

MRSAY! Newsletter December 2015 EDITION

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Presidents Message

Happy holidays from Baset!

On behalf of your colleagues on the Executive Team and all the MRSA committees, we would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year. It has been a busy year for all of us.

As the semester wraps up and 2015 comes to a close, we get ready to take a break to enjoy time with family and friends. It is also a time for self-reflection personally and professionally, to appreciate the work that we do at MRU, empowering students to shepherd our planet in the future.

Merry Christmas and all the Best for 2016!

Our Executive Assistant, Christine Pepper

We welcome Christine to her new role at MRU. Drop by the MRSA office anytime to say hi. She has settled into her demanding role with an ease that has surprised us all, and we are extremely grateful for her easy going manner and vast knowledge. It is a challenging role to be sure, as the Executive(s) change yearly but the Executive Assistant does not!



I joined Mount Royal Staff Association as Executive Assistant in June 2015. Previously I worked as a Student and Program Liaison within the Faculty of Continuing Education and Extension for 5½ years.

I enjoy the collegial environment at MRU, being part of a community that supports, encourages and celebrates the achievements of people who study and work here.

AGM was held Nov 18

Staff enjoyed cookies and coffee while listening to our accountant, Deborah Walker review our 2014/2015 budget. In her opinion our financial statements presented fairly in all material respects as of June 30, 2015. Some lively conversation occurred around EDT funding and bursary allocation. Committee members were introduced and mentioned some of the work that they are engaged in. This year we had a wonderful door prize-- 2 tickets worth \$107.00 to Jubilations Dinner Theatre won by Crystal Koch. We hope that she and her guest enjoyed a wonderful time attending "Modern Family Vacation" on Sunday Dec 6.

MRSA Executive team hosted MRFA Executive team

Your colleagues on the MRSA Executive team hosted MRFA Executive colleagues on November 24th over lunch (12:30-2:00). This initiative started a few years ago as an informal process; however, there is intentional thinking and efforts to maintain and strengthen the relationship. There are many common interests among Executives for both Associations. For example, maintaining and strengthening the dialogue around advocacy and Coalition work with SAMRU; also, sharing some common items during Negotiations.

We are planning to continue this in the future, the MRFA Executive team will host the MRSA Executive team in the Winter semester.

MRU Distinguished Awards Nomination Deadline January 31, 2016.

This is an opportunity for all of us to nominate one of our colleagues: staff, faculty and management. If you know of a colleague who deserves this recognition, please take some time and collaborate with others to submit an application. It might be the colleague that you nominate whom ends up winning the award and that is a great feeling.

There are several ways to thank and appreciate your colleagues who assist you to do your work and who go above and beyond their duties. This is an opportunity to nominate an individual or a team for the Employees' Awards; we hope that you take the time to nominate a colleague or a team.

Employee Awards Ceremony – Save the Date June 9, 2016.

Mount Royal Employee Giving Campaign

Join fellow MRU employees Raphael Slawinski, Patricia Kostouros, Baset Zarrug and Francesca Simon in supporting our students in their educational pursuits. The Mount Royal Employee Giving Campaign is the University's annual fundraiser where MRU employees have the opportunity to further impact the personal and professional growth of our students. The easiest way to give is through MyMRU. Click on the Donate Now button on the right hand side of the homepage and start your pledge today.

If you decide to give to this campaign and you are not sure where your donation can be given, you could dedicate your donation to MRSA scholarship and/or bursary which will add to what the MRSA donates.

A pledge of only \$8.35 per month can make an incredible difference in a student's life! If you have any questions or need assistance with giving please contact Whitney Struthers at wstruthers@mtroyal.ca or 403.440.5536.

Mental Health

One of the largest—and largely unspoken—challenges in the workplace today is dealing with mental health

issues. The Mental Health Commission of Canada estimates that the consequences of mental illness cost employers upwards of \$20 billion a year. That's not to say that there aren't resources available to help employees—Mount Royal has an extensive support system, including the Employee Family Assistance Program and Wellness Services. But the best services in the world are moot if people are hesitant to access them.

The stigma that exists around mental health is cited as the largest barrier for those seeking help. It's common for employees to believe that they will be treated differently if they ask for help, that gossip will spread, or that their condition will be trivialised. Often they become alienated, feel shameful of their condition, or believe they don't deserve help. This is why the MHCC—along with the Department of Defense—has developed The Working Mind, a seminar that helps employees understand how pervasive this stigma is, and how they, as a community, can overcome it.

Mount Royal is already ahead of the game. Community is one of the things we do best, as can be seen through campus wide initiatives like the Big Bike or Season of Caring. After taking this course myself, I understand how it can build our capacity as a community and help us to start the conversation about mental health and how deeply it impacts us.

We're not all medical practitioners or trained counsellors. It's not our role to provide treatment for mental illnesses. But we can create a culture of support and trust where people are comfortable—even encouraged—to ask for help when they need it. The road to recovery can begin with something as simple as knowing you have someone to talk to.

If you're interested in taking The Working Mind course, contact Rhonda Anderson at rlanderson@mtroyal.ca

~James Parsons, Alumni Relations

President's Holiday Reception Dec 16

MRU's three Presidents are once again hosting their annual Holiday Reception. It will be held on Wednesday December 16 from 2-4 pm in the Ross Glen Hall. Of course there is only one MRU President David Docherty, but MRU also has the Faculty Association President, Marc Shroeder as well as our very own MRSA President, Baset Zarrug. This is always a highlight for staff as it is a wonderful time to meet and chat with the Presidents, and to enjoy great appetizers and chat with our co-workers from all over MRU.

MRSA PD Day: Save The Date!

Confirmed for May 10, 2016 Stay tuned for more exciting information on the location and theme in January!

Academic Plan Update

All members of the MRU community are strongly encouraged to make time to attend the Academic Plan Consultation Sessions which have been scheduled for December 9 and 10. This document will directly impact all MRU students and employees and it is important that you provide your input in this process. The plan needs your input because it will impact the academic and organizational trajectory for the future for all of us.

MRU President Informal Chats: 10-11 in our Staff Lounge

Be sure to join us for coffee and conversation with David Docherty. Bring a colleague or two, the coffee and treats are on us!

Friday, December 18, 2015 Come and join us for some fun times as our lounge is very festive indeed! We have some yummy cookies from Subway, fresh coffee and perhaps David may dress as Santa? LOL-we will strive for that!

All in attendance will be eligible to **win** one of our 2 gorgeous poinsettias. (Must fill in the draw in person, but you do not have to be in attendance to win as we know staff come and go as time permits.)

Shown below are both the MRSA President Baset Zarrug and MRU President David Docherty. during the November staff chat. David is such a huge MRU Cougars supporter, he won the bid on a special Cougar jersey last year and is proudly wearing it.



Staff lounge:

Come visit our staff lounge to enjoy some treats and various changing decorations. We now have our lovely Christmas tree up thanks to Baset, Christine and Karen, with lots of beautiful decorations around the lounge for all staff to enjoy.



Karen's Korner

Where, oh where, has the year gone??? Do you remember as a child that a year used to last a lot longer? It took forever for Santa to come when I was a child. My fear was always that I had not been good enough to get his gift under the tree. Christmas Eve was always SO darn hard as I could not get to sleep because of the excitement within.

Well one year it happened. My brothers and I discovered the hidden unwrapped gifts in my parent's room. (OK—in my defense-I was the innocent youngest one!!! I got pulled in as my brother came running out with a huge Teddy Bear that both of my brothers knew was for me.) As we all know, children have to meet a certain standard—ie. not naughty! As happens to all naughty children- we were caught and told in no uncertain terms that there would be no Christmas that year. OMG!!! We were devastated! Santa wasn't coming? I totally believed in Santa and was the best little girl from then on –as were my brothers- not easy to do at our young ages. I think we were probably 7,8,& 9. Somehow, Santa was happy enough with our good behavior that he DID actually come on Christmas Day that year. A fun memory indeed.

I wish you all new, good and special memories this year. No matter what your belief, we will all be off

during the Christmas holidays, and I do hope we all take this time to reflect on our past year, make new resolutions and come back happy and ready to take on 2016 with gusto.

Merry Christmas everyone

See you all next year

Karen Hiebert

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