

MRFA Executive Board Campaign Statements

2020 Elections

President

(2 years - Tenured Members only)

Lee Easton - English, Languages and Cultures and General Education

Greetings, colleagues! I hope you and your families have kept safe and are managing through this unprecedented pandemic. As you are undoubtedly aware, MRU face three main issues both immediately and going forward: the ramifications of the pandemic; major budget cuts as a result of performance-based metrics; and changes to bicameral governance.

My name is Lee Easton, a veteran faculty member of MRU for over 22 years, and I am putting my name forward for President of the Mount Royal Faculty Association.

As the attached summary shows, I bring to the President's role a range of skills derived from a variety of leadership roles I have held over the past two decades. I want to bring this experience to the Association as we meet the challenges today and well into the foreseeable future. In addition, I offer an established record of advocating for faculty in a variety of settings ranging from collective bargaining to department Chair to the Association Executive Board.

The pandemic has highlighted how faculty have rallied to meet our students' needs under the most trying circumstances. I also want to thank the entire Executive Board and President Melanie Peacock for their hard work navigating this unprecedented challenge. As we look ahead to Fall 2020 and the impact of the pandemic, we know that on-line delivery is not what students most want when they come to MRU, but we must also ensure that our workplace is safe for all before we return to campus. In either case, the Association must ensure decisions that affect our ability to teach arrive in a timely manner.

Indeed, I believe the Association must play a key role in shaping whatever return to work plans emerge.

We must also consider the pandemic's impact on faculty's disrupted work plans and the ramifications of that disruption for annual reporting requirements and, most importantly, for our colleagues working towards tenure or permanency. We must advocate too for contract faculty upon whom MRU has relied to deliver its programs. Many may find themselves having to prepare for on-line delivery, underscoring, yet again, how the University, even in these difficult budgetary times, must address its over-reliance on contract academic faculty. You can expect that, as MRFA President, I will continue to advocate strongly for all faculty interests, including those of contract academic faculty.

In September, we have two important challenges ahead. First, bicameral governance will change significantly as we start a new General Faculties. The MRFA must play a key role in the bicameral governance of the University and, as my record shows I bring extensive history in governance at Mount Royal and a strong faculty advocate. As a newly-elected Faculty of Arts representative on the Part 1 GFC,

I have been working with other colleagues on the new GFC bylaws. I have been delighted to work with the Association's Academic Liaison Officer to ensure that faculty representatives are well-informed about how this new body will function.

Our second challenge is the development of a new Academic Plan. As a past co-chair of GFC's ad hoc Academic Plan Steering Committee, I know how important this planning process is to our collective future. I also know how important the Association's input can be to a creating a successful Academic Plan. Working with the Executive Board, I look forward to ensuring that our collective voice is fully engaged with this planning process.

As we look ahead to the challenges over at least the next two years, the current budget crisis will be driving much of the University's decisions. My involvement with the Collective Agreement will help me

ensure that our rights both in the CA and in the *MOU on Financial Emergencies* are observed. As faculty members, we will be exhorted to find creative ways to deliver our programs. The Association must stand fast to ensure that such creative approaches fit within the current Collective Agreement or be brought to the table in the current round for our Negotiations Committee to review.



We must also be prepared to challenge the province's imposition of performance metrics. The Association must continue to work internally with SAMRU and the MRSA and provincially with our peer institutions and other Alberta postsecondary organizations to oppose Alberta's new performance-based funding models. We must also engage other universities across the country through CAUT. I look forward to building on my experience serving on CAUT's Standing Committee for Collective Bargaining and Economic Benefits to represent our Association at Presidents' Council where we can find other allies.

So, what can you expect from me as the MRFA President? You can expect that, following in the steps of our Past Presidents, I will:

- Report frequently and frankly, as our past Presidents have done, about the realities we face as faculty;
- Advocate forcefully for the centrality of our academic mission and the crucial role that all faculty play in achieving that mission even as provincial cutbacks continue;
- Work with University leadership and administration to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on all faculty regardless of employment status;
- Collaborate with the Executive Board to continue our efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University and in the Association;
- Remain open and accountable to you, my colleagues.

We are in a turbulent, unpredictable time. But I have confidence that we as faculty and an Association have both the resilience to weather this storm and the ingenuity and creativity to ensure we emerge stronger. I am eager to lead us during this time. I ask for your support.

In solidarity, Lee

Treasurer

(2 years - All Members are eligible)

Rafik Kurji - Accounting and Finance

I am the current Treasurer of the MRFA and am delighted to put my name forward for the position for a second term for a two-year period ending in 2022. I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Accounting and Finance.

There is no doubt that in the last two years we have all seen phenomenal changes in the way in which our Association has had to cope with the demands on our roles as faculty members of MRU. The work to be done in the future will continue to have increased demands and changes. Through all the events of the last two years, the one thing that I can say with full confidence is that our Association continues to be on a sound financial footing and is financially stable. Through the efforts of my predecessors over the years, and with the diligent and dedicated efforts of the MRFA Executive and the staff, we are at this stable state in our financial story.

I pledge to continue to work hard and diligently in maintaining and, even, improving our financial picture. I also pledge to be an active member of the MRFA exec team as we set to embark into more turbulent and uncertain times in our academic roles at MRU. I have the experience and a record of involvement in various roles in the MRFA. Having previously served as the Treasurer for four years, not including my more recent two-year term in that position, I have also been a member of the negotiations team. I have also been a member of various standing committees of the Association over my many years at MRU.

I bring to the position of the Treasurer my many years of training and experience in the field of accounting and business. I am counting on your support during the upcoming MRFA elections. I believe that with your support, we will not only maintain, but continue to make MRFA even stronger.

"Together we can be stronger " .

Thank you for your support.

Diversity and Equity Officer

(1 year - All Members are eligible)

Maki Motapanyane - Humanities

I am an Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies in the Department of Humanities. I joined MRU in 2012. My teaching and research are focused in colonial/postcolonial social movements (Africa), feminist studies of political upheaval/social change, maternal theory and motherhood, and critical race theory through a cultural studies lens. I have over a decade of experience in academic program development and equity work. This has included alliance building between diverse community constituencies, cultivating partnerships, equity focused program development, and community outreach in both academic and non-academic settings. For instance, in this capacity, I served as Chair of the Board of the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation (AHRF), a former agency of the Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women. The AHRF (1973-2019) was the Government of Alberta's primary heritage support agency, to which I provided strategic vision and direction, attending to the rich and diverse history of Alberta, as well as implementation focused on the ways that an increasingly pluralistic province can be engaged in the heritage sector. I am also a trained mediator, having completed the 220-Hour Conflict Resolution Certificate at Mount Royal University. I mediate civil claims with the Alberta Justice and Solicitor General's Resolution Services office at the Calgary Courts Centre, and was welcomed onto that mediation roster with particular recognition of my skills in intercultural competency and equity-based analysis and practice. I serve as the current Chair of the MRFA Diversity and Equity Committee.

I have been involved in numerous equity-oriented initiatives at Mount Royal University. Among them, the university Diversity and Inclusion Survey (2018), and the initial drive for an institutional process to investigate pay equity. I have been a member of the MRFA Diversity and Equity Committee in the past, during which time the committee formulated what is now Article 24 – Diversity and Equity of the Collective Agreement. As current Chair of the MRFA Diversity and Equity Committee (2019-2020), my focus has been to provide strategic leadership, faculty support, and development of programming in the promotion of the Association and Committee's mandates. This has included Committee outcomes involving research and compilation of a list of recommendations to support the Negotiating Committee's on-going bargaining efforts. The introduction of the Equity in Education Series marked a new addition to the Diversity and Equity Committee activities portfolio this year, with two events planned. The first was the Black History Month Celebration (February 5, 2020), which gathered faculty, staff, students, educators, and experts in mental health, film, theatre and politics, to present their work and discuss the subject of equity in education. The event was well-attended and enthusiastically supported by colleagues and the campus community, and was featured on Global News.* The second event is the visit of Senator Paula Simons (talk, panel, breakout session with faculty), scheduled for May 20, 2020, which is postponed for the time-being due to COVID-19. Senator Simons has a lengthy career in investigative journalism, consistently covering issues pertaining to diversity and equity in her over twenty years at the Edmonton Journal, and has garnered numerous professional awards for her work. As part of my work with the Diversity and Equity Committee this year, I also represented the Association at the CAUT Equity Conference (Organizing for Equity: Skills for Activists, February 21-22, 2020). The conference gathered academic faculty and staff from across Canada to share information, strategies and best practices of their associations in advocating for equitable workplaces. A link to conference materials shared by the CAUT will be posted on the MRFA webpage under the Diversity and Equity Committee section, and I am preparing an executive summary of sessions attended with accompanying recommendations/actionable items.

The Diversity and Equity Committee has had an active year (as will be reflected in our Annual Report), seamlessly transitioning from the planning and execution of one project to the next, while simultaneously engaging in research, conversations and information gathering, consultation, planning, and collaboration with faculty and offices on campus. If elected to the Executive Board position of Diversity and Equity Officer (who, per Bylaws, also serves as Chair of the Diversity and Equity Committee), I would continue to build along two overarching and inter-related paths. First, serving as a resource of support, input, guidance, and consultation to the Executive

* Deb Matejicka, "Calgary filmmaker explores impact of a failed makeup industry on black women." *Global News*, February 7, 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6521377/calgary-film-makeup-industry-black-women/>

Board, Standing Committees and general membership of the Association on matters related to equity (e.g. issues of relevance to bargaining, the Collective Agreement, programming, education and advocacy). In addition, it is my aim to continue to provide strategic leadership in the collection, development and implementation of priorities and projects that serve to identify and address inequities relative to our university community. The mandate of the Equity Officer position represents and is accountable to a collective whole, engaged in on-going efforts to strengthen and protect collective bargaining, and to ensure equitable workplace conditions for all. We must continue to stand together, understanding that as a collective, the conditions of our work lives are inter-related. The mandates of positions such as the Equity Officer and the Diversity and Equity Committee are integral parts of strong Collective Agreements across the country, and crucial in our Association's efforts to maintain, secure and augment equitable workplace conditions for all members of the collective, which is a strengthening of the whole. It would be an honour to serve the membership in this capacity.

Contract Faculty Representative

(2 years - Contract Members only)

D.A. Dirks - Humanities

My name is D.A. Dirks and I am running for the position of Contract Faculty Representative for the MRFA. I want to serve my contract faculty colleagues by listening to their voices and representing their interests on the MRFA executive. I take very seriously the responsibility of serving contract faculty at MRU, who make up half of the faculty contingent at the university. We know that the upcoming budget cycle will be especially difficult for the most vulnerable among us, and I will fight to protect the hard-earned rights of the contingent faculty at MRU. I will build on the work of our MRFA predecessors by continuing to advocate for improving the terms and conditions of employment of precariously employed contract faculty. I have consistently served the MRFA by facilitating workshops and serving on committees. For example, I served as the Diversity and Equity Committee (DEC) Chair of the MRFA (2018-2019). In this position, I worked in partnership with people and offices from many areas of the campus, including the Office of Academic Indigenization, the Centre for Equity and Meaningful Inclusion, and SAMRU to address systematic barriers on campus.

For the past five years, I have worked as a contract faculty member in the departments of General Education (Clusters 2 and 3) and Humanities (History and Women's & Gender Studies) at MRU. I have a B.A. in Art History and an M.A. in History from the University of Calgary; and an M.A. in Higher Education and Student Affairs, and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Western Michigan University.

Prior to working at MRU, I held the position of Senior Academic Planner at the University of Wisconsin System Administration in the office of Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Student Success (IDEASS). Other work experience includes serving as the Coordinator of Student Organizations for Social Justice & LGBT Resource Center at Northwestern University, and Coordinator of LGBT Student Services at Western Michigan University.

Leadership positions I have held include: Vice-President Academic for the Students' Association of Mount Royal College (SAMRC); President of the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS); and Education Chair and Co-Chair for the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals. I have facilitated workshops on leadership, LGBTQ2+ human rights, anti-racism, and social justice at universities, high schools, and non-profit organizations.

On a more personal note, I was diagnosed with young onset Parkinson's disease in 2017 and am navigating the challenges of living with a chronic illness. When not advocating for liberation, I run with friends and rescue cats but not simultaneously.

Katrin Becker - Mathematics and Computing

I have long been an advocate for those who tend to have smaller voices. My primary goal as the contract member representative would be to advocate for more equity, job security and recognition for our contract instructors.

I have been a sessional at both MRU and the UofC. At the UofC I was always a strong advocate for undergraduate students and now, as we watch the percentage of contract workers continue to rise while our job security and working conditions do not it is more important than ever for us to have a strong voice. I hope to help that voice be heard.

I have been both a fulltime, tenured instructor and a sessional instructor at the UofC and I've been teaching as a contract instructor at MRU since 2008. For the last 20 years, I've been an active scholar in several fields and have published over 150 articles, presentations, book chapters, and books. I have expertise in instructional design, distance learning, game-based learning, and gamification. A broad view of higher education, varied experience, skills and expertise are more important now than perhaps ever before, and I would bring all of that to this role.

My personal journey in academia, while not unique, has afforded me first-hand experience with many of the issues facing contract faculty. Both my husband and I are academics. When our children were born, we made the decision to have me be the stay at home parent because it was clear that he could earn more and have better advancement opportunities than I. While the gender inequity has improved in many ways over the years, it still exists. As a woman in technology, I faced many challenges in my field, and while some conditions have improved, many have not. As an instructor in Computer Science at the UofC, I lost count of the number of times my role was referred to as "JUST an instructor". As someone who lives an hour away from MRU on a rural property outside of Calgary, I am also well aware of the challenges and costs involved in teaching one or two courses and in trying to remain involved in university affairs.

Through the years, almost every department head and dean I have worked for has freely admitted that sessionals fulfill an essential role and that the expertise and dedication they bring to their courses far exceeds the recompense given to them by the university, and yet that admission rarely translates into action.

I have always valued MRU's dedication to student learning, and we need to keep that front of mind while dealing with loss of funding as well as the weird times we currently face.

I value honesty, equality, tolerance, transparency, and plain language. Our Association needs to exemplify all of those qualities, and as contract member representative, I would do my best to help ensure that ALL members are recognized and supported.

Thank you.

Richard Erlendson – School of Communication Studies

Contract employment.

One word: Precarious.

Two more: Exploited. Casualized.

Three additional: Marginalized. Discontinuous. Unjust.

There is no greater issue at MRU than the soaring number of contract faculty whose lived experience is marked by the realities above – job insecurity, poor remuneration, no pension, and unpaid work.

Just eight months ago, Guy Obrecht stepped down as the MRFA Contract Faculty Representative. Ever since he signed my nomination form last September – and ever since Anupam Das signed my latest nomination form a few days ago – my mind has been in overdrive about the challenges ahead as I come to terms with the injustice faced daily by more than half the professors on our campus.



I've had the steepest eight-month learning curve anybody could have.

Eight months in an advisory capacity for contract faculty members who requested assistance with a variety of issues.

Eight months serving on both the MRFA Grievance Committee and Benefits Committee.

Eight months as a MRFA Executive Officer – attending regular and special MRFA executive meetings, a day-long retreat, MRU's President's Executive Council (PEC), new faculty workshops, information sessions regarding contract hiring and workload allocation.

Eight months of researching and writing articles with relevant information for contract faculty members – emailed regularly.

Eight months as a member of the MRFA Negotiations Committee. (This is where the learning curve took on a life of its own!) It started with a two-day workshop hosted by CAUT concerning interest-focused bargaining. Then there were visits to most of MRU departments to hear about concerns from members – and two sessions for contract faculty members. This information gathering progressed to 40 MRFA Negotiating Caucus meetings and a dozen sessions with the Board's Bargaining Team. We've only just begun!

Bargaining for a new collective agreement is essential for our faculty association, and I believe the continuity of my membership on the Negotiating Committee would provide stability in these uncertain times.

Please consider extending my eight-months to a full two-year term ahead to advocate and negotiate for contract faculty members present and future.

A few years ago, I attended an international conference known as the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labour (COCAL). I returned home a changed contingent faculty member.

Then, I attended CAUT's national symposium in Toronto – addressing the dire situation of contract professors in Canada. More understanding of the gross inequities between contract and full-time faculty.

In every unjust cause in history – from slavery to LGBTQ+ rights and everything in between – there has been a moment when everyone knew the situation could simply no longer be tolerated.

We're on our way to that moment as contract faculty.

I'd like to translate my first eight months as the contract faculty representative into a full-term ahead and advocate for contract faculty and their tenuous situation – the largest group of instructors at MRU – contingent, casualized, exploited, marginalized, precarious, part-time, contract professors.

The first eight months have been invigorating for me. I've seen my share of successes in this short period of time. But I need another term to see larger-scale changes.

I want to make a difference in the final season of my career that has included three decades as a post-secondary instructor; department chair; dean; vice-president, academic; elected school board trustee and board member of countless social justice organizations.

I graciously ask for your support as the next Contract Faculty Representative on the MRFA Executive Committee and Negotiating Committee.

Thank you for your consideration.

Communications Officer (2 years - All Members are eligible)

Kirk Niergarth - Humanities

I have seven years' experience on the Communication Committee and I am ready to devote the time and energy required to contribute to the MRFA executive as Communications Officer. Having got that down, the remainder of what I have to say will fall far short of the recommended 500-600 words.

Brevity is indicative of two ideas I have about the role. For one, effective communication does not always mean *more* communication. For another, listening is much more important for a Communications Officer than speaking. The officer leads a committee responsible for two-way internal communication: from the executive to the membership, and from the membership to the executive. They must be an open sounding board and an honest reporter.

I teach the history of unions in some of my classes. This history contains many lessons for the MRFA – some salutary, some cautionary. The one most relevant to internal communications is that the most effective unions have been those that are most democratic and whose leadership is most connected to the concerns of ordinary members. We will never all agree, but our decisions needs to be transparent and participatory if we hope to mobilize our collective strength in challenging times.

In addition to service on the Communications Committee, I have served on the Bargaining Communications Committee, the Bargaining Advisory Committee, and the Advocacy Committee.

When not in MRFA committee meetings, I can usually be found in the Department of Humanities where I am an Associate Professor. I teach History and Canadian Studies courses and write about Canada in the era of the Great Depression. Since 2018, I have been President of the Canadian Committee on Labour History.

Regardless of the outcome of this election, I will continue to serve the MRFA to the best of my abilities. I believe our organization is an essential vehicle for protecting the integrity of quality public education at our institution.

Kirsten Kramar - Economics, Policy and Justice Studies

One of my main areas of teaching and research focuses on the justifications for censorship in relation to obscenity and indecency in Canadian law. I also teach courses that examine the history and development of the Canadian approaches to hate propaganda through criminal and administrative law. My socio-legal background engages with the various debates in Canadian law and policy around expressive rights and the justifiable limits on freedom of expression.

Prior to teaching at MRU, I served a 2-year term as the Vice-president of the University of Winnipeg Faculty Association (UWFA), I have also sat on various UWFA committees including the Bylaws Committee (fun!), the Labour-Management Committee (co-chaired with the Vice-President Academic), I served as a Member-at-Large for a number of terms, and have participated in coordinating Strike Committees, during bargaining. As Vice-president of the UWFA, my role involved coordinating communications with our staff and Executive Director to effectively engage the membership on a variety of issues. This involved a numerous sorts of communication (including re-designing our 'brand' as well as website). I oversaw the communications team and participated in drafting and seeking approvals for official UWFA statements on a variety of issues that affected our membership. Our executive team lobbied senior administration, government and the wider public on a diverse range of issues and concerns affecting our membership during a time of significant budget cuts in Manitoba (never changes!). We regularly kept our members up to date on issues that confronted the membership. During this time, I was the Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Winnipeg and in that capacity sat on Senate Executive and was a voting member of Senate. In that capacity, I worked with senior administrative leadership and corporate counsel on the university's transition away from the Access Copyright model. I would bring this experience to the MRFA membership and hope to contribute positively to our collective aims.

Shelley Rathie - General Management and Human Resources

I am requesting your vote for the role of MRFA Executive Board's Communications Officer for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years. Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Over the past two years I have been a member of the MRFA Job Action Communications Committee (now the Bargaining Communications Committee), the MRFA Job Preparedness Committee and the MRFA Communications Committee. As a member of these committees I have taken an active role in delivering on each committee's stated objectives.

I was the lead communications committee member to design and facilitate this academic year's Department liaison's training session in October, and I was an active participant in re-writing/re-designing the Job Action Preparedness plan. Further, I provided insight, advice and content in the various other deliverables of these committees. These tasks, and the positive responses received from the MRFA Executive and committee members for my efforts, together with my high attendance level at MRFA General and Committee meetings demonstrates that I have an ability, and commitment, to assume the role of Communications Officer for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years.

My role as Assistant Professor, Human Resources further evidence that I have the Capability to assume this role. In the HR courses that I instruct there are many and various times when my strong communications skills, and professional discernment, are required. From interacting with Community Partners in MRU's Strategic Human Resources Management capstone course, to ensuring our students are prepared to assume the role of emerging HR Professional upon graduation and navigating relationships with our provincial HR association, I have an active role in the community and beyond the boundaries of our campus.

My ability to uphold the responsibilities of a board member and advance the objectives of organizations is long held. Throughout my adult life, I have held various board positions, including president, vice president and treasurer in the public-school system and in various volunteer, social and general Interest groups. When I make a commitment to an organization, I jump in with both feet roll up my sleeves and endeavour to assist the organization execute on its promises to its members.

My 20+ year career in the corporate space, was primarily in the function of human resources (HR). Communication, and the ability to help all constituents understand that communication, is fundamental to the role of a HR professional. Daily, I was called upon to interpret, re-frame, and design all matter of communication required by front-line individual contributors and managers, up to and including the senior leaders at the executive table.

I have been told, many times, that I have an uncanny ability to help people understand what is being communicated in a way that they can understand - that I can take something complicated and simplify it. I honed my skills in the field of communication by taking the time to know my audience, to listen deeply to what is, and just as importantly what is not, being said and to focus my attention on the other parties to the communication (rather than on what I want to say).

If you grant me the honour of becoming the next MRFA Communications Officer, I promise to listen deeply to what is, and what is not, being said, to communicate with you in an honest and transparent manner, and to simplify the messages so that they make sense and make a difference. Thank you.

Member at Large (2 years - All Members are eligible)

Irene Shankar - Sociology and Anthropology

I am pleased to submit my candidacy for the position of MRFA Member at Large. As a critical sociologist, I will bring my service, scholarship, and teaching experience to this position. The Member at Large position chairs the Bylaws Committee and is responsible for a wide-ranging set of duties, including those delegated by the Executive Board. My prior committee work in various levels of governance (such as GFC counsellor, Assistant Chair, and Canadian Sociological Association Equity Committee member and incoming Chair) has prepared me to successfully execute



these duties. Moreover, this past year, I was actively involved in supporting the Negotiating Committee through my work on the Collective Bargaining Advisory Committee. These service positions have broadened my understanding and knowledge of institutional policies, Collective Agreement, and MRFA bylaws. I have previously served on the MRFA Advocacy Committee and the ad-hoc Childcare Committee, where we completed a faculty wide survey and submitted a report with recommendations for policy review and change. All of our recommendations were accepted by the MRFA.

I am strongly committed to supporting MRFA's work on creating a responsive Collective Agreement and effective bylaws. As an MRFA member, I have consistently advocated for intersectional analysis of teaching evaluations, institutional review of gendered pay discrepancy and the need for a representative, and inclusive governing structure. If elected, I look forward to representing faculty interests, and upholding the values of equity, diversity, and meaningful inclusion.

Bio:

As a sociologist, my main areas of interest are the Sociology of Gender, Intersectional Feminist Theories, Critical Race Theory, Qualitative Methodology, and the Sociology of Health and Illness. My scholarship and teaching involve critical engagement with intersections of marginalization and inequality. I am recipient of the 2013 Champion Award from the Students' Association of MRU, and the 2016 Distinguished Faculty Award, a three-time nominee for MRU Teaching Award, and a two-time nominee of MRU Research Recognition Award.

I am currently completing my project on individualized and gendered constructions of risk and responsibility during the H1N1 Pandemic in Alberta in 2009, and working on my SSHRC IDG funded collaborative research on knowledge (im)mobilization of feminist research and expertise within post-secondary sexual assault policies and programs. The latter project stemmed from my experiences in the classroom, where I was unable to find responsive programs and services for my students.

Please visit my [faculty website](#) for more information.

Robert Catena - Nursing and Midwifery

I am seeking the opportunity to be on the MRFA Executive board for the position of Member at Large. I am seeking this position for a couple of main reasons, the first is to gain more knowledge about MRFA governance and the other is to become more involved in the complexity of the MRFA and how to best serve our members. I appreciate and have benefited from the many activities MRFA is engaged in for members and want to be a part of a team that supports such activities, for example, strengthening the collective agreement, camaraderie, and professional development.

I want to learn more about the intricacies of MRFA governance and gain a greater understand how this is applied within the MRU Community (and other alliances with MRFA partners) to ensure the concerns of members are staunchly presented and defended. I understand this will be a great undertaking and a steep learning curve and am willing to embrace such a challenge.

I am currently serving on two MRFA standing committees, the Job Action Preparedness Committee and the Professional Development Committee as well as being the School of Nursing and Midwifery Department Liaison. In addition, I have previous union experience with the United Nursing of Alberta, as a unit representative, on the executive board of Local 95 as Vice-President, and as President. I am also currently serving as an Executive Board member for the Western North-Western Region Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (WNRCSN).

My previous experience and involvement in MRFA have enabled me to be well positioned to serve as a Member at Large for MRFA Executive Board.