

**NOTES of the Mount Royal Faculty Association**  
**Meeting date: September 26, 2012**

**Call to order:** A General Meeting of the MRFA was held in Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta on September 26, 2012. The meeting convened at 4:10pm, President Gerry Cross presiding and Kit Dobson, Communications Officer.

**Members in attendance:**

See attached Attendance Sheets

**Agenda**

Added to President's Report: SEIs for distance delivery programs  
Office hours and presence on campus

**Officer's Reports**

President's Report

1. Recognizing Debra Jensen and Richard Collier
  - Debra Jensen taught Religious Studies and Richard Collier used to teach English: both passed over the summer. They were excellent people and both losses are tragedies.
  - Gerry wrote about them in the August President's Report
  - MRFA Policies and Procedures
    - Review of bereavement policies: when a member, or the spouse of a member passes, the MRFA donates \$1,500 to certain educational funds or bursaries depending if the member has/had children and what age they are.
  - Recognizing Debra Jensen
    - Debra was responsible for establishing a humanities scholarship and the department has renamed it to the Debra Jensen Memorial Scholarship in Humanities.
    - The \$1,500 memorial donation from the MRFA will go to this fund
    - Others may donate to this fund as well by delivering a cheque in person, with a visa over the phone or by mailing a cheque in. The Cheque is to be made out to the MRU Foundation and the scholarship that the donation is for should be identified in the lower portion of the cheque
  - Recognizing Richard Collier
    - Richard retired as soon as he hit the 85 factor. He was a very interesting person. He would write slogans all over his office. He was the President of the MRFA from 1975-1977.
    - His wife, Mardy Roberts, was on phased retirement up until August 14, 2012. Faculty remain members of the Association for up to 60 days after their employment ceases so she is still a member and this policy still applies to her.

- We will either be donating the \$1,500 to the MRFA Memorial Bursary or to a scholarship in the English Department

## 2. Reduction in Instructional Hours

- This is the plan that the MRFA chose to implement to enable faculty to resist pressures to reduce hours of instruction in courses
- We all recognize that there will be reductions because of funding issues but those reductions need to be made with the best possible decisions: we cannot arbitrarily reduce all hours of instruction without looking at the impact and the savings
  - The MRFA is going to cost out the savings generated from such cuts
  - We will express savings as a percentage of expenses and relate that to the amount of damage being done to the quality of instruction
  - Departments and Department Communicators have been asked to work on developing impact statements which must be submitted by the end of October.
- Discussion
  - Credit accounting seems to have been a plan that was developed by the current Provost and VP Academic (this reduction to 3 credit: 3 hours courses was one of the first projects he took on). In light of the fact that he is leaving at the end of December, is there a sense that he will try to push this through before the end of his term?
    - He said in chairs assembly that he was still very much here till the end of his term and would still be very active.
    - The provost has misrepresented what the credit accounting report said. The discussion/consensus at the time was that reducing all courses to three credits would *not* bring about a corresponding reduction to three hours of instruction.
 

“...both the President and the Vice-President Academic have publicly attested to that and agreed, if required, to provide letters in this regard to the MRFA”
  - Do you think the new acting provost will continue along these lines?
    - They push where it is easiest to push and this is our way of pushing back
  - What courses are impacted that used to be four credits? Are there any on campus that still offer more than three credits?

- Deans council decided last year that a good way to solve the budget problem would be to reduce instructional hours not credits.
  - There are six credit courses but they are just full year courses.
  - Interior design has courses that are of different numbers of credits (there is no standard 1:1 ratio in this department).
- At GFC the VP Academic stated, this is not a GFC matter it is a budget matter that would be dealt with at the board level.
  - Hours of instruction is a matter for GFC.
  - To change the hours of instruction a course submission must be made. The originator of the submission can chose to make it an editorial change, in which case it just goes to the registrar, or to make it a major/substantial change, in which case it has to go to APPC and GFC for approval.
  - When Gerry presented the impact statement to the Board last year they had not even heard of the instructional hour matter and needed an explanation. They then said that it is not a matter for the Board: that it is a matter for GFC.
  - Just because it has budget implications does not mean that it is not a matter for GFC

### 3. MRFA Executive Department Visits

- The Executive has visited five departments and the rest are scheduled with one or two exceptions. Gerry, the Member at Large providing liaison for the faculty in which the department is, as well as one or two other members of the Executive Board are attending these meetings.
- Two purposes for these visits;
  - To encourage departments to be more actively involved in the Association
  - To provide members with the opportunity to ask questions and to raise issues
    - These do not need to be MRFA related issues
    - We will compile a list of concerns: some of which the MRFA will work on, some will be referred to the negotiating committee, and some will be brought forward to the administration.
- We ask that all faculty: full and part time be invited to these meetings

#### 4. CAUT Policies

- We are currently members of CAUT through the ACIFA federated membership.
- Gerry did a presentation on CAUT Policies at the ACIFA Conference in June.
  - These policies will be posted on the website and you can refer to them so we can discuss them at a future meeting

#### 5. SEIs for distance delivery programs

- We are teaching more distance delivery courses but are being evaluated with the same form as is used in face to face courses. Moreover, we have the added problem of the low response rate involved with distance submitted SEIs.
- What happened to the committee that was working on this?
  - Jim Zimmer and Theresa Matus were working on this
  - Last year the membership passed recommendations on SEIs which were given to UTPC. UTPC has decided to undertake a full scale review of evaluation of teaching (not only SEIs)
    - The work that Jim and Theresa did will be folded into the UTPC review.
  - In the meantime, any members who have problems because of low response rates or issues with SEIs are encouraged to talk to Gerry.

#### 6. Office Hours and Presence on Campus

- This is an issue across campus
- Some chairs are saying that the Collective Agreement requires faculty to post office hours and make them available to students.
  - The expectations can be very different across campus
  - Some are expected to post daily appointment calendars so that their Chairs and colleagues know where they are
  - If a faculty member extends a conference by a day they have to notify the chair and provide a date when they will repay the time off
  - Some are unrealistically asking that faculty work in the office from 8:30 – 4:30 and not on the evenings and on weekends
- Response:
  - Attending a conference is academic work: it is not taking a day off
  - There is no article in the Collective Agreement requiring office hours. Departments have authority to set policies like this and are expected to set reasonable policies: the 830 – 430 is not a reasonable policy.
  - We hope to discuss this issue in department meetings

- Discussion:
  - It needs to be remembered that scholarship and service work is not always on campus
  - Faculty can also be available by phone or email: we do not need to be in the office
    - People can be hesitant to say anything about this
  - Comments are showing up on annual reports as well

## Treasurer's Report

### 1. Audited Financial Statements

- These are the financial statements for the 11 month fiscal period ending on March 31, 2012 which were approved by the MRFA Executive and signed off on by the auditor
- The MRFA Executive Board approved posting the statements on the password protected part of the website
  - Address: [www.mrfa.net](http://www.mrfa.net)
  - Once you log in you can see the financial statements link in the upper navigation bar, click on the appropriate link for the year you want to look at
- Auditor's Report
  - They are an independent organization
  - They do not look for fraud and they are not saying that the statements are 100% correct: they are saying that the statements are fairly presented with no material errors
- Statement of Financial Position
  - MRFA's Fund Accounting:
    - Operating Fund: pays all of our day to day costs
    - Professional fees fund: this is our contingency fund
      - We are trying to build this fund up to \$200,000 by 2014 because that is when the first large group of tenure system II candidates will be going through approvals. Denial of tenure grievances that go to arbitration can be expensive .
      - The fund balance is currently at \$85,000
    - Grants Fund: tuition refunds, scholarships
    - Building Fund: this was collected to do renovations and the money remaining is for maintenance
- No questions or discussion
- Financial Statements submitted for information

## Committee Reports

### 1. Negotiations Committee, Melanie Peacock

- The Negotiating Teams did not reach an agreement that could be brought to the membership for ratification so they are entering mediation. The dates for mediation are October 29 – 31. The mediator will be Gary Furlong who has worked with the teams before. We are hopeful and optimistic about this process.
  - See article 21.4 of the collective agreement for more information on the process
  - The team has been meeting and preparing for mediation: documenting positions with all evidence and supports etc.
- The team thanks you for your ongoing patience and support

## 2. Advocacy Committee, Roberta Lexier

- The committee asked to present today to give some basic information about the committee
- Other committee members: Irene Shankar, Kit Dobson, Michael Truscello, Kimberly Williams, David Ohreen, and Doug Rathburn
- This is a new standing committee that was created at the last AGM to “develop strategies for influencing public policy on post-secondary education, social justice issues, and other areas in which the MRFA policy on political activity authorizes the Association to express non-partisan political views”
- The committee reports to the MRFA executive
- There is a wide variety of ways in which the committees work could be presented
- The committee is working on student debt and financing higher education. Working with SAMRU and looking at institutional and prior government funding as well as societal priorities etc.
- Members are encouraged to get in touch with the committee if you have any matters that should be considered by the committee or if you have any questions

## **New Business**

1. Qualifications for the new Provost and VP Academic
  - Committee Composition:
    - There will be a total of 7 faculty members on this committee
    - As the MRFA Representative on the committee, Gerry will represent the MRFA and the members’ collective will.
    - We do not know when the committee is going to get started
      - Members can view the profile the MRFA previously developed for the President [online](#)
    - Gerry will recommend to David that the Chair on the selection committee be selected by the Chairs’ Assembly.
  - Discussion of Qualifications
    - Members are invited to submit input to Gerry.

2. September Election

a) Results

- Brenda Lang was elected the part time member representative
  - There were six excellent candidates
- Professional Development Committee results: Joe Pavelka from Physical Education and Recreation Studies and Enrique Lopez of Languages and Cultures

b) Motion to destroy the ballots

Moved: Martin Haworth

Seconded: Doug Rathburn

Vote

Carried

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:27pm. The next meeting is on Tuesday, October 30, 4:00 – 6:00pm.

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Kit Dobson,  
Communications Officer

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Date of Approval