



A message from Lee Easton, MRFA President, and the MRFA Executive Board

Greetings colleagues and welcome to a new academic year! We hope your summer was productive and restful. This new academic year begins with many challenges and opportunities. This update gives you a brief overview of some of the bigger ones.

### **Challenges to a Safe and Healthy Workplace**

While many are pleased to be back to in-person classes, the MRFA is keenly aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has not ended and that there are also concerns about the monkeypox virus and its spread. The Executive Board takes both of these situations seriously. Since there remains a wide range of views about the best responses to the COVID virus, the Executive Board has appointed a COVID Advisory Group to help guide the Board in its responses on this issue.

Meanwhile, the Association strongly encourages faculty who are feeling ill and/or testing positive to stay home and work with their Chairs to address how to keep continuity in teaching. We also continue to press for CO2 testing in instructional spaces. Look for a detailed *COVID Bulletin* tomorrow which will provide you an overview of the Association's approach to COVID, including information about your rights as a worker under OHS legislation and under the Collective Agreement.

### **Work Towards a Pay Equity Settlement**

Thank you to the members who came to the [Pay Equity Town Hall](#) and shared their thoughts. As reported at the town hall, the Association believes that a fair settlement must address pay inequities for all full-time women faculty currently employed at MRU regardless of when they started. We also believe that the settlement must address the extent of inequity. . The University has proposed an individual salary review process that will enable those who still believe there is an inequity to pursue the issue further. The Executive Board has tasked the Negotiating Committee to work with the Administration to ensure a fair settlement by November 1, 2022. Should there be no settlement, the Executive Board will consider how best to move forward with a policy grievance.

### **Workload Taskforce Update**

The Faculty Workload and Appointments Taskforce has engaged Lyle Kanee to facilitate the taskforce's work over the next year. The taskforce members will meet with Mr. Kanee September 28 to determine the taskforce's specific tasks and timelines. This is the first major assessment of faculty workload since the 2007 Faculty Roles and Responsibilities Taskforce, whose recommendations provided the basis of creating the two work patterns (TS and TSS) as well as the current tenure and promotion system. The taskforce is also examining the role of senior lecturers and pathways to full-time appointments for contract faculty. The taskforce will report out in April 2023 and its recommendations will be discussed at the May 2023 AGM. Look for more updates this semester.

### **New Opportunities**

There are also many opportunities this year, especially with so many new members joining the Association. I am pleased to welcome Tashfeen Hussain as the MRFA Treasurer and AnneMarie Dorland as the MRFA Communications Officer as well as the other re-elected and returning Executive Board officers.

**New Faculty Welcome to MRFA**

Members of the Executive Board had the pleasure of hosting over 50 newly appointed full-time faculty at the Faculty Center August 15 and 16. We were also delighted to meet with 25 new contract faculty whom the Association also hosted in the Faculty Center to introduce them to the MRFA.

**Renewing the Association's Mission/Vision/Value**

At its June planning retreat, the Executive Board authorized a review of the Association's Mission, Vision and Values, which will inform the Association's on-going implementation of the engagement model and the commitments made in *MRFA 2025*. Members of the MRFA Executive Board have asked to meet with academic units over the Fall to gather input on the proposed Mission, Vision and Values. Once we have heard from you, the renewed Mission and Vision, the Executive Board will undertake an organizational review of the Association's committees and its resource allocations. We are interested to hear your thoughts!

**Equity Taskforce on Systemic Racism**

In April 2022, the Joint Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee (JEDIC) struck an Equity Taskforce with membership from all employee groups. This taskforce has begun its important work. The mandate of this taskforce includes making initial recommendations in October to address barriers to inclusion, including those related to systemic racism. The Taskforce is to produce a final report late in the year with final recommendations to the JEDIC. Two leads have been appointed: Professor Paul Varella and Eva Gonzalez.

There are many other issues and initiatives with which the Association is engaged. As your MRFA Executive Board, we are committed to representing members and to fostering a vibrant community. We are eager to get started! Welcome to the new academic year!

Sincerely

Lee Easton and the MRFA Executive Board