

## **Minutes of the Mount Royal Faculty Association**

**Meeting date: March 13, 2015**

**Call to order:** An Executive Board meeting of the MRFA, was held in Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta on March 13, 2015. The meeting convened at 11:00am, President, Marc Schroeder, presiding.

### **Members Present:**

Scott Murray  
Elaine Mullen  
Marc Schroeder  
Richard Sutherland  
Karen Manarin

April McGrath  
Benda Lang  
Andreas Tomaszewski  
Tracy Powell  
Shiraz Kurji

### **Agenda**

Approved

### **Minutes**

Motion was made by Marc Schroeder to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2015 meeting.  
Motion Carried

### **In Camera Session**

Vice-President Policy and Grievance Officer's Report

### **Officer's Reports**

President's report

1. March 9-10 Ratification Vote  
The Academic Year and Library PC Committee reports were ratified.
2. Joint Committee on the CA Implications of the Reorganization  
The Joint Committee wants the minimum number of changes to the Collective Agreement as possible. Anything recommended by this committee affecting the Collective Agreement would need to be ratified.
3. Possible Changes to Alberta's Collective Bargaining Framework  
The Alberta government is likely going to propose moving to a provincial collective bargaining framework for PSE similar to what is done in BC. If this happens, there is a greater chance that Faculty Associations in Alberta will work together to get out of the Post-Secondary Learning Act and unionize.
4. Recent and Upcoming Advocacy Efforts  
The Advocacy Committee is planning a post budget announcement advocacy event. Also, Marc is in the process of developing a model PSE platform.
5. MRU 15-16 budget development  
There is a new draft budget being presented to BAC, but there are still several unknown variables. Revenues have changed with the implementation of market modifiers and the increase in the student services fee from \$125 to \$200.
6. February 23 Board of Governors Meeting  
Marc reported on contract academic staff: that they do 59% of the teaching at MRU and most of them are relying on this as their primary source of income.
7. Respectful Workplace Steering Committee and Subcommittees  
This committee met yesterday, but it has been unfocussed since it was created and it may be dissolved. It has two working subcommittees: one is looking at reinstating the position of an ombudsperson and the other is looking at possible revisions to the Personal Harassment Policy.
8. Tenure and Promotion Review Steering Committee

APTC has developed a form for Chairs and Deans to complete regarding duties being completed in a respectful and responsible way. Kathy sent out an email clarifying that input provided on these forms is considered and summarized as appropriate by the TC.

9. Potential Bylaw Changes

The Executive Board will be considering the possibility of having an Advocacy Officer and other potential bylaw changes at its next meeting.

**Point of Order:**

The Executive should consider having a consent agenda. We often devote too much of our meeting time on reports and do not get to the business items.

We will consider moving officers' reports to the end of the meeting

**Unfinished Business**

1. Appointments to the Ad hoc Contract Faculty Committee

Referred to the Nominations Committee.

2. FC Position Description

The hiring committee is meeting next week and will review the position description.

**Business Arising**

1. Debrief of Meetings with Guests

a. Staff representation at GFC

Motion THAT the MRFA support the MRSA's efforts to get representation on GFC

Moved: Shiraz Kurji

Seconded: Andreas Tomaszewski

Vote

Carried Unanimously

b. Code of Conduct Policy

Deferred

**New Business**

1. COFAS Subsidy Request

Deferred

2. Bargaining Goals Development Committee Report

Deferred

3. Contract Faculty IRG Proposal

Deferred

4. Nomination to the Arbitration Board

Deferred

**Order of the Day, 12:00pm**

Guest: David Docherty

1. Code of Conduct Policy & Advance Notice of Policy Changes

The PEC is developing a plan for providing the University Community with advance notice of policy changes. The process approved will take effect for the Code of Conduct and all other policies moving forward. In this process, draft policies will be posted on MyMRU for 30 days for comment and sent directly to impacted groups and to the University Leadership Group. After the 30 day period, there could be amendments made based on feedback received and the revised draft would be sent to ULG again. Then, PEC would forward the draft policy to the appropriate governing body for approval (GFC and/or the Board of Governors).

2. Working Relationship Between the MRFA and the Admin & Grievances and Arbitrations

At other Universities this relationship can be openly hostile and adversarial, but, at MRU, we have experienced good open lines of communications. This year, however, we have had more grievances and arbitrations than we have ever had in the past.

Grievances used for clarifying interpretations of the Agreement and/or for conflict resolution are positive and constructive. But, given the recent grievance cases, the Association is worried that there will be a breakdown in this relationship since we are not able to resolve things before arbitration.

Withholding information from the Association will lead to arbitration each and every time. The Association has a duty to represent its members and, to do so, it needs access to the relevant information.

- David agreed to work on making improvements to ensure the Association gets the necessary information to consider future grievances.
  - The Association is considering revising the grievance process. Rather than identifying a specific person or position that responds at step 2, step 1 would be with the person who made the decision and step 2 would be with the person 'above' them. This is usually the Provost at step 2 but would sometimes be the President.
  - In the current model, however, the MRFA believes the President still has a role in preventing arbitrations. Arbitration means there was a complete breakdown between the two parties who then needed an external person to make the decision. If at no other time in the process, the University President has a role in resolving Grievances once notified of the decision to move to arbitration.
3. Formative Feedback for Candidates (following promotion or sabbatical denial)  
David and Marc discussed this previously and it has been resolved.
  4. Statements Made by Other University Presidents  
David discusses the needs of PSE in Alberta with government officials first and then can convey some of these messages through the media.
  5. Meeting with Calgary Caucus  
At the meeting with the Calgary Caucus, David spoke about access and the disproportionate allocation of funding for PSE in Alberta.
  6. Priorities in Times of Fiscal Restraint  
As we anticipate a 5% cut, now is not the time for any sort of discretionary spending.
  7. Advocacy Week  
This initiative was successful and David applauds the Association for taking it on. To ensure the Association's future advocacy efforts are based on accurate and current data, the administration will provide relevant data on request.
  8. Data Reporting to the MRFA  
Improved data reporting is needed on an ongoing basis. We will look at other Associations' Agreements for example articles and David will discuss this with the new head of HR.

**Order of the Day, 1:00pm**

Guests: SAMRU Executive Board

1. Tuition  
There was not very fulsome consultation on the market modifiers or increasing the mandatory non instructional fee. One of the MRFA's advocacy goals is to support tuition regulation based on the CPI
2. Student Voting Initiative "Get Out The Vote"  
Universities in Alberta are working on this, and the goal is to reach 30,000 students. The MRFA will assist SAMRU by inviting faculty to get SAMRU to do in class presentations.
3. Advocacy Week  
The MRU coalition will be considering this as an annual event to be held a few months ahead of the provincial budget.

4. Class Sizes

There is work being done to determine what the ideal small class size is; however, given the current context, the results of this research may not be considered. As class sizes get larger, students would welcome changes in assessment tools, such as participation grades.

5. Academic Affairs Reorganization

The impact to students will be indirect. If faculty are not happy with the organization there will be impacts in the classroom.

6. Respectful Workplace

This current initiative did not consider how students fit into this.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 1:30pm.

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Communications Officer,  
Mount Royal Faculty Association

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Date of approval