

Summary of 2019 Department Visits

May, 2019

Various members of the MRFA Executive Board enjoyed visiting with you, our colleagues, at your respective Area/Department meetings from January – April 2019.

As expected, due to our diverse and multi-faceted work and interests, a wide array of questions was asked and various topics were discussed. Your Executive team valued this opportunity to engage with you in smaller settings and we appreciated the feedback shared.

As promised, the following provides a **highlight of common questions (i.e. similar queries that we heard across many departments) with respective answers**, that were noted throughout these visits:

Q) Why are MRFA regular meetings scheduled when they are? How else can I provide comments to the MRFA?

A) Regular meetings are scheduled on different days and times to best accommodate a variety of schedules. Formal information regarding how/when meetings must be scheduled may be viewed in the [MRFA Bylaws](#). Members are also encouraged to book in-person meetings with any member of the MRFA Executive Board or to submit comments [online](#).

If you cannot attend MRFA meetings, [minutes are posted online](#) for you to read and review.

The MRFA Executive wants to engage with, and hear from, our members.

Q) How can GFC be reinvigorated? How can we ensure more robust discussions?

A) This will be a question posed to Tim Rahilly, our new President. Also, plans are in place to provide GFC training to all MRFA members on Council and to promote attendance at pre-GFC sessions/meetings held in the Faculty Centre.

Q) What is the role of the new Labour Relations Officer?

A) The MRFA was pleased to welcome Derrick Antson to our team in January, 2019. Derrick is members' first point of contact for questions regarding the collective agreement (i.e. can I/should I grieve?, I don't understand or fully know my rights) and questions regarding overall employee relations issues. Derrick's e-mail is dantson@mtroyal.ca or he can be reached at extension 6198.

Q) What is the MRFA doing to respond to increasing class sizes?

A) We continue to monitor this and ensure adherence to requirements noted with the Collective Agreement. Ongoing conversations with management will continue. In addition to class sizes, the MRFA continues to monitor instructional workloads.

Q) What does the MRFA do to advocate for us?

A) As noted in the [MRFA Bylaws](#), the MRFA must remain non-partisan. This said, we actively meet with/communicate with all politicians to promote the value of Post-Secondary education and push for a more stable, viable funding model.

The MRFA also wants to work collaboratively with management, while ensuring our members' rights are upheld. We also work collaboratively (via monthly coalition meetings) with SAMRU and the MRSA.

Q) What is happening with negotiations? What do we need to know? Is a strike imminent?

{Negotiations were occurring at the time that the majority of department visits were held. As such, numerous questions revolved around processes, MRFA's approach to bargaining, etc. Detailed responses were given to the various inquiries. As well, a formalized Q & A document was set up on the MRFA website and was frequently updated throughout negotiations to provide timely information to members.}

A) We are committed to continuing to negotiate with the Board of Governors team and to represent our members' interests. There are legal processes/steps that must be followed before formal job action can occur.

*Note: In response to ongoing inquiries, and to help inform our members, a special meeting was held on February 13, 2019. During this session MRFA's legal counsel (Wayne Benedict) outlined key considerations within the Alberta Labour Code, steps required during negotiations and prior to a strike/lock-out, why a strike mandate is important (i.e. what happens if we are locked-out with no strike mandate.) Meeting notes may be viewed [online](#).

Summary:

Many thanks to our members who met with us, shared your comments, and provided ideas for how your Association can enhance our services. We also appreciated the expressions of gratitude that many members shared.

It has been our pleasure and honor to serve as your MRFA Executive Board throughout the 2018/2019 academic year.