminated information to MRU members. We ensured a media presence from several stations and were interviewed on the local news (See Appendix A)
2. We compiled a fact sheet and Powerpoint slides on post-secondary education funding. The information is intended to inform the MRU community about the impact of the 2013 Alberta budget cuts on students, staff, and faculty. Moreover, the fact sheet also explored the benefits of post-secondary education to society.
3. In November, we hosted a talk by Kit Dobson titled "Disciplining Knowledge: What Is University?" This discussion explored issues related to the purpose and value of higher education and kicked off our yearly seminar series, the Universities Matter series, on topics related to post-secondary education. Kit did an excellent job initiating this discussion and raising some key questions about why universities matter.
4. A coalition was formed between MRFA President (Gerry Cross), MRFA Advocacy Committee (David Ohreen), SAMRU (Sadiq Valliani), and Baset Sarrug (President, MRSA) to coordinate messaging and strategies to advocate for post-secondary education. As part of this strategy, we met with Linda Johnson (Chair, Progressive Conservative) on March 25 to discuss Mount Royal University's benefits to the community and answer any questions she had about our institution. This meeting was an excellent opportunity to provide Ms. Johnson with important facts about higher education and correct some misinformation she had about the sector. We hope to

continue to build the coalition and continue meeting with government representatives to provide key information to better their treatment of post-secondary education.

5. We were guests at various department meetings around MRU to present information on post-secondary status in Alberta, the outcomes, both projected and realized, of the budget cuts and the prevailing political position on post-secondary education in Alberta. Our goal in attending these meetings was to provide information to faculty members and to try and engage more individuals from around the university in our campaigns. We also asked faculty members in attendance to identify issues of concern to them that the committee could address. We will continue this process and hope to have a great deal of input from MRFA members to help guide our activities.
6. On January 14 and 15, 2014, the MRFA Advocacy Committee, in conjunction with SAMRU, the Office of the Dean of Arts, and the Arusha Centre, welcomed Harsha Walia to Calgary. Harsha Walia is a social justice activist and journalist who is best-known for co-founding the Vancouver chapter of No One Is Illegal. Walia's writings have appeared in over fifty journals, anthologies, and magazines, including Briarpatch, Canadian Dimension, Feministing, Fuze, Left Turn, People of Color Organize, Rabble, Z Magazine, and others. She has contributed essays to academic journals including Race and Class, as well as chapters in the anthologies Power of Youth: Youth and community-led activism in Canada; Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution; and Organize! Building from the Local for Global Justice. She is the author of the book Undoing Border Imperialism, which indigenous rights activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz has called, "the first extended work on immigration that refuses to make First Nations sovereignty invisible. Walia spoke to an overflowing crowd in Moot Court on the topic of social activism, as one of the keynote speakers for SAMRU's annual CREATE A Better Now event. She also visited three classrooms and participated in off-campus events while in Calgary. The Advocacy Committee also met with Walia as an opportunity to discuss potential strategies for further engagement with the community and ways to promote higher education in our local and national communities. This meeting was incredibly fruitful and provided a lot of suggestions about collaborations, coalitions, tactics, and communications.
7. Advocacy Committee members contacted and through a subsequent telephone conversation on February 28th with Michele Mulder, Chair of Alberta's School Council Association, gathered information on possible collaboration between post-secondary and K-12 schools to promote appropriate, sufficient funding for education and discussed strategies for MRU to promote its merits to parents, staff and the public via School Council meetings, ATA conferences and news bulletins. We hope to continue to build these relationships next year and into the future.
8. The committee continued to advocate for greater autonomy in relation to printing budget and other resources. The Advocacy Committee supposedly has budget for operations, but the MRFA Executive, which is not always supportive of the various activities we hope to undertake, must approve all expenditures. We will continue to negotiate with the Executive and membership to gain greater autonomy for the committee to be able to do its important work.
9. With MRFA President Gerry Cross the Advocacy Committee helped design a poster that highlights the fundamental problems caused by yearly budgetary cuts to post-secondary education and the detrimental effects this will have on individuals, as well as the wider society. This poster campaign will be launched shortly and will work to publicize the importance of higher education and the need for stable funding.

10. Advocacy Committee members compiled a list of media personnel who cover post-secondary news for the MRFA president, so that there can be easy dissemination of future press releases. Our external communications have been improving over the past two years but could be even more effective. The committee hopes to continue to work on this going forward.

ACTION ITEM: The Advocacy Committee calls for the creation of an ad hoc committee, comprised of the MRFA President, the Communications Officer, a representative of the Advocacy Committee, and potentially others, to develop a communications strategy for the MRFA. Advocating on behalf of our members and post-secondary education requires publicity and media coverage and, while the MRFA has been slowly improving this aspect of its operations, the committee believes it is important to develop a clear and effective strategy to ensure that our voices are heard outside the walls of Mount Royal University.

Appendix A:

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Canada/Calgary/ID/2408615901/>

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Canada/Calgary/ID/2408590434/>

<http://www.calgaryjournal.ca/index.php/news/1839-mru-students-staff-protest-education-cuts>

Awards Committee Annual Report
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Awards Committee Members:

Elaine Mullen (Chair)
Jarett Henderson
Brian Sevick
Jodi Nickel
Michele Holmgren
Colleen Campbell
Tristan Smyth

Activities

The Awards Committee announced and promoted the new MRFA Teaching Excellence Awards. The committee will be meeting in May-June to allocate the awards to one full time and one contract faculty member.

The award consists of a framed certificate, a plaque in the faculty centre and \$1,000.

Awards will be presented at the fall tenure and promotion celebration.

Respectfully submitted by the 2013-2014 Awards Committee

Bylaws Committee Annual Report
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The bylaw Changes were developed by the MRFA Bylaws Committee, the MRFA Faculty Centre Management Committee and the MRFA Executive Board. A special thanks to Marc Schroeder for his work in making these changes.

Summary of Bylaw Changes

The document providing rational for the changes made to the bylaws is available [online](#). Please refer to this for more information about significant changes have been made and why the changes were needed.

Bylaw Changes

The Bylaw changes are available [online](#). These changes have been made through tracked changes so you can easily see which articles have been added and/or revised.

New Standing Committees

Bylaws Committee Members, 2013-2014:

March Schroeder, Chair and MRFA Member at Large
Andreas Tomaszewski, Justice Studies
Qasim Syed, Math, Physics and Engineering

MRFA Faculty Centre Management Committee

Gerry Cross, President
Shiraz Kurji, Treasurer
Tracy Powell, Member at Large
Chantelle Anderson, Executive Assistant
Darlene Windrem, Faculty Centre Coordinator

MRFA Executive Board, 2013-2014

Gerry Cross, President
Karen Manarin, Vice President Negotiations
Scott Murray, Vice President Policy and Grievance Officer
Janice Paskey, Communications Officer
Shiraz Kurji, Treasurer
Brenda Lang, Contract Faculty Representative
Andreas Tomaszewski, Academic Liaison Officer
Marc Schroeder, Member at Large
Tracy Powell, Member at Large
Elaine Mullen, Faculty Representative to the Board of Governors

Communications Committee Annual Report
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The Communications Committee has met on a monthly basis throughout the year in order to continue to improve the communications of the MRFA.

- We have organized and hosted two brunches for all Departmental Communicators in order to ensure communication between the Association and the membership at the departmental level. We have sought to deliver key messages about MRFA business through our communicators throughout the year and to augment meeting attendance through this channel.
- In the fall semester, a chart of the organizational structure of MRU was approved. It is available [online](#). This chart was created with a view to creating more transparency about how the institution functions.
- Members of the committee helped the MRFA to develop its media strategies, including the creation of a media section on the [website](#) and in the [Weekly Newsletters](#).
- The Committee designed new hard copy communications strategies: the [MRFA Headlines](#) and the [News to Use](#).
- The Committee raised a variety of issues of concern to faculty, and circulated information about them via the network of department communicators. These issues included hiring processes for contract faculty, necessary support (in the form of parking passes) for contract faculty attending the AGM, the profile of research at MRU, LAPP pension plan changes, e-SEIs, and UniGlobe.
- The Committee also recommended more communications about research and research grant applications resulting in a PD seminar on the issue.
- The Committee did a thorough review of the MRFA's various communications strategies and committed to ongoing improvements.

The Committee's budget has been spent on three new communications initiatives:

- complimentary lunches, in the Faculty centre, for department communicators and their department members. These were intended to promote awareness of and engagement in the Association, and where they happened they were well received. The committee will revisit how these should be managed next year, but we recommend continuing with them.
- door prizes to encourage attendance at MRFA meetings,
- and professional photos for the Media section of the website.

Respectfully submitted by the MRFA Communications Committee

Child Care Committee Report
MRFA Annual General Meeting
9 May 2014

The Report of the MRFA's Child Care Committee will be added to the package on May 8. The report will include a summary of the survey responses and the implications for various areas of the University. Motions from the committee and recommended by the Executive Board are provided on the following pages.

The updated AGM package will be available on May 8 online at www.mrfa.net/agm

Members of the MRFA Child Care Committee

Mary-Lee Mulholland
Irene Shankar
Kari Roberts
Janet Miller
Joanne Baxter
Gerry Cross
Gulberk Koc Maclean
Chantelle Anderson

MRSA and Admin Members who participated in the process

Kathy Homer
Charissa Hovdebo
Rona Reitsema
Stefan Durston

Executive Board Recommendations to the Membership: supporting members with child care concerns.

Please refer to the Child Care Committee Report for further information on these initiatives and the survey responses. The Report will be available [online](#) on May 8, 2014.

Some survey responses included statements that it is not the role of the Association to address child care concerns on campus. The MRFA should address these concerns because:

- The total number of members who responded to the survey with, expecting or planning children is 105. This constitutes a significant percentage, 13.7%, of our current membership.
- Because part of the MRFA’s mission is to “uphold the values of diversity, equity and human rights,” the Association needs to consider how it can support members with child care concerns.

The following Executive recommendations to the membership were informed by the 189 responses to the MRFA Child Care survey and the 189 responses to the MRSA survey and they take into account the different responses of members with and without child care concerns. The response percentages below are taken from the MRFA survey as these motions deal specifically with actions the MRFA may take if the motions are approved.

Recommendation 1: Accommodation

Recommendation that the MRFA urge departments to create, or improve access to, formal and informal alternate ways of having class content covered for faculty with unexpected child care needs.

Rationale:

As a University and an association of professionals, employees should be accommodated in this way. This motion could be operationalized by creating an FYI list of possible approaches to the need to cancel classes.

72% of respondents with kids had to cancel a class 1 – 3 times in the last academic year. To reduce the number of classes cancelled, to mitigate the impact on our members and our students, the MRFA should facilitate the creation of or access to the following options to support members with children:

A formalized way of having class content covered by a colleague (e.g. paid substitute)

- o 47% of total respondents support this
- o 47% of respondents with kids support this
- o 47% of respondents without kids support this

An informal way of having class content covered by a colleague (e.g. combining classes, a buddy system, or reciprocity)

- o 65% of total respondents support this
- o 63% of respondents with kids support this
- o 66% of respondents without kids support this

Empowerment to offer content in another formal outside of class hours

- o 60% of total respondents support this
- o 67% of respondents with kids support this
- o 52% of respondents without kids support this

Only 5% of all respondents would not support any of the initiatives suggested.

26% and 24% of respondents supported having a pool of substitute faculty members and a pool of lectures from elsewhere in the University, respectively. This is not a significant amount of support. This would require further discussion before making a recommendation.

It is possible that some members are not aware that they have the ability to cancel classes; so, the MRFA could work to inform members of this option.

Empowerment to cancel classes

- o 62% of total respondents support this
- o 71% of respondents with kids support this
- o 53% of respondents without kids support this

Recommendation 2: Scheduling

Recommendation that the MRFA work with other areas of the university to promote scheduling practices that do not disadvantage members with children.

Rational:

People with Children are currently systematically disadvantaged. 80% of respondents with children have had to miss or cancel a meeting due to child care concerns. 58% of faculty with children have had their participation in University Governance restricted by child care concerns.

University, Department and Faculty level concerns need to be addressed. Cultural differences across these areas should not negatively affect faculty members.

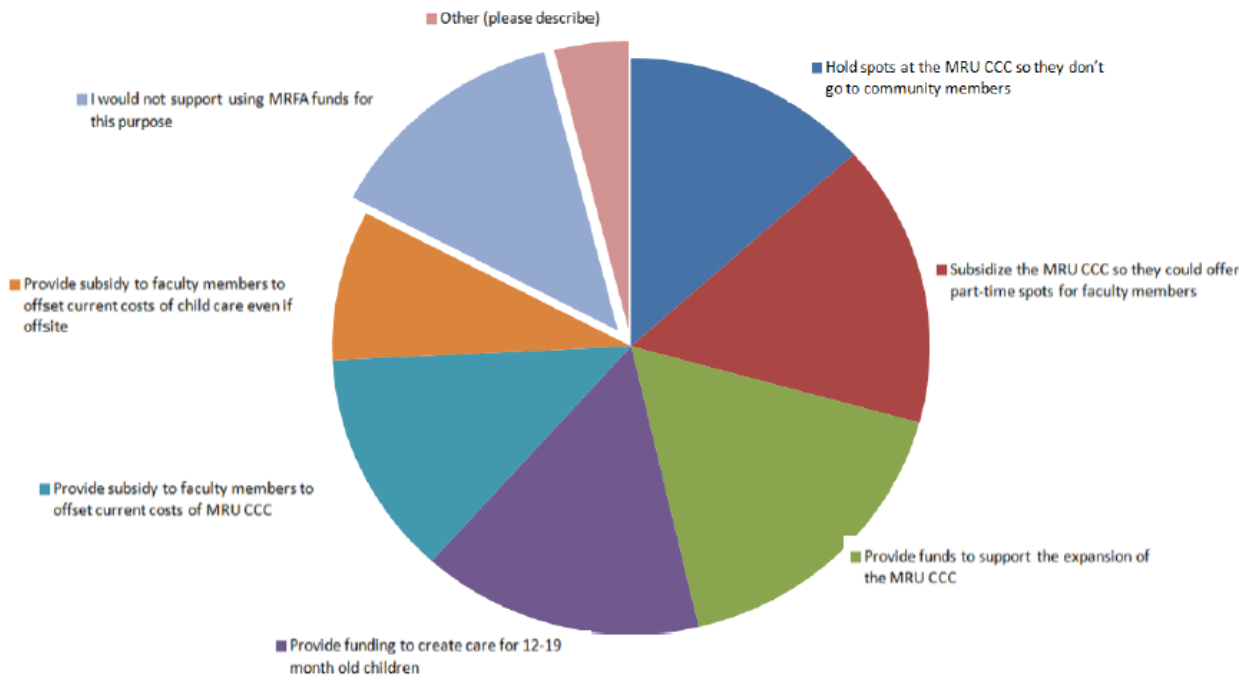
Recommendation 3: Cost Analysis

Recommendation that the MRFA Executive Board be tasked with developing proposals which include detailed cost analyses for the options supported by members for question 62 of the Child Care Survey and providing this information to the membership.

Rationale:

Question 62, Using funds to subsidize members or fund expansion of the MRUCCC

14% of responses were not in favour of using MRFA funds to support members with child care. The rest of the responses were supportive, but not in agreement on the best way to go about it.



Recommendation 4: Compassionate Fund

Recommendation that the MRFA membership approve the use of the MRFA Compassionate Fund to provide 60 day interest free loans to members to allow them to accept spots in the MRU Child Care Centre effective August 2014.

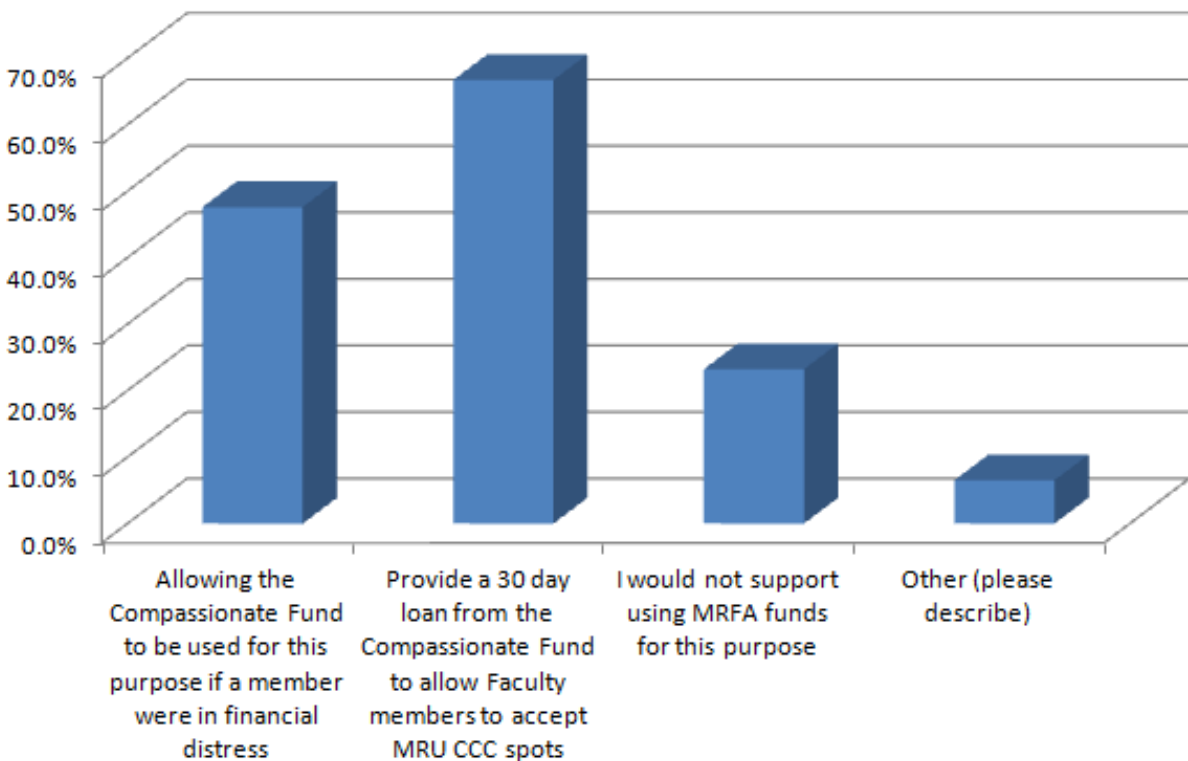
Rationale:

Question 63, Using funds to alleviate financial pressures of initial enrollment in MRUCCC

Responses showed support for using the MRFA Compassionate fund to assist members with the financial pressure of initial enrollment in the Child Care Centre. To be the most responsive to our members’ needs and concerns, and since there were some members who did not support this use of MRFA funds, the MRFA should move forward with option 2: “provide a 30 day loan from the Compassionate Fund to allow faculty members to accept MRU CCC spots.” This would assist our members and have no financial impact on the Association. The Association has sufficient funds in its accounts to cover these expenses for 60 day periods without affecting its ability to cover other costs which arise.

Members applying for this loan will be asked to provide proof that they have been offered a space in the MRU Child Care Centre

The survey asked about a 30 day loan, but, on further consideration, it was determined that more time should be given to allow members to pay back the loan.



Recommendation 5: Expansion

Recommendation that the MRFA advocate for the expansion of the Child Care Centre.

Rational:

With the demand for child care projected by the responses to the survey, it is clear that there is more demand for child care at MRU than the current space can accommodate. With some of the physical space adjacent to the Child Care centre soon to become vacant, this is the best opportunity for expansion of the centre.

Recommendation 6: Working with the Child Care Centre Board

Recommendation THAT the MRFA work in partnership with the MRU Child Care Board in regards to expansion.

Rationale:

The MRFA would have to work with the Child Care Centre Board on the initiative to expand the centre.

Recommendation 7: MRFA Staff

Recommendation that MRFA Staff have access to the same maternity and paternal leave benefits as faculty

Rationale:

As a professional Association that represents and advocates for the rights of its members, the Association is obligated to treat its staff in a similar fashion. As parental benefits for members improve they will improve for MRFA staff members. There are still many improvements needed to the Collective Agreement in this regard, such as the notification required: most universities require 2 weeks' notice and MRU requires 3 months' notice. Also, it is inequitable that members on four-for-five leaves get increments but people on maternity leaves do not necessarily get increments. They should get it automatically, even if they are on leave for a full year. These concerns, among others, have been communicated to the Negotiating Committee through the Diversity Committee's recommendations.

Diversity Committee Annual Report
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Membership (criteria revised September 13, 2013):

The MRFA Diversity Committee shall consist of:

- four (4) Regular Members to serve a term of two years and to be elected in odd-numbered years;
- three (3) Regular Members to serve a term of two years and to be elected in even-numbered years; and
- any other person recommended by the committee to serve in an advisory role, or to expand the diversity of representation, and appointed by the MRFA Executive Board to sit as a non-voting member for the remainder of the academic year
- For the 2013/2014 year our membership included:
 - Mohamed El Hussein
 - *Leah Hamilton
 - *Aliyah Mawji (Recording Secretary)
 - *Douglas Murdoch
 - Carmen Nielson (Chair)
 - Stefan Sikora
 - *Renaë Watchman (Representative on the Positive Space Committee)

*continuing for the 2014/2015 academic year

Summary of Activities:

1. In addition to the MRFA Committee Transition event on August 30, 2013, the Diversity Committee met on the following days: September 23, 2013; October 7, 2013; November 4, 2013; December 9, 2013; January 23, 2014; February 27, 2014; March 20, 2014; and April 17, 2014.
2. The Diversity Committee and the MRFA PD Committee held a joint Get Cracking session, “Diversity and YOU at MRU,” on January 24, 2014. The Diversity Committee facilitated a fulsome discussion with the session’s 16 attendees.
3. The MRFA sponsored Renaë Watchman’s attendance at the 2014 CAUT Equity Forum in Toronto from February 7-9, 2014. The theme of this year’s Forum was “Perpetual Crisis? Diversity with Equity in the Academy.” Renaë wrote and submitted a formal report for the MRFA, which is available for review. She will be doing a formal presentation of this report to the Diversity Committee in early Fall, 2014.
4. The Diversity Committee’s representative on Positive Space, Renaë Watchman, submitted a report on that group’s 2013-2014 activities.
5. The Diversity Committee made recommendations to the Negotiating Committee regarding the annual increment in the case of Maternity/Parental Leave and the duration of notice to administration required by women going on maternity leave.
6. The Diversity Committee prepared reports for the Executive and Negotiating Committees on equity policy clauses in Collective Agreements at Canadian Universities.
 - The Diversity Committee conducted a survey of 54 Collective Agreements at universities across Canada, of which 23 had equity policy clauses. Based on our

- assessment of these policies, the Diversity Committee identified 4 principles and inclusions that feature in existing Collective Agreements that will be necessary for MRU to establish an equity policy: 1) General statement of commitment to the principle of equity; 2) Joint committee on employment equity; 3) Data collection, assessment, and reporting; 4) Equity training for faculty and administration.
- The Diversity Committee forwarded a report to the Negotiating Committee that included sample clauses regarding “in principle” statements (1 in above) from various Canadian universities’ collective agreements.
 - The Diversity Committee forwarded a report to the Executive Committee that included sample clauses regarding all four principles and inclusions (above) from various Canadian universities’ collective agreements.

7. The Committee compiled a list of possible projects for the 2014-2015 Committee to consider for their agenda. These include: organize a CAUT workshop on equity issues; continue compiling a database of collective agreements with equity clauses (including, possibly, non-discrimination clauses); examine MRU institutional policies (not in the Collective Agreement) from a diversity perspective; provide the Executive with sample clauses from Canadian collective agreements dealing with maternity and parental leaves.

Submitted by Carmen Nielson, Diversity Committee Chair

Report for the Mount Royal Diversity Committee
Submitted by Renae Watchman (Appointed by MRFA Diversity Committee)

2013-2014 Members:

Monique Verhoef (**Chair** Positive Space & Diversity and Human Rights Coordinator), **Murray Holtby, Shereen Samuels, Renae Watchman, Charlie Hepler, D.A Dirks,** Kerri Martin, Kathy Offet-Gartner, Nadine Conklin, Natalie Meisner, Scharie Tavcer, Shane Gannon, Jeni Langille, Michael Cacace, Benjamin Maze, Joshua Cadegan-Syms, Jarett Henderson, Trudy Kwong, Terrance Zenuik, Vince Salyer, **Sally Haney,** Michael Morrissey, Natasha Rogers, Crystal Whitehead, Addison Asuchak, Andrea Wilson, Brent Oliver, Deanna Wiebe, Nathan Conley, Patricia Derbyshire, Roberta Lexier, Ron Griffith, Stephanie Stone.

Meetings:

- Fall 2013 meetings were scheduled monthly on Thursdays 10-12 pm. Unfortunately, I taught during this time, so I did not attend any Fall meetings.
- Spring 2014 meetings were scheduled monthly on Thursdays 11-12pm.
- All meeting agendas and notes that were provide are attached.

Events: promoted via postcards, email, and through Facebook and Twitter.

1. “Don’t Blame Me. Creating a Culture of Consent on Campus”
Friday October 11th. 11am – 1pm
Council Changes - Wykham House - Mount Royal University
Free Workshop Presented by SAMRU Pride & SAMRU Sustainability Centre
2. Nov. 29, 2013: Inaugural LGBTQ* Primer training. One hour. 17 attendees from across the university participated in this “educational initiative to build a more inclusive and safer space for LGBTTIQQA* identified people at MRU.” (D.A. Dirks)

3. January 24, 2014: RW completed Safe Space Training. Safe Space Training offered 3 times this academic year (final one is May 8, 2014 @ 1-3pm).
4. Sochi Olympics 2014: "Fly the Flag" campaign—MRU flew a pride flag in support of Gay Athletes at the Olympics and in protest of Russia's anti-gay laws.
5. April 10, 2014: Book Launch & Positive Space Social: Natalie Meisner's *Double Pregnant: Two Lesbians Make a Family*
6. **FALL 2013 ongoing events:**
 - First Fridays at 4pm: Queer Beer at the Hub
7. **SPRING 2014 ongoing events:**
 - FRIDAY JAZZ AT THE HUB: JANUARY 10, FEB. 7, MARCH 7, & APRIL 4, 2014

Resources

1. Consortium of LGBT In Higher Education, available through MRU Library:
<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wjly20#.UkCXtcasiSo>
2. Attached is the list of LGBTQ 'friendly' (their language) resources (from Kathy Offet-Gartner)
3. Inaugural **Safe Space Training** on January 24, 2014 materials available on the google drive attached:
<https://sites.google.com/a/mtroyal.ca/safe-space-resources/>

**Educational Grants Committee Annual Report
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Committee members

Shiaz Kurji (Chair)
Naomi Grant
Frank Cotae
Pat Kostouros
Donna Lazdowski
Chantelle Anderson

Committee Activities

Under the terms of the Collective Agreement, the MRFA Educational Grants Committee allocated \$60,000 in scholarships for dependents (Article 16.7) and \$64,000 in Tuition Refunds for faculty members taking credit courses and/or completing graduate studies at other institutions (Article 18.3). The Committee will also be allocating the MRFA Student Scholarships in June.

MRFA Student Scholarships

The Committee will meet in late May to allocate six scholarships of \$1000 each to a student in each of six major faculties/schools.

<u>Tuition Refunds</u>	Pool 1	Pool 2	Total
Number of Applicants	13	13	26
Percentage of Members' Tuition Reimbursed	99%	43%	71%
Total Funds Allocated	\$44,000	\$20,000	\$64,000

<u>Scholarships for Dependants</u>	Fall 2013	Winter 2014	Spring-Summer 2014	Total
Number of Applicants	20	17	No applications yet	34 to date
Amount Allocated	\$32,000	\$25,000	\$3,000	\$60,000

Respectfully submitted by the 2013-2014 Educational Grants Committee

**Ethics Committee Annual Report
MRFA Annual General Meeting
9 May 2014**

There were no ethics complaints in 2013 – 2014.

Respectfully submitted by the Members of the Ethics Committee,

Sinclair MacRae (Chair)
Miriam Carey
Jocelyn Lehman
Jack Dobbs
Richard Harrison
Bev McLeod

**Faculty Evaluation Committee Annual Report
MRFA Annual General Meeting
9 May 2014**

Members

Margaret Brown, Kathryn Brownsey, Antoine Eche, Michele Holmgren, Benjamin Kusi-Sekyere, Kathy Offet-Gartner, Michael Pollock.

Mandate

“The Committee shall recommend policy on pretenure, post-tenure, term certain and part-time evaluation, shall monitor the evaluation process, and shall provide information to Regular Members on evaluation. The Committee shall investigate and maintain current research information to inform its work and to enhance evaluation processes for all MRFA members.”

Activities and accomplishments

Following suggestions made by the President of the MRFA, the FEC tackled three issues:

1) Implementation of on-line SEIs:

On his request, the FEC provided the MRFA President, representing the MRFA on the Steering Committee for the Implementation of On-line SEIs, with background research on the literature and experiences at other institutions. Most of this had been done in the [Review of SEI literature](#) conducted in 2011 and presented on January 30, 2012. It was suggested to the President to share this with the other members of the Steering Committee.

Following methodological principles taken from the SEI Review (see FEC background research), the FEC gathered more information, notably including a [recent article](#) written by two former members of the FEC.

The activities on this topic came to a halt after the President of the MRFA informed FEC that no more additional information was needed and that the Winter SEI pilot had been delayed.

2) Drafting of a common form for the reappointment of contract faculty.

The FEC reviewed policies from various departments and established guidelines for a draft which was then submitted to the President of the MRFA.

The rationale is that this form will reflect the current status of the contract member within the department (i.e., reappointed; reappointed with conditions; not reappointed) and will contain a recorded response to that status from both the department and the contract member.

3) Review of the annual report system.

Margaret Brown agreed to be on the ad hoc committee that will make recommendations on improving the system.

Job Action Research Committee Annual Report
MRFA Annual General Meeting
9 May 2014

The MRFA Executive Board began discussing the forms of job action that the Association might be able to undertake in support of our Negotiating Committee during the previous round of collective bargaining. A draft charter for an ad hoc committee to examine these issues was developed in March and early April of 2012, but the Executive decided it was too late to act during that negotiating year and postponed formation of the committee.

After the outstanding issues were resolved during mediation in the fall of 2012, two members of the Executive met with the Association's legal counsel to discuss the types of job action that could be used. Our counsel's advice was that little or no service could be withdrawn legally, but there were opportunities to use information campaigns to put pressure on the university. The details of the advice provided are attached.

Further discussion at the Executive's planning retreat in early November 2013 resulted in establishment of an ad hoc Job Action Research Committee charged with developing a proposed job action plan. The committee's charter is attached. The members of the committee were Gerry Cross, Brenda Lang, David Sabiston, Janice Paskey, Krista Whitehead and Michael Truscello.

In accordance with its charter, the committee presented a series of ideas for consideration by the Executive Board. The Executive made revisions and approved the following as the framework for a job action plan.

1. There is little that we can do without the right to strike. When we had that right, the threat of a strike could be used by our Negotiating Committee to counter the university's power advantage in negotiations.

The MRFA should reconsider mounting a charter challenge on the right to strike, in conjunction with other Alberta post-secondary faculty associations.

2. Although we cannot hold a strike vote, we could demonstrate solidarity by holding a mock strike vote or by voting on withdrawal of selected forms of service or an information campaign.
3. Our Negotiating Committee gains power when the membership is solidly behind it, and the administration knows that it is. Information campaigns should be conducted to build support, as necessary. Buttons, either specific to a particular issue or with a generic slogan such as "I support my negotiators", are one possibility.
4. Information pickets could be helpful during difficult negotiations and mediation because they would ensure that the administration and the Board understood our positions. Information pickets would need to be based on issues that are contentious in negotiations.
5. Members could consider withdrawing service in noticeable ways such as boycotting Convocation or Open House, minimizing time on campus, and keeping work hours in accordance with the academic scheduling policy.
6. Members who are doing too much service should consider agreeing to less in future years.¹

¹ Members should be aware that, if you have agreed to serve on a committee, you cannot legally withdraw that service because it is part of your work commitment.

7. The MRFA could consider terminating social memberships.
8. Fifty faculty members picketing government offices such as the McDougall Centre would generate media opportunities. In a public venue, we may want to shift the focus from the particular issues in negotiations to broader advocacy for post-secondary education.
9. We could attempt to communicate through the media by issuing press releases when we were in mediation or arbitration.

Report on the job action research meeting which two members of the Executive had with the Association's legal counsel in November 2012

Cautions regarding job action

1. Our counsel has considerable experience advising unions regarding which services they could withdraw. Often the result was that the employer went to the Labour Relations Board and the union lost.
2. Because of this, he was nervous about finding anything that we might withdraw; we certainly don't have an unlimited right.
3. Withholding service is generally viewed as strike action because it is an attempt to persuade the employer to accept certain terms and conditions of employment. The Labour Board tends to base its rulings on the broadest possible definition of work. For example, a building trade union stopped dispatching workers and this was ruled an illegal strike, even though they were not yet at work. In another case, refusing voluntary overtime was ruled to be strike action.
4. Arbitrators also adopt a broad definition of work. For example, there was a case in BC where teachers refusing to continue doing voluntary lunch hour supervision was ruled an illegal strike, because they had made it part of their work.
5. The same reasoning might apply to honours supervision and even to committee work. We are professionals whose work is more self-motivated than that of hourly paid employees. Our work consists of more than just SICH. You could elect not to sit on a committee, but how could you argue that a committee is not work when you are on it?
6. If we took job action and the university wanted to stop us, they would have to apply for a court order, which is a longer and more costly process than going to the Labour Relations Board. If we were under the Labour Board, then the university would just have to file an affidavit seeking an illegal strike order and could have it in less than four hours.
7. If the university obtained a court order, then the Association could be exposed to the financial impact of members' actions, although there would probably be none. However, it is likely that the Association would be required to pay the university's legal costs. Individual members could be subject to discipline, although the Association could negotiate that.

What job action could we undertake?

1. For any action, it would be better if it were seen to be done spontaneously because of morale problems, rather than because the Association advocated for it.
2. An action is not worth taking if it does not create immediate pressure on the administration. Teaching would seem to have more potential for this than service.
3. We could implement rotating sickness or any other form of rotating inactivity to create slowdowns, although recently Air Canada pilots phoning in sick was ruled an illegal strike. This becomes more likely as the action reaches the threshold of creating pressure.
4. Cancelling office hours would be safe if there were no contractual commitment (although I think we could safely cancel office hours, perhaps we should consider this to be a preliminary opinion because the Addendum on Teaching, Scholarship and Service in the Collective Agreement includes student consultation and advice under teaching – although what form that should take is not specified).
5. We would have a stronger case for withdrawing service if we defined a minimum threshold based on the tenure standards and asserted that we would not do more. Our lawyer said that he could argue this with credibility, but could not give us a definitive answer that he would win. The university would be less likely to act, but would we be creating significant pressure?

6. He thought we would have to be careful in refusing honours supervision, referring back to the teachers' lunch hour supervision which they had done for many years and, thus, created an expectation that it would be done. On the other hand, we are under no obligation to supervise honours students and some faculty in departments with honours programs do not.

Picketing

1. This is quite a different matter. We have ample opportunity because we are not subject to statutory restrictions such as those in the Labour Code and picketing is protected by the freedom of expression provision in the Charter.
2. We are free to picket to the extent that we do not contravene other laws, such as trespass.
3. We should not threaten people but, as long as we create pressure by what we are saying, go for it! The administration can't stop us. If the students chose not to cross a picket line, then there is nothing they could do.
4. Sometimes nuisance is used against picketing. This is interfering with another's enjoyment of property, e.g. interfering with public access or egress. The result is usually an order to reduce the number of pickets.
5. Normally, picketing is done at the place of employment. This is where there is the greatest tolerance for picketing, but it can potentially be done anywhere. Pepsi workers once picketed stores where Pepsi was sold and it was deemed legal. We could picket government offices. Our lawyer would extrapolate that to picketing the President's house. Others might be cautious, but he is confident that we would have that right. But be careful; stepping on the lawn would be trespass.
6. We could place pamphlets on windshields and run newspaper ads.
7. Be creative!
8. There was a strike at York University in which all roads in were picketed, resulting in the university being shut down.
9. If we attempted picketing the roads, would students and staff respect the lines? This would be an illegal strike if it worked, but the university would have to get a court order to stop it and that would take time.
10. Building trades working on a new building might honour a picket line, but that would last at most until an order was issued. The Teamsters had a clause in their Collective Agreement that they were not to cross picket lines, but refusing to cross was still ruled to be an illegal strike.



Charter: **MRFA Job Action Research Committee**
Date: December 13, 2013

Preamble

The loss of the right to strike by the MRFA coincided with the adoption of interest-focused bargaining, a method which has worked successfully in recent rounds of negotiations. A time will come, however, when the MRFA will need to apply forms of job action, such as information campaigns and the withdrawal of selected forms of service, to support the collective bargaining process. Because service is now defined in the Collective Agreement as an element of work, the committee must determine which types of service may be safely and legally withdrawn, especially if such withdrawal is part of collective job action, and when are the appropriate times in the negotiating cycle to take such action.

Mandate

The mandate of the Job Action Research Committee is to develop a plan for withdrawal of selected forms of service, and any other forms of legal collective action, in support of negotiations. The plan is to list the types of service that can and cannot be withdrawn and propose a strategy for the collective withdrawal of service or any other forms of job action, including measures to raise awareness and generate support among the membership.

Membership

The Membership Support Committee shall consist of:

- the MRFA President;
- the Communications Officer; and
- up to six (6) Regular Members of the Association in good standing, including one (1) member of the Advocacy Committee and one (1) member of the Negotiating Committee, appointed by the Executive Board.

Activities

The activities of the committee include but are not limited to:

- determining which types of service may be legally withdrawn;
- identifying measures to raise awareness and generate support among the membership;
- developing a job action plan that includes the timing of information campaigns and job action in the negotiating cycle;
- consulting with the membership, the Association's legal counsel, CAUT staff, and other faculty associations, as necessary.

Authority

The committee reports to the Executive Board and will forward the proposed job action plan to the Executive Board with a request that it be recommended to the membership for approval.

Timeline

The proposed job action plan is to be presented to the Executive Board by March 31, 2014.

Negotiating Committee Annual Report
MRFA Annual General Meeting
9 May 2014

As you know, the MRFA and Board of Governors have been engaged in a full-round of negotiating this year. Preparations began in the fall, as members from the MRFA negotiating committee visited all but one department. Thank you for sharing your concerns with us; it is an important part of our preparation. We also surveyed full-time and contract members in January and February. We presented [highlights from the survey](#) at the March general meeting. Faculty concerns include salary, workload and security. Also at the March meeting, we gave a brief presentation on [the process of negotiations](#). Both PowerPoint presentations are available on the [MRFA site](#).

The MRFA Negotiating committee and Board of Governors' team attended two days of training on interest-focused bargaining, led by Gary Furlong. The MRFA Negotiating committee also had a two-day workshop on collective bargaining, offered by CAUT on campus. I attended the Negotiation Advisory committee of ACIFA in November and March. I also attended the CAUT Forum for Chief Negotiators in March. The CAUT Forum was particularly useful as one of the themes was program prioritization.

In Fall 2013, we negotiated a new article on Intellectual Property as required by a Memorandum of Understanding from the last round. Both sides came to agreement in January 2014; [the draft article](#) was presented to the MRFA membership at the January general meeting, and was later ratified. Over 99% of ballots cast were in favour of the new article. The Board of Governors also ratified the new article.

The MRFA Negotiating committee and Board of Governors' team exchanged statements of interests on February 14. Since the beginning of March, we have been meeting regularly and have made progress on a number of issues, including academic freedom. There are still some significant challenges ahead. So far both sides have met together 57 hours, not counting subcommittees. We will continue to meet throughout May, hoping to come to an agreement by May 31. I would like to thank Brady Killough, Rafik Kurij, Brenda Lang and Jennifer Pettit for their very hard work.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Manarin

**Professional Development Committee Annual Report
MRFA Annual General Meeting
9 May 2014**

Members:

Chair: Rod Corbett (ADC)
Treasurer: Katharine Barrette (Library)
Secretary: Sally Haney (Journalism)
Aida Patient (English)
Janet Miller (Counselling)
Jarett Henderson (Humanities)
Eric Roettger (Mathematics & General Education)
Bill Glanzman (Anthropology)
Joe Pavelka (ETOL - Physical Education & Recreation Studies)

Activities 2013-2014:

The following professional development activities have been offered by the MRFA Professional Development Committee for the year 2013-2014:

Fall 2013 Professional Development Event:

On September 19, 2013, the ADC, the President's office, and the MRFA PD committee co-sponsored Carl Honoré to speak at MRU. He gave the keynote presentation at Town Hall meeting titled: "MRU 2020" as well as facilitating a discussion afterwards. In his presentation, Carl spoke to a mixed audience of MRFA members, MRU staff, students and administration about the value of the Slow Movement and how it can relate to our vision of the future.

The date of November 21, 2014 has been set for the Fall 2014 Professional Event.

February Professional Development Day 2014:

"The Courage to Fail" - February 19th, 2014

This year's PD event was a half-day panel presentation featuring several faculty speaking to and sharing experiences of failures in teaching and what they learned from them. Speakers included Miriam Carey from the ADC and Steven Engler from Humanities, with facilitation from Janet Miller from Counselling, Aida Patient from English and Sally Haney from Journalism. Attendees included 36 members who had the opportunity to participate in group discussions and have a Q & A with the panelists, followed by lunch in the Faculty Center.

The date of February 15, 2015 has been set for the February 2015 Professional Event.

2013 Spring Retreat: "Into the Depths" - May 15th & 16th, 2013

The 2013 Spring Retreat took place at the Delta Kananaskis in Kananaskis, Alberta on May 14th & 15th, 2013. Twenty-five concurrent sessions included presentations by individual faculty members as well as panels made up of faculty members, administrators, and even several students. Topics ranged from connecting with and engaging our students with innovative teaching strategies, research strategies and teaching with next generation technologies. Over 150 full and part-time faculty members attended the event.

2014 Spring Retreat: "Advocate, Educate, Engage!" - May 12th & 13th, 2014

The 2014 Spring Retreat for faculty will also be held at the Delta Lodge at Kananaskis. We have 154 faculty currently registered for the retreat, offering 28 concurrent sessions, 8 ignite style presentations and two plenary sessions including keynotes James Turk on Day 1 and Kate

McKenzie on Day 2. Presentations by MRFA members, guests and even some faculty-student collaborative teams make for exciting program offerings. The event once again promises to be a fun and informative opportunity for faculty to meet, share and learn from each other. For more information go to <http://blogs.mtroyal.ca/mrfaretreat/>

Spring Retreat Review

The PD committee will be surveying the membership right after the 2014 Spring Retreat to gather feedback that will be considered in planning of future retreats.

Get Crackin' -Breakfast Discussion Series 2013-2014:

Four Get Crackin' breakfast discussions were held in the Faculty Centre on Friday mornings and included breakfast and good, hearty discussions. Attendance was excellent and included new and familiar faces:

- October 25, 2013 on *Get Your Oscar On; Performance in the Classroom* with 16 participants
- November 22, 2013 on *To Friend or Not To Friend* with 13 participants
- January 24, 2014 on *Diversity and YOU at MRU* with 18 participants
- March 21, 2014 on *Your Ideal Retreat* with 12 participants.

ACIFA Innovation in Teaching Award Nominations:

This year the MRFA PD Committee was proud to support two nominations for the Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association Innovation in Teaching Award, including the winning nomination:

- The first nomination is from Todd Nickle (Biology), who's innovation included developing easy to use resources that would help instructors in any discipline to transform their classes into more activity and discussion focused learning experiences. Todd has create a website at <http://easyblogteaching.blogspot.com> that is freely available for anyone to access who is interested. Todd did win this award and will be showcasing this innovation at that annual ACIFA Conference at the end of May.
- The second nomination is from Jim Fischer (Bissett School of Business), who's innovation was to transform one of the capstone international business courses into an enhanced experiential learning course for finance students that included participating in an international commodity trading simulation, a field trip to the commodity markets and financial institutions in Chicago, as well as student-led interviews and discussions with experts in the field.

ACIFA Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award:

This year the MRFA PD Committee did not receive any applications from our members for this award so none will nominated to ACIFA.

Respectfully submitted, Rod Corbett, Chair, MRFA PD Committee

Professional Standards and Governance Committee Annual Report
MRFA Annual General Meeting
9 May 2014

The Professional Standards & Governance Committee (PSGC) members were (in alphabetical order):

Harjinder Deol, Israel Dunmade, Shawn England (Chair), Christine Giancarlo, Bill Glanzman, Scott Murray (ex-officio), and Stefan Sikora.

This was the second year of activity for this committee (formerly the Professional Affairs Committee), and we continued the committee's tradition of co-sponsoring the MRFA "welcome back" event, which took place on August 23, 2013.

We similarly moved forward with an event initially planned for last spring by last year's committee, but unfortunately cancelled. This event, "Ethics and Conflicts of Interest in Academia," took place on Friday, November 15, between 12:00 and 2:00 at the Faculty Centre, and included an array of lunchtime delicacies made available by Darlene. This round-table discussion featured MRFA president, Gerry Cross, along with Sinclair MacRae and David Cann. It combined brief thematic presentations by the panelists, followed by discussion and ethical problem-solving group activities by all participants.

The next event, which took place at the Faculty Centre on March 28, 2014, was entitled "It's Not about Fit: Myths and Legends of the Academic Hiring Process." The panelists for this event were Gerry Cross, Karim Dharamsi, Scott Murray, and Keith Black. This event was designed to broadly appeal to all faculty, including those seeking either tenure-track positions and/or contract employment. The event attracted a mixed crowd, and participants enjoyed excellent refreshments (provided by Darlene) as well as fulsome discussion.

Finally, the PRGC is cosponsor two upcoming events featuring Loreleigh Keashley, both scheduled to take place May 13, 2014. These are "Bystander Responses to Unprofessional, Intimidating Behavior: Tools and Resources for Faculty," and "When Academe Becomes Hostile: Exploring the Nature and Impact of Bullying and Incivility." Also, although the decision was not finalized at the time when this report was completed, it is extremely likely that the PSGC will once again co-sponsor the next "Welcome Back" event.

Submitted by
Shawn England, Chair,
The Professional Standards and Governance Committee

**Social Events Committee Annual Report
MRFA Annual General Meeting
9 May 2014**

Committee Members

Kathy Offet-Gartner (Chair)
Christy Tomkins-Lane (to November, 2013)
Jennifer Hooper
Jocelyn Rempel
Sara Sharun
Liza Choi
Dennis Valdez (Replaced Christy mid November, 2013)
Darlene Windrem

Social Events

August 23rd: Welcome Back and Golf Tournament: This event served a dual purpose, it was planned as our initial Welcome Back event and then also served to host our Golf tournament that had to be postponed due to inclement weather earlier in May. As such, the event was held earlier than normal, which may have played a role in the lower than usual attendance of only about 60 people, 32 of whom golfed. Nonetheless, those who did attend enjoyed the company of colleagues, the prizes for the funniest golf 'achievements' and the delicious snacks that Dar had ready. This event was co-sponsored by the Professional Standards and Governance Committee (PSGC), which was much appreciated.

September 27th: Tenure Celebration: 'Toast to Tenure': This event was organized in association with the Board of Governors (BOG). The purpose of this kick-off event was to facilitate and encourage activities and the development of peer collegial relationships amongst both new and seasoned faculty in a relaxing and supportive environment. This was also the first year that the Tenure celebration was held in September rather than February. This created the need for rapid planning and organizing for a committee that had several new members. It came off beautifully with over 150 faculty and some spouses and family of the 10 newly tenured and newly appointed Lab Instructors attending. Participants enjoyed the music of three MRU jazz students and ate cocktail type food at this semi-formal event. The newly tenured were gifted engraved mugs and gift certificates for dinner at Tony Roma's.

October 18th: 'A Taste of Oktober: This was an Oktoberfest themed party where we tasted a number of German beers and ate German fare (authentic sausages, pretzels, and cheeses). We had a lively crew of about 120, so well worth repeating. It was good timing to have this event after the long weekend.

November 15th: 'Name that Tune': We had short clips of theme music from movies a/o TV shows and asked people to gather into teams and guess what the name of the song and show the song came from in order to win prizes (movie passes). People really got into this event, albeit, this was one of our poorest attended events this year, with only about 50 attending. Nonetheless everyone who did attend said they really enjoyed themselves. We noted to be sure not to organize a party on the Friday of the Reading break and to ensure that the reminder poster is sent out prior to the date of the event. It was thought that perhaps both of these factors played a role in the lower attendance. Notwithstanding, we would recommend repeating this event in the future—it got people talking and laughing together.

Thursday Dec 5th: MRFA Christmas Holiday Party: We hosted the traditional MRFA seasonal faculty event to wrap up the Fall semester. This event is the only event that we planned for a day other than a Friday, it seems to work well to host this on a Thursday. We had more than 160 people attend this event and went through significantly more wine than usual.

January 10: Beat the Winter Blues: A beach theme was decided on since we were in the midst of such a cold and dark winter. We wanted to bring in some colour and cheer, complete with leis, pink flamingos and palm trees on the tables, and little umbrellas in the complimentary Hawaiian punch. This touch of summer was enjoyed by approximately 100 people who feasted on pizza, fresh fruits and vegetables. We definitely felt that this was worth repeating again with the comment of “more pizza”!

February 7: Casino Night: The Casino event was so popular in 2012 & 13 that we decided to repeat it. As was previously, “AcesRWild” was hired for the evening, and they brought dealers, poker and black jack tables, as well as the customary fun money. Every person was given \$20,000 of fun money when they entered into the faculty centre. They had the choice of using this to buy raffle tickets for the many prizes, or to play casino games and potentially increase their earnings to buy even more raffle tickets. This event wasn’t as well attended as we thought might be the case, with only 55 attending, and there was a definite split between those who came to game and those who did not. Only about 20 people participated in the gaming aspect, so we wondered if this event has run its course and should not be considered for next year; or if it is held to consider moving it to the week immediately following the Reading break.

March 14: Celebrate St. Patty’s Day: This event was infused with green! Green shamrocks on the bottoms of glasses or tables won free drinks; green foods (melons, herb cheese, guacamole and green kale tortilla chips) accompanied the regular AA fare. There were a number of games of chance (coin flips; dice toss; and jelly bean guesses) that allowed everyone to try their luck for the pots of gold we had waiting for them (coffee card; gift certificate to the Hub; movie pass). This event was enjoyed by a happy 110 people and was recommended to be considered again.

**NB: The following events come from the 2014-15 fiscal budget, however come under the auspices of the current committee so are reported herein.*

***April 11: Race to the Finish Line:** This April event was hosted on the last day of classes with the purpose of encouraging a time of peer support and recognition that the race to the end of the semester was quickly approaching. This was also a chance for people to come and show their respect to Gerry Cross, who will be retiring soon as our MFRA President. Although Gerry will return to teaching and will go on graduated retirement from the university, we wanted to ensure we showed him how much he has meant to many of us. A secret invitation was sent out to all the membership. When Gerry entered the room, a spontaneous standing ovation occurred—a true sign of respect from your peers – and set the stage for our short program. The event was MC’d by SEC Chair, Kathy Offet-Gartner and a small tribute panel of speakers was arranged (the University President; Gerry’s Dean prior to becoming our President; his current Dean; and a former member of the Negotiating team) before the microphone was opened up for others to speak. In all, an additional 4 speakers came forward, including a former student, who is now a current Contract faculty and a summary remark and gift from the President of the MRSSA. We then said a toast and tipped a shot of sipping whiskey to celebrate his love of Scotch. SEC presented Gerry with a gift to savour and reflect on his many contributions to the MRU community. This event saw the faculty Centre packed with close to 200 people—a true testament to the guest of honour!

***May 23: Annual Keg Drain and Golf Tournament:** This event is a traditional final Social Event of the academic year and this year sees 4 of the 6 committee members completing terms. The event will include golf at Buffalo Run beginning at noon, followed by buns, cold cuts, and

cheese and the traditional keg drain at the Faculty Centre. Prizes for the tournament and the outdoor skill games that will be available for those who do not golf will be given at this time.

Budget: Our total budget for the year was \$10,000, a reduction of \$5000.00 from last year; a step taken because of the severe budget cuts to our Institution. The total amount spent on events was \$9,914.78; hence we had \$85.22 remaining unspent. We have been informed that the SEC budget will be increased to \$12,000 for 2014-15. This increase will be welcomed because although we were able to manage with the reduction we had this past budget year there were rumblings and complaints from some faculty when we were not able to provide substantial food offerings and free beverages. This additional influx of funds should help alleviate this pressure, which is felt most especially by Dar and is tiresome to say the least.

Final Comments

All of the events went very well this year if we favour the mood of those who attended and not actual numbers of attendees. It appeared that for all save one or two events, attendance was consistently good and people seemed to enjoy themselves. The most popular events seemed to be where there was a clear celebration: Tenure; Christmas; and thanks to Gerry Cross. Additionally, faculty seemed to enjoy the tasting event, the opportunities to win prizes, as well as the opportunity to connect with friends and colleagues and perhaps play a tune or two with fellow musicians. Despite the ongoing difficulties for all faculty associated with the budget cuts, people continued to attend social events. Both the March and April events were a great opportunity to foster continued community among faculty, and provide people with a chance to relax with colleagues and say thanks to one of our own.

Based on feedback from faculty, events to repeat include tasting events, and those events that focus on a clear celebration of sorts. Additionally, based on feedback from some faculty, as well as the committee, we believe that reducing the focus on awarding prizes, and refocusing on providing complimentary beverages, and a variety of food offering at all SEC events will meet the social needs of faculty and increase the overall enjoyment for all.

Further, because of the short turnaround time for SEC committee members to meet upon return in August and plan two major events at the beginning of their committee tenure, we decided to do some preliminary planning and organizing for both the “welcome back” event and the “tenure celebration”. Setting the dates for these events will allow us to contact those individuals who are involved in the program portion of the events, as well as representatives from committees that typically co-sponsor the events well in advance to secure their availability as well as the necessary room booking (we anticipate needing the Lincoln Park Room for the Tenure event due to the high numbers of tenure appointments anticipated). Additionally, by setting these dates, it allowed our initial event to be included in a ‘save the date’ poster to be included in each of the MFRA Retreat bags. **The date for the Welcome Back event has been set for September 5th and the Tenure and Promotion Celebration has been set for October 10th. The members of the committee would appreciate departments keeping the afternoon of October 10th open to ensure all involved and interested members can attend the celebration.** It is hoped that by taking this action this year, we can assist our colleagues who will comprise the 2014/15 SEC. Revisiting this practice in subsequent years would be prudent.

The committee would like to thank the faculty who came and supported these events, the MRFA executive and the MRU President’s and Vice President’s Office for their participation in and donations for specific events, to Gerry Cross for his continued support, to Chantelle Anderson for her exceptional organizational skills, to Darlene for her hard work, and to the remainder of the social committee members for their utmost dedication.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Offet-Gartner
Chair, MRFA Social Committee, 2013-14.