

## President's Update

FOR THE MORNING OF  
July 6, 2023

### Only Two Academic Staff Appointments to Memorial's Board of Regents

During the MUN Faculty Association's strike in January and February 2023, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador made a commitment to appoint academic staff members to the Memorial University Board of Regents - to help resolve our member's concerns about the state of governance at the University.

In late May, an amendment to the *Memorial University Act* received Royal Assent through the House of Assembly allowing faculty appointments to the Board of Regents. MUNFA was assured that following the passage of this amendment, an appointment would come "[without delay](#)". The provincial government proudly stated that "[For the first time in Memorial University's history, faculty will have representation on the Board of Regents.](#)"

MUNFA prepared a list of faculty and staff representatives to serve on the Board by the request of the Minister of Education. MUNFA recognized the challenges such as: the systemic crisis facing the University; the need for time to comprehensively rewrite the *Memorial University Act*; and the restoration of the University's reputation amid unstable leadership. To address these challenges, we sought pan-University representation on the Board of Regents by engaging our campus union colleagues to submit names from **NAPE, LUMUN, and CUPE, along with MUNFA.**

All of the seven names submitted were elected representatives on their respective executives. We viewed, and continue to view, each person on this list as equally important in achieving the end goal of reconstructing the governance system of Memorial University. Academic Staff Members are the backbone of this institution and each of our partner unions play a key role. We felt that given the short timeline provided and the urgency of representation, this was the best way to ensure a democratic process within a failed system.

Throughout this process, we expressed numerous concerns with a system that allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council to choose who to appoint on behalf of our membership and the membership of the other unions. Given these concerns, we additionally requested an assurance of this arrangement being temporary following a more comprehensive review of the *MUN Act* that centred the voices of academic staff members.

On June 29, due to radio silence on these nominations and the upcoming Board of Regents meeting on July 6, 2023, MUNFA sent a [letter](#) addressing the urgency of appointments to the new Hon. Minister of Education Krista Lynn Howell. We did not receive a response to this letter, and as it got closer and closer to Thursday's meeting, it appeared that academic staff members would not have representatives for this meeting. MUNFA amped up the pressure and put out communications and a media release regarding the letter to Minister Howell, the lack of response, and the disturbance of this.

Yesterday afternoon, following these communications, MUNFA was informed that they had appointed two of the seven names submitted. The two appointed were myself, **MUNFA President Ash Hossain, and Nathalie Pender, a MUNFA Executive Member-at-Large from Grenfell Campus**. The appointments were made at the last possible second and excluded our partner unions. This is proof of pressure getting results, but is entirely insufficient and we must continue to fight for more.

Appointing all seven academic staff members to the Board of Regents would be a small but significant step towards enhancing the collegial governance of Memorial. Regrettably, it appears that the provincial government is not prioritizing these changes as they had previously indicated. Treating these promises as lip service without impactful action is unacceptable. The government's reluctance to address this issue promptly suggests that their priorities lie more with upper administration rather than with the faculty, staff, and students who form the backbone of this institution.

While this is an insufficient move forward, we will continue to advocate for members impassionately with what we have. An Information Bulletin will be distributed by the MUNFA executive following discussions on how we best move forward within the confines of this broken system. This is just the beginning of a longterm campaign for changes to our governance structure. [Here](#) you can see MUNFA's submission for revisions to the *MUN Act* from 2021 as an introduction to the further, larger scale changes, we hope to see at Memorial.

Hope is not lost. MUNFA will continue to fight for the changes we need to ensure we are *all* rightfully included in the decision-making of *our* university. Beyond this, we continue to push the administration for change on other outstanding issues regarding collegial governance and conditions for contract faculty.

I encourage any members who are dismayed by this decision to send your thoughts to Minister Howell at [KristaLynnHowell@gov.nl.ca](mailto:KristaLynnHowell@gov.nl.ca) and President Bose at [pres@mun.ca](mailto:pres@mun.ca). We must keep fighting for more.

*In love and solidarity,  
MUNFA President  
Ash Hossain*