



MRFA Spring Retreat 2024

“Belonging, Building, and Connecting Communities” is a compelling call to reflect and act, and the 2024 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 and who will be facilitating recreational activities!

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.

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

Regards,

The MRFA Professional Development Committee





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. The statement recognizes that there are some who have been able to speak openly and freely without regard for consequences and that others have not been heard. We aim to create a respectful and inclusive space where people who have not been heard feel invited to speak while inviting those who have spoken to listen and to choose words judiciously and be mindful of their potential 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](#) 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](#). Our remote support person, Kim Smith, will be monitoring this form and will respond promptly.
- After leaving the space seek out support from Kim remotely. Please email her at LabourRelations@bycfa.com or call her at 403-542-8482.

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/3rDjr5j>
- 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





MRFA 2024 Kananaskis Retreat - Online Accessible Program

Join the Zoom Link here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89545026068>

Day 1 – April 29, 2024

9:00 – 9:30 | Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, and Opening Prayer

MRFA President, Lee Easton, will provide opening remarks and will welcome Alvin Manitopyes who has graciously agreed to open the retreat with a prayer and smudge.

“Alvin is of Plains Cree and Anishnawbe ancestry, a registered member of the Muskowekwan First Nation of Saskatchewan, Canada. He has experience sharing his extensive knowledge of traditional teachings, culture, history, healing practices and spirituality at wellness and environmental conferences and workshops for Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences throughout North America” ([Keepers of the Water](#)). This will be the second year that Alvin has shared his culture at the retreat and we express our gratitude for his contribution.



9:30 – 11:00am | Keynote - Cultivating Connections at MRU and Beyond

The keynote will focus on building and supporting connections between MRU and local communities. This panel will highlight the impact faculty members have beyond the classroom, emphasizing the invaluable relationships between members of our academic community and the communities we serve. The panel features a diverse array of speakers, each bringing a unique perspective to the discussion:

- *Richard Gregory*, Contract Faculty in the Department of Child Studies and Social Work, will speak on "Teaching in Local Communities and Contract Faculty Communities;" specifically, considering the outreach and impact that faculty can have beyond the classroom, especially within local communities.
- *Yasaman Amannejad*, Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Computing, will address the critical theme of "Building and Supporting Student Communities" and how faculty play a pivotal role in shaping and nurturing student communities within the academic environment.
- *Jaime Waucaush-Warn*, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities, will delve into the intersection of "Community Building through Indigenizing and Connections to Land" and how explorations of art on campus can illuminate the broader connections that exist between MRU, our communities, and our history.
- *Mirjam Knapik*, Associate Professor in the Counselling department, will explore the theme of "Building Faculty Communities." With insights into the dynamics of faculty collegiality and the role these community bonds play in the broader success of our academic community.

This keynote session will, also, provide an interactive space for attendees to share their experiences in building and supporting communities both on campus and locally. We hope this session will inspire, engage, and foster an enhanced understanding of the impact that faculty members have in collectively shaping the community experience at MRU.





11:10 – 12:30pm | Session 1

The Development of an Engaged Association: Creating a Community Prepared to Champion Collective Excellence

Presented by: Lee Easton (80 minute Presentation - **Hybrid**)

Location: Mount Kidd Ballroom **Facilitated by:** Lee Easton

The outgoing president of the Mount Royal Faculty Association will share insights on developing an engaged community poised to champion collective excellence. Key points include crafting a strategic vision, promoting inclusive leadership, fostering a culture of collaboration, navigating challenges, sharing success stories, and preparing for future leadership. Join us for a concise exploration of practical strategies and lessons learned in building a vibrant and united academic association.

1:30 – 2:00pm | Session 2

Engaging a Community of Practice in Curricular Redesign

Presented by: Breda Eubank, Jocelyn Taylor, Andrea Phillipson, Nadine Van Wyk, Mark Lafave (30 minute presentation – **Hybrid**) **Location:** Mount Kidd A **Facilitated by:** Teresa Merrells

Curriculum redesign should not occur from a top-down, outside-in approach. Rather, curriculum redesign must be developed as part of a community of practice to bring about real change. Therefore, Wiles & Bondi (1984) designed a systematic approach to curricular redesign that involves six steps: 1) Identifying the need for change; 2) Information gathering; 3) Review overall course goals; 4) Development of the course and its instructional strategies, and implementation; 5) Evaluation of the redesigned course; and 6) Dissemination. We will outline how we have created a community of practice and adapted these six steps in our journey of redesigning the first-year core course HPED 1040: Wellness & the Student: From Personal Health to Community Action. Lessons from this session can be applied to all curricular redesign.

2:10pm – 3:00pm | Session 3

Your Association: Your Contributions Create the Campus Community You Want!

Presented by: Brenda Lang, Lee Easton, Liza Choi, and Marty Clark (50 min. panel - **Hybrid**)

Location: Mount Kidd A **Facilitated by:** Lee Easton

Make your service count! Through your contributions to MRFA committees you help to build the campus community in which you, your colleagues, and your students can thrive! While serving on MRFA committees, contract and full-time faculty work with colleagues to champion collective excellence in teaching, scholarship and community engagement. Our work is collaborative and grounded in equity, diversity, and community. We are united in our commitment to upholding the highest of standards for post secondary education, celebrating the power of collegial governance, advancing the rights of our community, and advocating for a better future. In this session, you will hear about members' experiences in serving on Association committees and learn of the many benefits your service provides for you individually and to the broader MRFA and MRU communities.





3:10pm – 4:00pm | Session 4

Almost Halfway! Preparing for your Mid-Term Tenure Evaluation

Presented by: Kevin O'Connor, Michael Ata, Nathaniel Wagenaar, and Rachael Pettigrew (50 - Hybrid)

Location: Mount Kidd A

Facilitated by: Michele Wellsby

This session is geared towards faculty in year three of the tenure-track process. In this session, a panel of department chairs and colleagues who have recently completed their year three evaluation will share their perspectives and experiences. Topics covered include how to prepare your year three dossier, expectations towards tenure at the mid-term meeting, and what to expect in the meeting generally. The goal of the session is to make the midterm evaluation process more streamlined by allowing tenure-track faculty to become more informed about the process in a personable manner. The session is envisioned to start as a presentation, but end as a collegial discussion between panelists and tenure-track faculty.

Day 2 – April 30

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

Location – Mount Kidd Ballroom

Facilitators: Lee Easton and Chi Dara

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. This is a great opportunity to get to know more about some of our newest colleagues.

10:40 – 11:30pm | Session 5

You've got tenure! Now what?

Presented by: TBD

(50 minute presentation - Hybrid)

Location: Mount Kidd A

Facilitated by: Lee Easton

Congratulations, you achieved tenure/promotion! Years of hard work have paid off and you should be proud of your accomplishment. That's what you were aiming for in your career, right?

But what now? What other opportunities are there for you to share your experience, expertise and knowledge to benefit students, colleagues, and the university?

This session is designed to support faculty post-tenure and post-permanency to better understand the variety of options available to them moving forward once they have achieved these milestones.

Participants will hear from their colleagues about what other opportunities might exist for them as they continue in their careers at MRU. Whether you are looking for some change, thinking of how you might give back for the support you received, or wanting to pay it forward to others who are on a similar path, this session offers a chance to learn more about the variety of opportunities that exist within our community post-tenure/promotion. Designed as an interactive conversation and a space to ask questions and hear ideas, you will leave with a better understanding of the multitude of possibilities that can be explored for faculty who have achieved tenure and promotion.





11:40 – 12:00pm | Session 6

Cultivating Inclusive Nursing Education: A Two-Decade Exploration of the EAL Nursing Student Support Program and its Impact on Sense of Belonging and Cross-Cultural Understanding

Presented by: Liza Choi (20 minute presentation - delivered remotely - **Hybrid**)

Location: Mount Allan A **Facilitated by:** Chi Dara

Grounded in two decades of secondary data, our research study builds upon the foundational work of Choi and the EAL* Nursing Student Support Program, aiming to contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive society through a nuanced exploration of the program's impact on a sense of belonging and cross-cultural understanding.

*EAL includes “international students, newcomers (with permanent residency status or recent Canadian citizens), Canadian-born individuals who identify strongly with their family of origin,” and people of colour (Choi, 2023).

1:00pm – Finish | Session 7

More than Good Intentions: Developing a culture of accountability at MRU

Presented by: Milena Radzikowska (80 minute session and discussion - **Hybrid**)

Location: Mount Kidd A **Facilitated by:** Michele Wellsby

In this cooperative, interactive session, we will begin by sharing the ways that meaningful, positive change has been manifested within MRU in becoming a more equitable and inclusive place to work and learn, then explore additional and alternate methods towards building a more accountable institution.

Thank you for joining us for the 2024 Spring Retreat

This event continues to be an annual success thanks to your participation!

Please take a moment to provide your feedback on the Retreat here:

surveymonkey.com/r/MRFARetreat2024

We look forward to seeing you all again next year.

April 24-25, 2025

