

MUNFA's Summer Report

August 7, 2018

The past year has been a busy one for MUNFA and the pace of work on behalf of our members has not slowed during the summer. Here are some of the issues that MUNFA volunteers and staff have been addressing:

- [Pensions](#)
- [Governance](#)
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PENSIONS

As reported in a previous [Information Bulletin](#) and at our [April General Meeting](#), MUNFA continues to work towards restructuring our pension plan to create a Joint Sponsorship arrangement. As part of this process, MUNFA, CUPE, and NAPE enlisted a shared legal counsel, Murray Gold. On May 1-2, May 22, and July 5 the MUNFA, CUPE, NAPE team met with the administration to finalize a Reform Agreement. This agreement outlines the framework of our future jointly sponsored pension. While this agreement is comprehensive and marks a positive negotiation milestone, it is non-binding on the parties. This document has been communicated to the provincial government for their consideration. Until we have a firm commitment on funding the going-concern pension deficit, little more can be accomplished through continued negotiation.

GOVERNANCE

In response to [Memorial University's Governance Review](#), MUNFA has continued to push for Faculty representation on the Board of Regents. As highlighted by CAUT in a [Report on Board of Governor Structures at Thirty-One Canadian Universities](#), Memorial is the only university not to have faculty representatives on its Board. Additionally, Memorial's Governance Review argued against appointing academic staff to the Board on the basis that their role as representatives of their constituency is fundamentally at odds with the fiduciary duty they would owe to the University as Regents. CAUT effectively refutes this perspective in a [legal advisory](#) published in February 2018. On July 3, 2018 MUNFA President (Robin Whitaker), Past President (George Jenner), and Vice-President External (Ken Snelgrove) along with MUNFA's Executive Officer met with several Regents, Vice-President Administration and Finance, and Memorial University's General Counsel to discuss Faculty representation on the Board of Regents. The Board received our presentation, and the discussion that followed was collegial and positive. However, there is currently no definite process in place to change the existing structure.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING (aka CEQs)

MUNFA provided input to the Senate Committee on Course Evaluations. Our message was that CEQs do not provide a valid mechanism to measure teaching effectiveness. We note that a recent [arbitration award between the Ryerson Faculty Association and Ryerson University](#) further supports and substantiates our take on this issue. For an additional take on Memorial University's CEQs we encourage you to read [Dr. Christina Doonan's Op-Ed in the Gazette](#).

EQUITY

MUNFA made a [submission to the administration's consultation on its "Employment Equity and Diversity Framework and Plan"](#). Among other suggestions, MUNFA recommended: adoption of **Universal Design**, so as to meet the needs of all members of the Memorial community; concrete measures to increase the effectiveness of existing equity-supporting policies; meaningful and thoroughgoing support for the Indigenization of the Academy in line with the policies and practices outlined in the CAUT Policy Statement, "[Indigenizing the Academy](#)"; concrete measures to improve the working conditions and security of contingently employed Academic Staff; and better support for Memorial employees with young children.

BLUNDON CENTRE

The MUNFA Executive continues to hear from our members with concerns regarding a new protocol for exams being invigilated at the Blundon Centre. The two main changes to the existing process are that the Blundon Centre requires both an electronic copy and a hard copy of the complete exam package for each student and that these exam packages must be delivered to the Blundon Centre at least three (3) business days prior to the test/exam. For more details on how you can provide feedback, please review our recent [Information Bulletin](#).

NEGOTIATIONS

Despite MUNFA's Negotiating Committee participating in [4 days of conciliation in July](#) with the employer, there has been no substantive progress on key Articles that MUNFA considers the most important. There are no further talks scheduled until the end of August, due to the unavailability of the administration's team. For further information on the progress of Negotiations please visit our [website](#).

GRIEVANCES

MUNFA's Academic Freedom and Grievance (AF&G) Committees (St. John's and Grenfell) continue to advise ASMs with employment related concerns and file grievances on behalf of ASMs whose Collective Agreement rights have been violated. The St. John's Committee has been particularly busy over the summer assisting members who have been subject to sanctions and discipline-like actions from outside agencies. The AF&G Committees have also been proactive in recommending issues to the MUNFA Executive for Association grievances, such as the elimination of various supports and resources for Grenfell campus ASMs.

MUNFA LIASONS

To improve communication between the Faculty Association and its members at the academic unit level, MUNFA has introduced liaisons in each academic unit. These liaisons are in the process of collecting non-Memorial email addresses and phone numbers from their colleagues in preparation for potential job action – oftentimes the more prepared for job action a union is, the less likely it is to occur. For more information, check out our [email to members over the summer](#).

JOB ACTION COMMITTEE (JAC)

Volunteers from diverse faculties are working together to prepare for job action should Collective Bargaining reach an impasse. The JAC is currently working to secure off-campus space for MUNFA strike headquarters. If you are interested in getting involved, we are currently looking for volunteers to sit on the following sub-committees:

- Strike Services Committee
- Finance Committee
- Picket Line Committee

For more information on these committees, or if you would like to help out, please contact munfa@mun.ca.

REVIEW OF BENEFITS

Over the summer, MUNFA engaged Luedey Consulting to undertake an independent assessment of our current benefits package. It was determined that we have the industry standard or better in many areas except Basic Life Insurance and Dependent Life Insurance. For full details, check out our [Information Bulletin on this issue](#). MUNFA's Executive Committee and Benefits Committee will continue their work to monitor, refine, and improve our benefits package.