



MRFA Spring Retreat 2023

(Access the Online Sessions at meet.google.com/mps-fabi-vic)

Looking Backward/Looking Forward: Be the Change! is a compelling call to reflect and act, and the 2023 MRFA Spring Retreat program is filled with exciting sessions that promise ample opportunity for members to pause, connect with each other, challenge themselves, and learn from one another after a very busy year. Great thanks to all the faculty members from across the university who submitted proposals.

The annual Retreat is an exceptional occasion. It strengthens collegiality and facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration in scholarship, teaching and service. It helps us to focus on all the important things that make Mount Royal an outstanding university and that make the MRFA a strong and vibrant community.

The MRFA expresses its deep appreciation to the Board of Governors, the President's Office and the University Secretariat for the ongoing contribution of \$10,000 that they have committed to this Retreat. This sponsorship stretches back to the 1990s, and we are happy that the University continues to support our valuable annual event. It's an opportunity for gathering together as a community that we cherish now more than ever.

I'm also grateful for the members of the MRFA Professional Development Committee, who have worked tirelessly to organize this event and to assemble this excellent program. You'll notice PDC members still working hard during the Retreat as they greet you at the registration table and facilitate sessions, so don't forget to give them a little nod of appreciation.

As we endeavor to create a positive and generative space, I'll point your attention to the community agreements and related matters detailed in the following preface. I'm confident everyone will learn a lot at the Retreat, and I hope you can all relax a little, too. Perhaps I'll even see you on the dance floor!

Regards,
Andrea Phillipson
MRFA PDC Chair





Retreat Preface

The Association is committed to providing this opportunity for members to connect and engage in important dialogues and discussions in a positive and proactive way. What this means is that we need to consider our own positionality and be thoughtful in our approaches to ensure that we are all able to engage fully in conversations while minimizing harm and supporting each other when needed.

Community Agreements

As participants at the MRFA Spring Retreat we agree to the following Community Agreements:

- Recognize and seek to understand individual differences.
- Speak from our own experience and not invalidate others' experiences.
- Respect every person's right to withdraw consent to physical, mental, and/or intellectual interactions.
- Approach difficult topics with the aim of mutual understanding (not necessarily agreement).
- Recognize that our intention does not mitigate impact.

Facilitators will be present in each session throughout the retreat to provide support to speakers and attendees in adhering to these Community Agreements. If necessary, individuals may be asked to reframe their comments in alignment with the Agreements. If individuals engage in actions or words that are intentionally or unintentionally aggressive, bullying, or intimidating they may be asked to leave a session.

due to the number of attendees and sessions at the retreat, these Community Agreements will only be read in the first sessions of each day. Members with comments, questions or feedback related to community Agreements are welcome to submit them [here](#)

Expectations of Participants

We need to operate in an environment of safety to fully engage in potentially difficult conversations. The Association has set the following expectations to assist in creating a safer environment.

Retreat participants are expected to adhere to the Association's [Standards of Professional Conduct](#).

Supporting Each Other Through Difficult Conversations

Should a participant or moderator perceive that the community agreement has not been observed or a behaviour does not meet expectations, the moderator will draw attention to the situation and may

- Offer the participant an opportunity reframe their comments,
- Provide suggestions on how comments might be reframed, and
- Should the participant not take up these opportunities to address the situation, the moderator may ask the participant to leave the session.



Seeking Support When Needed

The program does include sessions which may give rise to difficult conversations; wherein, conversations may activate members and ongoing engagement in such conversations may be challenging in various personal, interpersonal, and emotional ways. Depending on your position, preference, and personal approach to these difficult situations, you may seek support at the retreat in the following ways:

- Continue to engage, respectfully, in the conversation in accordance with the Community Agreements and Expectations listed above and remind others, where needed, to abide by these same expectations. There will be facilitators in each session to assist in this.
- Disengage from the conversation and remove yourself from the space
 - We hope you may feel empowered to do so without concern for impact or perceptions: many of your colleagues in the space with you are allies and will support your decision to leave a space that is harmful to you
 - Refer to the [Member Support Form](https://bit.ly/3xF9CrS) (<https://bit.ly/3xF9CrS>) to connect with support on site or otherwise
- If you want to remain in the session but seek support or advice from a qualified resource, complete this [Member Support Form](https://bit.ly/3xF9CrS) (<https://bit.ly/3xF9CrS>). Our onsite support person, Kim Smith, will be monitoring this form and will respond promptly.
- After leaving the space seek out support from our on-site resource. She will be located in the Conference Boardroom just outside the conference lobby. If she is with another member when you try to meet with her, please email her at LabourRelations@bvcfa.com to arrange a time.

On returning to campus, members are reminded of these existing resources to which you may refer for support or advice if you have concerns:

- Office of Safe Disclosure - Request a consultation here: <https://bit.ly/3KXozZM>
- MRU's Confidence Line - <https://bit.ly/3rBkF11>
- Relevant Policies and Processes - <https://bit.ly/3JV8nH8>
- Homewood Health - <https://bit.ly/3rDir5j>
- MRFA Contacts:
 - MRFA Faculty Relations Officer - FacultyRelations@mrfa.net
 - MRFA Labour Relations Officer - LabourRelations@mrfa.net
 - MRFA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer - edi@mrfa.net

**We appreciate your participation in the annual MRFA Spring Retreat.
We hope that it is a positive experience for all attendees.**

*This program has been reviewed and approved by the MRFA Executive Board.
Questions about the program can be directed to president@mrfa.net*





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MRFA 2023 Kananaskis Retreat

Day 1 – April 24, 2023

8:30–8:40 - Community Agreements, Introductions, and Opening Prayer

8:50 – 9:50 - 2023 Retreat Keynote

(amended session abstract)

Racism at MRU - Challenges and Opportunities

Presented by: Members of the EDI Taskforce: Jebunnessa Chapola and Paul Varella & the Co-Chairs of the MRFA/MRU Joint Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee: Jacqueline Musabende and Stephen Price

Location: Silver/Bronze Room

Facilitator: Lee Easton

Format: Panel (60 minutes)

Representatives of the MRU/MRFA Joint Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (JEDIC) and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force will reflect on the work of both groups over the year and the Task Force's recommendations about how to address the institutional aspects of racism at MRU.

JEDIC established and supported the work of the task force which was composed of three support staff, three exempt/management staff and three faculty members.

Core objectives of the task force included the gathering of information and then making recommendations regarding racism at MRU. Information was sought through informal meetings with and formal requests for information with different MRU groups. including MRSA, MRFA, HR, HREB, the Office of Safe Disclosure, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, the Associate Vice President Academic, and the Associate Vice President Research and Community Engagement.

9:50 – 10:00am – Break

10:00 – 11:20 – Session 1

Climate Change as Moral Imperative: Creating a Carbon-Negative University

Presented by: Ranjan Datta, Brian Nichols, Andria Dawson

Location: Silver/Bronze Room

Facilitator: Peter Houston

Format: Panel (80 minutes)

CAUT has emphasized the need for faculty associations to do more to address climate change. In response, the MRFA has approved the creation of a member-directed working group on climate change and sustainability. Members of this committee will explore the moral urgency of doing more to address the climate breakdown and the many ways that Mount Royal can rapidly transition to more sustainable campus that absorbs more greenhouse gases than it produces. Attendees will learn more about what Mount Royal is already doing, initiatives that are underway, and changes they can support.





11:20 – 11:30am – Break

11:30 – 12:20pm - Session 2

A presentation from MRU Senior Administrators.

Presented by: Chad London, Lee Easton, and Michelle Logullo

Location: Silver/Bronze Room

Facilitator: Lee Easton

Format: Panel (50 minutes)

One of the strategic directions articulated in *Opening Minds and Changing Lives, MRU's strategic planning framework for 2021 to 2026* is to "strengthen diverse communities", and there is mention of commitments and opportunities to advance Indigenization and decolonization, and equity, diversity and inclusion, throughout the framework. Cross-institutional plans such as the Academic Plan, Indigenous Plan, and the EDI Plan, provide the opportunity to operationalize the commitments made in the high-level aspirational university plan. This panel will facilitate discussion about the tangible ways that MRU is addressing its commitments in these areas, with a focus on the critical role of faculty members and staff in advancing this work.

1:10 – 2:00pm – Session 3

From assigned readings to assigned listenings: ways to bring podcasts into the classroom

Presented by: Meg Wilcox

Location – Silver/Bronze Room **Facilitator:** Peter Houston **Format:** Individual Presentation (50 minutes)

Are you looking to introduce podcasts into your courses, but unsure of where to start? Have you already started using podcasts, but don't know how to take it to the next level? Meg Wilcox has been producing podcasts for a decade, and teaching podcasting at MRU since 2017, and in this session she shares how she incorporates podcasts in her courses, both as readings and assignments. From finding good podcasts and developing a great "listening lineup" to tools to help students engage critically with what they hear, this presentation will look at a variety of ways to use podcasting in the classroom and leave lots of room for your podcasting questions and queries. Meg will also share some early findings from a current SoTL research project that investigates how students engage with podcasts compared to traditional readings.

2:00 – 2:10pm – Break

2:10pm – 3:00pm – Session 4

Sharpening Our Understanding of Faculty's Role: Applying Gramsci's Model of Organic versus Traditional Intellectuals

Presented by: Marc Schroeder

Location – Silver/Bronze Room **Facilitator:** Karen Pheasant-Neganigwane **Format:** Individual (50 min.)

In an essay in his *Prison Notebooks*, early 20th century Italian philosopher, writer, and politician Antonio Gramsci laid out his now-well-known conceptual model of the organic versus traditional intellectual. Gramsci's insight was founded in the observation that, whereas all human beings are capable of and participate in intellectual activity, some in society are intellectuals by social function. His concern was therefore not with some romantic notion of





the intellectual but with the structural role played by certain categories of thinker in directing the work of society and its institutions. For Gramsci, no matter the ways in which some may flatter themselves, intellectuals tend to serve as the functionaries of a dominant class, thus playing a key role in the maintenance of social control. By contrast, for Gramsci, hope for a better world requires much more widespread, organic development of the capacity to play directive roles in our shared affairs. In this session, we consider this analysis in the context of academic workers at Mount Royal University. What are the implications for how we educate our students? What are the implications for how we collectively develop our ability to collegially govern our public university?

3:00 – 3:10pm – Break

3:10pm – 4:00pm – Session 5

An assessment of past and future possibilities for fostering a culture of academic integrity at Mount Royal University

Presented by: Amanda Williams

Location: Silver/Bronze Room

Facilitator: Teresa Merrells

Format: Workshop (50 minutes)

This presentation explores some of the wider broad strategies for cultural change provided by the International Center for Academic Integrity (ICIA, 2021), which include:

“re-envision[ing] pedagogy to include demonstrated competencies and learning outcomes so students have opportunities to practice, make mistakes, and learn from them”;

“ establish[ing] on-campus partnerships and collaborations to help faculty create positive pedagogical environments and promote integrity in the classroom”; and,

“re-evaluat[ing] pedagogy institution-wide to reduce incentives for academic dishonesty” (ICIA, 2021, pp.11-12).

This discussion will start with a personal reflection regarding how my practices as an instructor, and the coordinator of multi-section suite of courses, at Mount Royal has changed with these strategies as guideposts. I will then address future challenges requiring additional pivots such as Artificial Intelligence, social media groups, and shifting professional identities for educators.

Participants will then be invited to consider ways to personalize these strategies within their own specific disciplines; and how such shifts might contribute to creating more inclusive, equitable and accessible learning spaces across campus.

Day 2 – April 25

9:00 – 10:30am – Breakfast and Lightning Rounds

Location – Silver / Bronze Room **Facilitators:** Lee Easton and Peter Houston

Lightning Rounds: Hear from new MRU faculty members about their experiences and journeys which have brought them to MRU, their passions, their research endeavors, and their interests. In a time when many of us have not been able to meet with each other face-to-face, this will be a particularly great opportunity to get to know some of our colleagues. And, hear from some of our long standing members on their experiences as they prepare to transition into retirement.





10:30 - 11:00am

Getting to Know Other Faculty Positions

Presented by: Janet Miller, Jennifer Owen, Guy Obrecht, Richard Hayman, Andrea Phillipson

Location – Silver / Bronze Room **Facilitator:** Lee Easton **Format:** Panel (30 minutes)

Join with your colleagues for an opportunity to learn about different types of faculty positions (both contract and permanent) that encompass our association. Building a common understanding will support and connect us as a community while we move forward to advocate for all members' rights and improve the working conditions for all members.

11:00am – 12:20pm

The Future of Collective Bargaining at Mount Royal

Presented by: Kirk Niergarth, Pearl Herscovitch, Lee Easton, Anupam Das

Location: Silver/Bronze **Facilitator:** Khosro Salmani **Format:** Panel (80 min: 11:00am – 12:20)

MRFA negotiators past and present will reflect on the recent and anticipated future changes in the PSE collective bargaining landscape. Both internal and external factors will make the next round of bargaining significantly different than previous ones.

Externally, what will be the impact of the Ontario Superior Court's judgment that government-imposed mandates violate Charter rights? What will be the outcome of CAFA's legal challenge to the interference of the provincial government in the most recent round of agreements?

Internally, how will the new structure of the committees charged with negotiations change the process for the MRFA? How will bargaining relate to various internal committees and taskforces, including those on workload and systemic racism? Should the MRFA move from the "interest focused" process to a more conventional approach to collective bargaining?

Join MRFA current and former negotiators for a roundtable discussion that will cover these and other questions that will shape the MRFA's approach to bargaining in 2024.

Thank you for joining us for the 2023 MRFA Spring Retreat
This event continues to be an annual success thanks to your participation!

Please take a moment to complete the post event survey here:

surveymonkey.com/r/MRFARetreat2023

We look forward to seeing you all again next year.

Save the Date – April 29-30, 2024!

This program has been reviewed and approved by the MRFA Executive Board.
Questions or comments about the program may be submitted to president@mrfa.net

