



MAUT Newsletter: McGill Association of University Teachers

December 2017

## Academic Freedom Forum and its Aftermath

On October 26th, MAUT organized a [Forum on Academic Freedom](#). A keynote speaker and six panelists addressed the question of whether there is a justification for imposing limits on what an academic administrator may say in public, limits that would not apply to a regular professor in exercising his/her academic freedom.

The decision to have this forum was precipitated by events last spring, leading to Professor Andrew Potter's resignation as the Director of the McGill Centre for the Study of Canada. Ensuing events signaled a need to raise awareness about academic freedom and about the diversity of views in our community. We felt a forum could inform us in planning actions to ensure an unambiguous interpretation of the concept of academic freedom in general and the McGill Academic Freedom Statement in particular.

As expected, the ideas put forth by the panelists and the exchanges amongst them and with the audience were rich enough to help us outline a number of concrete steps to safeguard academic freedom in our community. The immediate step is to submit a request to the Secretary General (copied to the Chair of the Board of Governors) to clarify and augment the governance status of the McGill Statement of Academic Freedom. Our recommendation is that the University give Statements a formal, well-defined and meaningful status in our governance structure by elevating it to the status of a Governing Document.

A second step is to work towards developing a procedural mechanism within McGill (e.g., a Senate Sub-committee, an Academic Freedom Assessor, etc.) to address cases of possible violation of academic freedom internally if and when they arise. A third step is to consider ways in which greater vigilance can be exerted during deliberations of Senate which set out the mandates of new academic units and their administrators. For

## MAUT Fossil-Fuel Divestment

At the November 8th MAUT council meeting, motions were passed by wide margins to divest MAUT's investments of holdings in companies whose primary business is extracting and distributing fossil-fuel energy and to encourage a similar effort on the part of McGill University. This divestment initiative was also a topic of lively discussion at the 2017 MAUT Fall General Meeting on November 17th, with member comments being overwhelmingly positive and indicating support for divestment initiatives moving forward. It is expected that divestment can be readily achieved by transferring MAUT investments to relevant specialized mutual funds, with further updates on this important initiative forthcoming in the new year.

To review the specific language of the motions passed, the motion documents are available from our website for both the [MAUT divestment](#) and the recommended [McGill divestment](#) efforts.

## Support CEU's Future

As you plan your contributions in this season of giving, please consider [making a gift to support CEU](#). As the subject of troubling international news coverage over this past year, Central European University has undergone dramatic challenges to academic freedom yet continues to teach students from 120 countries and conduct international research toward solving critical public problems. In an effort to solidify institutional resources for students, faculty, and staff, CEU is currently accepting donations in support of [student scholarships](#), [cutting-edge research](#), and [conferences on critical issues](#). For more information, please check out the CEU [call for donations](#).

## McGill Employment Equity Survey

The 2017 McGill Employment Equity Survey is now available online. The survey takes less than a minute

example, a more careful formulation of mandates could reduce the possibility of loop-holes through which academic freedom could be compromised because an academic administrator is given a largely political, as opposed to academic, role.

Academic freedom is everybody's concern. I encourage members who wish to contribute to our activities and to discussions related to academic freedom to contact [maut@mcgill.ca](mailto:maut@mcgill.ca).

**Alenoush Saroyan,**  
MAUT President

## MAUT's Campaign to Fight Administrative Overload

On Monday November 13th, MAUT launched a survey asking our members to tell us about instances of excessive administrative burdens and practices that could be eliminated or simplified. The response was immediate and overwhelming: so far more than 230 members have reported a wide range of what appear to be unnecessarily bureaucratic routines and practices they are required to follow, from overly demanding research travel expense claims to hand-signed final exams.

A working group consisting of Nathan Hall, Sarah Severson, Renee Sieber and Axel van den Berg will analyze these responses to identify some of the major themes and priorities in the coming weeks. MUNACA and MUNASA may conduct similar surveys among their own members as well. If you did not have an opportunity to participate in our recent survey, or wish to further elaborate on your responses, please feel free to email MAUT Communications VP Nathan Hall directly with your comments by email to have them considered as part of our forthcoming analysis ([nathan.c.hall@mcgill.ca](mailto:nathan.c.hall@mcgill.ca)).

The information collected—and the proposed solutions—will serve as the point of departure for the Joint Standing Committee on Elimination of Administrative Overload consisting of representatives from the administration, MAUT, MUNACA, and MUNASA. The committee's mandate will be to actively collect information about unnecessary administrative impositions on faculty members and administrative staff and find ways to eliminate or alleviate them on a continuing basis. We are convinced that in the long run the work of this committee could greatly improve the quality of our working lives and our collective productivity.

**Axel van den Berg,**  
MAUT President-Elect

to complete and provides critical metrics about our workforce. All McGill faculty are needed to respond to the new survey launched in August of this year, even if you have previously responded to an Employment Equity Survey. If you have any questions or require further information about this important initiative, please email Tynan Jarrett at [tynan.jarrett@mcgill.ca](mailto:tynan.jarrett@mcgill.ca).

[Employment Equity Survey](#)  
[Sondage sur équité en matière d'emploi](#)

## MAUT on YouTube

Just a reminder that recent public panel discussions hosted by MAUT, as well as member events, are now available online for viewing at your convenience. Please click below for links to specific events and feel free to subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) to be automatically updated by email when new videos are posted.

[Fall General Meeting](#) | November 17, 2017  
[Academic Freedom Forum](#) | October 26, 2017  
[Guide to the Univers\(ity\)](#) | October 13, 2017  
[Naylor Report Forum](#) | June 20, 2017

**Nathan Hall,**  
MAUT VP Communications

## MAUT Social Circle



To RSVP for the MAUT Winter Brunch, please

## Support the Report: How to Contact Your MP

As you know, MAUT has been pushing hard to get the recommendations of the Fundamental Science Review, the so-called Naylor Report, after its lead author, David Naylor, accepted and acted upon by the Liberal government. Recent news coverage further shows support for this initiative among [high-profile foundations](#) from across Canada, with the latest push coming from Professor Molly Shoichet from the University of Toronto, the co-founder of [Research2Reality](#).

She encourages you, if you have not already done this, to **reach out to your science departments and colleagues to further expand the support of the report through your networks. Please also ask them to bcc to MAUT and to Dr. Shoichet ([molly@research2reality.com](mailto:molly@research2reality.com))** when you send their letter so that we can track our success in mobilizing the community.

In case you need reminding, ***we need to mobilize support for the Fundamental Science Review Report and we need to do this now.*** Minister Kirsty Duncan had a group of experts examine the state of investment in Canadian Science and the ecosystem in the federal granting agencies (NSERC, CIHR, CFI, etc). Led by David Naylor (former President of U of T), with our own Vice Principal, Research and Innovation, Martha Crago as one of the panelists, the report made a series of recommendations, including increasing the investment of the Federal government in research. As you know, this investment has been reduced substantially over the past decade and now lags significantly behind other OECD countries. We, in the academic community, support the recommendations of this report and need to make our support more visible.

***The Federal government is currently working on the budget, so it is really critical that you send this note as soon as possible - please don't delay.*** We cannot possibly complain about a lack of investment in research if we cannot even send a letter to our Minister Parliament. Attached to this newsletter is a sample letter by Dr. Shoichet in which she has highlighted sections you can update with your own information prior to sending it to your MP.

Check this website to find the e-mail address for your MP: [Evidence for Democracy](#)

contact us by email at [membership.maut@mcgill.ca](mailto:membership.maut@mcgill.ca).

## CAUT's Parliament Hill Day

On November 23rd, several members of MAUT's Executive and staff participated in CAUT's annual Parliament Hill Day. Each year CAUT arranges for participants from academic staff associations across Canada to meet with MPs on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to communicate issues of broad importance. This year's messages were: 1) support for the recommendations of the Naylor Report and 2) opposition to suggestions originating from the publishing lobby to reduce fair use provisions of Canada's existing copyright law. This legislation is scheduled for review during 2017/18 and the publishing lobby is proposing changes which would introduce costs for educational use of materials that are now available free of charge.

I personally met with MP Alexandre Boulerice (NDP, Rosemont- La Petite-Patrie) along with Joseph Varga, MAUT's Professional and Legal Officer, who is a constituent of Boulerice's riding, and MP Francis Scarpaleggia (Liberal, Lac-Saint-Louis) with Joseph and with Calvin Howley, Vice President of Cape Breton University Faculty Association. I also met with the very effective Parliamentary Assistant of Christine Moore (NDP Abitibi-Temiscamingue) along with Amanda Burk (Vice President, Nipissing University Faculty Association) and MAUT's VP Internal, Petra Rohrbach. Each of the parliamentarians we met were receptive to the Naylor report's ringing endorsement of basic investigator-initiated research as the engine of large-scale scientific progress, and we received several helpful suggestions about how to contribute effectively to the adoption by the government of the Naylor Report's recommendation of significant reinvestment in basic research, which we passed on to Karl Belanger, CAUT's Policy Advisor.



We must all do everything we can to engage our MPs on this issue. Again and again we heard that presenting charts and figures and statistics are not going to have the impact we wish, with our stories showcasing the value of basic research being most

If you'd prefer to write your own letter from scratch, check out this website for suggestions and additional information: [Advocacy Toolkit](#)

Here again is a [link to the executive summary and the full report](#).

Let's get this done... our students and staff are depending on us.

**Terry Hébert,**  
**MAUT Past President**

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effective. I told the story of McGill Chemistry Professor Bernard Belleau whose work on nucleosides developed the current mainline therapeutic for AIDS, 3TC, with this basic research in chemistry having been initiated even before AIDS was discovered or recognized!

As such, if you know of a great example that shows the value of basic research tell it to your local MP and let them know you would be happy to share it with the Finance Committee during its pre-budget rounds across the country as part of its citizen consultation phase. The current government is not ill-disposed to basic science, but is under financial pressure from all sides and will formulate budget priorities based on perceived citizen concern, so please be sure to make your views known.

**Ken Hastings,**  
**MAUT VP Finance**

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Have an event to promote on the MAUT e-Newsletter? Send all details, including date, time, location, event title and contact information at least 10 days prior to the event to: [maut@mcgill.ca](mailto:maut@mcgill.ca). Check the [MAUT website](#) for the latest news, events, kudos and other happenings of interest.

