



**MRFA**  
MOUNT ROYAL  
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

## ***MRFA 2025***

***Building an Equitable, Diverse, and Inclusive Association***

***First Annual Report***

***2022-05-12***



Dear Colleagues

I am pleased to convey the Association's first report on the Association's progress to become a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization, as identified in *MRFA 2025: Building an Equitable Diverse and Inclusive Association*.

As you can see from this first self-assessment, the Association has taken specific actions to make the required changes as outlined in the *MRFA 2025*. In particular, I highlight the new *Dependent Care Policy* and accompanying Dependent Care Fund, which we had in place for the MRFA-BoG Professional Development Days. We have also taken steps to make MRFA committee meetings as well as regular MRFA meetings more accessible. The commitments to EDI training for faculty agreed to in the new Collective Agreement are also important milestones as is creation of the EDI Taskforce, whose work will start soon.

Still, it's clear that the Association still has much work to do on many fronts and the next report will need to speak to those fronts. To be sure, there will be times when there will be a lag between implementing the Plan and seeing the impact of those changes. Future reports will be sure to highlight impacts whenever possible. Change is underway and we are actively exploring ways to ensure that we address other areas that you have identified as needing to be addressed. The Plan is, after all, a dynamic document and will need updates along the way.

In closing I want to thank the current members of the MRFA 2025 Working Group, all of whom have given much time and labour to completing the Plan and now to writing this report card. I want to express my appreciation for the past members of the Equity Review Taskforce and the past members of the MRFA 2025 Working Group, who laid the groundwork for this Plan in so many ways.

We know that the work to make a more equitable and inclusive Association and Mount Royal University is an on-going project. These annual reports will provide members with a way to recognize milestones and to celebrate achievements along the way. This journey can and, indeed should be one while arduous, also be one that brings moments of celebration too.

I look forward to sharing both the work and the celebrations with you.

Until next report,

Lee  
Lee Easton (he/him)  
President



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## **MRFA 2025**

*Building an Equitable, Diverse,  
and Inclusive Association*

*Intended to provide a pathway for the Association to achieve its goals as outlined in the MRFA Bylaws, the Plan's overarching goal is to create an organization that respects the dignity, rights, and beliefs of all Association members.*

### **Guiding Principles**

The Association commits to concrete actions that will result in the fullest inclusion of its members, with particular attention to those members whose voices and experiences have historically been absent from the Association, including (but certainly not limited to and not listed in any order of importance):

- Gender and sexual diverse individuals;
- Indigenous individuals;
- Individuals with disabilities;
- Neurodivergent individuals;
- Racially minoritized individuals;
- Refugees and new immigrants;
- Religious minorities;
- Socio-economically disadvantaged individuals;
- Women.

### **The MRFA 2025 Vision:**

***Acknowledgement and celebration.***

***Visibility and representation.***

***Equitable treatment and opportunities.***



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## **MRFA 2025**

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### **Five Key Interventions**

#### **0.0 Ensure Accountability**

The Association is committed to conducting cyclical organizational reviews with respect to all goals outlined in this plan. Immediate first steps include (a) developing a report to inform members annually about the Association's progress and (b) creating an EDI Policy

#### **1.0 Increase Representation**

Increase historically excluded members' engagement with the Association and representation on its committees and its executive.

#### **2.0 Increase Engagement**

Create, implement, and support inclusive, diverse, and equitable MRFA systems and structures.

#### **3.0 Prioritize Safety**

Strengthen the Association's working environment to prioritize safety for its members and staff.

#### **4.0 Build Member Capacity**

Build members' capacity to develop and implement EDI in the MRFA and across the university.

*The MRFA recognizes that each member of the Association uniquely embodies and inhabits multiple, simultaneous, and contextualized social locations and experiences and that, as such, various approaches are required to address all the Association's unique members and the continued awareness needed to acknowledge, respect, and support those members.*

**View the Plan, the 2022 Report, FAQs, and submit comments here:  
[mrfa.net/mrfa-2025/](https://mrfa.net/mrfa-2025/)**

## Foundations

### *Where did this plan come from?*

This plan has its origins in the MRFA Executive Board's 2020 Statement on Racism issued in the wake of George Floyd's murder and acknowledging police violence against Black and Indigenous people in Canada. In that statement, the MRFA Executive Board committed to a full review of the Association's By-laws, Policies and Procedures to ensure they were as inclusive as possible and did not foster discrimination.

In September 2020, the Executive Board established an Equity Review Taskforce, charged with examining those basic documents and they made a series of recommendations resulting in important changes to the Association's Bylaws as well as to an on-going revision of Association's policies.

As the review progressed, however, the Taskforce members saw that a more fundamental cultural change was required—change that would take time and a clear action-oriented plan to guide the work needed to transform the Association into a more open welcoming organization. With that goal in mind, the Taskforce wrote the first draft of MRFA 2025 with four proposed goals or interventions. The MRFA Executive Board approved those goals in June 2021 and directed the Working Group to consult with members about the draft Plan. The Plan was posted in June 2021 on the Association's website for member comment and suggestions.

Starting in September 2021, the MRFA 2025 Working Group continued refining the Plan. It reviewed members' feedback from the summer and then held consultations between October and December 2021. Representatives of the Working Group also met with the BIPOC Support Network and received feedback from the MRFA Diversity and Equity Committee. The Working Group reviewed all received feedback and, where appropriate, made revisions to the Plan. The Plan was presented to the MRFA Executive Board for approval. We launched the Plan on Mar 25, 2022 in an event that included representatives from the MRU Coalition.

I wish to thank all of those who took time to share their thoughts and expertise.

I know that some members are still curious about the Plan and its origins. Let me therefore take a moment to answer two frequently asked questions.

### **Why is this plan necessary?**

This plan is required in order to address the Association's past inadequacies and failures when dealing with the concerns of our members who hail from equity deserving groups or, more accurately, historically-excluded groups. The Plan's starting point is that the Mount Royal Faculty Association has not always been the inclusive, equitable and welcoming organization that we have imagined it to be. As an Association, we need to do better to make sure we hear the legitimate concerns our colleagues have expressed about being unheard, marginalized and treated unfairly. This Plan offers a road map to acknowledging (facing) that the Association has

deep connections to white, hetero-normative, patriarchal, ableist, male, colonial privilege (yes, that word) and to reorienting the Association to become more fully serving all of its members.

### **What does the plan offer?**

MRFA 2025 has major goals or interventions that will transform our Association over the next 4 years. The Plan is focused on accountability—it outlines concrete strategies and specific actions with implementation timelines. Over the next three years, the MRFA Executive Board will lead an organizational review to ensure the Association’s mission, vision and goals are congruent with our focus on equity, diversity and inclusion. We will be reviewing our organizational structure and activities, which will culminate in proposed changes to be effective in May 2023. The MRFA 2025 Working Group is also working on an annual report card format, which will provide members with a progress report on the Plan’s implementation. You will notice a number of actions are already accomplished (in green) or underway (underway.)

### **Where can I find the plan?**

MRFA 2025 can be found on the Association’s website ([mrfa.net/mrfa-2025](https://mrfa.net/mrfa-2025)). You will find there a FAQ page that provides some information about the Plan. This is a dynamic document so if you have questions or comments about *MRFA 2025*, you can submit them via the form on the MRFA 2025 webpage or address them to [office@mrfa.net](mailto:office@mrfa.net) or to [president@mrfa.net](mailto:president@mrfa.net). We anticipate making adjustments to the Plan as it unfolds.

## ***2021-2022 - Roadmap***

Here are the guiding principles that direct the MRFA's equity diversity and inclusion (EDI) efforts:

1. Accountability
2. Representation
3. Engagement
4. Working Environment
5. Member Capacity

## ***Stakeholder Engagement***

The Working Group endeavored to consult with members in a variety ways. Here is a list of the different groups and individuals that the MRFA 2025 Group consulted since September 2021 and whose voice we have tried to capture in the Plan.

- BIPOC Support Network
- MRFA Diversity and Equity Committee
- Dr. linda manyguns, Associate Vice-President
- Feden Abeda, MRU Office of Safe Disclosure
- Indigenous Faculty Group
- Open Consultations with the MRFA Membership were also held on October 26 and 27 and on November 1, 2021

## ***Data Gathering/Analysis***

An important factor in addressing equity, diversity and inclusion issues is ensuring that we have appropriate data to ground our actions. Here are some areas the Association is working to gather that data.

1. **Census overview** - this year we received a total of 320 responses to our annual Census. This is slightly down from prior years which we believe reflects both high levels of faculty workload and fatigue resulting from the high level of member engagement and stress during the bargaining period, which concluded only shortly before the census was distributed. That said, the Association has received roughly 250 self-identification forms from members to date and 127 members responded to the section of the census related to experiences at MRU. We will be analyzing the data from the census and will be reporting back on the results in Fall 2022.
2. **Increasing Response Rates**- The Board will work to make concerted, targeted efforts in Winter 2023 to increase response rates to the census, including responses to the self identification and new experiences sections, to ensure the Association has a more holistic understanding of our membership and their experiences.

3. **Grievances** - this year there are an unprecedented number of grievances and many of them related to harassment in the workplace. Work is being done to resolve these through internal processes before arbitration processes commence. Detailed accounting of all grievances is available in the Grievance Report. We are working to ensure better support of members who file grievances.
4. **Attendance at MRFA Events and Meetings**
  - a. Meetings - Online meetings saw attendance ranging from 34 members to 205. It is to be noted that the high attendance was due to the important matters being considered related to bargaining; however, we noted a general increase in all MRFA Regular Meetings from prior in-person meetings. Moving forward, the Association plans to continue to host hybrid meetings to enhance accessibility of MRFA Meeting. Attendance will be tracked in the Association's database. The first such hybrid meeting will be the AGM on May 13, 2022.
  - b. Events - The various events which were held in-person, online and hybrid format ranged from attendance as low as 5 to as many as 110. Attendance will be tracked in more detail moving forward so that this committee will be able to evaluate improvements resulting from interventions.
  - c. MRFA Faculty Center - the Faculty Association recently implemented controlled access for the faculty centre, which will enable us to gather baseline data on faculty centre use with which we can measure improvements moving forward.
5. Initiatives that intersect with the work of the MRFA 2025 Plan over the next year include:
  - a. JEDI focus on systemic racism
  - b. Systemic Racism/EDI Taskforce
  - c. EDI Training Taskforce
  - d. Pilot Project of Community Agreements at MRFA-BoG Professional Development Days

## ***Actions Taken***

1. Identify and reduce barriers to participation and representation in the MRFA
  - a. Engaged Committee Chairs in conversation about invisible and invisibilized labour with the goal—in 2022-23—of developing a revised Committee planning and reporting plan.
  - b. Revised the MRFA Census to collect EDI-focused data. Revised census implemented Winter 2022.
  - c. [MRFA Meeting Policy](#) reflects Universal Design principles.
  - d. Implemented online meeting technologies for hybrid meetings to increase engagement and access.
  - e. Piloting flexible meeting times.
  - f. Created a post-meeting follow-up mechanism for online and hybrid meetings.
  - g. Installed automatic doors to the Faculty Centre for mobility access.
  - h. Implemented an online food ordering system.

- i. Implemented recommendations from the Diversity and Equity Committee on providing food options that are more Inclusive and representative of cultural, religious, and health-based practices.
2. Champion EDI changes in the Collective Agreement
  - a. Faculty Workload Task Force established April 2022 towards reducing job precarity for contract faculty..
  - b. A representative of the Diversity & Equity Committee now included on the Long-Term Bargaining Goals Committee.
  - c. Review results of MRFA “Cultural Landscape Report” to better understand who is leaving MRU and why
  - d. Include precise references to groups during bargaining negotiations.
3. Increase access to EDI education and training.
  - a. 2020–2024 Collective Agreement provisions to jointly create EDI training
  - b. 2021-2022 MRFA Executive Board, Grievance Committee, and staff EDI training (12 hours of training in Fall 2021)
  - c. 2022-2023 Implementation of ongoing provision of annual training for all Executive Board Members, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) members, and Committee Chairs
4. Support faculty members with caregiving responsibilities in their tenure, retention, and promotion.
  - a. Created a [MRFA Dependent Care Policy](#)
  - b. Ongoing provision of Dependent Care Assistance Fund
5. Increase transparency and accountability within the MRFA.
  - a. Developing a draft internal [Complaint Policy](#) (currently [open for consultation](#))
  - b. Developed pilot of an Exit Questionnaire for MRFA Executive members and Committee Members (implementing in Spring 2022).
  - c. Develop and communicate processes for reporting incidents that take place within the Faculty Centre.
6. Track and address the impacts of COVID-19 for the next 4 years.
  - a. Revised the MRFA Census to collect EDI-focused data. Revised census implemented Winter 2022.
  - b. Preparing to address the effects of Long COVID on members
7. [Enhanced the Communication on EDI initiatives](#) on Campus
8. Piloted [Community Agreements](#) at the MRFA 2022 Retreat and provided for an on-site safe space resource

## ***Looking Ahead: 2022—2023***

Looking into the next academic year, we will be reporting on the specific steps envisioned in the Plan including (but not limited to):

- A review of the Association's mission, vision and values.
- a structural review of the Association's organization to ensure its alignment with the vision of inclusion and equity the Plan has advanced.
- Creation of an EDI Council will be an important part of this structural review.
- Review the MRFA 2022 Census to identify barriers that faculty from marginalized groups experience
- Integrate the MRFA 2025 Plan into the Association's on-going implementation of the union organizing model to develop solidarity

The MRFA 2025 Working Group will also continue its work next year, moving to become a monitoring and reporting group while the proposed EDI Council takes up moving the plan forward. We are also eager to establish the EDI training mandated in the new Collective Agreement. The JEDI Committee has established an EDI Taskforce and the Association will advocate for the rapid adoption of its recommendations. As we work to make the University a more inclusive workplace, we are eager to meet with the in-coming Association VP, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Moussa Magassa as he takes up the challenges of EDI at Mount Royal University itself. We will share this report with him and look for ways to work together.

## ***Acronyms***

SAFRO-Senior Administrative and Faculty Relations Officer currently [Chantelle Anderson](#)

BIPOC- Black, Indigenous and People of Colour Support Network

EDI- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

JEDI Committee- Joint Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the successor to Joint Equity and Diversity Committee (JDEC), established under Article 24 of the Collective Agreement

MRFA- Mount Royal Faculty Association