

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



SEPTEMBER 2018

Welcome back! I hope everyone had an energizing summer.

While we prepare for our return to our classrooms, libraries and laboratories, central administration is embarking on a branding exercise that they hope to be as successful as the Trailblazer campaign. As part of that initiative, UM's Vice-President External is encouraging all members of the UM community to participate in "shaping our story into something that can be embraced, experienced and celebrated by all, while advancing the learning, discovery and engagement priorities of our university in a meaningful way".

We all are very proud of our work, and absolutely should share and celebrate it more. UMFA is taking small steps in this direction, as you may have noticed – profiles of several UMFA librarians and their work is [now on our website](#), and more profiles are on their way. Keep an eye on your inbox over the next couple of months.

However, developing a "brand" is not the same as developing a solid academic reputation, and building a reputation is more than just *communicating* better – it

requires *doing* better. At least insofar as the university's strategic objective of building community through an outstanding learning and work environment, we all hope that the administration takes meaningful action to improve upon the last decade that saw three unfair labour practices, one strike, one narrowly averted strike, and two external investigations and a threat of censure by the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

The UM could establish a brand for itself as a defender of academic freedom, a provider of quality research and education, and a model university employer. This could involve joining the universities that have credibly committed to making their salaries competitive with comparator institutions, and have met those commitments. It could involve adopting the practices of other universities who have acknowledged the worth of their teaching-focused instructors, offering them professor positions, thereby recognizing the educational requirements and important contribution of the position to the institutional mission. Even more boldly, the university could take the lead in standing against the imposition of performance indicators in all phases of university decision making, as they are known to be inaccurate, biased, and incomplete measures of academic achievement. UM could also take the lead against the overuse of contingent and temporary faculty positions and hiring poorly paid and overworked casual academic staff.

In conversations with members, I have heard many report that they are starting a term with more preps, and more students than earlier in their careers, and heavy service responsibilities. Please look after yourselves, your colleagues, and contact the UMFA office if you encounter situations that you're uncertain about – no question or concern is too small. I will also be continuing “coffee with the president” around campus this year and hope members will stop by, as it is both enjoyable for me and an important information conduit for us.

With respect to the UM's news of inappropriate behavior, sexual harassment and sexual assault on campus, UMFA believes that everyone in the UM community deserves safe campuses and workplaces. As workers, we all have the *right* to a safe workplace, and your UMFA reps, Executive, and staff are here to help you. Please, if you are subject to sexual harassment or sexual violence in any form, from anyone, or are contacted by the administration about a workplace investigation, contact the office ASAP for confidential advice and support – faum@umfa.ca or 474-8272.

You may be aware that recently the Government of Manitoba released the [results of a workplace audit](#) of public sector workers' experiences of sexual harassment. Among other things, it revealed that while 17 percent of respondents had been subject to sexual harassment, 70 percent of those incidents went unreported. While there has been much in the news about the UM, we have no such workplace data to point to. It's incumbent upon the University to first collect and then act on such information.

We encourage the UM to meaningfully and robustly consult with faculty, staff and students to learn more about the scope and nature of the problems on our campuses, and gather and report better data on these incidents. I know UMFA members will participate in consultations and provide feedback on new policies and changes to existing policies if the administration provides the appropriate means to do so.

Best wishes for a good school year,

Janet Morrill

We make **UofM** happen

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
Faculty Association



Copyright © 2017, University of Manitoba Faculty Association, All rights reserved.

**You are receiving this email because you are a member of the
University of Manitoba Faculty Association.**

Mailing Address:

100-29 Dysart Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2M7

[Update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).