STATEMENT: The Mount Royal Faculty Association's Opposition to Bill 33

To our Members, the Mount Royal University Community, and the Government of Alberta:

The Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA) stands in opposition to Bill 33. As an Association whose mission and vision are deeply rooted in being collaborative and grounded in equity, diversity, and community, we view this legislation as a direct infringement on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and the fundamental principles of fair, inclusive employment.

The MRFA is committed to advancing the rights of our community, celebrating the power of collegial governance, and upholding the highest standards for post-secondary education in Alberta. The Association has a mandate to engage in political action when legislation directly threatens the working conditions, rights, and academic environment of our members. Bill 33 does exactly that by attempting to dictate how universities conduct their internal affairs and stripping away existing commitments to equity and inclusion.

The premise that legislation is required to mandate "merit-based" hiring in the post-secondary sector is fundamentally flawed and misrepresents how faculty are hired at Mount Royal University (MRU). Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility initiatives do not stand in opposition to merit; rather, they ensure that the definition of merit is applied fairly, without systemic bias, to all qualified candidates.

Hiring at MRU is already a highly rigorous, qualifications-based process governed by our Collective Agreement. Specifically, Article 4.1.5 of the Collective Agreement strictly dictates that *"At the time of initial appointment, it shall be the responsibility of an Employee to furnish valid evidence, in writing, of experience and qualifications."* Furthermore, Article 4.1.6 mandates that *"All Employees shall be evaluated according to the existing policies and procedures in place for each category of appointment,"* with selection committees thoroughly vetting candidates based on these credentials.

Our hiring practices are inherently designed to select the most qualified, capable, and exceptional educators and researchers. To suggest otherwise undermines the integrity of our current faculty and the rigorous collegial governance processes that brought them to MRU.

Beyond hiring, Bill 33 represents a broader, alarming trend of government overreach into the operations of post-secondary institutions. One of the MRFA's primary Advocacy Goals is to protect institutional autonomy from government interference. Universities must remain spaces where diverse perspectives, equitable practices, and academic freedom are protected from the shifting winds of partisan politics.

By attempting to ban Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility considerations in public-sector hiring and training, the government is playing culture-war politics at the expense of our institutions' ability to foster a modern, inclusive, and globally competitive academic environment.

Call to Action The MRFA calls upon the Government of Alberta to immediately withdraw the provisions of Bill 33 that interfere with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility practices in the post-secondary sector. We urge the government to respect the autonomy of universities and the rigorous, collectively bargained processes already in place that ensure high-quality, equitable hiring.

We will continue to advocate for a post-secondary system that is truly accessible, equitable, and representative of the diverse communities we serve.