

Mount Royal Faculty Association

Statement on Academic Freedom

The Association affirms its ongoing commitment to academic freedom, as written in the *MRFA-BoG Collective Agreement* and the Association's By-laws Article 16-*Code of Ethics*.

Academic freedom forms an important part of the terms and conditions of the MRFA Collective Agreement. Article 23- Academic Freedom, for example, confirms that faculty need not fear institutional censure as part of their work. As a core value of the Mount Royal Faculty Association, the importance of academic freedom is also articulated in *Article 16-Code of Ethics* of the Association's Bylaw.

As Association members, we need to be alive to the possibility that free speech, protected under academic freedom, may also cause harm to some. The Association notes that Article 23.5 states in "exercising the freedom to comment and criticize, academic staff members have a corresponding obligation to use academic freedom in a responsible manner." Academic freedom must be considered, as the Collective Agreement states, with the rights of other members of the academic community in mind.

While holding to the importance of academic freedom, faculty associations must also balance multiple demands from diverse members and must consider how academic freedom works in relation to high-stakes issues. This issue was recently addressed in OCUFA's publication *Academic Matters* in which [Linda Rose-Krasnor and Michelle Webber](#) suggest that faculty associations consider "inclusive freedom," whereby Associations can "defend the principle of least restrictive speech provisions in negotiations, consultations, and grievances, while promoting the use of language that leads to a sense of inclusion and invites full participation in the expression of ideas."

The Collective Agreement ensures that all faculty members have the right to academic freedom. As part of its duty to uphold that Agreement, the MRFA will defend this right should the Employer seek to infringe upon a member's academic freedom and ensure that employees' rights under Article 25- Discipline are observed.

What the Association will do.

- 1) We commit to talk more about how academic freedom can be used responsibly and how this freedom relates, for example, to the relevant laws around hate speech, to which the Association must also attend.
- 2) We commit to understand what academic freedom means as a right of employment and how that intersects with other employment rights such as those outlined in Article 22- Workplace Environment.
- 3) We commit to dialogues that explore what an "inclusive freedom" approach might mean at MRU.

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