



**Minutes of the Mount Royal Faculty Association
Diversity and Equity Committee Meeting
Meeting date: Tuesday, September 21, 2021**

(Approved electronically on September 29, 2021. Moved: Leah Hamilton, Seconded: Maryam Elahi. Motion carried)

Call to order: A Diversity and Equity committee meeting of the MRFA was held virtually in Calgary, Alberta on Tuesday, September 21, 2021. The meeting convened at 10:03a.m., Chair, Milena Radzikowska, presiding.

Members Present:

Andrea Phillipson
Derrick Antson
J.J. Fenez
Leah Hamilton
Maryam Elahi

Milena Radzikowska
Shelley Rathie

Absent with Regrets

Audra Foggin

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved by consent.

Minutes for Information: The August 25, 2021, minutes of the Diversity and Equity committee meeting were approved online previously and provided for information.

Unfinished Business

1. Discussion on starting meetings

The committee discussed how to start its meetings moving forward. It was agreed that the committee would start its meetings with an informal check in with members.

2. Appointment of DEC rep on the Joint Diversity and Equity Committee

There was some confusion regarding whether the representative recommendation should be a member of this committee or not. Once clarification is obtained, the committee will make its recommendation. It was also noted that Leah Hamilton is an Executive Board appointee to the JDEC and is a member of this committee and that Leah can liaise between the two groups. A comment was made regarding the important work of the JDEC and that delay in meetings may create wider equity concerns. The committee also discussed that there are no contract faculty members on this committee and that a recommendation to the Executive Board is to have a contract faculty member appointed to this committee to ensure inclusivity and representation.

Action: JJ will follow up with Chantelle and inform Milena and the committee. The committee will make its recommendation either electronically or at its next meeting.

Recommendation: The Diversity and Equity committee recommends to the MRFA Executive Board, to ensure diversity and inclusion of different faculty voices, that the MRFA Executive Board appoint a contract faculty member to serve on the Diversity and Equity committee.



3. Review [Religious Diversity Google Doc](#)

- a. Member communications on Religious holidays/observances
- b. Formal recommendation to the MRFA Executive Board re Secular or Fully Diverse

The committee discussed how to address members' requests for communication on religious and cultural events and observances. It was noted that cultural events and observances are as important as religious events and observances. The committee discussed having an open calendar for members to add their cultural and religious holidays as well as having a space for members to share their experiences with their cultural and religious events and observances. The committee discussed the importance of having this be based on personal experiences rather than have it framed in an objective way. The committee discussed how there is not always consensus even among members of the same communities on how or when certain events and observances take place. The committee discussed framing this in an inviting way rather than a reactive way, whereby members have the spaces already available and decisions do not need to be made on an individual basis. The committee also discussed framing this initiative as a pilot program.

Recommendation: The Diversity and Equity committee recommends to the Executive Board that the MRFA adopt an open calendar and space in communications for members to share experiences on cultural and religious events and observances.

On the wider question regarding diversity or secularism, the committee discussed concerns around framing this topic in this way. It was noted that the committee members did not feel as though they were experts on this topic and that seeking expert guidance could be a benefit. It was also noted however that there is disagreement amongst experts on this topic as well. The committee did not want to take a stance on the question and did not make a formal recommendation for the Executive Board to consider. However, the committee spent a considerable amount of time discussing how to make the MRFA more inclusive for members overall.

Action: Leah Hamilton will draft a list of recommendations for making MRFA events and spaces more inclusive, including food to be served in the Faculty Centre and themes of events. This will be circulated to the committee members for comments and additions. Final recommendations will be confirmed by October 6 and sent to the Executive Board for its consideration on October 8, 2021.

4. Officer's Report: Update on the MRFA 2025 plan



A link to the MRFA 2025 EDI plan was provided for members. The committee was informed of the revisions already made to the document, for example regarding grouping similar action items together and removing repetitive items. The committee was informed that an issue at the moment with the plan is that there are very little actions or tasks attached to some of the items in the plan. The committee was also informed that the Executive Board would like this committee to host a Town Hall in October 2021 regarding the EDI Plan and this committee will need to think through what that town hall will look like.

5. Event planning (as per the [Committee Charter](#))

- i. Equity in Education
- ii. Supporting Women/Equity-Seeking Groups in Leadership
- iii. Other

The committee briefly discussed calling these projects not events. The committee will work offline to brainstorm ideas for these projects and will discuss this at the next committee meeting.

Action: J.J. Fenez will create three Google Docs, one for each project above, for members to add ideas to. A reminder will be sent on October 19, 2021 for members to review documents and add comments.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 11:08a.m.