



June 9, 2026

President's Message: Board of Regents Resignations

Dear MUNFA Colleagues,

Last week I shared with our membership that Dr. Ashrafee Hossain and Ms. Nathalie Pender have resigned from Memorial University's Board of Regents. Prior to making any public statement on this issue, MUNFA also sent a [letter to the members of the Board of Regents](#) explaining our position, reiterating that these concerns involve longstanding structural and systemic concerns, not the service of dedicated volunteers, and providing specific information on the areas where governance practices on Memorial's Board fall objectively short of other Canadian Universities.

Today I want to speak directly to why these resignations happened and where things currently stand.

In the spring of 2023, following our job action, MUNFA agreed to a [temporary arrangement](#) with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Two academic staff members would serve on the Board of Regents while the government undertook comprehensive reform of the Memorial University Act, including a permanent, elected system of faculty representation. That commitment was the condition of MUNFA's participation. We were clear about this at the time, and we have been clear about it ever since.

Three years later, the promised reforms have not been delivered and appointed regent terms are ending.

I want to be precise about what that means, because the Board's public response to these resignations referenced "progress made" that has now been "set back." I would ask members to consider what progress actually occurred? [Section 31 of the Memorial University Act](#) still formally disqualifies Memorial teaching staff from serving on the Board. [The only change made in 2023](#) was the addition of a narrow exception allowing the government to appoint ASMs at Memorial when and if they choose to do so. There are no designated faculty seats. There is no system of elections. There is no mechanism by which academic staff members can choose, communicate with, or hold accountable anyone who sits at that table on their behalf.

As a result, what we have now is inclusion without actual representation.

Appointees are not representatives. That distinction matters. Just as elected representatives in government are accountable to the people they serve through

transparent and accessible processes, University governance should be held to the same standard. Memorial's Board of Regents was not built for representation, which is why reform is essential.

The Board and Chair Justin Ladha's comments in response to the resignations suggested that no concerns were raised through established channels. I want members to know that MUNFA has raised these [structural concerns in writing to the government in 2021](#), before the arrangement even began. We raised them again in the 2023 discussions and resubmitted recommended updates. A submission was made to the [current government in December 2025](#) and this topic was also discussed in our meetings with the Minister. We have also repeatedly raised the issue of governance with Administration. No plans for resolving the temporary situation were ever shared with us.

Ultimately, we asked the Official Opposition to raise the question of elected faculty seats directly during the recent [Budget Estimates session for Education](#). The Minister's answer was that he had no plans to allow MUNFA members to elect their own representatives and was focused on filling the seats quickly. MUNFA was not consulted on future appointments.

That left two options: accept academic staff inclusion with no meaningful representation for another three years, and without even the expected guidance from the [now shuttered Collegial Governance Committee](#), or uphold the commitment we made to our own members and conveyed to government, that this interim arrangement could not become a permanent one.

The decision to resign was a difficult one for Ash and Nathalie, and it was the right one. I am grateful for their service and for the integrity they brought to an impossible situation. They were asked to represent a community without the tools to do so.

MUNFA cannot submit names to fill those vacant seats under the current arrangement. Moreover, doing so would be actively choosing a governance system that fails to meet even the minimal standard of other Canadian universities. Practices that grant sole authority to the Chair to close any session without deliberation and rely on a [Code of Conduct](#) that requires confidentiality on "any materials provided" and support for administration actions as a legal requirement of their duties as a Member of the Board are fundamentally incompatible with a representational model.

What we are asking for is straightforward and it is fair: academic staff members must be able to elect their own representatives to the Board of Regents. That is [the norm across Canada](#). It is what was promised. And it is what this institution owes the people who fulfill its academic mandate.

Achieving change in structures and systems is arduous and often frustrating work, but it is also the only kind of change that lasts. MUNFA will continue work for the long overdue modernization of the Memorial University Act that would make it possible.

Members can listen to CBC St. John's Morning Show interviews with [Board Chair Mr. Justin Ladha](#) and MUNFA [President Dr. Lisa Moores](#) at the links provided for further information. Questions or feedback can be sent to the MUNFA office at munfa@mun.ca.

In solidarity,

Dr. Lisa Moores
President, Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty Association