

## Professional Affairs Committee Report

### 2011-2012 Annual Report

I am pleased to submit this annual report for your perusal at the successful completion of this academic year as your 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. In fact, this is the final year of my second 2- year term in this position. So first and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the expression of your trust by electing me first in 2008 and then re-electing in 2010. In return, I have done my best to serve the emerging professional needs of the faculty arising from our continuing transition from a college to an undergraduate university by chairing the Professional Affairs Committee (PAC) and serving ex-officio member on the Diversity Committee. When I started, PAC was a brand new committee with no precedent to follow. With your cooperation, hard work by PAC members and the Executive's support, today it is a successful and fully functional committee of the MRFA.

The Professional Affairs Committee (PAC) has mainly focused on those emerging professional needs of the faculty which are generally not addressed adequately by other avenues in the university. PAC has worked earnestly to foster professional excellence in the Mount Royal Community. PAC's complete mandate is given below.

“The Professional Affairs Committee (PAC) shall recommend, develop and offer opportunities for faculty development and training in the areas of academic governance, parliamentary procedure, faculty leadership, conflict resolution and mediation, labour relations, and professional conduct.

The committee shall foster professional excellence within the MRFA community. Professional excellence encompasses the ability to model leadership behaviours and collegiality, to take an active role in academic governance, and to act in accordance with the MRFA bylaws and the processes established in the Collective Agreement.”

In the time I have served on PAC, structurally it has consisted of eight (8) members: the Second Vice-President (Chair) and First Vice-President (ex-officio); 3 members (2 tenured) were elected for 2 years in even-numbered years, 3 members (2 tenured) were elected for 2 years in odd-numbered years. The current membership of the current PAC is given in a table which can be found at the end of this report.

In light of the framework of its mandate, PAC's activities for this year included the following:

- On September 20, 2011, PAC co-sponsored with the Social Committee a social event titled “Who's New at the Zoo..U to introduce new faculty to the MRFA. The event took place at the faculty Centre. Prior to the program, PAC encouraged new faculty to come, and older faculty to bring new people from their departments to this program. There was a good turnout at the program and PAC Chair also gave a brief presentation welcoming new faces and met a number of new faculty members. This program was a great example of two MRFA committees working together in harmony to serve the membership.
- On September 6, 2012, PAC organized an expert-based workshop on peer collaboration and review. The workshop was co-sponsored by MRU's Provost and Vice President Academic. Dr. Dan Bernstein from the University of Kansas (KU), an internationally renowned scholar on the chosen topic, was the presenter at this workshop. A booklet containing useful information was especially prepared and distributed to the participants. MRU President Dr. David D Docherty also welcomed the presenter at the workshop lunch.

PAC members worked very hard in collaboration with the presenter over an extended period of time to make this workshop relevant and useful to our members in the current MRU context. Based on the evaluations, the workshop was a great success. Majority found the workshop useful, timely and relevant and they would recommend it to others.

As the process of promotion to full professor was in its infancy when this workshop took place, a dinner meeting with the presenter was organized the day before the workshop at the request of the

Provost and VP Academic. The meeting was attended by MRFA President and PAC Chair along with the Provost and the VP Academic and resulted in some very useful discussion for the institution.

- On December 9, 2011, a very successful workshop on the Robert's Rules of Order was organized at the Moot Court. The workshop was facilitated by Robert James, PRP and had a special focus on GFC. This was the fourth annual workshop organized on this topic by PAC. Building on past experience and suggestions of the faculty, this was a highly interactive workshop based on Mount Royal needs and scenarios. To enhance the usefulness of the workshop, the format of the workshop was decided after consultation with Dr. Lee Easton, Speaker of the MRU GFC. Based on evaluations, the workshop was very well received by the faculty who attended the workshop. The workshop was open to Administration as well. Associate Vice-President, Academic and Associate Dean of Arts also attended the workshop. Gerry Cross, MRFA President, also spoke briefly at the workshop about the importance such workshops. The workshop was co-sponsored by the MRU Provost & VP Academic's office.
- Most of what the MRFA accomplishes as a professional organization is the result of involvement of its members with the MRFA. Therefore, it is essential to give new faculty an opportunity to connect with and get to know the MRFA committees. To serve this purpose, at the time of writing of this report, a program titled A Committee (Af)fair is planned for Thursday, May 3, 2012 at the Faculty Centre. Though the program is of a special interest to new faculty but it is open to all faculty members. This program is a regular yearly feature of PAC. Last year this program was attended by about sixty faculty members and was found very useful by the participants based on the evaluation conducted at the end of the program.
- MRFA's fiscal year is different from MRU's academic year. If I were to report on the basis of the fiscal year, I would like to include two important workshops dealing with the dynamics of human interaction in the university setting that PAC organized in May 2011. The first was an all day workshop titled Communication, Conflict, and Change in the Academic Workplace: Pattern for Success in an evolving Landscape which took place on May 5, 2011. This workshop will be presented by Bill Wartens from Wayne State University, USA. The second workshop titled Why can't we all just get along? Incivility and hostility within academia was presented by Loreleigh Keashly from Wayne State University, USA and took place on Monday, May 9, 2011. A lot of work went into preparation of these workshops. Both workshops were open to both faculty and administration. Based on evaluations, both workshops were very successful. Both workshops were co-sponsored by the MRU Provost & VP Academic's office.
- In early 2012, PAC conducted a survey regarding specific interests in a variety of topics for workshops and presentations which could be organized solely by PAC or in collaboration with other MRFA committees like the Professional Development Committee. More than 200 faculty members completed the survey. In response to the results of the survey, PAC is organizing a Round Table Discussion titled Community, Collaboration & Cooperation on the three most chosen topics on April 30, 2012. The three most chosen topics are: Meaning of Professional Excellence in a University, Challenges in Assessing Students, and the Paradox of Research: Challenges to Teach and Research in the MRU model. The discussion on these topics will be moderated respectively by Dr. David Sabiston, Dr. Stefan Sikora and Professor Deborah Smillie.

As 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, following is brief account of some of my other activities:

- I am ex officio member of the Diversity Committee (DC). A report of the Diversity Committee has been submitted separately by its Chair Ricardo Hoar.
- Participated in the MRFA Executive meetings with the Dean of Arts Candidates in Feb. 2012
- Participated in the MRFA Executive meeting with the search consultant for the VP University Advancement

- Participated in the Association Governance Workshop on January 5 and 6 at MRU. This workshop was arranged by the MRFA and delivered by CAUT. This was one and a half day workshop on building a stronger association. Major topics included the roles and responsibilities of members of the Executive, negotiations, committee structure, and engaging the membership
- Served as the MRFA delegate to the ACIFA Professional Affairs Committee and participated in its meetings in Calgary and Edmonton
- Served as a member on the ACIFA 2012 Award for Innovation in Teaching Application Review Committee

I would like to close by extending my sincere thanks to all members of the Professional Affairs Committee, the Diversity Committee, the MRFA executive, and Gerry Cross, MRFA President for their support. I also would like to reiterate my warmest thank to all MRFA members for their trust and support. The report would remain incomplete without thanking the administrative staff (Chantelle and Darlene) for their warm, consistent and competent support in many different ways.

I hope you find this report helpful.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Qasim Syed

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President

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