

MRSAY! Newsletter –May 2015

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PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS AND VOTING!

Dear Colleagues,

I am sure you are all aware of the upcoming provincial election occurring on **Tuesday, May 5th**, 2015, to elect an MLA who will best represent and serve us.

As a citizen of this province, a member of your community, a member of the MRSA and an employee in the Post Secondary Educational system, this is a great opportunity for you to express your democratic rights and freedom.

Many of us ask different types of questions, make comments or present arguments: why should I vote? It is only one vote! My vote doesn't count! or Who cares!

There are many privileges that we experience when we live in Canada and one of them is the ability to vote to elect a government; sometimes we take many of these rights for granted.

Let me tell you why you should vote! I grew up and finished high school in a dictatorship system where I did not have any rights or freedom. Even though I was young (almost 18) and had just started to understand life, I could feel the pressure, the intensity and the unjust that accompanied the dictatorship system:

-I did not have the right to vote to elect the government;
-I did not have the freedom to talk about the government;

- I did not have the freedom to constructively criticize the government;
- I did not have the freedom to engage in conversations with my peers without fearing that I might say the wrong thing and I might be arrested;
- I could not walk out of my home without carrying my ID as I could be stopped and asked to present my ID.
- Family members and friends were not able to trust each other and everyone feared everyone else;
- _ People lived in fear not knowing when and if ever they would see a day when they felt fearless!

Let me tell you why you should vote! In the last couple of months, you might have heard and read about people who are boarding unsafe boats from Northern Africa attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea in the hopes that they reach southern Europe. These people put their lives and the lives of their families in danger. These people take these high risk journeys so that they may land at a place that may give them the chance for freedom, an opportunity to be part of a democratic process, and a better life. These people take these high risk journeys so that they have the ability to express their rights and freedom; the freedom and the right to vote are given to you once you become a Canadian Citizen, as I did.

This is an opportunity for you to exercise your rights to elect your government, do not let this occasion pass you by; it is time for you to educate and inform yourself and then make an informed decision. So I encourage you to vote on Tuesday, May 5th, 2015.

Currently, there are nine (9) registered political parties in Alberta which are required to provide updated registration information to Elections Alberta as changes occur. The following information is updated as received from the political parties. Here are the political parties:

Alberta First Party	
Alberta Liberal Party	http://www.albertaliberal.com/issues
Alberta New Democratic Party	http://www.albertandp.ca/
Alberta Party	http://www.albertaparty.ca/betterway
Alberta Social Credit Party	http://www.socialcredit.com/
Communist Party - Alberta	http://www.comunistparty-alberta.ca/
Green Party of Alberta	http://greenpartyofalberta.ca/platform/
Progressive Conservative	https://www.pcalberta.ca/plan
Wildrose Party	http://www.wildrose.ca/policies

Source: <http://www.elections.ab.ca/public%20website/603.cfm>

MRSA Professional Development Day May 14--last chance to register

There are still a few spots open for our first Professional Development Day in 2 years!
A "tab" on the www.mrustaff.ca website has been created to keep you informed about the PD Day in May. Check it out!.



MRSA General Meeting:

The Mount Royal Staff Association will be holding a General Meeting (GM) on **Thursday, May 21, 2015** **in the Lincoln Park Room (J 301)**.

The meeting will begin at **11:30 am** and conclude at or before **1 pm**.

Human Resources, Managers, Deans, Chairs and Supervisors have all been notified of the GM date and have been requested to encourage MRSA members to attend the meeting.

The GM will be an opportunity to meet the new MRSA Executive, to review the MRSA 2015-2016 Budget and other pertinent MRSA business. Please come join us and feel free to bring your lunch along.

Thank you for taking the time to support the MRSA initiatives.

MRSA Elections

As mentioned in the email sent out to all staff on April 24, all of the Executive positions were filled due to acclamation. We are excited to welcome our new team and will be proud to introduce them at the General Meeting on May 21st at 11:30 in the Lincoln Park Room. We have some new faces joining the team and are eagerly awaiting their input and ideas as we move forward. We will be having a full day of planning on June 25 with the new and previous executive. It will be a great day of meeting each other, learning new roles and starting to begin strengthening the new team as we prepare for their new roles starting officially on July 1.

We also filled all of our outstanding Committee spots and are looking forward to welcoming new faces.

MRSA Employee Survey

The MRSA Executive Board invites you to take part in the MRSA Employee Work Environment Survey. A link to the survey was emailed on April 24th. The results from the survey are to be used to evaluate overall work environment, current workplace conditions and mood of the membership. This survey will be used as a basis for research, and as such, a report will be created and shared with the MRU community. In future, the survey will be sent annually and used as a repository of data for negotiations and other statistics. Your views are important to us and we hope you will share them in this online survey.

The survey requires about 10 minutes of your time, and will explore your experiences as a staff member at MRU. The study findings will provide information about work engagement, work environment, relationships between staff and department supervisors/managers/deans/chairs, career development and the MRSA. To date, 48% of the membership has taken part in this survey!

Collective Agreement - Did you know?

Article 28.7

Spouses and Dependants of Employees shall be eligible to enrol at 50% of the charge in any non-credit course offered by the University, subject to the approval of the Dean of the Faculty of Continuing Education and Extension (exclusions may apply), The University reserves the right to request proof of Spousal or Dependant status from the Employee.

A very personal and meaningful letter from your MRSA President Baset Zarrug:

May at a Glance:

May 1-PD day registration closes
May 1-Work environment survey closes
May 5-Alberta election
May 5-Stakeholder Management course
May 11--Goodlife Fitness Health & Wellness Leadership Summit
May 14-MRSA PD Day
May 18-Victoria Day..MRU closed
May 20-NEO
May 20-Picnic in the Park-Big Bob's BBQ
May 21-MRSA GM
May 25-Board of Governors Meeting
May 27-Mental Health First Aid course
May 28-EAD--Employee Appreciation Day
May 29-Spring EDT application closes.

New Employee Follow-up

If you are fairly new, you may remember attending a NEO within the first month or so of starting at MRU. If you have not yet attended one, the next one is being held on May 20. This is a wonderful way to become orientated to the MRU community and to also meet some of the MRSA executive.

As a follow-up, we then send out email invites to staff who have recently completed their 6 month probation. Members of the executive meet with staff in our Staff Lounge and enjoy some coffee and treats. It is just an informal way to welcome you again to the MRSA and answer any questions you may have about us.

EDT Reminder

Now is the time for employees wishing to apply for the EDT (Education, Development and Training) funding to do so. The Spring semester opened on April 15 and will close on May 31 for all courses starting May 1-June 30. Check out the www.mrustaff.ca/appliedt for all guidelines and FAQ's. Rule of thumb is if you are taking any workshops, personal/professional development course or MRU recreation courses, you may be eligible for funding.

Farewell and Thank You from Kathy Homer

It is with mixed emotions that I announce my departure as the Administrative Assistant to the MRSA. Even though I will miss my colleagues, I am looking forward to starting a new phase of my career. I will be moving into the Governance Assistant role within Mount Royal on May 25 and will be working with the Provost and Vice-President Academic, the General Faculties Council and its committees.

I have been in this role with the MRSA for almost eight (8) years and I learned a great deal and worked with many wonderful people. I can only wish that my new role will give me such rewarding experiences and supportive friends.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for making my time with the MRSA a truly enjoyable one. My very best wishes for the future go out to each of you and the MRSA as a whole.

Yours sincerely,

Kathy Homer

Karen's Korner

I encourage you to read Baset Zarrug's message at the beginning of this months newsletter. It is a very personal and powerful message from a man who knows how life is without the freedoms and rights we, as Canadians, enjoy.

Have a great month and don't forget to honour your Mother on May 10th
As my Mom once said to my brother who was being very disrespectful to her..."Once I am gone - I am gone forever!". Over 20 years have gone by since those words, and yet I have never forgotten them and the hurt Mom felt. Hey, Mom is 80 now, suffering ailments but still a fighter.... and since she lives in Victoria I won't be able to be there in person, but she will be receiving flowers and a phone call from me on her special day.

Love you Mom

Karen Hiebert