



MRFA Regular Meeting Minutes November 28, 2018

Call to order: A Regular meeting of the MRFA was held at Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta on November 28, 2018. The meeting convened at 4:09pm, President, Melanie Peacock, presiding.

Members Present:

Approximately 100 people attended, with 69 officially signing in: See attached attendance sheets.

Approval of Agenda

Moved: Brenda Lang and Seconded: Miriam Carey.

Vote - Carried Unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Rafik Kurji to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2018 MRFA Regular Meeting. Seconded by Allison MacKenzie.

Vote – Carried Unanimously.

Officers' Reports

President's Report, Melanie Peacock

1. MRFA Staffing Update

- The process for hiring a Labour Relations Officer has moved to the interviewing stage. It is hoped that the new individual will begin their role by January 7, 2019.
- The Hiring Committee for Chantelle Anderson's parental leave has been formed and will begin shortlisting candidates over the winter break. The aim is to begin interviews for this role early in January 2019.

2. MRFA Committee Resource Development (mrfa.net/publications/resources/)

Members are encouraged to refer to various useful links being compiled on the MRFA website, including an MRFA Social Media Guide, information on how to use pronouns, a Roberts Rules cheat sheet etc.

3. Advocacy Issues

National Advocacy & CAUT Council

Melanie attended Parliament Hill Day and CAUT Council on November 22 to November 25, 2018. There is a strong sense of support and solidarity and, while some of the challenges we face are different from other Faculty Associations across the country, we have a lot in common, such as concerns around precarious employment, institutional budgeting, unclear and changing funding models, class size, workload etc.

Provincial Advocacy

Melanie was introduced at the Alberta Legislature on November 5th and met with Minister Schmidt's team and staff to discuss various matters relating to PSE in Alberta and to MRU specifically. Minister Schmidt hopes to speak to MRFA members in late January or early February. Several other meetings with MLAs and municipal officials are being scheduled for early in the winter semester.

4. Student Accommodations

Faculty have the right to appeal or question students' requests for accommodation. Legally however, until the appeals process is finalised, faculty must provide the accommodation. Melanie is investigating members' concerns about the accommodation process and how these may be addressed or mitigated. Members are encouraged to review the information sheet on students' requests for accommodation under "Publications and Resources" / "Faculty Resources" on mrfa.net. Questions or concerns about the process should be directed to Chairs and/ or Accessibility Services and/ or communicated to the MRFA.

5. **Bill 19**

Bill 19 will come into force on February 1, 2019. The work of the 2017/2018 Executive Board informed parts of the Bill, for example; tuition caps. On this, Melanie has met with Vice-President, Academic Lesley Brown and President David Docherty and has reminded them that while tuition caps are great, we need to push for back filling, effective use of other resources and a good funding model to support quality education regardless of/within the scope of tuition caps. The Bill will also change the structure of the General Faculties Council, and ongoing work will be required to ensure the transition is managed effectively for all stakeholders.

6. **Conflict of Interest**

The Ethics Commissioner in Alberta has put forward some significant changes to the *Conflict of Interests Act* with particular regard to concurrent employment. Simply put, the changes require any employee of MRU (and employees at publically funded institutions) to declare any and all other employment that they are paid for while employed at MRU. If you are a contract employee at MRU, teaching even one course, you will have to get written approval that there is no conflict of interest from your Dean for any concurrent employment, academic or otherwise. There is significant pushback against the changes from Management at other universities and we are having the necessary conversations with MRU Management about pushing back against this as well. We certainly want to (and will) follow any and all legal obligations but want to work provide input on how any new legal requirements can and should be implemented in a reasonable, functional, transparent and equitable manner.

7. **Department Meetings**

Members of the Executive Board will be attending Department meetings in the Winter 2019 term and are looking forward to members' questions and informative dialogue.

8. **CAFA (Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations) Meeting**

The Rules and Regulations for CAFA have changed and the MRFA is now eligible to become members of CAFA. The MRFA Executive Board will continue to discuss this and more information will be provided to the membership in January.

9. **Other:**

- The MRFA is not trying to be militant or uncooperative with management. Your Association meets with management to look for ways to collaborate and cooperate and while (at times) we may disagree, we look for ways to work it out.
- There is concern that wearing the buttons may cause negative backlash. We acknowledge this and ask that members please consider wearing your buttons. This act goes a long way to showing and representing MRFA solidarity.

Vice-President, Policy and Senior Grievance Officer Report, Brady Killough

1. **Recent Policy Consultations**

a. **Space Management**

There is not much for faculty to be concerned about with this policy except that there is a lack of clarity in the policy and terms need to be adequately defined; for example the term "space: is not defined clearly. The Faculty Centre and Staff Association Lounge do not count as "space" under this policy however.

b. **External Grants (non-research)**

There is not much for faculty to be concerned about with this policy, however, it also lacks clarity, in particular regarding what constitutes a scholarship versus an external grant supporting a program.

2. **Grievance Report**

- There is one grievance currently at Step One which relates to sessional hiring procedures.

- One grievance previously reported on was resolved at Step 2 regarding Article 4.17.4.1: the resolution was that a limited-term person will be hired as per the Article.
- There was no agreement reached at Step 2 for any of the other four grievances previously reported on, and all of them advanced to Step 4. In each case that did not advance to arbitration a written communication was made to the Board indicating that the decisions not to advance to arbitration were made without prejudice so as not to effect the ability to advance similar grievances in the future.
 - Two of the unresolved grievances related to the definition and role of “Chair”. Although it was decided not to advance to arbitration, the issue is being addressed and the situation will eventually be brought back into compliance with the Collective Agreement.
 - One other unresolved grievance was related to the MOU on page 135 of the Collective Agreement regarding appointments with academic rank for existing academic administrators. After review by the Grievance Committee and Executive Board review, it was decided not to advance to arbitration.
 - The final unresolved grievance also relates to Article 4.17.1 (and related Articles) and specifically, the term ‘normally’ in the text. In essence, the Board is using the term ‘normally’ to not fill a position with a limited term employee and seems to be using ‘normally’ as to mean ‘usually’. In order to act in a way that is not what is expected in the Collective Agreement, a situation has to be abnormal in some way. The Board is using budget reductions as their ‘abnormal situation for this, however, given the regularity of modest budget reductions over the last decade or so, it is hard to say that a modest budget reduction constitutes an abnormal situation.

Order of the Day, 4:40 pm

In Camera Session

Negotiations Committee Report, Lee Easton, Chair of the Negotiating Committee

The motion was made to enter the In Camera Session of the meeting by Sabrina Reed. The motion was seconded by Christian Cook. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

1. Ad hoc Job Action Committee - Job Action Plan Update
The Annual Review of the plan is complete and the Committee is now moving on to other work sorting out various details and flushing out some processes. It is important that members know this planning would take place regardless of where negotiations are at and that the Executive, through this committee, is being strategic and thoughtful.

Facilitated Discussion:

The membership was invited to provide input on their engagement in the Association and possible improvements which could be made to increase member engagement. Members’ feedback will be considered and actioned as deemed appropriate by the Executive Board and/or relevant MRFA Committee.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:37pm.

Communications Officer, MRFA

Date of approval