

NOTES of the Mount Royal Faculty Association

Meeting date: November 30, 2011

Call to order: A General meeting of the MRFA, was held in Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta on November 30, 2011. The meeting convened at 4:30pm, President Gerry Cross presiding and Kit Dobson, Secretary.

Members in attendance:

See attached Attendance Sheets

Agenda

- Added Item 6 under President's Report, Compassionate Fund Motion
- Added Item 4 under Committee Reports, MRFA Representative on the University Diversity Committee

Officers' Reports

President

1. Grievance Report

Arbitration Award

- The MRFA executive took this grievance to arbitration on February 1, 2010. This was a policy grievance on the application of the Personal Harassment Policy in the internal affairs of the MRFA.
 - The decision to go to arbitration was based on advice from the Lawyer and from CAUT
- Background
 - The initial cause of the grievance was a personal harassment complaint involving two matters that were internal matters of the association. One related to a staff member of the association and the other was over a denial of tenure case. Both were very difficult things for the Executive Board to deal with
 - The personal harassment complaint led to an individual grievance filed by a member and, at step two of this individual grievance, the Executive decided to initiate a related policy grievance. Both cases went through

the internal grievance processes but only the policy grievance was taken to arbitration

- The grievance sought prevention of MRFA members becoming overly sensitive in debate for fear of possible personal harassment claims.
- The policy grievance cited Collective Agreement Article 22.1.1 wherein the board cannot discriminate against members for things done in service to the Association.
- Arbitration Award
 - The arbitration panel was a three person panel and they selected a chair
 - The majority ruled against our case
 - This means that the Personal Harassment Policy applies to MRFA faculty members doing MRFA business
- Discussion:
 - Substantively, what does this mean? What do we learn or what do we do differently now?
 - We can try to get an article into the Collective Agreement to handle this. Many Associations have such articles in their Agreements that make it possible to base a grievance on any university policy. As it is now we can only base grievances on contraventions of the Collective Agreement itself.
 - As an Association we have a duty to represent our members and the grievance process is our primary way of doing this.
 - It is unpleasant to go to arbitration and lose. We rely on the advice of our legal counsel: the same thing could happen in any grievance.

Step 3 Grievance

- Step 3 grievance filed by a Part-time member whose summer course was extended from 8 to 13 weeks. The member argued that Article 13.4 should apply to Part-time faculty.
- The step 3 grievance committee ruled that the article in question does not apply to Part-time employees.

2. CAUT Council

- CAUT Council was last week and Gerry will include a detailed written report in the Monthly Report
- CAUT is quite concerned about using Google as the mailing system in Universities because American privacy law applies.
- MRU is considering Google. Part of the rationale is that UofA is in the process of moving to Google as an email provider
- More information will be posted on our website under the materials for this meeting

3. CAUT Western Regional Conference

- Gerry wrote about this in last month's president's report
 - This was held Oct 21-22
 - Gerry was only able to attend the first day.
- Gender Equity was an important Topic
- Access Copyright
 - The University of Regina has hired a Copyright advisor who was a member of their association
- Jim Turk, the Executive director of CAUT, presented on threats to PSE.
 - He advocates that Faculty Associations take a strong role in political advocacy. If we do not do it, who will?
 - He recognized that it is difficult for an Association to take political action because the membership will never be in total agreement. However, Associations do not need total agreement: they need majority support.
 - The MRFA Executive Board has review of our political advocacy policy in its goals for this year.
 - This will be a main item of business at the January Meeting
 - The MRFA exec is meeting with the SAMRU to discuss common interests and it is very likely that we will discuss jointly sponsoring political forums in the upcoming provincial election
- Round Table Reports

- An important message generated from the Round Table reports was that the whole principle of bicameral governance is that faculty lead in academic decisions. This does not always happen but we need to make it happen: it is in our power to make this happen.
 - The MRFA's Academic Liaison Committee is assisting faculty in their roles on GFC but this is just one of the ways that we need to work toward improving the faculty voice in academic decision making.

4. Child Care Task Force

- The task force has been established and Pat Kostouros is the MRFA appointee
- The task force has met once and will be putting together a survey that will be coming out in the New Year. After the survey has come back Pat will report back to the membership.

5. Format of Tenure Celebration

- At the initiative of the Executive Board the MRFA's Social Events Committee has decided to change the format of the tenure celebration slightly.
- Rather than having chairs speak for each member who has been granted tenure, the SEC is going to send out a form to collect information about newly tenured members. There will be one person presenting all of the members who were granted tenure using the information provided on the forms.
 - This will shorten the formal part of the presentation and we will get to celebrate sooner.
- This is not necessarily final: we want to see how this will work.
- The call for information will come out soon

6. Compassionate Fund Motion

- The Compassionate Fund
 - The MRFA established a compassionate fund several years ago that is governed by a section of the Policies and Procedures Manual
 - Expenditures are permitted up to \$2,000 per faculty member and the

approval process for this is three signing officers of the association. This is intended to cover sudden unexpected expenses in which there is some financial need.

- We budget \$20,000 for this fund and we have never spent anywhere near that amount
- Expenditures beyond \$2,000 per member must be approved by the membership and that is what we bring to you today
- Additional allocation to member
 - A Part-time member's son died unexpectedly in eastern Canada and the total expense was \$16,000.
 - The member's partner also works Part-time; thus, there is financial need

Resolved THAT the MRFA membership approve and additional expenditure of \$2,000 from the Compassionate Fund to support this member

Discussion:

- Exec motion does not need to be seconded
- This additional \$2,000 is in the fund already right? We are not taking it from anywhere else?
 - Yes it is a budgeted item
 - If this is approved we will be up to \$6,000 spent of the budgeted amount
- Is this additional \$2,000 going to be enough to help this person?
 - Yes.

Called the question, Allison Dube

Vote

Carried Unanimously

Treasurer

2010-2011 Audited Financial Statements

- The 2011 yearend audit has been completed. We have received the statements and the report which is totally clean and mostly clean in terms of internal controls. It was done on a timely basis.
 - The auditors recommendations on internal controls were standard.

- Overall they were not concerned with our internal controls or accounting procedures
- If anyone wants to look through the audit report it is available in the MRFA Offices
- Rafik has served admirably. This is the second year of his second term. We will be looking for another treasurer at the AGM in May and it is surely an asset to have an accountant in this role.

Committee Reports

1. Negotiating Committee, David Sabiston

- Thanks to all the members who participated in the open houses. People are all very busy and workload was one of several matters that came out of these meetings
 - Salary was a common concern
 - There were comments on salary, the grid, and some apparent disparities. Members expressed concern regarding the difference between the Associate and Full Professor grids.
 - MRFA is still a member of ACIFA and we meet twice a year to discuss common issues in bargaining. One of these things is salary and salary expectations. We are at 0% salary current and if we remain so in the next contract we will be falling 4-5% behind Alberta Colleges. We are not expecting a 0% next year.
 - Part-time Appointment, Re-appointment and allocation articles
 - The teams will continue fine tuning these articles
 - Promotion
 - We are going through the first round of promotion applications now. Members brought forward concerns about the promotion process, criteria and expectations.
 - Workload
 - We seem to have done a full circle. In 2004 we were negotiating for more money less work, then we were negotiating for more money

and different work, then no money and more work: now we are back to negotiating for more money less work .

- In 2004 Faculty were asked to fill out time logs to assist in gauging workload. This may be a useful exercise again.
- Current work of the MRFA Negotiating Committee
 - The Negotiating Committee is currently developing its survey based on input gathered at the open houses, from member emails and other discussions. Within the next few weeks the committee will be testing the survey and will hopefully have it sent out in early January
 - We are engaged in interest based bargaining. Prior to bargaining the teams get together for a joint bargaining workshop. The teams will be doing this Jan 12
- The Board's Negotiating Team
 - Randy Genreux is the chair. This will likely be to our benefit as he is very familiar with our interests and values.
 - Other members of the Board's team are Jim Zimmer, Manuel Mertin, Jeff Goldberg, and Heather Haddow
- Discussion
 - Promotion and Part-time articles were done last year: are there issues that were not addressed in the last round or are these things coming up as a result of things that were done?
 - Often in Negotiations you are under time constraints and you want to get things in the Agreement so you do.
 - There are misinterpretations as people get used to new articles and we often expect to have to go back and review or revise previous work as needed
 - Members are invited to contact the members of the Negotiating Committee with any concerns and/or input.

2. Vision Statement Review Committee, Gerry Cross

- Thank you to all those who provided feedback.
- We adopted some input directly, and some comments generated new ideas

- We have a new statement that remains open for comment and will be brought forward for approval at the AGM
- Revisions
 - Decided to go with a vision and mission separately
 - Fewer words in the vision
 - Added some good things to the mission
- Revised Drafts
- Vision
 - Progressive educators pursuing excellence
- Mission
 - The Mount Royal Faculty Association provides a collective voice for faculty, promotes tenure and academic freedom, advocates for the highest standards of professionalism in higher education, and upholds the values of diversity, equity and human rights.

3. Faculty Evaluation Committee, Bob Uttl

- The FEC has done an enormous amount of work this year and last year. Bob Uttl, the current chair of the committee, is going to start reporting out on the results of all this work
- Background and Design of the Survey
 - The MRFA Executive Board suggested the survey
 - The survey was comprised of 4 closed questions and 2 open questions
 - Review of questions asked (see FEC presentation on mrfa.net)
- Results
 - The survey was sent to 868 members
 - There was a 48% return rate
 - The number of comments that came back was surprising: almost or more than half of the total closed questions had comments
 - This led to content analysis and coding
 - These are unsolicited responses to open ended questions these numbers are a lot lower than they would have been had we directly asked questions pertaining to these matters

- View the full FEC report on mrfa.net under 2011-2012 General Meeting Minutes or in the FEC Section of the Website.
- Discussion
 - This is terrific work: the committee members' efforts are much appreciated.
 - We need a clear sense of the FECs power in generating a new SEI in relation to UTPC. Do you think it is important for the FEC to get a clearly communicated commitment from Robin on this matter?
 - Gerry initiated this process last fall by going to the FEC and suggesting that they look at two things: that SEIs be anonymous or confidential and to look at some means for tailoring the forms for specific areas as appropriate for disciplines and methods of teaching. The FEC decided the best approach would be to do a survey. The survey had a response rate we have never come close to getting before even when surveys have dealt with salary.
 - Gerry mentioned to Robin that the new tenure system provides a good opportunity to review the form and process and to review, more generally, the evaluation of teaching. Robin agreed in principle and said that it was something that would have to be put off to next year: now this year. Gerry has kept Robin informed of the FEC's work through the interim.
 - Gerry talked with Robin today about UTPC. UTPC is created by the Collective Agreement, and the Agreement is an agreement between the MRFA and the university so we do have some say in the working of UTPC.
 - How can we determine that the faculty perspective is valid?
 - That is a valid concern
 - Regarding question four and the response of whether students can evaluate teaching effectiveness, why did the committee conclude that faculty think students are not able to evaluate teaching?

- The closed question had 55 to 45 split
- With over 400 people responding to the survey is a 55 to 44 statistically significant?
 - Yes, likely
- People obviously really like SEIs. We hope that this is represented in all fairness of all concerns and that the faculty is in a sense of two minds. We could consider where the dichotomy coming from.
 - That might be useful
 - There is the distinction between using SEIs for summative or formative purposes.
 - Nobody would argue using them in a formative way but summative uses should be avoided

Motion that no summary recommendations from the MRFA's Faculty Evaluation Committee be sent to the administration without approval by the membership

Moved: Bruce Ravelli

Discussion:

- This was the intent and the MRFA Executive is in the process of reviewing it now
- The Executive has the recommendations from the FEC. These recommendations have not been presented because the Executive has not discussed them. The intent of this meeting was to get through the groundwork and materials and results that led to the FEC's recommendations

Vote

10 abstentions

Carried

- Some members are concerned about the Executive Board moving ahead without hearing members' concerns up front. If the Executive does some of the initial work without members then the recommendations will feel prejudged.

- We could have a special meeting to discuss just this issue
 - We do not need to have a special meeting for this. There is no rush on this. There is a general meeting scheduled for the last week of January and that is soon enough.
- The executive will continue with its discussion of the motions and will be informed by any member comments. We will not bring any finished document or recommendations to the membership until we have had a chance to further discuss it with the membership
- Will we hear the rest of the presentation?
 - Yes
- Will we have a chance to discuss the presentation?
 - Yes
- The Executive Board will look at the motions and discuss them, as it does so with all committee recommendations. That is how the process works. There will be a conversation as a community but that does not prevent the Executive Board from looking into it.
- What implications does this have on those going through the tenure process? It seems to be indicating that SEIs are not an effective judge of teaching effectiveness
 - Those members who are responsible for evaluating tenure candidates are already aware of deficiencies in SEIs. This is plainly evident in the fact that the same instructor will get different ratings in different courses.
 - Departments generally do not use a particular cut off for SEI numbers.

4. Diversity Advisory Committee

- This committee was struck early last year
- The Committee, under authority of Brian Fleming and Robin Fisher, is to create a diversity plan for the university
- Stephanie Stone, a former student, has convened the committee and the committee's first order of business is to get word out at the institutional level

that these conversations are getting started. We will start by looking at best practices at other universities

- o Anyone with questions or comments can contact Scott Murray who is the MRFA representative on this committee

Announcements

MRFA Holiday Parties

Kids' Holiday Party: December 6, 5:30pm (FC)

Adult Holiday Party: December 8, 3:30pm (FC)

Professional Development Committee

Spring 2012 PD Retreat, Save the Date! May 15-16

Reading Week PD Day, Save the date: February 22, 2012

Winter 2012 MRFA Meeting Schedule

Monday, January 30, 2012 4:00-5:50pm. Location: Y224

Thursday, March 1, 2012. 3:00-5:00pm. Location: LPR (J301)

Tuesday, April 3, 2012. 2:00-3:50pm. Location: Y224

AGM: May 11, 9:00 - 2:00. Location: Jenkins Theatre (I115)

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:05pm.

Secretary
Mount Royal Faculty Association

Date of approval