



**MINUTES OF THE MRFA EXECUTIVE  
AUGUST 16, 2006  
FACULTY CENTRE @ 9:30am**

**FINAL**

**In attendance:** David Hyttenrauch, Doug Rathbun, Jane Drover, Mardy Roberts, Bruce Ravelli, Miriam Carey

**Guests:** Minister of Advanced Education Dennis Herard and his Special Assistant, Thomas Djurfors

President David welcomed the Minister and his Special Assistant, and thanked them for their visit. He then presented them each with a brief summary of the MRFA and noted that the purpose of the meeting was both for us to present our ideas and aspirations as well as for us to hear of the Minister's concerns.

**1. Bill 55 Draft Regulations**

The Minister inquired whether President David has read the draft regulations and how recently he had been involved in discussions thereon. President David had not been in attendance at a meeting yesterday, but expressed concerns with the proposal to cap the number of members at 40, noting that this cap would compromise both the number and representativeness of faculty on the governing body dealing with academic affairs. He further clarified the importance of academic representation on academic governance, and that decisions outside the academic realm should be properly decided by the Board of Governors. The Minister agreed to take these comments back to his Department for reconsideration.

In a later part of our conversation, the Minister noted he didn't anticipate any difficulty taking the regulation proposals through the Standing Policy Committee or Cabinet, but that most resistance might be felt at the caucus level where members are approaching the issue relatively cold.. He suggested the Quality

Council process in which we are involved, and ultimately our AUCC accreditation, should allay any concerns and then “it’s a done deal”.

## **2. Mandate Transformation**

We then had a rather broad and very interesting discussion around the subject of mandate transformation, with the Minister wanting to hear what makes Mount Royal unique and advantageous. Bruce Ravelli exemplified a move away from a strictly academic career in two traditional universities in favour of a teaching-focused career here. He described differences in culture and work pressures, noting that scholarship should directly benefit teaching and students. We discussed teaching and research loads both here currently, as projected, and at a traditional university. Mardy Roberts noted a further advantage in Mount Royal becoming an undergraduate university; more resources would be directed at teaching rather than supervising graduate study. Miriam Carey highlighted the proposal for a BA in Policy Studies which builds a semester’s-long Internship into the academic curriculum; the Minister asked for a brief note with further details. The Minister seemed very receptive to our comments.

## **3. Mentoring, E-Campus Alberta**

Minister Herard then shared some of his interests and ideas. He wishes to establish a more structured and formalized mentorship program within the K-12 education system so as to assist young people in finding their passion and facilitate their further study therein, if applicable. He noted community, employer, parent, and student partners in this endeavor, and we suggested post-secondary faculty could also be more directly involved. E-Campus Alberta might also be utilized as an upgrading, second-chance facility where any student would work towards various prerequisites from their location and on their schedule.

## **4. Student Loans**

The Minister would also like to modify the student loans program in a number of ways: taking more (if not all) responsibility from the federal government for student debt in Alberta and working schemes for lessening that debt through employment and contributions made here in Alberta. A new tuition policy is in the works; it proposes to cap tuition increase to the CPI which means that greater funds will have to come to post-secondary institutions through other sources, including government.

## **5. Celebrating Albertans**

Minister Herard also wishes to establish some more direct means of communicating to Albertans all the success stories being written in education in general. He envisions a website of these stories as told by their initiators -- he mentioned an innovation fund which supports such initiatives.

As none of these initiatives or proposals has been made public, these comments remain confidential.

## **6. The meeting adjourned at 11:45am.**