



MRFA
MOUNT ROYAL
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

Communications Policy

Category: Operational Policy

Date last Revised: August 24, 2021

I. Overview

The aim of MRFA communications with members is to promote a two-way flow of communication between the Association and its members to facilitate the exchange of appropriate information related to the activities and responsibilities of the Association as outlined in the MRFA's mission and mandate. The primary communications channels are:

- The MRFA website and other online media such as Facebook and Twitter,
- Weekly MRFA bulletin,
- Regular Faculty Forum,
- Email as necessary to communicate time-sensitive or important information,
- Posters and Flyers, and
- MRFA Department Liaisons

II. Aims

- i. The aim of MRFA communications with the administration of the University is to express and defend the views and values of the Association in a clear, firm, principled and respectful way.
- ii. The aim of MRFA communications with other Associations or professional bodies is to represent the views and values of the Association, to engage in mutual growth and education, and to ask and offer mutual support as necessary.
- iii. The aim of MRFA communications with the media, government, and other external organizations and individuals, is to express with clarity the views and values of the Association on matters which affect the interests and rights of the Association (as both a labour and professional organization of faculty), or the interests of the University and post-secondary education more broadly. To effectively accomplish this aim, the MRFA shall produce press releases as deemed necessary.

III. Authority

- i. The Membership by resolution may direct the Executive Board or its Officers to convey particular messages.
- ii. The Executive Board may direct the President or other Officer to convey particular messages.
- iii. The President is authorized to speak on behalf of the Association in any relevant context, and to represent an Association position or view, subject to direction from the Executive Board or membership.

- iv. The Executive Board may authorize Officers or other individuals to speak on behalf of the Association, and to represent an Association position or view.
- v. Chairs of Association committees or their designees may speak on behalf of their committees and represent their committee's views. Communications sent by committees are to be submitted via the Communications Coordination [form](#).

IV. Limitations

- i. On difficult or controversial issues that may be divisive among the membership, Association positions or views must be determined and communicated advisedly, with significant consultation with members.
- ii. The MRFA will not advertise for members' private business ventures or publications in any of its communications channels.

V. Entitlement to Communications

- i. All Regular Members are entitled to receive Association information related to any statutory role of the Association, including bargaining, financial statements, meetings and other business to be considered by the Association.
- ii. Regular Members, Associate Members and Members Emeriti who have submitted Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation Consent (CASL) forms are entitled to receive Association information related to social and professional development activities and services of the Association.
- iii. Social and Honorary Members who have submitted Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation Consent (CASL) forms and other appropriate individuals or associations are entitled to receive Association information related to social activities.
- iv. Only current Regular Members of the Association shall be permitted membership in the MRFA's closed Facebook Group. Those on management assignments at any post-secondary institution will be removed from the Facebook group for the duration of the appointment and may request to be added back to the group when the appointment is concluded.
- v. Only current Regular Members of the Association shall be provided user accounts on the MRFA website, and Members shall not share account details or member restricted web content with others.

VI. Applicable Committees

- Communications Committee
- Advocacy Committee
- Bargaining Communications Committee

VII. Related Policies

- Political and Advocacy Activity

VIII. Email Communications

Email is used for communicating time-sensitive or important information.

- i. The Association shall distribute announcements of MRFA meetings and events to the membership via email as appropriate. There shall normally be a maximum of one announcement and one reminder per meeting and event.
- ii. Members may request that particular messages be conveyed by the Association. The President and Communications Officer are empowered to determine whether such requests should be honoured, considering the relevance to the membership or the Association's activities, and which communication channel shall be used to disseminate the information. Requests to convey members' retirement announcements have standing approval.

a. Authority

- i. Individuals with standing authorization to use the Association's distribution lists to send individual emails to the membership, as appropriate within the parameters of their roles, include the President, Senior Administrative and Faculty Relations Officer, Labour Relations Officer and Administrative Assistant.
- ii. Members of the Executive Board may be granted temporary permissions, as needed, to send emails using the Association's distribution lists at the discretion of the President in consultation with the Senior Administrative and Faculty Relations Officer. All such messages are to be reviewed by the President or Communications Officer prior to distribution and permissions shall be revoked immediately following distribution of the approved message.

b. Limitations

Individual emails not otherwise permitted within this policy require prior authorization from the President and Communications Officer of the Association.

c. Distribution Lists

Faculty distribution lists and contact information are gathered and prepared by the Association solely for the purpose of facilitating the Association's communication with members. As a FOIP consideration, such information must be gathered with regard to the privacy of members, and distribution lists are reserved for the exclusive use of the Association for authorized communications with members. The Association does not provide direct access to its distribution lists.

- i. Where an affiliated organization (such as CAUT) requires contact information for the provision of services to MRFA members, such organizations may be granted access to the information at the President's discretion.
- ii. Members may voluntarily provide personal e-mail contact information to the Association and this information is to only be used for communication purposes during an MRFA sanctioned job action/strike or lockout.

IX. Website and Other Online Media

The purpose of the website is to communicate and archive all information pertaining to the Association that would be of interest to the membership. This includes, but is not limited to, Association bylaws, policies and forms, committee business and events, meeting

minutes, reports and contact information. Moreover, the website and other online media are means to communicate targeted information or general interest information, such as event and University announcements, Professional Development opportunities, and/or external information relevant to Association members.

a. Authority

- i. Individuals with standing authorization to add content and/or otherwise modify the Association's website include the Senior Administrative and Faculty Relations Officer and the Administrative Assistant.
- ii. All content added to the website must be aligned with the Association's mandate and mission statements and be within limitations outlined in this policy. Non-routine posts must have prior approval of the Executive Board, where appropriate, or the President or Communications Officer.
- iii. Members may request that particular messages be put on the website or other online media. The President and Communications Officer are empowered to determine whether such requests should be honoured. Messages posted on any online media shall be done in support of the Association's objectives as articulated in the Bylaws and in accordance with the MRFA's Social Media Policy.

b. Limitations

Significant website modifications require prior Communications Committee approval.

X. Social Media

The primary purpose of social media use by the Association is to forward the Advocacy goals as approved by the membership. To maintain a consistent presence on Social Media platforms, there shall be at least one post on each platform weekly.

a. Authority

In accordance with article III.iv, the MRFA's Advocacy Officer is hereby authorized to develop posts on behalf of the Association via approved social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter. The Senior Administrative and Faculty Relations Officer may publish the posts on behalf of the Advocacy Officer where appropriate and subject to the conditions below:

- i. All posts shall be in compliance with relevant policies and bylaws and the tone shall match the Association's identity as detailed in its vision and mission statements.
- ii. Posts shall be reviewed prior to posting by one other member of the Advocacy Committee.
- iii. All posts on Twitter will be tagged with #ABpse #ABpoli and/or #FightTheCuts

b. Revision and/or Removal of Social Media Content

Complaints received about social media posts shall be reviewed by the President and Communications Officer who shall determine if posts should be maintained, edited or removed from the respective social media platform.

XI. Newsletters

The purpose of Association Newsletters is to regularly provide information to members that would be important to them as members of the Association and as Academic Staff at MRU.

- i.** Bulletins, emailed to members weekly, provide important Association updates, list upcoming events that are of general interest to Association members, and may highlight MRFA, CAUT and CAFA events/issues.
- ii.** Faculty Forums, online publications sent to members occasionally, detail the business of the Association and provide topical information which may be of interest to Association members.

b. Authority

The Senior Administrative and Faculty Relations Officer is authorized to develop and distribute Weekly Bulletins in consultation with the President, where applicable.

The Communications Officer is authorized to approve content for the Faculty Forums which shall be developed and distributed by the Senior Administrative and Faculty Relations Officer, with support from the Communications Committee, normally at least four times per academic year.

c. Limitations

Content for newsletters is subject to the aims and limitations of this policy.

XII. Posters and Flyers

The purpose of posters and flyers is to promote Association events and other information of high importance to the membership and/or the campus community, where applicable.

a. Authority

- i.** Posters, event notices and flyers may be posted in the Faculty Centre subject to the following considerations:
 1. All MRFA Committee event notices must be approved by the respective committee prior to posting,
 2. All postings must be in line with the Aims of MRFA Communications (see article II),
 3. All posts shall be in compliance with relevant policies and bylaws and the tone shall match the Association's identity as detailed in its vision and mission statements.
 4. All postings not originating from the MRFA must relate to the work of the MRFA, CAUT, CAFA, or other Associations with which the MRFA is affiliated or which the MRFA supports in accordance with its mission, mandate, and/or approved advocacy goals.
- ii.** The MRFA may distribute one copy of approved MRFA event notices to each academic unit for posting at the discretion of MRU Department Assistants.

- iii. Flyers may be sent to all faculty members when deemed appropriate by the relevant MRFA Committee and in consultation with the Senior Administrative and Faculty Relations Officer.

XIII. Department Liaisons

The purpose of the Department Liaison network is to facilitate a two-way flow of communication between the Association and the membership and to provide a contact point for the Association within each Academic Unit.

a. Appointments

In accordance with the Bylaws, the Communications Committee shall annually recommend to the Executive Board the appointment of a member, from each department, to serve as MRFA Department Liaison. In formulating the recommendations, the Communications Committee shall consider potential appointees based on level of engagement with the MRFA, attendance history at MRFA meetings, past support for and understanding of MRFA initiatives, and any other criteria deemed relevant. The recommendations shall normally be presented to the Executive Board in May of each year, after the annual MRFA Committee elections have taken place.

b. Training

In accordance with the Bylaws, the Communications Committee shall annually provide the MRFA Department Liaisons with a list of expectations and duties. These expectations and duties shall include those listed in the Bylaws at a minimum. The Communications Committee, in consultation with the President, may include additional duties in accordance with the mandate of the Communications Committee. The list of expectations and duties shall normally be provided between August 15 - 31.

c. Authority

The President and Communications Officer are empowered to determine which messages will be communicated via the Department Liaison network.

XIV. Press Releases

The purpose of press releases is for communicating time-sensitive or important information to the media and the public regarding matters pertaining to Post-Secondary Education.

a. Development

The initial draft of a press release may be developed by any MRFA Committee or the MRFA Executive Board. As the MRFA's external representative and media liaison, the MRFA President shall be involved in drafting all press releases.

- The MRFA's Administrative Assistant shall maintain a media contact list to be used for the distribution of press releases.

b. Authority

The President, in consultation with the Communications Officer, and with the Advocacy Officer where appropriate, is empowered to determine whether and at what time a press release will be distributed.

XV. Position Papers

The Executive Board may from time to time develop Position or White Papers or other correspondence related to the Association's activities. The Executive Board may advance and publish these as Association positions for the MRFA, the University or external audiences as appropriate, with due consideration for consultation with Regular Members.

XVI. Surveys

The Association shall endeavour to ensure that members have the ability to provide meaningful input to the Association at all times, and this shall include, but not be limited to, the following surveys:

a. The Annual MRFA Census

The MRFA Census shall be administered annually, no later than March 7, to all current Regular Members of the Association. The survey shall be open for three weeks with a weekly reminder sent to members who have not yet responded. Committees will be asked annually in January if they would like to have ≤ 3 questions included in the MRFA Census, and these shall be included subject to approval by the President.

b. The Bargaining Survey

The MRFA Bargaining Survey shall be administered in the Fall semester immediately preceding the expiry of a Collective Agreement. The Negotiating Committee shall draft the survey in consultation with the Executive Board and the Long-Term Bargaining Goals Review Committee. The survey shall be open for three weeks with a weekly reminder sent to members who have not yet responded.

c. Other Surveys when approved by the Executive Board

The Association may determine that a survey of the membership is required at other times of the year do address important issues affecting the membership. When these additional surveys are being considered the following process shall be followed:

1. If originating from a committee, the committee shall submit a membership survey proposal to the Executive Board. This proposal shall include an overview of the intent, timing, and anticipated outcomes of the survey.
2. If the Executive Board approves the survey proposal, the committee will proceed in drafting the survey.
3. The draft survey, once approved by the committee, shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval.
4. The final survey, as amended where appropriate by the Executive Board, shall be scheduled in coordination with other Association initiatives and communications (in accordance with article III.v).

XV. Communications with the Association

Notwithstanding the provisions noted below, Staff and Officers of the Association shall make all reasonable efforts to respond to members promptly.

- i. Staff and Officers of the Association can be expected to be available for contact during their regular business hours as indicated in staff contracts and/or as posted on the MRFA website where applicable. When not available for immediate consultation during these hours, they can be expected to respond within three business Days.
- ii. Due to scheduling demands, meetings with certain Officers may be made by appointment only.
 - Members are to contact the Association's Administrative Assistant, at office@mrfa.net, to schedule appointments.
 - Regularly scheduled meetings with MRU Senior Administrators shall normally be attended by at least two members of the Executive Board and/or staff.