
MAUT

Council Meeting

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 25, 2013

McGill Faculty Club: 1:00 PM

Lunch with Principal Fortier 12:00-1:00 PM

Present:	
Executive:	K. Hastings, A. Shrier, B. Lennox, A. Saroyan, G. Mikkelson, C. Ragan, B. Reed
Council:	K. Hashimoto, A. Paré, H. Durham, A. Kirk, L. Kloda, L. Glass, P. Caines, M. Nahon, A. Moores, R. Sieber, K. GowriSankaran
Guests:	J. Galaty, E. Zorychta, J. Hurtubise
Regrets:	K. Siddiqi
MAUT Staff:	H. Kerwin-Borrelli, J. Varga

Special Lunch Meeting with new Principal Suzanne Fortier

K. Hastings welcomed McGill's new Principal Suzanne Fortier to this get-acquainted lunch meeting with Council. The Principal indicated that she had received brief biographies of the Council and Executive members and that she was pleased to have this opportunity to hear about issues of concern to MAUT and to share her views and her early impressions of McGill.

A. Saroyan, VP External, asked about the status of CREPUQ, which has recently undergone a major restructuring. The Principal responded that its mandate has been reduced. It will no longer be a lobby vehicle for universities in Quebec, but will focus on collecting data of value to its members, which include both the UQ system and the charter universities. A. Shrier asked whether the UQ system would be dismantled, as recently recommended in the Bissonnette-Porter report. S. Fortier noted that in a recent meeting with MESRST Ministre Pierre Duchesne the latter indicated that the government would not adopt this particular recommendation of the Bissonnette-Porter report. The UQ system is here to stay.

B. Reed, VP Communications, asked about the role of the university in the 21st Century, particularly as it concerns its function in the nurturing and development of young people. He referred to the traumatic events of November 10, 2011 at McGill which seemed to reflect a lack of communication. S. Fortier stated her view that that it is a key role of the university to bring new generations into an exciting intellectual environment and it is important for the administration to have meaningful exchanges with the members of the university community, including students.

A. Paré, Council member, commented that recent Town Hall meetings on the budget cuts gave the appearance of consultation but he felt there was little to show that the input from that consultation was heeded. He asked about the Principal's view about debating issues and coming to conclusions. S. Fortier commented that she intends to participate in discussions throughout the university to gather information about how departments work and that she will encourage wider debates and will look for opportunities and occasions for discussion within this challenging economic environment. The Principal referred to the Senate as a good place for debate on academic issues while at the same time noting that much of the work of Senate, including consultation and consensus-building, is done at the level of its committees.

G. Mikkelson, VP Internal, expressed concern that aspects of the current governance process have a top-down, rather than a democratic bottom-up approach and raised the possibility of a Board of Governors with a majority of internal, elected, members. The Principal felt that the primary role of the Board of Governors is stewardship with responsibility to the broader civic population that supports the university. Its stewardship necessitates an arm's length relationship, which could not exist if the majority of members were internal. Regarding the appointments of deans and vice principals she felt the community does play a role. In the case of a deanship, recommendation of candidates involves a process of consulting the relevant units.

P. Caines, Council member, expressed his concern that collegial interactions had over recent years been replaced by a corporate mindset. He referred to the appointment of deans and felt that there had been at least one case where consultation and recommendations by the unit were disregarded. He referred to the Council motion he proposes, along with K. Siddiqi, which calls for change to the current system of appointing deans by, for example, calling for selection committee to be elected by members of the unit in question, and by permitting members of the unit to discuss the various candidates. The Principal felt that support from the units was extremely valuable and referred to very positive outcomes of several searches during her term as VP Academic

at Queen's in which the candidates on the short list would meet the communities. At the same time she noted the value of keeping some conversations private, in order to arrive at the best result.

R. Sieber, Council member, asked about recent increases in administrative staff. The Principal responded that all administrative units took cuts in the recent budget crisis. The Principal expressed her view that the work of the administration is to support academics in their efforts to maximize the quality of research and teaching at McGill. The university needs administrators to accomplish this but it is an ongoing effort to achieve the optimum balance. R. Sieber commented that reporting is a heavy burden on academics. The Principal was very sympathetic to this concern. She referred to the steady increase over the years in the reporting requirements of the federal and provincial governments, and stressed that there were no make-work projects at McGill in terms of reporting.

C. Ragan, VP Finance, in relation to reporting requirements, commented that the introduction of new electronic forms for academics to fill out should be limited to one per quarter. He said that McGill does much that is right but that the increasing number of students in relation to academics and space was poor practice which results in a lower-quality academic experience for students. He is skeptical of the view that *Bigger is Better* and instead suggested *Fewer Students, More Faculty and More TA's*. The Principal likewise is not a believer in Bigger is Better. She referred to the recent experience of the double cohort in Ontario in which Queen's was one of very few universities that did not seek readily available expansion funding from the government. Avoiding this growth had not hurt Queen's one bit. The students that choose Queen's do so, not because it is a large university, but because it offers high-quality education. The same is true at McGill – it is quality, not quantity, that attracts students. Regarding size, there is a need for a certain critical mass, but careful attention must be paid to the ratios of academics and students and students and funding.

A. Kirk, Council member, commented about a 30% increase in engineering students and that during budget discussions staff was advised to *do more with less*. There was no resource allocation. S. Fortier commented on the challenge to find the right balance.

L. Kloda, Council member and Chair of the Librarians' Section, asked about the recent budget cuts and retirement incentive program and emphasized that the libraries must deal with the effect of 30 retirements, which means fewer people to support researchers. S. Fortier noted that the Administration is working on recalibrating redeployment issues since 250 people have taken voluntary retirements. This is recognized as a major challenge.

K. Hastings thanked Principal Fortier who left the meeting at 1:00 pm.

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

Following the departure of the Principal, CASC members E. Zorychta, J. Hurtubise and J. Galaty joined Council and K. Hastings called the meeting to order. The meeting was held in closed session following a prior e-vote of Council (13 in favor of a closed meeting and one against, with 14 votes received of a possible 19).

Council reviewed the Agenda. Under Other Business, B. Lennox proposed adding Communications, A. Paré, to add Advising and R. Sieber to add Travel Reimbursements. A. Saroyan moved to adopt these additions, Seconded by B. Lennox. The Agenda was approved.

1. CASC Caucus/Council Strategy Session

Council and CASC members discussed issues and strategies in relation to the upcoming September 30 CASC meeting where the implementation of the deficit-sharing provision of Pension Plan Amendment 24 was to be discussed.

K. Hastings referred to the MAUT Open Forum on Pension Issues held on September 24/13. He commented that at the Open Forum while there was a clear feeling that the employer should be solely responsible for plan

deficits, at the same time there was a consensus that MAUT should engage in discussions with the administration to attempt to minimize the impact of what would otherwise be unilateral imposition of the deficit-sharing provision of Amendment 24.

Council and guest CASC members had extensive discussion of diverse issues including: the extent of the deficit, the importance of Plan sustainability, Canadian Revenue Agency implications, the probable interest rate environment of the intermediate future, anticipated significant academic staff salary increases during each of the next three years, the participation of other employee groups within the pension plan, the mechanism of deficit-sharing, the time-scale over which deficit-sharing might extend, the situations existing at other universities, intergenerational effects within the pension plan, on the depth and possible mechanisms of MAUT consultation, and the role of retirees within the plan.

Based on these discussions the following plan was adopted as a guide for the September 30 CASC discussions:

There should be a sunset clause (3 years) on deficit-reduction contributions.

There should be a cap of approximately 2% of salary on any member's deficit reduction contribution.

Deficit-sharing contributions should not be age-graduated, but uniform.

The MAUT CASC caucus should insist that any specific proposals from the September 30 CASC meeting be brought to MAUT Council for discussion before final adoption.

2. Slate of MAUT nominees for University Committees

G. Mikkelson presented proposed slates for nine university committees developed by the *Working Group on MAUT nominees to University Committees* (consisting of G. Mikkelson, A. Saroyan, K. Hastings, with support from J. Varga and H. Kerwin-Borrelli)

These slates evolved from nominations, including self-nominations of Council members and the general MAUT membership. G. Mikkelson noted that the committee considered the balance across genders and faculties.

The proposal concerned the following committees:

Advisory Committee for the Nomination of a Principal,
Assessors for Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination,
Committee on Staff Grievances and Disciplinary Procedures,
Intellectual Property Appeals Committees,
Panel for the Investigation of Research Misconduct,
Principal's Awards for Administrative and Support Staff,
Standing Committee on Sabbatic Leaves,
University Appeals Committee
University Health and Safety Committee.

G. Mikkelson noted that the Committee discussed approving slates whose terms beginning with the academic or calendar year. The slate for the Advisory Committee for the Nomination of a Principal was referred to a later date, which left eight slates. L. Glass moved that Council accept the slates for these eight committees, and that appointments to the SBAC and CASC committees be considered separately. Seconded by B. Reed.

A. Kirk moved to table the motion on the committee slates until the next Council meeting to enable more discussion both of this issue at that time and more discussion of CASC strategy at the current meeting. (Council had interrupted the above-summarized discussion of CASC strategy to address the Committee memberships issue, and following tabling of the Committees discussion, returned to complete the CASC discussion)
Seconded by C. Ragan. NB: At this point, several Council members had left. Of the remaining fourteen, twelve voted in favor of tabling the last motion and two voted against. The motion passed.

3. Other Business - Communications

B. Lennox asked Council to reflect on recent messages from the VP Communications concerning the right to editorialize and the right to poll members concerning the invitation to the Provost to MAUT's Open Forum on Pension Issues. He said that the information that is sent out on the MAUTFORUM Listserv must be vetted by Exec.

A. Paré said that no other forum exists for members with dissenting views to speak out. K. Hastings acknowledged the need for another means of expression forum but that former VP Communications had consulted with Executive members before releasing the final version of a message.

There was a brief discussion in which the following points were raised: the MAUT listserv is the Association's official channel, elected Executive officers (including VP Communications) have official responsibilities, that another forum, such as the MAUT BLOG, could be used for dissenting opinions.

Members of Council asked that the Executive Committee take up this issue at its next meeting.

- Advisors

A. Paré noted that an Advisors' Working Group will bring a proposal to a future Council meeting.

4. Adjournment

A. Paré moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by L. Glass. The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.