

MRFA Weekly Bulletin

January 04, 2022



Highlights this week



1 President's Message

Happy New Year! I hope the holidays gave you all a moment to regroup and even rejuvenate as we head into what is certainly already a challenging start to 2022. I want to note two immediate challenges.

First, it was heartening to see that the decision to start classes next week on-line was made before the holidays. This decision provided more certainty and more time to adjust teaching plans for the winter semester. Following from the University's decision, the MRFA Executive Board also decided, in an abundance of caution for our staff's health and safety, to return to remote work. (See the next item). But, remote teaching poses many challenges and I know that many faculty and students will be looking forward to resuming in-person classes as soon as it is safe to do so.

The other challenge before us remains collective bargaining. At the most recent Negotiations Town Hall, members present gave strong support for the negotiating team to proceed to formal mediation. There was also strong support to intensify the preparations for job action to back our demands at the table. The Executive Board will be considering those next steps at its Friday meeting. Among the items we will be discussing is the location of a strike headquarters. Certainly I hope formal mediation succeeds, but it seems increasingly clear that we may have to back our demands with a strong formal strike reach a fair deal.

We are not alone fighting this front. Today faculty at Concordia University of Edmonton (CUEFA) started the first faculty strike in Alberta's history and this may not be the last one this academic year. The strike at Concordia University of Edmonton has similar issues around pay and workload. Their job action offers us an important opportunity to build solidarity with our colleagues across the province and to demonstrate our resolve to reach a fair deal with our employer.

Here are two ways to show your support of CUEFA:
Sign the [petition](#) supporting the CUE Faculty Association;

Share your support on social media using the hashtags: [#abpse](#) [#sscuefa](#) [#cuefa](#) [#moneyformansions](#) [#mindsovermansions](#) [#peopleoverproperty](#) [#solidarityCUE](#) [#CUEstrike](#) OR using the tag: [@CUEfacultyassoc](#) [@CUETruth](#) [@AUPE](#) [@ABFedLabour](#) [@FightbackLabour](#) [@CUEEdmonton](#) [@CUE_President](#)

The MRFA is working with other PSIs in Calgary on other ways to show our support and the MRFA Executive Board will be considering how the Association can show its support at its Friday meeting.

To provide you with the most recent insights about collective bargaining across the province and in our sector, the Negotiating Committee and the Job Action Preparedness Committee are hosting a Town hall Monday January 10 at noon where Brendan Bruce, Executive Director of CAFA, will update us on the current situation.

Colleagues, I know this is not the ideal start to the new year. Despite these challenges, however, I am confident though our continuing solidarity will ensure our success this semester and throughout 2022.

Sincerely,
Lee

2 MRFA Pandemic Update

As you know the University decided December 22, 2022 that the majority of classes in Winter 2022 would commence with remote teaching starting January 10, 2022 until January 22, 2022. Although subject to pandemic conditions and restrictions, classes are anticipated to resume in person teaching January 24, 2022. The Association welcomed the University's decision to inform faculty and students before the holidays so that there could be more time to plan for the semester.

3 MRFA Operations

The MRFA has also responded to the changing circumstances. First, all MRFA committee meetings, town halls and regular membership meetings will continue to be held virtually until further notice. Professional development events will also be held virtually. The MRFA Office, which has been open for in-person services, is moving again to remote work which means you can still reach us virtually. We will continue to provide all MRFA services. Please note however, the Faculty Center is now closed to members until January 24, 2022. Lunch service has been suspended until at least Wednesday January 26, 2022. Social events planned for the Faculty Center are cancelled or will be rescheduled.

4 Important Dates and Upcoming Events



PSEC Event [Cultivating Civil Discussion](#)

Given the increase in conflict in academia and our desire to help every single faculty flourish, Members of the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee have invited a few of our own faculty to start a conversation towards maintaining solidarity amongst us by sharing their practical strategies on how to prepare for a conflict or how best to transform a potentially hostile debate into a neutral and fruitful one.

Speakers:

- Jennifer McCormik, Student Counselling Services - Physiology and Perception: Role of Internal Factors in Civil Academic Discussions'
- Shiraz Kurji, Accounting and Finance - The Basic Tenets of Civil Discussion
- Mirjam Knapik, Student Counselling Services - Conditions that Support Civil Dialogue

Date: January 07, 2022
Time: 9:30 - 10:30am

Join the webinar [here](#)

[MRFA Retreat - Learning Together: New Directions in Challenging Times](#)

Call for Proposals:
Proposals are now being accepted for the 2022 Retreat which will be held either in-person (in Kananas) or online (pending pandemic restrictions) on April 26-27, 2022.

All proposals must contribute to the professional development of MRU colleagues relate to the theme of the retreat, and align with the Association's member-approved [mission statement](#)

[Submit a Proposal](#): The Professional Development Committee has extended the date for proposal submission to January 28, 2022.

Social Event Organized by MRFA Triad Committee

This event has been rescheduled to a date that will be determined by the committee and subject to the reopening of the MRFA office on January 24, 2022 as per the pandemic regulations.

Date: TBD
Time: 12:00 - 1:00pm
Location: Faculty Centre
Register [here](#) to attend the event. Registrations close on January 7, 2022

New Year Event Organized by the Social Events Committee

This event has been rescheduled to February 4, 2022 subject to the reopening of the MRFA office on January 24, 2022 as per the pandemic regulations.

Date: February 04, 2022
Time slots: 12:00 - 2:00 pm (Lunch serving) or 4:00 - 6:00 pm (end-of-day serving)
Location: Faculty Centre
Register [here](#) to attend the event. Registrations close on Jan 13, 2022

[View MRFA Calendar →](#)



Reminder – MRFA Committee Positions Available:

The following positions are to be appointed by the MRFA Executive Board in accordance with MRFA [Bylaw 13.1.1](#) and MRFA [Policy Article 14](#):

[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 position 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