Statement from the Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA) on Bill 38, the Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act

The Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA) expresses strong concern regarding several provisions within Bill 38, the *Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026*. Consistent with our mandate to safeguard academic freedom, uphold shared governance, and advocate for a high-quality post-secondary education (PSE) system in Alberta, we urge the provincial government to reconsider the legislative overreach embedded in this bill.

As outlined in the MRFA's Model PSE Platform and rooted in our Mission, Vision, and Values, a thriving university relies on institutional autonomy and the unhindered pursuit of knowledge. Bill 38 introduces mandates that fundamentally threaten these principles.

The requirement for post-secondary institutions to maintain "neutrality" on social and political issues is a direct infringement on institutional autonomy and academic freedom that fundamentally degrades the quality of education students receive. Universities are inherently spaces for critical debate, inquiry, and the challenging of ideas. Imposing government-defined neutrality creates a chilling effect in the classroom, where faculty may feel pressured to self-censor and avoid teaching complex, pressing societal issues for fear of violating vague mandates. When students are shielded from controversial topics or diverse perspectives, they are denied the rigorous, analytical training necessary to navigate and solve real-world problems. Furthermore, granting the government the authority to dictate minimum standards for campus codes of conduct bypasses established bicameral governance structures. This undermines the role of General Faculties Councils in determining the academic and social direction of our institutions, shifting vital educational and pedagogical decisions away from academic experts and toward political directives.

In alignment with our Model PSE Platform, we maintain that government intervention should focus on providing sustainable, predictable public funding to ensure affordability and high-quality instruction, not on increasing bureaucratic control over campus discourse. Tying institutional operations to ideological compliance frameworks harms the overall integrity of the educational environment. It forces institutions to divert critical resources away from student services, front-line teaching, and research in order to monitor and enforce political compliance. Ultimately, this level of interference diminishes the reputation of Alberta's post-secondary system on the national and global stage, compromising our ability to attract and retain top-tier academic talent and devaluing the credentials our students work so hard to earn.

Call to Action The MRFA stands firm in its commitment to a post-secondary system that is accessible, equitable, and free from unwarranted political interference. We call on the Government of Alberta to meaningfully consult with faculty associations, student groups, and institutional leaders. We urge the removal of provisions in Bill 38 that mandate institutional neutrality and external control over university codes of conduct.

We will continue to advocate vigorously for policies that support our members, protect academic freedom, and ensure Mount Royal University remains a vibrant, independent, and critical institution for the public good.