

**MAUT Annual Report 2015-16**  
**VP Communications and the MAUT Communications Committee**

**MAUT Communications Committee**

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**Overview**

This year represented a consolidation year for the Communications Committee and the VP Communications with the implementation of new operational policies for publishing the Newsletter and the completion of the MAUT Website update. We have established an effective information and workflow management system that connects the VP Communications through the Administrative Officer (AO) Honore Kerwin-Borrelli to the Web/Newsletter Editors (Gen Gore, Andrea Miller-Nesbitt and Jane Aitkens), and the ListServ. This past year we worked with the Membership Committee and tried to coordinate our efforts to provide communications support for their activities and initiatives. The two committees met jointly in the fall of 2015, which was highly valuable, however somewhat late in terms of planning. We enthusiastically recommend a joint meeting of the Membership and Communications Committees over the late spring/summer to set up an annual strategy and prepare for a Newsletter very early in the fall semester. This year we also held a forum on Communications and Media Relations that was run by Angela Regnier, CAUT Communications Officer. This was a highly valuable meeting that addressed many important issues and in particular the relevance of social media as a communications tool, which is a direction to consider in moving forward. A brief update on the main aspects focused upon this past year is provided below.

**Website:** This year, efforts have been made to resolve some outstanding issues regarding the website. All of the standing committees have been reviewed and updated thanks to the efforts of VP Internal Alenoush Saroyan. In general, following the first joint Council meeting in May when revisions to committee compositions are announced, updates should be posted on the MAUT website. This past year also saw a major update concerning the MAUT Constitution and By-Laws thanks to the combined efforts of Ken Hastings (VP Finance), Marc Richard and Joseph Varga (MAUT Legal Counsel). We continue to post announcements, council minutes and pictures of events. There's a separate page for News and Reports, a section on Current Issues and finally, separate pages devoted to the MAUT Librarians' Section and to MAUT Retirees. The MAUT website is hosted at McGill free of charge. However, this imposes certain restrictions and there could be a review of other options, including moving to a website hosted outside of McGill at a cost that will have to be determined.

**Newsletter:** This is the second year of our electronic MAUT Newsletter. During this past year we published three Newsletters that provided headlines and short introductions with links to more complete stories and reports on the MAUT website or other websites. We

followed the guidelines for publishing the Newsletter that we established last year (see annual report 2014-2015). In brief, the VP Communication assembles a first rough draft of the Newsletter from information submitted to the MAUT Administrative Officer (AO). This is sent back through the AO to the editors (Genevieve, Andrea and Jane) who use Envoke to assemble a first real draft. After review by the Executive the Newsletter is finalized and sent out to MAUT members by the ListServ. This approach results in the Newsletter being generated at no cost to MAUT. The Newsletter has now become the official Newsletter of MAUT. We also agreed that the Fall Newsletter should be sent to all McGill Faculty and not just MAUT members, as an incentive to consider joining MAUT.

**ListServ:** The VP Communications has historically been charged with oversight of the ListServ and makes routine decisions as to what should be sent out through the ListServ by the AO. The AO checks with the VP Communications before anything is released. It has been the policy of the VP Communications to check with the MAUT Executive before sending out information that might be considered contentious. However, there has been some discussion as to whether the ListServ should be used to distribute individual members' opinions on contentious issues. We have always maintained a balanced perspective and have only presented positions or policies adapted by MAUT Council or Executive to avoid the appearance of being partisan. This is an important issue that deserves further discussion.

**Communications Forum:** A half-day Communications and Media Relations Forum was held February 3, 2016 at the McGill Faculty Club. The presenter was Angela Regnier, CAUT Communications Officer who ran an excellent workshop that provided important perspectives and engaged a full house of 15 MAUT members. She presented information on analyzing our communications strategies, drafting a message, using social media and website considerations. It was evident that MAUT does not engage the public outside McGill, as does CAUT, nor do we have much influence on policy makers. In terms of communications per se, Angela highlighted the need to develop a communications plan for the next 18 months and to work on crafting messages for members and others. It was suggested that we update our website to increase the abundance of images and reduce the text. Also, Angela suggested that we find some way to incorporate a customer engagement tool and perhaps engage members in an evaluation of communications. In this regard, she suggested using social media to communicate with members and to establish a Facebook page hand-in-hand with a MAUT Twitter account. Angela also highlighted the importance of face-to-face contact with MAUT members that could include future workshops as well as engaging members at the level of academic departments, an initiative already started by the Membership Committee.