

## Mount Royal Faculty Association – Social Events Standing Committee Annual Report for 2013-2014

### 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

**September 27<sup>th</sup>: Welcome Back and 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 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 18<sup>th</sup>: '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 15<sup>th</sup>: '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, although 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 5<sup>th</sup>: MRFA Christmas Holiday Party:** We hosted the MRFA-traditional MRFA seasonal adult 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 the Thursday. We had more than 130 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. W-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 Hawaiian punch that was offered for free-. 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, and 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 75 attending, and there was a definite split of-between those who came to game and those who did not, and it did not waver. 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.

Comment [SS1]: not sure what is meant here.

**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.

**April 11: Race to the Finish Line:** This April event was hosted on the last day of classes with the purpose to-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-and-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 seat the stage for our short program. The event was MC’d by Sec-SEC Chair, Kathy Offet-Gartner and a small tribute panel of speakers was arranged (the University President; his-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, come-some 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 150 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 in the earlier afternoon, followed by pizza and the keg drain at the Faculty Centre. Traditional AA snacks will be provided and prizes for the tournament and the outdoor skill games that will be available for those who do not golf.

**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, we believe that continuing to provide great prizes, 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.

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 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.

**Comment [SS2]:** In reviewing the minutes of the meeting after the St. Patty's Day event, it appears we noted that people seem less interested in games and prizes, and we discussed how, if need be, we should spend less on prizes and more on food and drink, and ensure that every event offers a free drink. I am not sure if others still agree with this statement, or if you think that prizes are the key to successful events.