SAMRU Representation Position Statements

Preamble

For over a hundred years students have organized to effectively serve and represent the needs of their student community. We had student leaders when Mount Royal was a high school, when it was a college, and to this day where it stands as an undergraduate university. With such a long history, it is important that students are aware of the positions that their student leaders are advocating on their behalf.

We hope that these Position Statements will help inform you of the type of advocacy we engage in as student leaders. These statements are meant to be improved upon over the years as new student leaders come and go, and as you impact them with your voice. An additional purpose of this document is to communicate our positions to the entities we advocate to, such as to MRU individuals, committees, councils, and to the MRU Board of Governors, as well as to external stakeholders, such as the public, all levels of government, and to the media.

This is an invitation for you to get more involved with your Students' Association! Part of a healthy dialogue is knowing what your Representation Executives stand for, and understanding how you can impact those positions. You can do so by reaching out and having your voice heard - maybe by joining our Representation Executives Advisory Committee, sending us an email or even running to be a Representation Executive yourself.

The Representation Executives, on behalf of SAMRU, believe:

MRU Budget

That students should be able to easily access and understand financial information about their university and how it impacts them as a student.

That students experience the benefit that MRU receives from the generosity of donors.

Tuition and Fees

That MRU should have tuition and fees be affordable for all students.

That students must be meaningfully consulted* in regards to any tuition and fee increases.

That regarding exceptional tuition increases, SAMRU advocates for a return to the 2019 changes to the Post-Secondary Learning Act, which required a joint application from both MRU and SAMRU for any exceptional increase.

Student Services and Facilities

That MRU should engage in meaningful consultation* with students regarding the development of facilities and services on campus.

That MRU should put an emphasis on providing diverse non-academic student experiences and quality student services.

That MRU should make relevant** information available and accessible to students regarding the improvements of student services and campus facilities.

Indigenous Advocacy

That MRU should work to remove the barriers that Indigenous students face when accessing and completing their post-secondary education.

That the voices of Indigenous students should help direct MRU's work on Indigenization, Decolonization and Reconciliation, emphasising "Nothing for us, without us."

That MRU maintains its recognition of the genocide done to Indigenous peoples.

That MRU should continuously celebrate the cultures and accomplishments of Indigenous communities of Treaty 7.

That MRU should uphold the treaties and meaningfully work towards the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

Gender-Based Violence Prevention

That in order to have a trauma-informed university community, MRU must invest in educational opportunities for university leadership, staff, faculty, and students.

That GBV-related resources should be made available for student access in classrooms.

That feedback processes must include an understanding of cultural safety, and should not require vulnerable people to educate others.

That MRU continues to offer alternative approaches to resolving trauma incidents that are robustly and skillfully supported (ex. modified restorative justice and community healing practices).

That MRU continues to review and refresh its inclusive processes, including regular feedback from individuals who are most impacted by current policies and practices set in place, and continuing to strengthen existing relationships with stakeholders who work in the field.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

That MRU aids students in having a meaningful sense of belonging to their Campus Community.

That students should be meaningfully consulted* on major changes made to Wellness Services when they affect students.

That students have a variety of counselling services offered to them, such as modes in a variety of cultural contexts and delivery methods.

That counselling staff should reflect the diversity of the students in which they serve.

That all student-facing staff and faculty should be prepared to communicate safely with students by completing mental health and disclosure training.

That students from equity-deserving groups should be compensated when they provide the emotional labour of sharing their experiences as racialized students. This also should apply to students who come from marginalised populations.

That all students should receive content warnings regarding triggering content on campus and in the classroom.

That up-to-date mental health information, especially suicide prevention information, should be a communication priority to students.

That Wellness Services regularly reviews and refines the effectiveness of their communication strategies.

That MRU works in tandem with external partners to provide students with the full range of referrals and services available to meet their immediate and long term needs, especially during peak seasons (e.g. midterms and exams).

That MRU should address the unique barriers faced by international students when accessing mental health support.

That International students should be supported in creating stronger support systems due to their unique situations.

That a healthy campus environment is a priority for students, and that MRU can achieve this by following the direction of best medical practices in all health-related decisions.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

That students who have faced discrimination based upon race, national or ethnic origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, ability, or any other protected grounds according to the Alberta Humans Right Commission should be supported in getting the most out of their university experience.

That all student-facing staff and faculty should receive equity, diversity, and inclusion training.

That all ethno-cultural identities of students should be respected, recognized, and celebrated, including the wide mosaic of Indigenous nations across Canada.

That the MRU campus community should regularly collaborate to strengthen diversity and inclusion with the aim of achieving equity.

That the MRU campus community will be actively accountable and action orientated in areas where it lacks Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

That the diversity of the MRU administration, faculty, and staff reflect the student body in which they serve.

That MRU should recognize, celebrate, and provide flexibility for students around a wider variety of cultural and religious holidays, and other important and commemorative days.

That MRU should meet the needs of equity-deserving groups by working towards retention rates and graduation rates of those students.

MRU Governance and Policy

That students should have access to the information they need to understand the governance structures of MRU, and how they can meaningfully impact those structures.

That MRU policies should be easily accessible and readable for students.

That students should be informed of key policy changes and updates throughout the year on issues that directly impact them as students.

That MRU should provide easily accessible and relevant** information regarding key policy changes and updates throughout the year on issues that impact students.

Student Awards

That MRU awards, scholarships, and bursary applications are inclusive towards equity-deserving groups.

That students are provided adequate reminders and time for filling out scholarship applications.

That there should be a wide range of criteria for MRU awards, scholarships, and bursaries outside of academic achievement.

That MRU should recognize non-traditional experiences in the same regard as formal (traditional western) experiences when evaluating award applications.

That MRU should accept the experiences of students who are unable to gain typical experiences due to socioeconomic barriers, and have instead gained experiences through other avenues.

That MRU's Student Awards Committee members should reflect the diversity of the student population.

MRU Courses

That MRU should raise awareness of GNEDs in a way where students understand the added value of GNED courses to their lives and to their education rather than simply as a requirement to fulfill for graduation.

That foundation GNED courses should be regularly updated and reviewed to maintain relevance and quality.

That MRU should put the course syllabi of previous years in the course description (with a disclaimer that it is subject to change) so students can have a better idea of what the course entails before registering for classes.

In order for students of equity-deserving groups to be successful in their courses, MRU faculty should actively implement Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the classroom and actively work towards reducing learning barriers for those students.

That MRU should raise early awareness of the importance and value of honours degrees to students.

That MRU should expand their curriculum to include knowledge outside of the western scope.

That MRU should expand their assessment techniques outside of standard examinations (i.e. Universal Design of Learning) to accommodate different learning styles.

That MRU program departments should highlight the impactful value (e.g. professional and personal value) of a student's program, especially within the first half of a degree.

Faculty Feedback

That students should be able to give diverse forms of feedback on the course delivery of all professors, that the feedback should be used meaningfully, and that MRU should communicate how the feedback is being used.

Alberta Post-secondary Education System

That students should be empowered to pursue the program of their choice.

That any boards, councils, or committees of the Ministry of Advanced Education (which advises or makes decisions on behalf of the post-secondary system) should include post-secondary institutional stakeholders, especially students.

That provincial post-secondary education policy performance indicators must be relevant**, attainable, and have a transparent reporting framework.

That the government should provide stable, predictable, and sustainable funding for post-secondary institutions.

That SAMRU will assist in appropriate grassroots activities in support of our members when we have considered our advocacy to be ineffective.

Student Employment and Work-Integrated Learning

That MRU should support students in finding gainful employment before and after graduation.

That MRU should prioritise current students for on-campus employment positions where appropriate.

That MRU should protect students' safety during placements.

That MRU and the provincial government should continue to increase research assistant opportunities for undergraduate students.

Municipal and Transportation Advocacy

That the City should engage in meaningful consultation* with MRU students in Municipal Planning & Development relating to student life in the city.

That MRU students should have frequent, reliable, affordable, accessible, and efficient transportation options when accessing campus.

That MRU students should have access to real-time, reliable information regarding transportation updates (e.g. moved bus stops, cancelled bus stops due to construction, cancelled/delayed buses etc.)

Housing

That MRU should provide emergency housing for students that are in unsafe situations.

That MRU should collaborate with government and developers to build affordable and safe on and off-campus housing.

That the municipal government should implement rent controls and offer financial aid to make housing affordable.

Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning

That MRU should consider integrating AI in classrooms to personalize learning; tailoring content and pacing to diverse and evolving student needs.

That MRU faculty should support ethical AI use to uphold academic integrity, provided there's transparency, respect for privacy, and clear guidelines on AI's role in assessments.

That MRU should consider promoting equal access to AI tools for all students, focusing on bridging the digital gap and training educators to ensure inclusive AI-enhanced learning experiences.

That MRU should develop a holistic policy with meaningful student consultation* on the use of AI in teaching and learning.

Textbook Affordability

That MRU should champion the widespread adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) to provide accessible and cost-effective learning materials, fostering broader educational opportunities and enhancing student success.

That MRU should support the collaborative creation and sharing of OER, encouraging educators to contribute and adapt resources.

That MRU should use OER to address educational equity by eliminating financial barriers to learning materials.

<u>Notes</u>
* meaningfully consulted: student consultation that is deemed by students as serious, important, and worthwhile.
**relevant: refers to the significance, applicability, and direct connection to a student's current academic pursuits, student affairs, future goals, and the rapidly evolving demands of student life.