

President's Report — Melanie Peacock



Melanie Peacock,
MRFA President

The start of the Fall term is always a special time on campus. As new students arrive and others return to continue their learning journey the sense of excitement and trepidation in the air is palpable. Line-ups at the bookstore, students looking lost and the chatter as course expectations are discussed are other sure signs that a new academic year has commenced.

Over my 15 years at MRU I've realized that this new beginning, and all the feelings that accompany it, are also felt by faculty. As *Progressive Educators Pursuing Excellence* we strive to deliver knowledge and encourage a passion for learn-

ing. We want to provide the best education to our students in a welcoming and academically rigorous setting. I've spoken with many of our colleagues who continue to ponder how this can best be accomplished in an ever-evolving, complex and challenging post-secondary environment.

One of the critical ways to achieve our desired objectives it to work with, and support, one other. I have learned so much from my peers over the years. Information ranging from University policies and procedures to classroom strategies have gladly been shared. A shoulder to lean on or a friendly ear to brainstorm with have readily been available when I needed help enhancing my pedagogy.

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Bill 148, how legislation will change the working conditions for contract faculty in Ontario — Guy Obrecht, Contract Member Representative



Guy Obrecht,
Contract Member Rep.

A key issue in Ontario's province-wide College strike last year was the discrepancy in pay and job security for contract faculty. This issue, along with other national movements like the "fight for 15 and fairness", are addressed in the recent passing of Bill 148, the Fair Workplaces and Jobs Act. What this piece of legislation does, beyond raising minimum wage, increasing scheduling windows, mandating paid sick leave and improving job security, is guarantee "equal pay for equal work".

Equal pay for equal work means that if two people are doing "largely" the same task, they cannot be paid at different rates. For instance, if people are teaching a university class they should be paid the same amount of money, regardless of the class size or subject.

The only exceptions to this rule are based in different qualifications and seniority. So, in Ontario, if two people have been teaching for the same number of years at the same school and have the same qualifications, they must be paid the same amount, regardless of their employment category.

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President's Report (Continued)— Melanie Peacock

While I always want to stay connected to other faculty I realize that busy, demanding schedules do not always make this easy. When thinking about this I was reminded of the game *Connect Four* that I used to play with my children when they were younger. The goal was to try and align four chips in a row (horizontal or otherwise) as another person attempted to do the same, while there were attempts to block someone from accomplishing this objective.

What are the things that block us? Lack of time, miscommunication, conflicting goals, differing demands and varying resources can all potentially hamper a faculty member from "connecting their chips". This is one way in which your Mount Royal Faculty Association can assist. The work we do can help you connect your "chips" by staying linked to, and supportive of, your colleagues.

"Let's keep our *chips connected* and let's ensure that we support one another as we continue our important work."

So, how can this be done? I encourage you to attend our regular monthly meetings. Opportunities for dialogue and learning from one another are provided at each session. Also, the MRFA Executive Board welcomes questions and is willing to engage with our members and re-

spond to inquiries at these meetings. We must ensure that rumours and unclear understanding of information and processes do not block our connection. To this end, I encourage you to reach out to me if you want to dialogue, share your concerns or contribute ideas. Professional development opportunities, volunteering on an MRFA committee, participating in advocacy events and attending social functions are other critical ways to remain informed and connected to the MRFA and to your faculty colleagues.

It is also important to note that your MRFA Executive continues our work with the Staff Association (MRSA), the Students' Association (SAMRU) and members of management to help ensure that connections continue and can be enhanced.

I have always been honored to be an educator and a key part of this has been how blessed I have felt (and continue to feel) to work with, and be supported by, tremendous colleagues. Let's keep our *chips connected* and let's ensure that we support one another as we continue our important work. I look forward to the upcoming academic year and the opportunities ahead.

Together we are stronger.

Melanie Peacock PhD, MBA, CPHR

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.

Bill 148, how legislation will change the working conditions for contract faculty in Ontario (Continued) — Guy Obrecht, Contract Member Representative

New collective agreements are now having to quantify the amount that a full-time tenure track professor is paid for time in class teaching (with seniority and qualifications) and match that to the amount contract faculty are paid. For instance, if a professor is paid \$100 000 annually to teach 8 courses and engage in service for 20% of their salary, then the value of a course would be \$10 000 for any contract faculty with the same qualifications and seniority. CUPE local 3902 estimates the base cost of a class at the University of Toronto will be around \$23 000.

“New collective agreements...quantify the amount that a full-time tenure track professor is paid for time in class teaching (with seniority and qualifications) and match that to the amount contract faculty are paid.”

The pay calculation doesn't include benefits, so vacations and pensions are not included, but still, the cost of moving to this pro rata model of pay represents a big challenge to budgets. One college in Ottawa, Algonquin, is reported

“However they manage the transition... the landscape of post-secondary education in Ontario is going to be very different in 2020.”

to be facing a cost increase of up to \$29 million in order to be compliant with the provisions of the Bill.

There is still some breathing room for institutions that have ratified collective agreements before the April 2018 date of the Bill's coming into force; these agreements are allowed to be in violation of the Bill until January 1, 2020. It will be interesting to watch over the next year and a bit how post-secondaries in Ontario manage to renegotiate faculty salaries in an era of fiscal restraint. However they manage the transition, be it class size increases, restructuring, or increased provincial funding, the landscape of post-secondary education in Ontario is going to be very different in 2020.

Find out More...

To learn more about other changes made to the Ontario Employment Standards Code in Bill 148 (Ontario's "Fair Workplaces Better Jobs Act") visit: <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-41/session-2/bill-148>

Alberta's NDP government also recently revamped our *Employment Standards Act*. For more info visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/employment-standards-changes.aspx>. However, it is important to note that **Alberta's *Employment Standards Act* does not apply to academic staff in Alberta**, the rights enshrined in the act are only available to faculty if negotiated in your Collective Agreement. All faculty are strongly encouraged to become familiar with the Collective Agreement and to contact the Association if you require clarification or support. For more information visit: <https://mrfa.net/member-support/the-role-of-the-mrfa/>

Your Questions

What is the difference between a strike and a lockout?

According to the Alberta Labour Relations Board:

A strike includes a cessation of work or a refusal to work.

A lockout includes the closing of a place of employment by an employer or the suspension of work by an employer.

Either side must give 72 hours' notice before a strike or lockout can start.

You cannot be terminated simply because of being on strike or locked out.

Picketing at an employees' place of employment is allowed during a legal strike or lockout.

Both the union and the employer must follow the rules set out by the Labour Relations Code before a strike or lockout can occur, and during a strike or lockout.

For a current Bargaining Update, be sure to attend the **Regular Meeting on September 27, 3:00 – 5:00 PM** in the Jenkins Theatre (I-115).

Does the MRFA help cover the cost of tuition for further education?

The Board of Governors provides a grant of \$64,000 annually to the MRFA for tuition refunds for full-time and contract faculty.

You can apply for refunds for credit courses at other institutions, if you are working on your PhD, or Graduate degree, or if you take a credit course at another institution you are eligible for a tuition refund.

Application deadline: the last working day in September.

Go to the **MRFA** website and click on **Funding Opportunities** for more information and the tuition refund form.

What is the Compassionate Fund and how can I apply?

This fund is intended to help MRFA members facing an extraordinary financial crisis.

Applications may be based on bereavement, serious illness facing the member or someone in their immediate family, a sudden change of residence, and/or an unanticipated change in income.

The Compassionate Fund also offers 60-day interest free loans to members to allow them to accept a spot in a Child Care Centre.

For more information about the fund and how you can apply - go to the **MRFA** website and click on **Member Support**.

We welcome your questions for upcoming issues of *News to Use*.

Please submit your questions to Chantelle Anderson.

Access Benefits and Funds Negotiated by the MRFA

- In the past five years seventeen members have accessed the MRFA's [Compassionate Fund](#). For more info see the relevant section of the MRFA's Policies and Procedures Manual: go to mrfa.net and click on *About Us*, *Governance* and then *Key Documents*.
- The MRFA has provided 1,370 honorariums to contract faculty members engaged in service activities over the past five years. The average amount paid per activity was over sixty dollars. For more information see Collective Agreement Article 14.15. To apply for a [Contract Service Honorarium](#) go to mrfa.net and click on *Funding Opportunities*.
- There are unspent funds in faculty [Health Care Spending Accounts](#) every year. *This is your money—Use it!* (Even if it is just to get that very well deserved massage!). For more info visit: <http://mtroyal.ca/EmploymentCareers/HumanResources/BenefitsandPension/index.htm>
- In the past five years the MRFA has provided \$300,000 in [Scholarships for Dependents](#) at an average rate of over \$120/eligible credit. For more information refer to Collective Agreement Article 16.7. To apply for a Scholarship for Dependent go to mrfa.net and click on *Funding Opportunities*.
- The MRFA has provided 93 [Tuition Refunds](#) to members over the past five years, totaling \$317,679 in tuition refunded. Of the eligible amounts claimed members received, on average, a 93% refund on tuition they had paid other institutions. For more information refer to Collective Agreement Article 18.2. To apply for a Tuition Refund go to mrfa.net and click on *Funding Opportunities*.

Use Your Faculty Centre

- Based on revenues over the past five years, the MRFA has served over 10,000 lunches in the Faculty Centre. View the [MRFA Lunch Menu](#) online: go to mrfa.net and click on *Faculty Centre*.
- To book the centre or a meeting room in the centre contact Robert Mariani—6193

The "Listicle" in the next News to use issue will focus on MRFA Member Support Services. For members needing support please go to mrfa.net and click on *Member Support*.

As the MRFA's Negotiating Team has been preparing for Enhanced Mediation, scheduled for September 17-19, the team has been focusing on issues that affect all faculty—professors, laboratory instructors, counsellors, librarians and educational developers.

**A Negotiations Update will be provided, in camera,
at the upcoming Regular Meeting.**

Thursday, **September 27, 3:00—5:00pm**, Jenkins Theatre (I115)
The agenda will be emailed to members on September 13.

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To book
meeting rooms call:
403.440.6193

MRFA Meetings, Events, Initiatives and Deadlines 2018-2019

September

September 14, 3:00 – 4:00 - MRFA New Faculty Wine and Cheese - Faculty Centre
September 15, 12:00 - 2:00 - Second Annual MRFA Family BBQ /Fun Day
September 20, 3:00 - 3:45 - Pre-GFC Drop in (hosted by ALC) - Faculty Centre
September 21, 8:30 – 10:00am – Get Cracking on Understanding Job Action – [Register Online](#)
September 27, 3:00 - 5:00 - MRFA Regular Meeting - I-115
September 28, 2018 - Tuition Refund Application Deadline - [Application Form](#)

October

October 4, 4:00 – 6:00 - Wine and Cheese Contract Social - Faculty Centre
October 12, 9:00 - 1:00 - MRFA Fall PD Day - LPR
October 16, 2:00 - 4:00 - Tenure and Promotion Workshop – Q306 – [Register Online](#)
October 18, 3:00 - 3:45 - Pre-GFC Drop in (hosted by ALC) - Faculty Centre
October 19, 3:30 - 5:30 - Signs and Beer in the Faculty Centre – [Register Online](#)
October 22 – 26 - Fair Employment Week—the MRFA's Advocacy Committee will be hosting various events for FEW
October 23, 4:00 - 6:00 - Contract Appointment Information Session – For Contract Members
October 24, at 4:30pm, Rally to support PSE - Calgary City Hall – [Register Online](#)
October 25, 10:00 - 12:00 - Contract Appointment Information Session – For Chairs
October 26, 11:30 - 1:30 - MRFA Regular Meeting - Y-222

November

November 15, 3:00 – 3:45 - Pre-GFC Drop in (hosted by ALC) - Faculty Centre
November 28, 4:00 – 6:00 - MRFA Regular Meeting - LPR
November 29-30, 10:00 – 2:00 - Annual Craft Show and Sale - Faculty Centre
November 30, 4:00 – 7:30 - Tenure, Promotion and Awards Celebration—LPR then Faculty Centre
November 30, 2018 - Scholarships for Dependents Deadline - [Application Form](#)

December

December 6, 9:00 – 6:00 - Drop in Grading Session in the Faculty Centre
December 7, 3:30 – 7:30 - MRFA Holiday Party - Faculty Centre
December 13, 3:00 – 3:45 - Pre-GFC Drop in (hosted by ALC) - Faculty Centre
December 14, 3:00- 7:00 - MRFA Kids Holiday Party - FC-Registration required
December 19, 9:00 – 6:00 - Drop in Grading Session - in the Faculty Centre
December 22, 2018 - Contract Service Honorarium Deadline - [Application Form](#)
December 22 – January 1 - Faculty Centre Closure

January

January 2, 2019 – Faculty Centre Lunch Service Resumes – Faculty Centre
January 11, 3:30 – 7:30 - MRFA Social Event - Faculty Centre
January 17, 3:00 – 3:45 - Pre-GFC Drop in (hosted by ALC) - Faculty Centre
January 28 – February 1 - Advocacy Week
January 29, 3:00 – 5:00 - MRFA Regular Meeting - LPR

February

February 14, 3:00 – 3:45 - Pre-GFC Drop in (hosted by ALC) - Faculty Centre
February 21, 9:00 – 1:00 - MRFA Winter PD Day - Lincoln Park Room

March

March 1, 3:30 – 7:30 - MRFA Social Event - Faculty Centre
March 8, 10:00 – 12:00 - MRFA Regular Meeting - LPR
March 21, 3:00 – 3:45 - Pre-GFC Drop in (hosted by ALC) - Faculty Centre
March 29, 2019 - Scholarships for Dependents Deadline - [Application Form](#)

April

April 5, 9:00 – 11:00 - MRFA Regular Meeting - LPR
April 18, 3:00 – 3:45 - Pre-GFC Drop in (hosted by ALC) - Faculty Centre
April 18, 2019 - Contract Service Honorarium Deadline - [Application Form](#)
Monday, April 29 - 30 - 2019 Spring Retreat - Kananaskis

May

May 10, 9:30 – 1:00 - MRFA Annual General Meeting - LPR
May 16, 3:00 – 3:45 - Pre-GFC Drop in (hosted by ALC) - Faculty Centre
May 17, 3:30 – 7:30 - MRFA Golf Tourney, Rec Day & Keg Drain - Faculty Centre
May 23, 11:00 – 1:00 - MRFA BBQ - FC Patio
May 31, 2019 - Scholarships for Dependents Deadline - [Application Form](#)