

Summary

MUNFA Members have a story to tell. It is the story of a group of passionate people, inspired by their students, doing research that makes an impact on their province and beyond. It is also a story of a group of people who are deeply uncertain about the future of Memorial University. Tough fiscal times, growing administration, and a sense of lost focus threaten what MUNFA members feel is the core purpose of the university: excellent teaching and research.

The Survey

Over the course of three weeks, MUNFA received detailed responses to a lengthy survey from 220 members, representing almost every academic unit.

Key Points

Teaching and research come first

Over and over in this survey, faculty members emphasized the importance of focusing on supporting top quality teaching and research – and supported trimming back some of the other things happening at MUN to make that support happen.

By the numbers: Making an Impact on Newfoundland and Labrador

93%	Share of respondents doing work directly relevant to NL
855	People employed by the respondents to this survey alone
4.1	People employed per faculty member
38%	Share of respondents who have brought in more than \$100,000 in research funding from outside NL over the last 5 years
62%	Share of respondents doing work that benefits community organizations

Faculty are looking for a vision

MUNFA members are unsure where Memorial wants to go. The university has many priorities – perhaps too many – and faculty members see some of them as distractions or wrong turns.

Tough times are coming

MUNFA members know that cuts and austerity are what the near future holds for MUN. Many see this as an opportunity to press “reset” on the university’s priorities and refocus on the core parts of the university’s work.

Administration is more obstacle than aid

MUNFA members expressed deep discomfort about the current state of university administration. Its growing size is seen as pulling resources from academic work and tangling faculty into thicker and thicker webs of bureaucracy. Offices and positions formed to enable faculty are often seen as doing the reverse, and many faculty strongly disagree with a worldview that sees the university as a business.

MUN is a special place

MUNFA members are deeply involved in community engagement, and cognizant of MUN's special relationship to Newfoundland and Labrador. Some, indeed, worry that that focus is too singleminded, and others see little connection between their public engagement and their success within MUN. Many cited the collegial atmosphere at MUN as something special – and something at risk.

Supports matter – and some are lacking

MUNFA members cannot succeed without a range of supports from both inside and outside the university. Inside MUN, access to up-to-date journals and functional physical infrastructure is the biggest need. Outside

MUN, it often comes down to research funding, especially from government.

People are everything

When MUNFA members are asked about the most hopeful things they see in MUN's future, the answers almost always come down to people. They are excited by the young, talented faculty being recruited to the university, and concerned about keeping them. They are proud of the quality of students, and worried that this quality will decline in pursuit of tuition dollars. They work with talented staff, but are frustrated by bureaucracy.

"I believe that the majority of faculty members seek to maintain a focus on the core purposes of the university (i.e. to provide a high quality education for students and to support basic/curiosity-driven research). We can only hope that this will translate into a willingness to push back."

- Survey Respondent