

Social Event Committee (SEC) Members:

Dennis Valdez (Chair: 06/14-03/15)

Namrata Khemka-Dolan (Co-Chair: 03/15 – 05/15)

Liza Choi (Co-Chair: 03/15 – 05/15)

Michele Holmgren

Jennifer Hooper

Kathy Offet-Gartner

Social Events

September 5, 2014: Strangers Wanted

The very first event hosted by the social events committee was “Strangers Wanted!” with the catch phrase, “If you happen to find a stranger, someone new, or someone just plain strange, bring them to...” We created a Bingo icebreaker because it is a great way for faculty to mingle and quickly get to know each other in a fun and interactive way. The winners of the Bingo were presented with coffee gift cards. This was a well-attended event with roughly 100 faculty members in attendance.

October 14, 2014: Toast to Achievements

This event was organized in association with the Board of Governors (BOG). We requested faculty to join us in celebrating the accomplishments of our colleagues at the Tenure, Promotion and Awards Celebration. During this event we were pleased to welcome 35 members into the ranks of the tenured faculty and to celebrate the promotion of 12 faculty members. This was a semi-formal event with a cocktail theme and food. Overall, the event was also well attended with 150 faculty members, as well as the MRU President and VP Academic, and invited partners of the faculty being recognized.

Nov 14, 2014: Prom Royalty

The Prom Royalty event was unfortunately the poorest attended event of the year with about 50 attendees. We believe that this was in large part because there was confusion as to what the event was: dress up like in high school or dress up from the 60s. Our take away from this is that the Prom Royalty event required better communication and clarity with regards to the event’s theme and event’s associated contest. That being said, the event was a complete blast! Everyone who showed up at the event had fun and we were able to give an extra drink ticket to those who had dressed up. The songs played at the event ranged from 50s to 90s with a disco heavy content. The Social Events Committee recommends repeating this event in the future, as there is a lot of potential yet to be realized with this theme.

December 5, 2014: MRFA Christmas Holiday Party

We hosted the traditional MRFA seasonal faculty event to wrap up the Fall semester. We received very positive feedback from the attendees and more than 180 faculty attended the event. There was a great feeling of joy and merriment at the event but that may be related to the fact that we went through significantly more wine than usual.

January 16, 2015: Back to the Future

To get into the spirit of this theme, the faculty center was decorated based on the movies from the trivia sent out as part of the event advertisement. It got faculty talking and helped break the ice almost immediately. 70 faculty were in attendance. This was lower than the turnout that we hoped for and we discussed the possibility that there might have been issues with department communicators and posters

not being put up. Those who did attend said they really enjoyed themselves. The music and trivia game were well received, the pizza heartily devoured, and we received feedback that the gifts were appropriate and that we should continue with this same concept/setup with different themes such as James Bond, Murder Mystery, etc.

Of special note amongst the feedback we received there was some feedback directed specifically towards Michele indicating that she did a great job with the trivia, games and performing as the Master of Ceremonies for the event. Kudos to her!

February 6th, 2015: Dance the Blues Away

This was a laid back event leading into Valentine's Day where faculty were invited to come out for a night of dancing with their significant others. 80 people were able to attend the event. We had a live band, Steve Pineo, and multiple hors d'oeuvres such as chocolate and fruit sticks were provided. Dance lessons for 2 were offered as the door prize, which was won by our president Dr. David Docherty.

March 20th, 2015: Ceilidh

Our Ceilidh event was scheduled to occur close to St. Patrick's Day. We had shamrocks for decorations, green beer and Guinness for beverages, Irish bread and a series of cheeses for refreshments. In keeping with the Irish theme, we had a guest dance instructor from the Irish Cultural Society, Gayle O'Neill. The dancers were amazingly vigorous and whoever participated ended up drenched in sweat. We gave the instructor a \$25 gift card to cover her travel expenses and a \$100 gift card as a thank you. In order to kick start participation we offered \$5 coffee cards to the first 30 dance participants. Participants loved it and we were told to re-do this again for future events. In addition, Gayle gave two \$25 gift cards to her best dancers. This event cost roughly \$800.00 and we had budget left over so we gave everyone a second round of complimentary beers.

NB: The following two events come from the 2015-2016 fiscal budget; however, they come under the duties of the current committee so we are reporting these events here.

April 17, 2015: Chill

The semester is coming to an end and you know the best way to unwind? Karaoke! Well, the karaoke singing can be stressful when you first get on stage but the extra drink ticket that was provided to our singers helped balance that out! In keeping with this concept we have purchased a karaoke machine. Since karaoke has its roots in Asia we had an Asian food theme: egg rolls, spring rolls, pokey stick, pot stickers (dumplings), ginger beef and more! To top it all off, best singers will get iTunes gift cards.

May 29: Annual Keg Drain and Recreation

This is a traditional final Social event of the academic year and this year sees all the committee members (except 1) completing terms. The event will include the traditional golf at Shagannappi Golf Course beginning at noon however we wanted to do something for faculty who do not golf or for faculty who finish golfing early. We will have other recreational activities available, such as bocce ball and patio games at 2 pm in the faculty center. The plan is to try to involve more members in the recreational activities so, if we can be creative with this, it should be fun for everyone.

Budget

The overall budget for the Social Events Committee was \$12,000. The total amount spent by the SEC

was \$12,001 meaning we overspent by a dollar.

Final comments:

All the events went well this year – attendance was consistently good and faculty seemed to enjoy themselves. The most popular events this year (just like last year) were Toast to Achievements and our Christmas event. Faculty seemed to enjoy the opportunities to win prizes, as well as the opportunity to connect with friends and colleagues and perhaps dance to a tune or two. Based on feedback from faculty, we were strongly encouraged to repeat several event themes such as various trivia themes (we did back to the future this year but similar ones), Irish dancing and the live music band.

The committee encountered several challenges internally this year. Sporadic attendance from some committee members during events resulted in several difficulties and as a result the charter had to be changed. The MRFA Social Events Committee was expanded by adding two more members, one full-time and 1 contract faculty (thereby going from 6 total members to 8 total members). In addition, it was decided that the MRFA Executive Assistant, Chantelle Anderson, attend committee meetings to assist with MRFA Board/SEC communications; this was a welcome addition. Furthermore, the charter was modified that the committee must meet once per month throughout the academic year.

The committee would like to thank the faculty who came and supported their events, the MRFA executive and the MRU President's and Vice President's Office for their participation in and donations for specific events, to Marc Schroeder for his support - especially during the discussions regarding the challenges that the committee faced this year, to Chantelle Anderson for her exceptional organizational skills, to Darlene Windrem for her hard work, and to the remainder of the social committee members for their utmost dedication.

Respectfully submitted,
Namrata Khemka-Dolan