
MAUT Council Meeting

MINUTES

Wednesday, December 11, 2013
McGill Faculty Club 12:00 noon – Gold Room

Present:	
Executive:	K. Hastings, B. Lennox, G. Mikkelson, C. Ragan
Council:	H. Durham, L. Glass, A. Kirk, A. Paré, M. Nahon, K. Siddiqi, L. Kloda, A. Moores, R. Sieber, K. Hashimoto
Regrets:	A. Shrier, A. Saroyan, P. Caines, K. GowriSankaran
MAUT Staff:	H. Kerwin-Borrelli, J. Varga
Guests:	O. Dyens, A. Walsh, B. Gillon, I. Henderson, A. Sherwin, A. Laywine, L-F Brodeur

K. Hastings called the meeting to order at 12:11 pm.

1. Adoption of Agenda

Council reviewed the previously circulated Agenda. There were no changes. C. Ragan moved to approve the Agenda. Seconded by A. Paré. The Agenda was approved by consensus, without objection.

2. Approval of Minutes

Council reviewed the draft Minutes of the May 8, 2013 Joint Council Meeting. B. Reed had sent additional text on the discussion concerning elections and co-opted members which had been incorporated into the draft Minutes. C. Ragan moved to accept the Minutes. Seconded by A. Paré. The Minutes were approved by consensus, without objection.

3. Remote participation in Council meetings

B. Lennox brought a polycom to the Council meeting, which was installed in the Gold Room. This enabled B. Reed in Barcelona to participate. R. Sieber thanked Council for setting up remote participation and noted that outside participants should always mention their names before beginning any discussion and that the presenter should indicate which item is being discussed and displayed on the screen.

4. Childcare subcommittee (A. Moores)

A. Moores referred to the Senate Memorandum [D13-32] on the creation of a Subcommittee on Family Care (JBSCE) which was presented by Associate Provost L. White on Dec 04/13, following the PGSS request for a university-wide committee. The document can be accessed at: http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-32_family_care_cover_memo_with_appendices_0.pdf

She referred to V. Conzon's Report on Childcare issues at McGill and noted that family care implications have surfaced with recent scheduling issues. She is chair of the MAUT ad hoc Committee on Day Care which has been active for three years and produced minutes and proposals. A. Moores stated (a) there should be a MAUT representative on the University subcommittee on family care, that she will apply for this position, and can forward data outlining childcare initiatives over the past three years. A. Moores also proposed that (b) MAUT should conduct a survey of its members concerning these issues. The current members of the MAUT ad hoc Committee on Childcare are: A. Moores and P. Rohrbach. K. Hastings proposed that A. Moores join the Senate Subcommittee and that MAUT provide input on the Committee's Terms of Reference and composition.

C. Ragan suggested that the MAUT Daycare survey be sent to all academic members of the McGill community. Though MAUT's primary responsibility is to members, the message could indicate that MAUT is looking out for the interest of all academic staff and this initiative could be important for recruitment efforts.

Audrey Moores inquired whether MAUT or the Senate subcommittee should conduct the survey. K. Hastings proposed that MAUT should form an internal subcommittee, initially comprised of A. Moores and P. Rohrbach, to recruit more members and to develop the survey. K. Hastings will ask Council for volunteers.

K. Siddiqi noted that MAUT could be more pro-active in this area and referred to earlier efforts to increase daycare availability. A. Moores noted that the MAUT ad hoc Committee on Daycare had met with various university groups including the Principal, has been involved in attempts to increase the number of slots at the McGill Childcare Centre, and that MAUT had donated \$3K to support research on a daycare initiative involving the RVH.

The discussion will continue at the next Council meeting.

5. Heightened French language proficiency requirements

K. Hastings noted the information from the New Faculty Orientation session in August 2013 stated that Québec has new and higher level French language proficiency requirements for Permanent Residency, which could require, for beginners, as much as 600 hours of French lessons. He asked Council for help and suggested organizing mentoring efforts to keep people on track. A. Moores noted major problems in day to day life as French courses could involve three evenings per week, three hours per course, and homework. She noted that academics will have great difficulty meeting research expectations, which will affect their tenure applications. The Provost's Office will pay for French language classes in January 2014. A. Kirk noted that French classes have been set up through McGill and information sent to academics. The case of pre-tenure academics, required to take up to 200 hours of language instruction, will be taken into consideration in their tenure applications. K. Hastings noted these are serious recruitment and retention issues. B. Lennox noted that if an academic failed to meet this requirement, the renewal of work permits would be problematic.

R. Sieber commented this is a huge problem and the same proficiency level is required by doctors and nurses who can re-sit the exam. L. Kloda noted the buddy system at the UdeM with academics recruits. She commented on the different experience when deans are hired. Money and effort is spent for private tutoring during working hours, which is not the experience of the average professor. M. Nahon suggested hiring TAs for this work. A. Kirk noted that the buddy system can help for conversational French. K. Hastings will request mentors and volunteers in the upcoming monthly report to address this issue. K. Hastings will circulate a note to Council asking for volunteers and write Provost Masi explaining this serious issue and request creative solutions including extending the tenure clock.

C. Ragan suggested that the French language requirement could be considered a violation of academic freedom and that CAUT should be involved.

There will be further discussion of this topic at subsequent meetings.

6. Classroom scheduling parameters (Ollivier Dyens, Anna Walsh)

Deputy Provost for Student Life and Learning Ollivier Dyens and Associate Registrar Anna Walsh attended the Council meeting as guests in order to provide an update on Classroom Scheduling Parameters. O. Dyens noted that his department is still working with this dossier and there have been modifications to the scheduling parameters based in part on his previous consultation with MAUT regarding childcare issues and research time. O. Dyens has asked for MAUT's assistance in the scheduling issue, noted the changes in the document, and that more emphasis has been placed on chairs' responsibilities.

The response of the Deputy Provost to the initial expressions of concern by MAUT and others regarding childcare blockoff restrictions has been well-received. An example is the following email from D. Titone which K. Hastings included in the Annotated Agenda for the December 11 Council meeting:

Dear colleagues,

I know that we often fail to read administration-related notes such as the one just sent by Julia, however, please permit me to focus your attention on the highly positive nature of what just happened, which was raised in our faculty meeting at the beginning of this term..

The administrative office in charge of course scheduling (Office for Student Life and Learning) listened thoughtfully and seriously to the concerns about child-care drop-off/pick-up restrictions voiced strongly and ably by MAUT, the McGill Senate Sub-Committee on Women, and they modified their policy on course scheduling to address those concerns.

Thus, there is no longer a hard-line, inflexible, top-down restriction on faculty having to choose between picking up vs. dropping off their children (or engage in other serious commitments) RE course scheduling. It appears that such decisions have again been given back to department chairs to work out.

As someone who was affected by this policy, I am proud and relieved that our administration listened seriously and took this action, and that MAUT and other key people in the community fought for faculty on this issue.

I give Ollivier Dyens and MAUT a *lot* of credit here...

B. Reed acknowledged the positive nature of the changes made and the request for assistance and emphasized that consultation is needed to prepare for next year. If accommodations are made when needed, these same academics will step in to help others and the chairs will coordinate. A. Paré appreciated the consultation and that the solution involves problem solving on many levels. He noted that as some colleagues "game" the system, chairs must do their jobs. He hopes the Deputy Provost will encourage chairs and deans to address these issues and not wait for protests from academic staff.

O. Dyens noted that at times some departments have requested blockoffs until 9:30 am possibly (a) due to increased enrollment issues and students' choices or (b) to accommodate TAs. O. Dyens will take these concerns into account but noted that by accommodating some, others are disadvantaged. M. Nahon proposed identifying the departments with large numbers of blockoffs,

bringing the data to the deans and explaining that the situation is unfair to other departments. O. Dyens asked for MAUT's continued input in resolving these issues.

L. Glass commented the situation is "mind-boggling" and what worked last year should have worked again. He proposed that some of the problems could lie with the software and that the scheduling committee take last year's lead and work with it. B. Lennox commented on the significant problems of room availability, as they are currently at capacity, so that increased enrolment may push a class out of rooms that were (just) large enough in previous years.

A. Walsh noted the system takes changes into account as long as rules are there and rooms are available.

R. Sieber commented on the need for cooperation, as one size cannot fit all and does not equal fairness. She suggested that academics could collaborate by arranging mutually complementary blockoffs and this would involve the community in solving the problem.

O. Dyens commented on a multi-pronged approach to involve deans, chairs, and academics concerning research time off.

K. Siddiqi commented on the recent positive steps but he noted that some chairs have been bullied by senior members within their departments and that there should be no tolerance. He suggested looking at the bottlenecks, finding solutions for small problems, and giving chairs more responsibilities.

A. Walsh noted that more information will be forthcoming in 2014. K. Hastings noted that dialogue is important and asked when and how MAUT can provide feedback. MAUT can orchestrate an on-going dialogue. It was agreed that O. Dyens would visit Council once each semester to maintain open communication.

7. Academic Freedom Statement (Brendan Gillon)

B. Gillon quoted from the Minutes of the Council Meeting on December 14/11 which stated:

M. Nahon proposed the following motion, which was seconded by M. Richard:

Motion on Academic Freedom.

Given the controversy that has arisen over the recently approved AUCC Statement on Academic Freedom and its implications for the exercise of academic freedom by McGill academics,

Given the absence of an explicit McGill policy to inform and provide guidance on academic freedom to the public and to the McGill academic community, and

Given the importance of having a clearly enunciated statement on academic freedom at the University,

Be it resolved that MAUT strike a committee charged with examining statements and policies on academic freedom at other Canadian universities (and if appropriate in other countries such as the US and the UK), reviewing recent exchanges over the AUCC statement on academic freedom, formulating a statement on academic freedom that will be presented to the University for consultation and eventual adoption at Senate.

B. Gillon noted this motion followed the CAUT Fall General Meeting 2011, which he attended with M. Nahon, M. Richard and J. Varga, and where the AUCC and CAUT statements on academic freedom were discussed. The members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Freedom are: B. Gillon [Chair] J. Aitkens, D. Cere, J. Galaty, and I. Henderson. The committee reviewed data from many sources including the FQPPU, UNESCO, collective agreements, statements from Canadian and American universities and McGill documents from the 1960s. A

draft of the statement was circulated on November 08/13, and is to be discussed at this December 11 Council meeting.

Draft Statement of Academic Freedom

by the MAUT Committee on Academic Freedom

members: Jane Aitkens, Daniel Cere, John Galaty, Brendan Gillon (chair) and Ian Henderson.

Academic freedom is central to McGill University's mission of advancing learning through teaching, scholarship and service to society.

The scholarly members of the university have the freedom to conduct research and disseminate its results, through teaching and publication, without being constrained by the imposition of any orthodoxy, political or disciplinary, without being directed to pecuniary ends and without being subject to punitive measures as a result of their academic pursuits. They may exercise this freedom in the service of both the university and the wider society by promoting and informing debate, encouraging independent thinking and critical reflection, preserving and disseminating knowledge and fostering innovation.

The exercise of academic freedom requires both good university governance and vibrant scholarly life. The former depends on the full participation of scholarly members in administration and governance, who in that setting retain the right of free expression, including the freedom to criticize one another, the university, its policies and its administration.

The university and its officers have a duty to protect the academic freedom of its scholarly community, both individually and collectively, from infringement by other members of the community as well as agents or agencies external to it. An essential element of academic freedom is the obligation of the university, its officers and its members to defend the community from the undue influence of governments, accreditation bodies, corporate and individual donors or societal pressures.

Finally, members of the university are, as citizens, entitled to participate in public forums and debates. In doing so, they should represent their views as their own and not as those of the university.

B. Reed commented that B. Gillon spoke about process, not substance and asked what key and main contentious issues were thrashed out. He referred to the Open Forum on Academic Freedom in February 2013 and asked what the Committee did with the feedback. C. Ragan asked how this draft statement differs from others.

B. Gillon referred to the Open Forum on Academic Freedom [Feb 08/13] where the agenda topics included the recent experience of the librarians at McGill, and how academic freedom interacted with funding agencies, donors, professional accreditation bodies, and private sector partnerships. The Committee took these issues into account.

A. Paré noted such a statement is an important part of academic life. L. Kloda said that academics would need to hear where this particular statement might fall short of the ideal. R. Sieber asked for clarification on the comment on pecuniary constraints, and noted that a larger view of academic freedom would address the dictates of granting agencies that tie funding to concrete deliverables. G. Mikkelson asked about the most important threats to academic freedom and suggested that in many cases these involve scientists. He noted that the AUCC statement tries to define what academic freedom “is” whereas the CAUT statement defines it as what it “includes”. B. Gillon noted the proposed MAUT statement does not “define” academic freedom, nor is it a laundry list of specific points that may not be valid in 10 – 15 years.

Council also noted some grammatical choices and made suggestions and K. Hastings asked Councilors to forward any additional comments to B. Gillon. The MAUT Committee on Academic Freedom will forward a revised draft to be considered for adoption at a subsequent Council meeting.

8. Business arising

Referendum on constitutional amendments from Fall General Meeting

K. Hastings noted that the Fall General Meeting not having reached quorum obliges us to present the proposed constitutional amendments to the membership in the form of a referendum. His plan was to use the Omnivox system to hold a referendum in early 2014.

Communications discussions at Executive Committee meetings

K. Hastings noted, and brought forward for Council’s information, that there has been active discussion at Executive Committee meetings of communications, of the role of the V-P Communications, and of the relationship between V-P Communications and the rest of the Executive Committee. The following motion was passed at the October 9, 2013 meeting *“Starting immediately, that no member of the Executive should send a significant message to the broad membership without having first brought it for consultation and general approval by the Executive Committee.”* (This issue has been on the Council agenda several times before, but was set aside due to time limitations.)

A related motion was passed at the November 27, 2013 Executive meeting, *“That the Executive Committee today reaffirms that MAUT is the publisher of the Newsletter and that no Newsletter be issued to its members by any means except after approval of the MAUT Executive.”*

These motions arose out of differing views of the autonomy of the V.P. Communications, and the propriety of including personal opinions in communications on official MAUT “channels”, such as the MAUTFORUM listserv and the Newsletter.

B. Lennox referred to three distinct messages to members, sent by VP Communications B. Reed, on the MAUTFORUM listserv that were contrary to the Association’s policy. During discussion of this point at Council it was noted that an open discussion forum would provide opportunities for communication of “personal” opinions that do not now exist.

A. Paré noted that the VP Communications is essentially autonomous and as editor of the Newsletter is charged with communicating to members. He asked if that meant the VP Communications has *carte blanche* or must have an integrated discussion and the Executive’s approval before the Newsletter goes out. G. Mikkelson noted that B. Reed requested Newsletter reports and vision statements on broader issues such as governance.

He felt that if the majority of Executive members objected to vision statements in the Newsletter, this would stifle communications. B. Lennox stressed that the Newsletter is published by the Association and that the VP Communications is the editor. Statements on important topics must be vetted by the publisher, as represented by the MAUT Executive. R. Sieber commented on the need to rebuild trust with members, that different points of view are important to communicate, and that top-down decisions are not fruitful.

Noting the limitation of time, K. Hastings proposed that discussion of this topic be continued at a future Council meeting.

Council moved into **Closed Session**

12. Adjournment

K. Hastings called for the meeting to be adjourned. R. Sieber moved this motion, seconded by K. Hashimoto, approved by consensus, without objection. The meeting adjourned at 2:41 pm.