

President's Message

DATE: **June 3, 2026**

SUBJECT: **Faculty Representatives Resign from Board of Regents**

In the spring of 2023, MUNFA agreed to an arrangement with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for two faculty members to temporarily serve on the Board of Regents, to give the Government time to properly update the Memorial University Act and ensure regular representation on the Board, a system of elections and measures that would bring Board governance up to the standard seen at other Canadian universities. [[IB 2022/23:53](#)]

Three years have passed. The promised changes to the Act have not been made, and our colleagues on the Board have found it impossible to provide the transparency and accountability that our members and all members of the public have the right to expect.

As a result, both [faculty representatives to the Board have resigned](#), effective immediately. Attached are the letters sent to the Minister of Education and to the Board of Regents about this decision and the challenges our members have encountered.

As all of you know, concerns about governance and the right of members of the Memorial community to participate in decision making about the future of the University were a key issue during our last round of negotiations. As MUNFA President and a member of Senate, I remain deeply concerned about the lack of commitment from the University to normal academic governance, particularly given the abdication of commitments to strengthening shared governance following our 2023 job action. As members will recall from [IB 2025/2026:17](#), the University Administration unilaterally shut down the Collegial Governance Committee established through our last Collective Agreement before it could complete its work or deliver its public report.

MUNFA will continue to press the Government for the long overdue modernization of the Memorial University Act, and I will continue to fight for the kind of university that our members want and that the people of this province deserve. As always, members with questions or feedback are encouraged to reach out to the MUNFA office at munfa@mun.ca.

In solidarity,

Dr. Lisa Moores,

President, Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty Association

President's Message



Date: June 2, 2026

Honourable Paul Dinn
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
Minister of Advanced Education and Skills
P.O Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6
MHAPaulDinn@assembly.nl.ca

Honourable Minister Dinn,

We, Ashrafee Hossain and Nathalie Pender, are writing today to share our joint decision to discontinue our service to Memorial University's Board of Regents ("Board"). Please accept this letter as our resignation from the Board, effective immediately.

This decision has not been made lightly, and our resignations are not a result of frustration with the work of governance itself. The Board of Regents plays a critical role in Memorial's bicameral governance system, vested with the responsibility for financial and administrative decision-making for the University.

We are cognizant of the weight of this responsibility and remain appreciative of the time, effort, and commitment contributed by many individuals involved in its work. Our frustration lies instead with the fundamental structural and systemic obstacles to healthy and well-functioning collegial governance at the Board of Regents, and the associated consequences of its absence for the Memorial community.

As you may recall, the issue of Memorial's significant shortcomings in collegial governance became a matter of broad concern and attention during MUNFA job action in early 2023. Members of the University community have become increasingly frustrated at being excluded from participating in decisions about how the University is managed, and it is highly unusual for a University Board to not include elected members of Faculty. At that time, the Premier made a public commitment to comprehensively reform the Memorial University Act ("MUN Act") and approached MUNFA to negotiate interim Board representation for our academic staff members while reform was underway.

As MUNFA's leadership has provided a letter detailing the background of this issue and the context for the subsequent decision we will not repeat that here, except to say that our interim participation was clearly communicated as a gesture of good faith and commitment to supporting the promised reform. There was a shared commitment to working together to repair the damage done to the University by past leadership.

However, we have now diligently completed almost three years of Board service without any progress toward such reform. Major concerns include, but are not limited to:

- A persistent lack of transparency in governance and decision-making structures and processes – instead of holding open and transparent deliberation as the default with

exceptions requiring clear justification, Memorial's Board defaults to opacity with overuse of In Camera sessions and parts of the session not documented in the minutes;

- Confidentiality expectations that are overly broad (impeding critical consultation with constituents to inform responsible decision-making) and an outdated and overly restrictive code of conduct framework, both of which are inconsistent with known best practices for Board accountability in Canadian universities;
- The absence of clear, democratic, and representative procedures for determining who speaks for and represents the university community; and
- An ongoing pattern in which substantive governance concerns are acknowledged rhetorically but not meaningfully resolved in practice.

As the reform commitments that brought us to the Board in the first place have not been honoured, our presence can no longer be offered as evidence that the problem has been solved. We have become increasingly concerned that our continued participation in Memorial's Board of Regents would serve only to legitimize a system in urgent need of change. And at this point, we do not believe it is appropriate for us to remain a part of a governance structure that is unwilling or unable to undertake the degree of reform required to restore confidence, accountability, and legitimacy.

The governance work undertaken by the Board of Regents is critically important. We want a Board that functions in the interest of this province and a Board that includes representatives of the University community. It is our sincere hope that Memorial and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador will eventually undertake the substantive changes necessary to align its governance practices with modern standards of transparency, accountability, and democratic representation.

Sincerely,



Ashrafee "Ash" Tanvir Hossain



Nathalie Pender

Cc: Secretary of the Board of Regents
President, MUNFA



June 2, 2026

Honourable Paul Dinn
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
Minister of Advanced Education and Skills
P.O Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Honourable Minister Dinn,

I am writing to you today in full support of my Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty Association (MUNFA) colleagues, Ashrafee Hossain and Nathalie Pender, and their decision to resign from the Memorial University Board of Regents. To aid understanding of the context for this decision, I will also provide background information regarding their initial appointment.

During the MUN Faculty Association's job action in January and February 2023, the weak state of shared governance at Memorial University emerged as a concern across the university community. As documented in CAUT's [Report on Board of Governors Structures at Thirty-One Canadian Universities \(2018\)](#), Memorial stood alone in Canadian higher education, explicitly barring teaching staff from the Board of Regents by statute. In response, the Premier made a commitment that Memorial's governance structures would be reformed, beginning with faculty representation on the Board.

In the spring of 2023, while comprehensive reform of the *Memorial University Act* was still pending, the government proposed an interim measure, an amendment to the Act permitting the Lieutenant Governor in Council (LGIC) to appoint academic staff members to the Board. The government framed this as a first step, with thorough legislative reform of the Act to follow.

MUNFA agreed to participate in good faith, though not without significant reservations. In a letter to the Minister of Education dated May 4, 2023, MUNFA raised several concerns: that allowing government to select who "represents" academic staff is conceptually problematic; that excluding partner bargaining units was troubling; that the Board's existing Code of Conduct, bylaws, and conflict of interest policies imposed restrictions on academic staff members far more severe than those at comparable Canadian institutions; and that this interim arrangement risked reducing the government's commitment to the deeper reforms Memorial genuinely required.

A further overarching concern was the Board's default to opaque practices, which directly contradict the core principles of open, accountable collegial governance. These concerns were reinforced at a MUNFA member town hall held in September 2023, where the Executive

Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) confirmed that the various restrictions in place at Memorial were not the norm across the country.

Despite those difficult circumstances, professors Hossain and Pender were willing to accept appointments and have participated actively and responsibly as members of the Board for the past three years. In doing so, they brought the perspective of academic staff to the table, engaged constructively with governance processes, and fulfilled their obligations while remaining committed to the goals MUNFA has long championed: transparency, accountability, and genuine collegial governance at the only university in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The same cannot be said of the reform commitments made in 2023. The core issues identified in MUNFA's 2021 submission on the review of the *Memorial University Act* remain unaddressed. In December 2025, MUNFA submitted renewed recommendations for *Memorial University Act* reform to inform the current PC government. It is unfortunate that while appointment of faculty representatives on Memorial's Board of Regents was presented as a first step in reform, in practice it was also the final step.

MUNFA's position has not changed. We continue to call on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to deliver on its commitment to comprehensive reform of the *Memorial University Act*. That reform must include legislated, designated seats for academic staff on the Board of Regents; open Board meetings as the default; conflict of interest and confidentiality provisions that recognize the representational role of academic staff and how they can contribute to better informed decision-making; and democratic procedures for the selection of representational members and Board leadership. These are the documented accountability practices of universities across this country. Until that reform is delivered, the governance of the only university in Newfoundland and Labrador will remain structurally deficient.

I have extended my sincere thanks and appreciation to Nathalie Pender and Ash Hossain for seeing their commitments through with integrity and providing every opportunity for others to do the same. Communities are ultimately defined by what they do, not merely by what they say. These colleagues' actions reflect a conviction deeply valued by MUNFA - that meaningful change is not brought about by wishing for it, but by working tirelessly to achieve it. I am grateful for their service and dedication.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lisa Moores
President
Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty Association

Cc: Secretary, Board of Regents
Deputy Minister Judith Hearn
Assistant Deputy Minister Heather Craniford
Nathalie Pender
Ashrafee Tanvir Hossain