

## 16. CODE OF ETHICS

This article first describes the principles upon which the Code of Ethics is based. The Code itself begins at Article 16.1.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We, the members of the MRFA, assert the following as our code of ethics.

1. **Responsibility:** We have a duty to fulfill our obligations, both written and implied, and to accept responsibility for the consequences of the decisions we make as scholars, teachers, and members of the academic community.
2. **Respect for Oneself and Others:** We have a duty to respect others and a right to respect from others. We accept our leading role in teaching respect for all human beings, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and other categorizations that can be used as a basis for discrimination.
3. **Fairness:** We have a duty to be fair in our dealings with others and a right to be treated fairly.
4. **Truth and the Advancement of Knowledge:** We acknowledge that the concept of truth is itself part of academic inquiry. We agree to conduct our scholarship and teaching in good faith, to be judged by the highest standards in our respective disciplines, and to apply ourselves to the advancement of knowledge in our scholarship and teaching.
5. **Academic freedom:** We have the right to academic freedom, the duty to exercise and defend that right, and the obligation to encourage it in institutional and civic life.
6. **Excellence:** As teachers, scholars, counsellors, librarians, office-holders within the University, and members of the Mount Royal University community, we commit to maintaining the standards of excellence expected of us by our students, our fellow scholars and ourselves.

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### PREAMBLE

Professionals are self-governed both as groups and as individuals. As higher educational professionals, we assume a variety of roles and sometimes face competing demands that arise from conflicting duties. The challenge of discharging these diverse duties and of maintaining high standards of conduct cannot be met by merely following a list of rules. We need a framework for conceiving of professionalism in higher education that will help us determine for ourselves how we should act in particular situations.

This code rests on the belief that, in order to consistently and correctly determine professional standards of conduct, one must understand upon what those standards are based. Therefore, although the code guides by identifying standards of professional conduct, it also serves an educative function by showing how they are derived and justified. Rather than merely regulating with a limited set of rules, the code consists of a framework of core values, ethical principles, rights, duties, and standards of ethical conduct that define the concept of professionalism in higher education. Through identifying the deeper bases of standards of conduct, it articulates and defends an ideal of the higher educational professional. Thus, in

addition to offering a framework which can help members think through the specific ethical challenges that we face, this code intends to contribute to the social milieu in which members of the Association independently endorse, and mutually reinforce, the promotion of the shared values that provide meaning and direction to our work.

As a proud association of equal, autonomous, and responsible professionals, the members of the Mount Royal Faculty Association are united in our resolve to promote these basic values and commitments and thereby maintain the highest standards of professional conduct.

#### FOUNDATIONAL VALUE: PROMOTING THE COMMON GOOD

The purpose of ethics is to promote the good of individuals. The welfare of specific individuals taken together is the common good. Since higher educational professionals collectively share a general commitment to promote the common good, higher education is an ethical enterprise. Promoting the common good both justifies, and helps to generate, the set of specific values that collectively define professionalism in higher education.

#### SPECIFIC CORE VALUES

The core ethical values of responsibility, respect for oneself and others, and fairness are generated by the fundamental goal of promoting the common good. The core values of truth and the advancement of knowledge, academic freedom, and excellence arise from the unique character of the higher education mission. Together these six specific values constitute the basis of higher educational professionalism.

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#### THE SIX CORE VALUES OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALISM

1. Responsibility
2. Respect for Oneself and Others
3. Fairness
4. Truth and the Advancement of Knowledge
5. Academic Freedom
6. Excellence

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#### ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Ethical principles are derived from ethical values, which may be too imprecise to guide behaviour. Ethical principles express ideal standards of behaviour and we should view them as providing us with reasons for acting. Principles have weight or importance and, although they may not determine decisions for us, they can incline those decisions one way or another. As life is often complex, the weight particular ethical principles carry will vary depending on the specific circumstances in which we find ourselves.

The following general ethical principles are derived from the core values of higher educational professionalism. They express standards of professional conduct and generate our specific rights and duties.

##### 1. VALUE: RESPONSIBILITY

Ethical Principle: Higher educational professionals should take responsibility for their decisions and actions, especially as these decisions and actions impact the interests of others.

## 2. VALUE: RESPECT FOR ONESELF AND OTHERS

Ethical Principle: Higher educational professionals should have and show respect for themselves and others.

## 3. VALUE: FAIRNESS

Ethical Principle: Higher educational professionals should be fair and, be seen to be fair, in their dealings with others.

## 4. VALUE: TRUTH AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

Ethical Principle: Higher educational professionals should seek the truth and be committed to the advancement of knowledge.

## 5. VALUE: ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Ethical Principle: Higher educational professionals should act to safeguard academic freedom.

Academic freedom encompasses a range of more specific freedoms including freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly. Together these freedoms form the basis of the higher educational enterprise by making the search for truth and the advancement of knowledge possible. For this reason, insofar as truth and the advancement of knowledge are valuable, so too is academic freedom. Just as we need freedom in our individual lives, we need it to discover how best to advance our common interests. Apart from its instrumental value, academic freedom is required for professional respect because autonomy is a pre-condition of responsibility and responsibility is required for self-respect. Self-esteem in our working lives depends upon us being able to take credit for our successes and this, in turn, is dependent upon us being free to make our own academic choices and decisions.

We regard the set of freedoms that constitute academic freedom as fundamental Charter rights, each of which generates corresponding duties. Although each of these rights and duties are valuable, the right to dissent and the corresponding duty to respect such dissent warrant special attention. The pursuit of truth is a social venture that crosses generational and national boundaries. Individuals do not advance knowledge in a vacuum. Moreover, since none of us are infallible, none of us can determine what others should believe. The truth will most likely emerge in an environment in which individuals are free to express and defend their views without fear of threat or reprisal. This right to freedom of expression includes the right to responsible dissent. In a climate in which opinions are vigorously debated and challenged, the justification for those opinions can emerge. An understanding of the justification for certain truths is required to ensure that those truths will not be held as prejudices, putting their meaning in danger of being lost. The right to dissent and the corresponding duty to respect dissent are necessary to ensure that the truth will emerge and remain vital. Since the scope of the freedoms that constitute academic freedom is the measure of the maturity and vitality of a society, and since they so directly bear on the pursuit of truth and the advancement of knowledge, higher educational professionals have a unique, fundamental duty to safeguard these freedoms and to educate society about their importance to the common good.

## 6. VALUE: EXCELLENCE

Ethical Principle: Higher educational professionals should seek excellence in their work.

## 16.1 ETHICAL STANDARDS

The following ethical standards are derived from the core values and ethical principles stated above. They pertain to the specific roles we assume as colleagues, teachers, scholars and researchers, and administrators, and as members of our wider communities, including Mount Royal University, our disciplines and professions, and broader civil society.

These standards shall apply to all Regular Members of the Association.

## 16.2 RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS AS COLLEAGUES

### 16.2.1 Responsibility

16.2.1.1 We have a duty to be accountable for the impact that our decisions and actions have on our colleagues.

16.2.1.2 We have a duty to honour and uphold all agreements adopted by the Association and all verbal and written agreements among ourselves with respect to our professional responsibilities and obligations.

16.2.1.3 We have the right to speak on behalf of the Association only if we have the informed consent of the Association or its Executive Board.

### 16.2.2 Respect

16.2.2.1 We have a duty to treat our colleagues with respect.

16.2.2.2 We have a duty to be respectful of our differences and diversity.

16.2.2.3 We have a duty to maintain our colleagues' privacy and to keep confidential all information learned about a colleague during participation in the work of committees or other work-related activities, except where disclosure is justly required as part of that work. This duty extends to confidential information learned about third parties who are not members of the Association.

16.2.2.4 We have a duty not to divulge confidential information pertaining to Association affairs, except as required by law or by consent of the Association.

### 16.2.3 Fairness

16.2.3.1 We have a duty to judge our colleagues without bias or prejudice.

16.2.3.2 We have a duty to evaluate the work and efforts of our colleagues fairly and objectively and to make professional assessments on the basis of merit to the best of our abilities.

16.2.3.3 We have a duty to act in good faith in our dealings with our colleagues.

16.2.3.4 We have a duty to avoid conflicts of interest and to fully and appropriately disclose any potentially conflicting obligations in our dealings with our colleagues.

#### 16.2.4 Truth and the Advancement of Knowledge

16.2.4.1 We have a duty to be truthful with, and in our dealings about, our colleagues.

#### 16.2.5 Academic Freedom

16.2.5.1 We have a duty to protect the academic freedom of our colleagues and to encourage their freedom of inquiry. This includes respect for our colleagues' right to dissent and to express views with which we disagree.

16.2.5.2 We have the right to academic freedom.

#### 16.2.6 Excellence

16.2.6.1 We have a duty to maintain high standards of collegiality.

16.2.6.2 We have a duty to encourage each other to abide by this code.

### 16.3 RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS AS TEACHERS

#### 16.3.1 Responsibility

16.3.1.1 We have a duty to be accountable for the impact that our decisions and actions have on our students.

#### 16.3.2 Respect

16.3.2.1 We have a duty to treat our students with respect, to be mindful of the position of power we occupy, and to uphold a professional relationship with them.

16.3.2.2 We have a duty to be respectful of our diversity and to be tolerant of differences between our students and ourselves, and those among our students.

16.3.2.3 We have a duty to maintain students' privacy and to keep confidential all information learned about a student, except where it is given to a colleague for the purpose of aiding or evaluating the academic progress of the student, where maintaining privacy might be contrary to the interests of the Mount Royal University community, or where it is given with the prior consent of the student.

#### 16.3.3 Fairness

16.3.3.1 We have a duty to judge our students without bias or prejudice.

16.3.3.2 We have a duty to evaluate the work and efforts of our students fairly and objectively and to make professional assessments on the basis of merit to the best of our abilities.

#### 16.3.4 Truth and the Advancement of Knowledge

- 16.3.4.1 We have a duty to protect and promote academic freedom in our classrooms, including by fairly considering a broad range of views and opinions
- 16.3.4.2 We have a duty to promote academic honesty and integrity in our courses.

#### 16.3.5 Academic Freedom

- 16.3.5.1 We have a duty to protect the academic freedom of our students and to encourage their freedom of inquiry. This includes respect for our students' right to dissent and to express views with which we disagree.

#### 16.3.6 Excellence

- 16.3.6.1 We have a duty to maintain high standards of teaching expertise and appropriate, discipline-specific standards of intellectual rigor in our courses.
- 16.3.6.2 We have the right to engage in professionally recognized and appropriate development activities in order to enhance our performance as teachers.

### 16.4 RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS AS SCHOLARS AND RESEARCHERS

#### 16.4.1 Responsibility

- 16.4.1.1 We have a duty to be accountable for the impact that our decisions and actions have on our fellow researchers and scholars.
- 16.4.1.2 We have a duty to be accountable for the use of any funds awarded to us as researchers and scholars by Mount Royal University or external granting agencies. We have a duty to allocate or spend these funds responsibly.

#### 16.4.2 Respect

- 16.4.2.1 We have a duty to respect and promote the ethics of research involving humans or animals.

#### 16.4.3 Fairness

- 16.4.3.1 We have a duty to judge our fellow researchers and scholars without bias or prejudice.
- 16.4.3.2 We have a duty to evaluate the work of our fellow researchers and scholars fairly and objectively and to make professional assessments on the basis of merit to the best of our abilities.
- 16.4.3.3 We have a right as researchers, scholars, and experts to pursue outside interests consistent with our primary obligations to Mount Royal University.

16.4.3.4 We have a duty to avoid conflicts of interest and to fully and appropriately disclose any potentially conflicting obligations in the course of our research and scholarship.

16.4.3.5 We have a duty to avoid using any advances in knowledge that we have gained as a result of access to confidential information obtained in our capacity as a peer reviewer or referee, or any other position of trust and authority, unless we have the permission of the author.

#### 16.4.4 Truth and the Advancement of Knowledge

16.4.4.1 We have a duty to base our research and scholarship on advancing knowledge in good faith.

16.4.4.2 We have a duty to acknowledge any creative or academic contributions that our colleagues and students make to the work that we produce.

#### 16.4.5 Academic Freedom

16.4.5.1 We have a duty to protect and promote our own academic freedom and the academic freedom of our fellow researchers and scholars.

16.4.5.2 We have the right to academic freedom. This includes the right to freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly.

#### 16.4.6 Excellence

16.4.6.1 We have a duty to maintain high standards as researchers and scholars.

16.4.6.2 We have the right to engage in professionally recognized and appropriate development activities in order to enhance our performance as researchers and scholars.

### 16.5 RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS AS ADMINISTRATORS, INCLUDING AS CHAIRS

#### 16.5.1 Responsibility

16.5.1.1 We have a duty to be accountable for the impact that our decisions and actions have on those over whom we have authority, including students, staff, and faculty.

#### 16.5.2 Respect

16.5.2.1 We have a duty to treat students, staff, and faculty with respect, to be mindful of the position of power we occupy, and to exercise our authority without making unreasonable, arbitrary, contradictory or retaliatory demands.

16.5.2.2 We have a duty to be respectful of our diversity and to be tolerant of differences among and between ourselves and students, staff, and faculty.

#### 16.5.3 Fairness

16.5.3.1 We have a duty to avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest by not using our position for personal gain.

#### 16.5.4 Truth and the Advancement of Knowledge

16.5.4.1 We have a duty to be truthful with, and in our dealings about, those over whom we have power.

#### 16.5.5 Academic Freedom

16.5.5.1 We have a duty to protect and promote academic freedom, including a duty to respect and encourage responsible dissent.

#### 16.5.6 Excellence

16.5.6.1 We have a duty to maintain high standards of leadership and managerial competence.

### 16.6 RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS AS MEMBERS OF MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

#### 16.6.1 Responsibility

16.6.1.1 We have a duty to be accountable for the impact that our decisions and actions have on Mount Royal University's stakeholders.

16.6.1.2 We have a duty to participate in development of, and to abide, by Mount Royal University policies and agreements, and to discharge our duties fairly and in good faith, mindful of our responsibilities to Mount Royal University's stakeholders.

#### 16.6.2 Academic Freedom

16.6.2.1 We have a duty to protect and promote academic freedom at Mount Royal University.

#### 16.6.3 Excellence

16.6.3.1 We have a duty to seek reforms which would improve Mount Royal University.

16.6.3.2 Full-time members have a duty to participate in the governance and administration of Mount Royal University at the Board of Governors, Association, Faculty, department and other levels, provided that this participation is consistent with the member's primary responsibilities and individual abilities.

### 16.7 RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS AS MEMBERS OF OUR BROADER ACADEMIC COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

#### 16.7.1 Responsibility

16.7.1.1 We have a duty to be accountable for the use of any funds entrusted to us as occupants of positions of trust and authority in our professional

bodies and associations. We have a duty to spend these funds responsibly.

- 16.7.1.2 We have the right to engage in the activities and governance of our professional bodies and associations, provided that exercising this right is consistent with the discharge of our primary responsibilities at Mount Royal University.

## 16.8 RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS AS MEMBERS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

### 16.8.1 Truth and the Advancement of Knowledge

- 16.8.1.1 We have a duty to be truthful about our qualifications and expertise, including when speaking on matters outside our professional expertise.

### 16.8.2 Academic Freedom

- 16.8.2.1 We have a duty to protect and promote academic freedom.
- 16.8.2.2 We have the right to academic freedom, including the right to exercise all of our academic freedoms off campus.