



## Mount Royal Faculty Association Bulletin March 8, 2021

### Highlights this Week:

#### In Recognition of International Women's Day

Today is International Women's Day where individuals and organizations stand united with woman around the world, in celebrating their social, economic, cultural and political achievements. For more information visit the [International Women's Day website](#), and consider nominating someone for the **CAUT Sarah Shorten Award**. The award was established in 1990 in honour of Sarah Shorten, who served as Vice-President (1982–83) and two terms as President of CAUT (1983–84 & 1984–85), to recognize outstanding achievements in the promotion of the advancement of women in Canadian universities and colleges. Nominations for the award may be submitted by academic staff associations, status of women committees, or any other interested parties. **The deadline for nominations is June 1, 2021.** The nomination form and procedures are available on the [CAUT website](#).

#### Pay Equity Update from the MRFA President

As promised at the Regular Meeting, I am providing an update on the pay equity situation and the MRFA motion passed at that meeting. First, for those who were not in attendance in the meeting, members voted overwhelmingly for the following resolution:

*THAT the MRFA demand that the University provide a report at the aggregate-level including relevant data, so that members can understand and assess their position, and that the Joint Diversity and Equity Committee host a series of town halls to explain the data and to answer questions.*

Since the regular meeting, I can report:

- Members of the Executive Board met with the MRFA members of the Joint Diversity and Equity Committee to discuss how to move forward and meet the demands of the motion. *The MRFA representatives on JDEC members will provide a follow-up on Tuesday March 10.*
- Vice President Policy Heather McLellan and I met with the Interim Provost on March 2. We apprised Dr. Evans of the member's motion and discussed which findings in the consultant's report might meet the demands of the motion. *The Provost seemed receptive to addressing these concerns.*
- The AVP-HR has presented the JDEC's work including the consultant's report to the President's Executive Committee (PEC) on March 3, as stipulated by the *MOU on Article 24- Equity and Diversity*.
- The University has agreed that a joint meeting with the JDEC and the Association should happen to map out a way forward. This meeting will also consider how to address the MRFA's demand for public presentations about the findings of the consultant's report. *Work will begin to schedule this meeting.*

Meanwhile the MRFA website has created a separate member resource page, which includes studies from the University of Manitoba that show how systemic pay inequities have been addressed there. Look for further updates as the circumstances change. I understand that we need to make progress on this issue soon.

#### Return to Campus for Fall 2021

At the Community Town Hall held on March 3, President Tim Rahilly announced that the University aims to have the campus open to the fullest extent possible under Alberta Health Services regulations. Dr.



Rahilly explained that current AHS restrictions will need to change to allow large numbers of people back on campus and that much depends on the progress with vaccines, but the aim is to have a much more active campus in Fall 2021.

The MRFA Executive Board met on Friday to consider the University's aim to have a return to campus to the fullest extent possible and arrived at the following conclusions:

### **1. The Pandemic Situation Remains in Flux**

While some faculty are understandably eager to be back teaching face-to-face, the Association wants to be clear that a return to campus must happen only when it is safe to do so. Further, individual Employees situations add an additional layer of complexity when determining if the workplace is safe (e.g. individual and familial health). While vaccines do offer the promise of a safer workplace, many factors can change between now and September including the spread of variants, the available vaccine supply and the ability of delivery systems to deliver the vaccines to all who want them. As explained by Dr. Tam (Patel, 2021), while their roll out of inoculation provides us with hope, we need to prepare for health measures to remain for the longer duration.

**2) The MRFA holds that a full return to campus requires a safe and healthy workplace.** We expect that employees will be asked to return to campus only when it is safe to do so.

### **3) Faculty who are unsafe to work on campus should apply for appropriate accommodations to deal with those concerns.**

Safety relates both to the demonstrable elements (e.g. advice from a medical professional) and personal psychological elements (e.g. feeling unsafe), in which all Employees are entitled to a safe work environment. For Contract academic faculty, you should apply for available work and if unsafe, apply for accommodations, Full-time faculty should discuss these matters with their Chair and Dean, and seek accommodations when necessary. See the Association's [COVID Advisory #2](#) for details.

### **4) The Association advocates against "flex delivery" modes.**

Some faculty are anxious that the university may opt for what some call a "multi-" or "hyper-" flex course delivery model. Given the workload implications of such flex arrangements, the Association strongly advocates against the imposition of such models. We will be reaching out to senior Administrators for clarity about whether flex delivery is an option being seriously considered at this time. We will also raise this issue through our representative on the Academic Working Group. Finally, since this is an academic matter, any decisions about flex delivery should be made with the active engagement of the General Faculties Council.

Many are eager to see a return to normal for Fall 2021. The University's aim to have a return to campus at the fullest extent possible is a sign that a new normal may be on the horizon. The Association believes that we must continue to monitor the pandemic and vaccine rollouts before that future can be certain.

### **MRFA Updates**

- Bargaining Updates
  - The March 3, 2021 Collective Bargaining Bulletin is available [here](#) (you must first [log in to your mrfa.net account](#) to access the bulletin).
  - Register [here](#) to attend upcoming Bargaining Town Halls
- Residency Requirements - guidelines for working remotely outside of Alberta are available [here](#).
- Draft Minutes from the March 2 Regular Meeting are available [here](#) and related documents are available [here](#).



- Proposed Bylaw Amendments open for comment are available [here](#), a summary of the changes with rationale is available [here](#), and you can submit your comments [here](#) by **March 17**
- The next Regular Meeting is **April 9, 9:00 – 11:00am**. Register [here](#) to attend. (Please note, a Special Meeting to approve the proposed bylaw amendments will be held in conjunction with the Regular meeting on April 9. Official notice, and related documents, for this Special Meeting shall be sent out on March 24)

### MRU Policy Consultation

In accordance with the university's policy framework, drafts of the proposed new *Privacy* policy and *Access to Information* policy have been posted on the policy website for their 30-day consultation period. Together, both policies will replace the outdated Information Management policy and provide clearer direction on how the university meets its obligations regarding the collection, use, disclosure, and protection of personal information, and how the university responds to requests for access to information in accordance with Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. These changes are part of a broader realignment of MRU's information management suite of policies and redevelopment of our *Records and Information Management Program* policy and *Information Security* policy are also being undertaken in parallel with this consultation period. The resulting work will consolidate the outdated *Records and Information Management Program* policy into a newly proposed *Information Management* policy and *Information Security* policy to provide an updated framework for the university's information management and protection program. Feedback on both policies can be sent directly from the website or via these links to [policy@mtroyal.ca](mailto:policy@mtroyal.ca) between March 1 and March 31, 2021.

- [Access to Information Policy - Consultation Draft](#)
- [Privacy Policy - Consultation Draft](#)
  - Read the draft policies and submit feedback [here](#).

### MRFA Events Coming Soon:

- **Contract Hiring Information Sessions:** Sessions are being offered jointly by the MRFA and Academic Affairs to provide an overview of appointment processes and important information with respect to the use of SPoTs during the pandemic.
  - Session for Chairs **and Committee Members** on **March 9:** 2 – 3pm ([Meeting Link](#))
  - Session for Contract faculty members on **March 10:** 3 – 4pm ([Meeting Link](#))
- **Pre-GFC Drop in Meeting** – March 10, 4:00 – 5:00pm (attend on [zoom](#))
- **Members Rejuvenate on Friday Afternoons** (selected dates) at 3:30pm on the following dates: March 12, April 16, May 21, and June 4. – attend on [zoom](#).
- Fridays at 6:00pm – **Faculty Centre Band Socials** – music lovers are still gathering for a drop-in music session each week. All are welcome to sing, play an instrument, or listen and enjoy. email [mholmgren@mtroyal.ca](mailto:mholmgren@mtroyal.ca) for the meeting url
- Wednesdays 3:00 – 4:00pm - **Tea with Lee** - on [Zoom](#).

### Question of the Week

**What are the 3 most important factors for you to be able to return to campus in Fall 2021?**

- [Full vaccine rollout](#)
- [Safety protocols in place](#)
- [Mandatory masks in public spaces](#)
- [Mandatory masks in class](#)
- [Plexiglass protection around lecterns/smart cabinets](#)



To manage stress and workload right now, **40%** of respondents to last week's question are **Making time for Self-Care**, **13%** are **Reducing Meeting Attendance**, or and **47%** are **Not doing much/barely hanging on**. Here are some resources that you may want to look into to promote wellbeing during this very busy time of year:

- [MRFA Covid Advisory on Faculty Wellness](#)
- [MRU Employee Wellbeing Website](#)
- [Employee Wellness Brochure](#) (Recently Updated)
- [Employee Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\) / Homewood Health Services](#)
- [Academic Development Centre's Recent Wellness Newsletter](#)
- MRFA PD Sessions on Wellbeing:
  - [Wellbeing in the Learning Environment Notes](#) (Feb 2020)
  - Mental Toughness [PowerPoint Presented by Brent MacDonald](#) and [Session Notes](#) (Fall 2020)

## MRFA Upcoming Events

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Learning Environment - PD Series

The MRFA's Professional Development and Diversity and Equity Committees are co-hosting a series of sessions relating to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the learning environment. Additional information on each session will be available closer to the date and registration will be required for each session – [Register Online](#).

- **Mar 19**, 8:30 –10:00, Get Cracking - Difficult Conversations in the Classroom
- April 30, 10:30 - 11:30 - Supporting Inclusion in the Teaching, Learning and Working Environment

### Contract Hiring Information Sessions

Sessions are being offered jointly by the MRFA and Academic Affairs to provide an overview of appointment processes and important information with respect to the use of SPOTs during the pandemic. Session for Chairs on **March 9**: 2 – 3pm ([Meeting Link](#)) and a session for Contract faculty members will be held on **March 10**: 3 – 4pm ([Meeting Link](#)).

### Pre-GFC Drop in Meetings

The MRFA Academic Liaison Committee's pre-GFC meetings are held a day in advance of GFC meetings, from 1:00 – 2:00pm, on the following dates:

- Wednesday, **March 10**, 2021: 4-5p.m.
- Wednesday, April 21, 2021: 1-2p.m.
- Wednesday, May 26, 2021: 2-3p.m.

Zoom Links for all meetings are available in the MRFA Calendar ([www.mrfa.net/calendar](http://www.mrfa.net/calendar))

## CAFA News

### CAFA Awards 2021 - Nominations are Open

The Nomination Form and information can be found [online](#).

## CAUT News



### **CAUT Call for nominations for the Sarah Shorten Award.**

The award was established in 1990 in honour of Sarah Shorten, who served as Vice-President (1982–83) and two terms as President of CAUT (1983–84 & 1984–85), to recognize outstanding achievements in the promotion of the advancement of women in Canadian universities and colleges. Nominations for the award may be submitted by academic staff associations, status of women committees, or any other interested parties. **The deadline for nominations is June 1, 2021.** The nomination form and procedures are available on the [CAUT website](#).

### **CAUT Call for Nominations for the Academic Librarians' and Archivists' Distinguished Service Award.**

The Award was established in 1994 to recognize outstanding contributions by academic librarians and archivists, other academic staff, or groups to the advancement of the status and/or working conditions of academic librarians and archivists at Canadian universities and colleges. Nominations for the award may be submitted by academic staff associations, or any other interested parties or individuals. **The deadline for nominations is June 1, 2021.** The nomination form and procedures are available on the [CAUT website](#).

## **MRFA Reminders**

### **Volunteer List to Support Members Isolating or in Quarantine**

MRFA members have volunteered to provide support to colleagues who are isolating or under quarantine due to the pandemic. This support may vary but could include things such as grocery delivery. Members who are isolating and needing support are welcome to contact any of the members, listed [online](#), to get the support you need.

### **MRFA Comment Form**

The MRFA is seeking members' input on any matter relevant to the MRFA: currently we are soliciting members' input specifically related to members' experiences working from home and transitioning to remote delivery. Members are welcome to use this [online form](#) to submit their feedback on MRFA initiatives, communications, and any other matters the MRFA may or should be involved in.

### **Connect Online on Fridays**

The MRFA is hosting monthly open zoom meetings, **Members Rejuvenate on Friday Afternoons**, 3:30 – 6:00pm, for members to get together. Please refer to the [MRFA google calendar](#) (Click on the “+GoogleCalendar” so you can easily access it anytime) for links to MRFA zoom meetings.

### **Faculty are Asked to Complete a Profile Demonstrating the Value of PSE**

Even amidst the current challenges, we need to continue to advocate for PSE. The MRFA Advocacy Committee plans to showcase the value of the work being achieved, thereby illuminating the damaging consequences of diminished funding and support for the post-secondary landscape. If you would like to volunteer to be highlighted as part of this initiative, please fill out the [online faculty profile form](#) or contact our Advocacy Officer Frank Cotae ([fcotae@mtroyal.ca](mailto:fcotae@mtroyal.ca)). The Advocacy Committee will also be highlighting the significant impacts these budget cuts have on our students. Members are welcome to share the [online student profile form](#) with students who want to have their voice heard.

### **Faculty Members are Asked to Provide Their Contact Information**

Thank you to all members who have taken the time to provide their private contact information. If you have not yet had a chance to respond please do so now [online](#). It is important that the Association have this information on file in the event of a lockout or strike or other Association initiatives which require a



high level of member engagement. Please note – this is just a matter of preparedness and is not in any way related to the current state of negotiations.

### **Google Calendar**

Instructions for how to add the MRFA Calendar to your Google Calendar are available [here](#), and the calendar is always available at [mrfa.net/calendar](http://mrfa.net/calendar).

### **#stopPSEcuts Survey Results**

Thank you to those members who took the time to respond to the PIA survey - “Survey results show vast majority of the post-secondary sector does not trust the provincial government to act in the best interest of the sector...The sector and the public overwhelmingly agreed that investment into post-secondary education is part of the solution for Alberta’s current economic challenges...[and] The post-secondary sector and the public strongly disagree with the provincial government’s cuts to post-secondary education.” View the [Media Release](#) and [Survey Result Summary](#) online.

### **MRFA Covid Members’ Advisory – Faculty Wellness**

With the one-year mark of the pandemic approaching, the MRFA office is preparing to remain in its remote delivery framework until September. As we continue with remote delivery this semester, the Association wants to emphasize the importance of mental health and the measures it suggests can help with COVID stress, anxiety and burnout. This advisory highlights the Association’s efforts to take concrete measures to alleviate the ongoing effects of the pandemic and to highlight the range of available resources available to help support members. Read the Member Advisory [online](#).

### **MRU Homewood Health Session- Stress Busters**

On March 16th Human Resources, Wellness at Work is hosting Homewood Health to present on the topic of stress busters. This session will explore all aspects of the stress response, focusing on practical tips and tools to help bring employees to optimal stress levels, and helping to maximize energy and performance. Employees can register for the session [online](#).

### **Study on Experiences of Faculty with Disabilities**

A doctoral student at UBC seeks input on study Exploring the Experiences of Disabled Faculty Members Using Institutional Ethnography. Tenure-stream academics working in Canadian post-secondary institutions, who identify as disabled or as having a disability, are sought for interviews about their experiences going through the tenure and/or promotion process. The study hope to identify how disability has shaped experiences in acquiring tenure/promotion status, what other types of work are undertaken or experienced during this process, and how experiences have been shaped by the policies encountered. If you are interested in learning more about the study or if you would be interested in participating, please contact Kealin McCabe (kmccabe@student.ubc.ca) EdD Candidate, Department of Educational Studies, University of British Columbia.

## **Dates and Deadlines at a Glance**

### **March**

March 10, 4:00 – 5:00 ~ Pre-GFC Drop in – refer to [Google Calendar](#) for Zoom Link

March 19, 8:30 – 10:00 ~ MRFA PDC and DEC – EDI series Session 3 – [Register Online](#).

March 23, 11:00-12:00 ~ MRFA Drop in Session – Submit your questions [online](#) and attend the session on [Zoom](#)

March 26, 3:30 – 7:30 ~ MRFA Social Event



March 26, 2021 ~ Scholarships for Dependents Deadline ~ [mrfa.net/faculty-ops](http://mrfa.net/faculty-ops)

#### April

**April 9, 11:00 – 1:00 ~ MRFA Regular Meeting**

April 21, 1:00 – 2:00 ~ Pre-GFC Drop in (hosted by ALC) – refer to [Google Calendar](#) for Zoom Link

April 29-30, 8:30 – 5:00 ~ Spring Retreat ~ Online

April 30, 12:00 – 1:00pm ~ Committee Affair on Zoom

#### May

May 14, 2021 ~ Contract Service Honorarium Deadline ~ [mrfa.net/faculty-ops](http://mrfa.net/faculty-ops)

**May 14, 9:30 – 1:00 ~ MRFA Annual General Meeting**

May 21, 3:30 – 7:30 ~ MRFA Golf Tourney, Rec Day & Keg Drain ~ Tentative

May 27, 11:00 – 1:00 ~ MRFA BBQ ~ Tentative

May 26, 2:00 – 3:00 ~ Pre-GFC Drop in – refer to [Google Calendar](#) for Zoom Link

May 28, 12:00 – 1:00 ~ MRFA Drop in Session – Submit your questions [online](#) and attend the session on [Zoom](#)

May 28, 2021 ~ Scholarships for Dependents Deadline ~ [mrfa.net/faculty-ops](http://mrfa.net/faculty-ops)

#### June

June 12-August 13, 2021                      MRFA Office and Faculty Centre Closure

#### Contact Us

- [Office@mrfa.net](mailto:Office@mrfa.net) – All inquires can be directed here.
- [LabourRelations@mrfa.net](mailto:LabourRelations@mrfa.net) – All inquires relating to the Collective Agreement and Grievances can be directed here.
- [President@mrfa.net](mailto:President@mrfa.net) – All inquires related to Association governance and external affiliations can be directed here.
- [EDI@mrfa.net](mailto:EDI@mrfa.net) – All inquires and comments relating to equity, diversity and inclusion matters can be directed here.
- [Communications@mrfa.net](mailto:Communications@mrfa.net) – All inquires relating to MRFA communications can be directed here
- [Negotiations@mrfa.net](mailto:Negotiations@mrfa.net) – All inquires relating to collective bargaining can be directed here