

MUN Faculty Association
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President's Update

FOR THE AFTERNOON OF
September 22, 2023

Board of Regents Town Hall Summary

Hello everyone,

My thanks to everyone who was at today's Town Hall meeting on the Board of Regents issues. This is just a short message to summarize the event, the key issues that were discussed, and some possible next steps.

The Town Hall opened with a brief synopsis from me about how the current situation at MUN and the seats that have been allocated to ASMs on the Board of Regents (BOR) came to be. For those unable to attend today's Town Hall, the key information is that no seats on the BOR have been specifically allocated to MUNFA members. The government has merely appointed two ASMs (Ash Hossain; Nathalie Pender) who as ASMs are also, simply by default, MUNFA members.

There is no process in place as to how seats may or may not be allocated differently in the future and the legislation governing these issues is currently being revised by the government. Legislative reform is supposed to be forthcoming after the release of the AG's report which is due in the next couple of weeks.

In addition to whatever happens on the legislative side, there are also substantial changes that would be needed to the BOR's code of conduct, by-laws, and conflict of interest policies to make the situation more workable for MUNFA members who sit on the board now or may sit on the board in the future.

After my synopsis, we heard from David Robinson, Executive Director of the CAUT. David gave us an excellent overview of other universities across the country that have what might be called gold-standard university governance in place. In particular, David highlighted the University of Manitoba, the University of Lethbridge, the University of Toronto, the University of Waterloo, and Bishop's University.

These institutions have language in their respective codes of conduct that provide exceptions to strict confidentiality and conflict of interest clauses for university staff and students and recognize the importance of representatives being able to report back to their constituencies. These institutions have language that, unlike Memorial's, encourages academic freedom and true collegial governance. Specific language (e.g., on conflict of interest) from these institutions' governance structures is available in CAUT's ["Report on Board of Governors Structure at Thirty-One Canada Universities."](#) It was made clear that the restrictions in place at our institution are *not* the status quo across the country.

In the discussion that followed my synopsis and David's presentation three concrete actions were identified:

1. To proactively create a submission to MUN's BOR for changes to its Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, and Bylaw documents. Concrete language changes can be derived from the CAUT report linked above.
2. To continue advocacy for changes to the MUN Act to include permanent designated seats on the BOR for MUNFA. MUNFA's previous work on these points can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
3. For the [Collegial Governance Committee](#) (see [Appendix K](#) of our current Collective Agreement) to push for change, per items 1 and 2 above.
4. To continue MUNFA's advocacy with the provincial government for a [full revision of the MUN Act](#).

[The next BOR meeting is scheduled for October 5](#) and MUNFA will continue to maintain transparency with members as we move forward in this fight for better collegiality at Memorial.



Josh Lepawsky
Professor of Geography and MUNFA President