

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.¹ 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

¹ 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/>

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 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.