



Department Liaison Roles and Responsibilities

The Department Liaison is an important service role and is a key role within the Mount Royal Faculty Association: Department Liaisons are an actively engaged group of Association members who inform their colleagues of MRFA meetings, initiatives and social events.

Liaising with Members and the Association:

Department Liaisons are expected to follow up, in a timely manner, on all communication requests received from a member of the Communications Committee or the Executive Board.

The means by which MRFA messages can best be communicated within departments is generally at the discretion of the Department Liaison. Should the Executive Board deem a message to the membership to be urgent, the method of communication may be prescribed by the Executive Board. Department Liaisons are expected to assist with communicating requests to the best of their ability and may refer to the tips provided below to assist in communicating with members. Department Liaisons are not to simply forward emails they receive from the Communications Officer or Executive Board.

Expectations:

- Attend MRFA Regular Meetings and the Annual General Meeting (if absent, enlist another member of the department to attend and report back).
- Attend four Departmental Association Representative meetings annually (usually to be scheduled in August, October, January, and March).
- Communicate findings of the MRFA meetings to the department (excluding content of in-camera sessions).
- Read the *Weekly Bulletin* and *Faculty Forum* and communicate key points to members.
- Liaise with the Communications Officer about communications strategy.
- Act as two-way communication between the department and the MRFA.
- Attend and encourage colleagues to attend MRFA Social and PD events when possible.
- Work to encourage support for the efforts of the MRFA, our collective agreement, and fellow faculty.
- Attend workshops related to increasing knowledge of labour relations and other matters relating to the MRFA.
- Educate self about the Collective Agreement.
- Direct members as appropriate when they have questions about the Collective Agreement.
- Promote the MRFA's union role in the workplace and encourage members to reach out to the MRFA for assistance as appropriate.
- Attend program, department, Faculty Council meetings (to be informed about what is happening in the workplace).



- Department Liaisons may occasionally be sent flyers to distribute to members. Due to the often time sensitive nature of such flyers, Department Liaisons are expected to put these in colleagues' mailboxes when they are received.

Required Meetings:

All Department Liaisons are required to attend the following meetings:

- An annual training session and meeting in August with the Communications Committee and members of the Executive Board;
- An update and report meeting in January with the Communications Committee and members of the Executive Board; and
- Two additional meetings annually, usually scheduled in October and March, to connect with other Liaisons and report to the Communications Committee.

Academic Responsibility Concern Form

As Department Liaison, one of your main roles is to be an information conduit between the Department you are in and the MRFA Executive Board. By being attentive to the Department culture and norms, Department Liaisons are expected to report violations of the Collective Agreement and/or administrative decisions that disadvantage union member(s). Examples might include increased workload trends, not filling vacant positions, and increased class size. To monitor and document these (and other) trends, Department Liaisons will assist members to complete an [Academic Responsibility Concerns \(ARC\) form](#). The ARC form may be completed to aid the Association in identifying developing trends/potential issues that are relevant at the Faculty and/or Department level.

Tips for Department Liaisons

Communication Tools and Methods

- Introduce yourself to members in your department to inform them of your role, and post your Department Liaison sign, provided by the MRFA, on your door.
- Be aware of and maintain a list of who is in your department. You can get an email list from your Chair or the MRFA and use this to send invitations through Google Calendar to important MRFA events.
- Mention events and meetings to your colleagues in passing when appropriate.
- Ensure MRFA posters are posted in common areas in your department and printed communications are distributed to members' mailboxes in a timely fashion.
- Put notices on your door related to the MRFA.
 - Regularly update notices related to the MRFA on a dry erase board on your office door. Department Liaisons can inquire with the MRFA office to provide a dry erase board for this purpose, and when Department Liaisons change, the dry erase board would be given to the new Department Liaison.



- The most effective way to communicate with many members of your department is to have a standing item on your department's meeting agenda. Inquire with your Chair to see if this can be accommodated.
 - The Communications Officer will send out a summary of MRFA highlights which Department Liaisons can refer to when speaking at Department Meetings.
 - Extra efforts will need to be made to communicate with contract faculty who do not attend regularly scheduled department meetings.
- In addition to all of the above strategies, if your department does not meet regularly, or if you are from a cognate department that is not located in the same area of campus consider the following:
 - Host a monthly open discussion regarding MRFA business on a certain day every month: book a room in the faculty centre or use a space in your department.
 - For departments with multiple disciplines that are not located in the same area, the MRFA could have two Department Liaisons. Department Liaisons are asked to identify a need for this if there is one.
 - Receive comments, questions and other input from members of your department and report these to the Communications Officer.

Emphasizing Benefits and Services Provided to Members

- Try to focus or phrase messages in terms of what the MRFA is doing for members.
- Take opportunities as they arise to remind colleagues of benefits, such as financial and other support, provided by the MRFA.
- Facilitate members' engagement while recognizing their time constraints. For instance, "if you can't attend the whole Regular Meeting, you can try to be there at ** time for the agenda item related to ***".