



MINUTES OF THE MRFA
MARCH 22, 2006
Y224 @ 3:00pm

DRAFT

1. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Scott Murray (Humanities) -- That the agenda is approved as presented.

Seconded by David Clemis (Humanities); carried unanimously.

2. Approval of minutes of 21 November 2005

MOTION: Frank Harks (Interior Design) -- That the minutes of 21 November 2005 be approved as presented.

Seconded by Bruce Ravelli (Behavioural Sciences); carried unanimously.

3. Approval of minutes of 30 January 2006

This item was **deferred** as members may not yet have had a chance to review these minutes. All minutes of the MRFA membership meetings (both general and special) are now posted on the MRFA website which can be found in MyMRC under Faculty Resources.

4. Presentation and Discussion with ACIFA representatives

President David welcomed David Milner (President), Terry Swaye (Labour Relations Officer) and Brett Bergie (Research Officer) from ACIFA and updated the membership on recent developments re: our CAUT

application. The CAUT Executive plans to address the bylaw interpretation question at the April meeting, and considers it a matter of confidence. It has been suggested that our membership application may then be considered should the Executive's interpretation of the bylaw stand (that individual Colleges may apply for membership), or it may be suggested that we postpone our application until November. At the moment, President David and Past President Jerre are going to the CAUT April meeting. On a related matter, we are anticipating some legal letters from the CAFA members in response to our legal letters sent to them.

Brett Bergie distributed an ACIFA handout to the membership while President Milner briefed us on **main areas of ACIFA activity** which included:

- Labour relations – as busy as ever.
- Government relations – a growth area in which the ACIFA voice is being heard in Advanced Education. ACIFA has been involved in a number of consultative processes associated with Minister Hancock's review of the post-secondary system in Alberta. Brett's regular meetings with bureaucrats in the Department are an effective access point for policy influence, it is thought and principal areas of interest include tuition, greater funding, and advocacy for ACIFA interests.
- Internal activities include the pursuit of a federated membership in CAUT, an overhaul of the ACIFA constitution, the reorganization of the spring conference in Jasper, the change of insurance brokers from Mortgex to Johnstons, which specialized in education markets, collective bargaining, and the production and distribution of the ACIFA newsletter.

Questions and discussion focused on:

- Advantages of ACIAF membership to the MRFA (Bruce Ravelli, Behavioural Sciences). President Milner responded that the relationships and collective power of an organization such as ACIAF, with 15 individual members, is the primary advantage. It is hard to quantify the effects of lobbying through an organization like ACIAF
- Terry doesn't track how much the MRFA uses his services, but he could say that it is far less than SAIT and that he is in southern Alberta often to visit other members such as ACAD, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat – so he is very accessible and available when needed.
- Avril Torrence (English) asked about any internal redirection as a result of several members moving into a more mixed mandate (for example, ourselves and Grant MacEwan). President Milner said

- there is nothing formal in terms of addressing the specific concerns of such members at the moment, but the ACIFA respects the individual integrity and needs of individual members. One of the benefits of the organization is the diversity of its membership.
- Walter Bruno (Communications Studies) asked what ACIFA has done or could do to get us a better pension plan. President Milner noted that ACIFA is involved in a coalition of LAPP members examining the issues and that the initial thrust was in the direction of privatization although that has rescinded somewhat.

Moving on to the question of a **dues change**, President Milner noted the relative inequity of the current cap system in that it results in a higher per capita due payment from smaller members of ACIFA. The proposal under consideration is a sliding scale (downwards as faculty numbers increase) and it would result in an approximate increase to the MRFA membership dues of \$600 (earlier he had said \$600; the figure was not clear), based on this year's faculty and dues payment. He confirmed that faculty numbers are gleaned from the Financial Reporting Information System (FIRS) of Advanced Education and, while two years out of date, represent some consistency in estimating actual full-time equivalent faculty.

There then ensued some more **general discussion**, the main points of which were:

- Mark Chikinda (Communications Studies) asked about the actual costs of ACIFA membership and how those might increase over time. Mardy Roberts (Behavioural Sciences; MRFA Treasurer) noted that current costs for ACIFA membership are \$79.40 per faculty member per annum, and that will increase by approximately 4%, representing an increase of approximately \$1.50pfpa without the sliding scale change.
- Bruce Ravelli (Behavioural Sciences) wondered whether a conversation with Red Deer (which left ACIFA and remains out at the moment) might be useful. President Milner provided some background to that issue and suggested Red Deer remains out of the loop, given that the Ministry of Advanced Education prefers to deal with federations of post-secondary institutions rather than individual institutions.
- Scott Murray (Humanities) inquired about any potential change in ACIFA dues for the MRFA if ACIFA realizes CAUT membership. President Milner suggested that they are currently working out the increase costs and how that will fit into dues. Mardy Roberts (Behavioural Sciences; MRFA Treasurer) said she worked the figures for CAUT membership for us and they would result in a \$60papf

- increase, therefore it must be less than that for a federated membership through ACIFA.
- Mark Chikinda (Communications Studies) confirmed through President Milner that, should the MRFA decide to leave ACIFA, we would have to give one year's notice.
 - Re: dues, Brett Bergie (ACIFA Research Officer) also mentioned the acquisition of Fairview College by NAIT which resulted in ACIFA losing the entire due contribution from Fairview as NAIT was already above the cap.

5. President's Report

- a. President David confirmed to the membership that **Grievance** 2005-003 remains at Stage 2 and should be resolved soon.
- b. President David reminded the membership of the **Education Fund** set up for the children of Shoba Ittyipe and suggested that individuals interested in contributing could contact Susan Barley, Charles Hoeppler, or himself.
- c. He gave the membership a reminder that the outstanding **Health Spending Account** (\$200) for 2004-5 should be used by June 15 or it will be removed, leaving the \$200 Health Spending for 2005-6 to be utilized before the end of the academic year 2006-7.
- d. The **Annual General Meeting** is scheduled for Friday, 12 May from 1pm and a wine and cheese will follow in the Faculty Centre.
- e. Re: **CAUT**, the CAUT Executive plans to address the bylaw interpretation question at their April meeting, and considers it a matter of confidence. It has been suggested that our membership application may then be considered should the Executive's interpretation of the bylaw stand (that individual Colleges may apply for membership), or it may be suggested that we postpone our application until November. At the moment, President David and Past President Jerre are going to the CAUT April meeting. On a related matter, we are anticipating some legal letters from the CAFA members in response to our legal letters sent to them.
- f. President David briefed the membership on issues surrounding **committee membership, responsibility, and accountability**. He has drafted guidelines which he will circulate to the membership for feedback with the intention of enshrining these in the MRAF Bylaws at the AGM.
- g. On a related matter, he informed the membership that MRC President Dave and he have been discussing issues around **harassment and other potentially discriminatory practices** (for example, the hypothetical posting of inflammatory cartoons on an

office door), and they have agreed there are some policy gaps which need to be filled.

- h. Transition-related **Task Forces** are all up and running, but it is too soon to report on their conclusions/recommendations.

6. Negotiations Report

No member of the Negotiations Committee was available to attend this meeting, so President David briefly summarized activities to date. The new language of Article 15 was overwhelmingly ratified by the membership. Each party had to submit their Statement of Interest by 23 March and negotiations commence on 29 March.

7. Other Executive Reports

- a. Miriam Carey (Policy Studies; MRFA Secretary) informed the membership that the **MRFA website** is under re-construction, but that current forms and minutes are posted on it. She invited interested members to visit the website and suggest items they would like to see included in its redesign. She also informed the membership that a brief information e-mail on **professional development funding** will shortly be distributed to all faculty in the hopes of clarifying some confusion over forms and processes which vary between part- and full-time faculty.
- b. Jerre Paquette (English; MRFA Past-President) informed the membership that a subcommittee examining **retirement issues** will be hosting a seminar in May. All interested members will be invited to attend and share ideas.
- c. David Clemis (Humanities; MRFA 2nd Vice-President) reported that **Academic Council** has had many and lengthy discussions of late, and that principal policy changes are in the areas of research (he will send on details) and the Credit Accounting Committee will report to Academic Council in April. At his point, President David informed the membership that potential procedural changes in the areas of **Scheduling and Credit Accounting** will have serious impact on faculty and that he will shortly be calling a **Special Meeting** to address some of these issues in these two areas specifically.

8. Smoking Room

President David briefed the membership on the main drivers behind this Executive initiative, which is not considered matter of confidence. The

health of Faculty Centre staff who must enter the smoking room or work near to it is of prime concern, as is the need for more appropriate space utilization. Offices are currently airless and without natural light and storage space has been a concern.

General discussion noted the following:

- Mark Chikinda (Communications Studies) congratulated the Executive for taking on this contentious issue. He suggested we might ballot the entire membership, although he suspects the conclusion is foregone. Bruce Ravelli (Behavioural Sciences) responded that notice of the motion has been given and that interested parties are presumably at this meeting.
- Paula Dozois (Interior Design) wondered why the July deadline has been set given that the Calgary bylaw does not take effect until 2008 and that any potential renovations may take a good piece of time. Miriam Carey (Policy Studies) reiterated the space concerns and the desire to move Executive and Staff Offices as soon as possible to more suitable environments, even if on a temporary basis.
- Geoff Owen (Humanities) wondered why the Attitude Adjustment on Friday afternoons isn't likewise cancelled on the ground of health concerns. Walter Bruno (Communications Studies) noted that moderate consumption of alcohol can be of health benefit; no consumption of tobacco is considered beneficial to health.
- Paula Dozois (Interior Design) informed the membership that engineer's reports consistently demonstrated that second-hand smoke is of no danger in the Faculty Centre. She further queried that potential paternalism of assuming workers' interest vis. second-hand smoke.
- Sabrina Reed (English) noted how unpleasant it is to hold meetings in Meeting Room 2, which is next door to the smoking room. She expressed concern for the unpleasantness of the work environment for those who spend a lot of time in the Faculty Centre.

MOTION: (Executive) – That the Mount Royal Faculty Association close its smoking room effective 1 July 2006. Carried with one abstention.

There then ensued discussion on the potential process and costs associated with renovation options. President David informed the membership of the Executive's desire to hold an open consultative process re: visioning the Faculty Centre, and members may be invited to wine and brainstorming evenings over the next few weeks. Paula Dozois (Interior Design) noted the potential costs associated with using the professional services of faculty in that discipline. Miriam Carey (MRFA

Secretary) informed the membership that discussions are preliminary and have included MRC VP Administrative Services Richard Roberts who is amenable to sharing costs for necessary infrastructure improvements. Avril Torrence (English) noted the lease requirement that renovations shall be undertaken by the lessee, and Miriam Carey responded that an understanding of the lease informed her informal conversations with both Jacqui McFarland (Interior Design) and Richard Roberts (VP Administrative Services).

MOTION: (Executive) – That the Executive investigate renovating the Faculty Centre, including the existing smoking room, to improve meeting, office, and storage facilities, and report back to the Membership with specific proposals and costs. Carried.

9. Mandate Transformation

This item was deferred due to lack of time.

10. Any Other Business

None.

11. The meeting was **adjourned at 4:55pm**. Moved by Scott Murray (Humanities) and seconded by Jennifer Petit (Humanities); carried unanimously.