



**MRFA**  
MOUNT ROYAL  
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

## Mount Royal Faculty Association Bulletin September 27, 2021

### Highlights this Week

#### Return to Campus – Information and Support

##### Proof of vaccination deadlines

- In accordance with the memo sent to the MRU community at 12:00pm on September 24, verifications of vaccination status must now be done on the MRU Now App. [Here](#) is more information on how to do this.

##### Classroom Safety

- It is important that faculty encourage students to use the cleaning materials in the class to clean their spaces when they enter and leave the classroom.
- The Association has been monitoring the lack of availability of masks in classrooms: we have informed EHS, as well as the Provost, of these problems. Hazardous incident reports have been filed regarding the availability of masks in classrooms when students need them.
- Faculty are encouraged to [submit the form on the EHS site](#) when your classroom requires supplies (masks and cleaning supplies should be in each classroom) and/or members [can submit a health and safety incident report form](#) when those required supplies are not present.

##### Masks

- Faculty should be changing masks frequently to enhance safety on campus: please encourage your students to do the same.
- Watch for the MRFA President who will be visiting your area in the coming weeks to distribute MRFA masks. If you miss Lee on his walk through, please email [office@mrfanet](mailto:office@mrfanet) and a mask will be put in interoffice mail for you. These masks are best used over an N95 and/or with filters (filters are available for pick up in the Faculty Centre).

##### MRFA Advocacy Efforts, Resources, and Reminders:

- The Association has sent a [letter](#) to Minister Nicolaidis, the Minister of Advanced Education, protesting the approach taken with respect to fall 2021 return to campus directives.
- A covid resource page is available [here](#) (this page includes the recent [public health order](#))
- To ensure the Association is best able to present and advocate for our members, we invite members to [let us know](#) if you are having to stay home and/or isolate due to symptoms, close contacts, or positive test results for yourself or your dependents.
- Your colleagues are also here to help! If you are having to isolate and need support, please reach out to one of your [colleagues who has volunteered to provide support](#).

#### Advocacy Matters: Unpacking Alberta 2030

On April 29 Jason Kenney's UPC government formally unveiled its plan to thoroughly transform the system of public post-secondary education that Albertans have, for over 110 years, been working together to build. Entitled [Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs](#) and identified by the government as one of its "[key initiatives](#)", the plan is presented as a ten-year strategy for building a new PSE system out of

the old: one in which the overarching, single-minded goal will be the realignment of institutional priorities according to the interests of employers and industry. Aspects of the plan include the following:

- Introducing mechanisms for constraining decisions about institutional program offerings and curricula so to privilege the demands of markets and private interests, and where students are recast as future workforce, to the detriment of a fuller set of considerations vital to education for the public good;
- In the context of dramatic increases in tuition, exploring the “modernization” of student aid for reasons that include supporting “the needs of the economy”, potentially leading to student aid being used as a lever to steer students toward those programs of study preferred by industry and government;
- Prioritizing industry-serving micro-credentials and the shift to online learning, with the potential that forthcoming provincial frameworks may divert scarce resources and undermine academic freedom and shared governance;
- In the face of the move by government to withdraw public funding, requiring institutions to demonstrate greater reliance on private sources of revenue, exposing them to market forces, economic shocks, and private interests;
- Prioritizing research that is valued by industry for its perceived commercialization potential, i.e., for profit-making;
- The implementation of an intellectual property framework that may threaten the intellectual property rights faculty currently have over their teaching and scholarly works;
- A “flagship initiative” to adopt “faculty promotion and tenure policies to incentivize faculty to pursue entrepreneurial activities”;
- Anticipated changes to the PSE governance model that threaten to further erode meaningful shared governance of post-secondary institutions.

Taken as a whole, the components of Alberta 2030—including the cross-section summarized above together with the plan to cut about 20% in total from provincial PSE operating grants between 2019 to 2023, to leave a significant portion of the remainder “at risk” according to government-set performance-based funding metrics, and to subject students to steep increases in tuition—threatens to further the corporatization of post-secondary education, render Alberta’s PSE institutions subservient to instrumental objectives and private interests, and to erode student choice, institutional autonomy, and the academic freedom of faculty.

This short article begins the process of unpacking Alberta 2030 by surveying the political project a high level, with an emphasis on how components are interrelated and are consistent from an ideological perspective. Subsequent articles will drill down into individual components. Ultimately, faculty at Mount Royal and across the province must be prepared to articulate and stand behind a better vision for PSE in Alberta. Nevertheless, we must begin by understanding the details of the current plan and what’s at stake.

If you have ideas about advocacy-related topics that you’d like to see us dig into, including issues related to the Alberta 2030 initiative, please don’t hesitate to contact the Advocacy Committee via [facultyrelations@mrfa.net](mailto:facultyrelations@mrfa.net).

#### **F<sup>4</sup>: FAST FACTS FOR FACULTY - Sandbox on Demand**

(The first installment of the MRFA PD Committee’s bite sized facts for faculty).

Sandbox on Demand is a great resource from the ADC that has multiple resources for Blackboard, Google applications, MRU specific technology, Microsoft, Surveys, iClicker, and Anecdotal notes. This is a great starting point for faculty when they have questions. It’s like having the Andrews with you at all times! Even on the weekend! Stay tuned for our next F<sup>4</sup> about specific Blackboard functions.

[Click here](#) to access Sandbox on Demand

### **CAFA Distinguished Faculty Awards – Announcement of Recipients**

The MRFA congratulates all members who submitted nominations for consideration in the 2021 CAFA Distinguished faculty awards and would like to announce that Dr. Brett McCollum, Professor (Chemistry) at MRU, is the recipient of the CAFA Distinguished Teaching Award, for 2021. Other award recipients are listed [here](#).

### **Student Massage Therapy Clinic is Open - support students and get a massage!**

Fall 2021 appointments are now available for you to book at a reduced rate while supporting students. The experience they gain in the clinic is a critical piece of their education and we are proud to provide this vital service to our community. Whether you need a relaxation massage or have a condition that requires a therapeutic treatment, our students are trained to the highest standards nationally and can meet your needs. [Book Now](#). The \$30 fee for one-hour massage treatments supports our student scholarships. Present your [MRU OneCard](#) for a special MRU Advantage rate of \$20. Please bring exact change or a cheque. For more information, please visit our website: [mru.ca/bookamassage](http://mru.ca/bookamassage)

### **Call for Research Participants: Academics in Living Apart Together Relationships**

Faculty are invited to participate in a study called “Managing love, work and pandemics in Living Apart Together (LAT) Relationships among Academics and Professions.” From Brandon University, The purpose of the study is to explore the structural dynamics of LAT (for example as related to gender, class, race, age, abilities, and sexualities) and variations across the lifespan (before entering the workforce, in early career, after marriage or cohabitation; after relational dissolution, post-retirement, and in late life) in order to grasp the intricacies of relational and family evolutions in our increasingly technological advanced and globalized society. Interested individuals can refer to more details on the study [here](#) and inquire with [petrellas@brandonu.ca](mailto:petrellas@brandonu.ca).

### **Question of the Week**

**On a scale of 1-6 with 1 being not at all and 6 being very much, please rate how safe you feel now having been on campus with the current protocols over the last week?**

There was no question of the week in last week’s special issue of the bulletin. Members are still encouraged to [Use the MRFA Logo as Your Virtual Meeting Background and Picture](#) and to submit a photo of you holding a [sign showing support for a fair deal](#).

**Thank you to all members who take the time to respond to these questions.** The Association continues efforts in representing your concerns and your feedback is very helpful in this process!

## **MRFA Reminders**

### **Remaining Committee Vacancies – Call for Statements of Interest**

#### **Academic Liaison Committee**

*Position:* 1 position for 2021-2023

*Eligibility:* All regular members from the Faculty of Science and Technology. Experience on GFC would be deemed beneficial.

#### **Awards Committee Chair**

*Position:* 1 position for 2021 -2023.

*Eligibility:* This position is open to all regular members. Demonstrable understanding of the variety of ways and various levels to assess teaching, as per MRU standards (competent teaching, proficient and scholarly teaching and leadership and excellence in teaching), would be deemed beneficial.

### **Member Engagement Committee**

*Position:* 3 positions for 2021-2023 and 1 positions for 2021-2022

*Eligibility:* three of these positions must be filled by contract members and one position is open to all full-time members. For representative purposes, candidates from a variety of sessional appointment types would be ideal (e.g. lab, sessional, continuing, and fixed term).

### **Social Events Committee**

*Position:* 1 position for 2021-2023

*Eligibility:* All contract members are eligible.

### **Job Action Preparedness Committee**

*Position:* 1 position for 2021-2023

*Eligibility:* All members are eligible

## **Reminders: Funding Opportunities for Faculty**

There are several opportunities for funding negotiated in the Collective Agreement, including

- [Tuition Refund Applications](#) - for reimbursing full-time, limited-term, sessional (teaching three or more courses at MRU in the same period), continuing, and fixed-term employees who successfully complete credit courses, or for graduate studies program fees, at any other post-secondary institution.
- [Scholarships for Dependents](#) - the dependents of tenured and tenurable faculty, full time lab instructors, as well as Continuing and Fixed Term faculty, teaching 384 SICH or greater, provided dependents are registered as full-time students in credit courses at MRU, and attain a GPA of at least 2.0
- [PD Allocations](#) - For reimbursing expenses related to responsibilities for teaching, research, professional or general University duties.
- [Contract Service Honourarium](#) - to support Contract faculty who participate in non-instructional activities (see current opportunities for [MRFA service](#) here).
- and [More](#) ....

## **Reminder - MRFA 2025: Towards a More Diverse, Inclusive and Equitable Association - Open for Consultation**

Last year the Association made a number of structural changes to make the Association more inclusive and welcoming. As part of this continuing effort, the Executive Board approved in principle the draft version of the Association's four-year plan MRFA 2025. The Board also endorsed a consultation plan that will offer members the opportunity to discuss the Plan. Members of the Association can review the draft Plan and offer comments [online](#) (Please Note: to see the draft plan you will need to [log in to your mrfa.net account](#)).

## **MRFA PDC Events on Managing In-Person and Remote Delivery**

Save the Dates - Fall PD Day – Resources for Members: October 14, 11:00am – 12:00pm

Let us know what you want to learn more about!

The PDC invites members to [let us know](#) what types of PD sessions would be of interest this year.

In addition to the series noted above, the committee is planning a PD for scholarship series in the Winter 2022 semester.

## **Scheduling with Your Association (@mrfa.net)**

Trying to schedule a meeting with the MRFA but can't see availability in the google calendar? Due to the move to the @mrfa.net email server, the President's and Association Staff members' calendars are viewable by searching for them in your calendar using the full email address (i.e.

[facultyrelations@mrfa.net](#)). Members are encouraged to contact [office@mrfa.net](#) for all scheduling requests.

## Faculty Centre Update

The Faculty Centre remains closed until further notice: our target opening date is **October 12, 2021**. Members are encouraged to send inquiries and booking requests to [office@mrfa.net](mailto:office@mrfa.net).

## Resources from the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee

Your Professional Standards and Ethics Committee (PSEC) has developed some useful resources over the past couple of years and is linking them here again for your reference. If there are any specific items you would like information on within the [mandate of PSEC](#), please feel free to send input to [FacultyRelations@mrfa.net](mailto:FacultyRelations@mrfa.net).

- [When to contact the MRFA](#)
- [MRFA Ethics Bylaws Flowchart](#)
- [Robert's Rules for Online Meetings](#)
- [Robert's Rules Cheat Sheet](#)

## @mrfa.net Spam Email Filtering

It has been brought to our attention that some MRFA emails are being filtered to spam when they are sent from the Association's @mrfa.net server. Please take a moment to ensure that you have not missed messages and mark @mrfa.net as safe if any messages have been filtered to spam (the most recent message was sent from [negotiations@mrfa.net](mailto:negotiations@mrfa.net) on April 13). Moving forward, the Association will be sending more communications from its server; so, it is important that you keep this in mind should you suddenly stop receiving our messages.

## 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.

## 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).