

MAUT • APBM

McGill Association of University Teachers Association des professeur(e)s et
bibliothécaires de McGill

SPRING GENERAL MEETING April 25, 2014

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:12 pm. Ken Hastings, President, welcomed members to the MAUT Spring General Meeting, reminded them to sign the attendance record, identify themselves and indicate their status as full, associate, or retired members prior to questions and comments.

A total of 72 attendees signed in including 53 full members, 15 retired members, and 2 guests and the 2 MAUT Officers. The quorum for General Membership Meetings of 100 full members was not achieved.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Members reviewed the Agenda. There were no changes and the Agenda was adopted.

M. Richard / A. Kirk Adopted

In his welcome address, K. Hastings noted the change in MAUT Officers and Council members following the 2014 Elections. R. Janda, the Chief Returning Officer, will present a brief summary of the election results and introduce the Executive and Councilors for 2014-2015. At the conclusion of this meeting, Bruce Lennox will be the new MAUT president.

K. Hastings explained the different approach for this meeting since written reports were circulated previously to the membership along with the MAUT Newsletter [Vol 39 #1]. Each reporting officer would deliver a brief overview of highlights, leaving time for questions and for discussion of larger issues. He noted that A. Shrier, Past-President, would arrive shortly and that C. Ragan, VP Finance had sent regrets. K. Hastings will present their reports. If there are questions, they will be forwarded to those Officers for responses. He also noted that the process for adoption of the Statement on Academic Freedom would follow the conservative procedures normally applied in the case of constitutional amendments. Because a quorum of members is not present, the issue will be discussed at this meeting, but adoption per se would take place by a subsequent referendum of the membership. K. Hastings also invited members to attend a reception immediately following the meeting.

3. Minutes of the November 15, 2013 Fall General Membership Meeting

The Minutes were posted on the MAUT website for review. G. Mikkelson and M. Richard will forward their minor changes. With these forthcoming corrections, the Minutes were adopted.

H. Etemad/ A. Kirk Adopted

4. Report of the Nominating Committee on 2014 MAUT Election (Richard Janda)

R. Janda, Chair of the Nominating Committee, reported that 282 voters participated, compared to 269 in 2013. He presented the names of the 5 newly-elected Councilors: Jeremy Cooperstock, David Covo, Tim Moore, Niky Kamran, and Kaleem Siddiqi. All open Executive positions were filled by acclamation: President Elect (David Lowther), V.P. Finance, (Chris Ragan), V.P. External (Axel Van den Berg), V.P Internal (Alenoush Saroyan), and V.P Communications (Al Shrier). R. Janda presented a slide showing the names and faculties of all members of the 2014/15 Council and Executive, including constituency Councilors Tara Mawhinney (Librarians' Section) and Kohur GowriSankaran (Retirees' Section).

5. Reports of Officers

President (Ken Hastings)

K. Hastings noted that all reports have been circulated. He reported on the series of academic salary increases that will take place over the next three years. He noted these were steps in the right directions to bring McGill salaries to a higher level among the U-15 group of Canadian research-intensive universities. He reported on the pension plan deficit-sharing initiative that began on January 1/2014, as specified in Amendment 24c of the McGill University Pension Plan and as recommended by the D'Amours Report.

K. Hastings spoke about Principal Suzanne Fortier and the high level of transparency she has introduced, as exemplified by posting her employment contract on her website. The Principal has also circulated summaries of the Board of Governors' meetings and has released her expense reports. He noted that the Principal has prepared and circulated plans which will guide her efforts as Principal over the coming years. On May 14th, MAUT will be hosting the first of what is hoped to be a regular series of "Coffee and Conversation" events with the Principal to which all MAUT members will be invited.

President-Elect (Bruce Lennox)

B. Lennox remarked his role as incoming President was to support the Executive and current President. He commented on the many portfolios that MAUT has handled and on which has taken a leadership role. His article in the Newsletter outlined the need for MAUT to be adaptable and agile following the provincial government's funding cuts. Academics will be tasked with managing changes, doing the best job and sharing best practices. He mentioned situations where class sizes have gone from 100 to 600.

B. Lennox is looking forward to discussions on these and other aspects affecting academics and arriving at solutions.

Past-President (Alvin Shrier)

Members can read Al Shrier's article in the latest Newsletter for updates.

VP Internal (Greg Mikkelson)

G. Mikkelson forwarded a summary of his text.

Democracy and transparency are keys to collegial governance. Another, I would argue, is solidarity – both among faculty and between faculty, other staff, and students. Unfortunately, declining membership in MAUT over the past several years seems to indicate declining solidarity among faculty. I suspect the McGill salary policy – which has resulted in rapidly widening gaps in pay between "rich" and "poor" faculties; and which, through the annual "merit" exercise, pits individual professors within departments against each other in a zero-sum game – has contributed to these declines. I, along with other members of Council, have therefore begun raising these issues in Council for discussion, which will hopefully lead to wider consultation with the MAUT membership, and subsequent action.

G. Mikkelson also quoted from his articles in the April 2014 Newsletter. He referred to a Gini Index with salary inequality data on the tenure-track professors in the 9 biggest faculties at McGill over a period from 2006 to 2013. He noted that more discussions are needed and that the CASC members should discover and report on fuller analyses on inequality that has increased over time and explain whatever rationale was used. He noted that MAUT members should continue A. Paré's work on the pros and cons of the merit exercise which he believes undermines performance and creativity.

M. Richard referred to the FGM held by the MAUT-LS. M. Richard said the merit exercise in the Libraries has been problematic for the last 10 years. The Librarians are currently trying to improve the process, with mixed results. The new MAUT-LS Executive still envisions serious problems with merit in the Libraries. He remarked that the new MAUT Executive could address these issues

K. Hastings emphasized that there are divergent views within MAUT on many issues, including salary policy, that all topics are on the table, and there will be further discussion of salary policy issues.

VP External (Alenoush Saroyan)

Alenoush Saroyan referred members to her article in the MAUT Newsletter which outlined news from both the provincial and national perspectives.

Concerning the provincial scene, there has recently been a merging of the Ministries [Education]. She reported on several working groups [*chantiers*] that resulted from the Québec Higher Education Summit of February 2013. These included: (a) The Legal Framework of Universities – Bissonnette-Porter Report; (b) a Charter for Universities - Corbo Report and (c) a working group on University Financing that is expected in June 2014.

The FQPPU organized a focus group on academics' working conditions and the outcome is expected to be a picture of the environment in Québec universities.

Concerning the national scene, J. Turk is stepping down as CAUT's Executive Director and will be replaced by David Robinson. Library and Archives Canada has withdrawn its controversial Code of Conduct and many constraints on staff have been lifted. According to the CAUT website, tuition at McGill is the 2nd lowest of Québec universities.

VP Finance (Christopher Ragan)

Members can read C. Ragan's report on MAUT finances in the April 2014 Newsletter.

Chair, Librarians' Section (Lorie Kloda)

L. Kloda reported that the Librarian's Section has a total of 52 active and 21 retired members. 78% of the librarians at McGill are members of the Association. The Professional Issues Committee [PIC] of the Librarians' Section surveyed members' perception of the support provided by the University for their own research. The PIC developed a set of recommendations for the orientation of new hires. Discussions are underway to implement these two initiatives. The Librarians' Section will hold its Spring General Meeting on April 29th. Tara Mawhinney is the incoming Chair.

Chair, MAUT Retirees (Kohur GowriSankaran)

K. GowriSankaran reported that N. Acheson, who has served on the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee [SBAC], has been diligently monitoring the benefits accorded to the retirees by the University. K. GowriSankaran commented that the University has been "pinching pennies" on the backs of the retirees.

The MAUT Council has supported the formation of a "universal retirees association for McGill employees", possibly to be named: MURA – McGill University Retirees Association. K. GowriSankaran anticipated that this association will soon be in place. A committee has been formed to work on the MURA Constitution and Bylaws.

There have been several activities for retirees. These included the luncheon get-togethers at the Faculty Club and Tadjia Hall. There have been several outings: (a) a visit to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, (b) a jazz concert at Bougie Hall; and (c) a bird watching excursion. A trip to the Morgan Arboretum is planned later this semester. K. GowriSankaran thanked D. Canning for planning these events. He also thanked D. Thomas-Edding for managing the very popular Bridge Games on alternate Tuesdays.

6. Open Discussion Items

Statement of Academic Freedom

K. Hastings briefly reviewed the events leading up to the formation of the MAUT Committee on Academic Freedom and the adoption by Council on April 23 2014 of a Statement of Academic Freedom (circulated to members prior to the Spring General Meeting). The long range goal is to present the statement to the University for adoption as a university statement of academic freedom. The intention was to bring the Statement forward at the Spring General Meeting for endorsement by the membership. However, in the absence of a quorum of members at this meeting, affirmation of the adoption of the Statement would be done by a referendum of the MAUT membership. However, the present meeting does provide an opportunity for discussion of the Statement and K. Hastings opened the floor for comments.

[Note: The consultation period for the MAUT Referendum on the Statement of Academic Freedom took place from May 21st to May 28th, 2014. There were 204 respondents and the Statement was accepted by an 87.7% majority.]

M. Richard thanked the committee for its work and inquired how MAUT would proceed to have this statement adopted as a McGill document. In his view, the best fit for the document would probably be at the level of either a regulation or a policy; in either case, Senate would be the body to which such a regulation or policy would be brought for adoption. The University Statutes, which can only be amended by the Board of Governors, are at a level that is too high

to fit the statement; conversely, procedures and guidelines have a level that is too low, and they operate mainly at the faculty level.

Ian Henderson, member of the Committee on Academic Freedom, thanked the Association for the opportunity to serve that role. He noted the key feature of the statement in the opening few words: *Academic freedom is central to McGill University's mission of advancing learning through teaching, scholarship and service to society.* He noted that everything else in the text enhanced the opening statement and was a factor why the Committee recommended a statement rather than a set of regulations. The statement was not to preclude abuses; such a document could end up very lengthy. The document, once accepted by MAUT, would be brought to Senate and the idea was to keep the text at a minimum. I. Henderson referred to a situation at McMaster and remarked the MAUT statement will not prevent attacks but the opening line presents the intent of the entire text.

G. Mikkelson inquired about the last sentence in the statement: K. Hastings read: *Finally, the scholarly members of the university are 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.* G. Mikkelson stated that he voted against the statement at Council because he felt this was an unnecessary and potentially dangerous statement.

E. Zorychta referred to the issue of McGill's name and the use of asbestos in third-world countries. It happened that a McGill professor testified that the practice was safe. It was not made clear that the professor was speaking for himself and not on behalf of the University. Consequently, the McGill name was used to back up claims that asbestos use was safe. She noted the importance of keeping this last sentence. I. Henderson emphasized that professors have to be clear when publicizing their own views and not those of the University. The statement is careful to address such concerns. N. Acheson asked about the reason for using the term "scholarly members" and whether it would include students. I. Henderson noted the statement affirms the fact that academic freedom extends to the widest members of the university. The term was deliberately chosen as a "designator" a term that does not appear in any University regulations and could potentially include students.

M. Richard raised a procedural point. The statement has been debated but it will not formally be adopted here because of the lack of quorum; instead, it will go to a referendum for adoption or not. If the plan thereafter is to bring MAUT's statement to Senate, then a process for doing so has to be initiated. Once at Senate, the statement will be open to debate and possible revision before adoption.

B. Haskell remarked the term "collegial governance with the full participation of scholarly members" and also "respect for the institutional autonomy of the University, does not, however, justify violation of academic freedom within the University itself". She commented the Administration says it is autonomous from the government, but there could be restrictions.

H. Etemad asked if MAUT would be presenting a normative or a positive document for Senate to approve. He referred to the first sentence and asked if it began a normative discussion or was an agreement. He mentioned the third sentence "requiring collegial governance". The fifth paragraph "the University and its officers have a duty to protect the academic freedom of its scholarly community", which means dictating that they should. He inquired if MAUT was setting norms. K. Hastings commented that collegial governance does exist at McGill, though it is by no means perfect.

I. Henderson stated the document, as written, is not meant to be the voice of MAUT but of the University. The committee recommends that MAUT sponsor the statement to make it become authoritatively raised in Senate. The Committee drafted the document in the voice of Senate. M. Richard commented it is not a regulatory document; it is more of a policy. In Senate, the Administration is answerable to Senate on how it applies policy. If the statement is adopted as a policy, the Administration could be called to account in Senate on its application of the statement.

Communications mechanisms and member engagement

K. Hastings noted the report of the Communications Committee is included in the annotated agenda. As President, he apologized to the ListServ for the launching of the Alternate MAUTFORUM, which upset many members.

The intent of the Communications Committee is

- (1) to engage members by using the right mechanism and
- (2) to maximize member engagement in the larger sense.

K. Hastings' statement referred to an internal dialogue with and among members. The ListServ cannot be invasive and the Communications Committee will research modalities on different communication mechanisms. There must be an easy opt-out function and an option for a digest. The traffic will initially be moderated. He mentioned the MAUT Blog that is non-functioning. Another question raised was whether the Newsletter is still useful in an electronic age.

T. Hébert commented that nobody liked the way the Open Forum set out. It lasted 1 day. Communications have to be two-way. What needs to be revised is an opt-out mechanism, a button. He proposed a weekly digest for members. He noted the website is useful as a repository for links. He questioned the need for a Newsletter if members get up-to-date information. K. Hastings noted there is plenty of room for more discussion.

Audrey Moores noted that a discussion forum exists on "My Courses" and stressed the need to have this conversation. Computer Science developed a tool for such discussions over 25-years ago. There must be an environment for conversation, a hierarchy, and a set up for a weekly or daily digest. If you are on the site and see "conversation on academic freedom", then members can follow that link.

N. Acheson noted that looking for feedback is a two-way street. The Newsletter was not designed to be an annual report. There can be editions of two or three pages each with thoughtful discussions and these can stimulate discussions. The Newsletter is an electronic document in PDF format. N. Acheson has asked for a Retiree Members' article in the Newsletter.

G. Mikkelson noted the Newsletter makes Executive Officers and Committee Chairs accountable by submitting reports which lead to broader communications. A. Shrier, as the new VP Communications, will call a meeting of the Communications Committee early in his mandate. His intentions are to re-invigorate the website and the Newsletter

Daycare issues at McGill – Results of MAUT Survey

Audrey Moores referred to recent applications for additional daycare spaces in 2012 and 2013. MAUT supported these applications and emphasized there should be a subsidized CPE close to

where people work, not where they live. Recently MAUT used Lime Survey software to survey the membership and get a sample from the MAUT membership. The survey took place from March 17th to 31st, 2014. The objectives of the survey were to find out the following information:

- Do MAUT members currently need daycare?
- Have MAUT members needed daycare?
- Do MAUT members perceive that finding a daycare solution is **easy** for them?
- How do MAUT members feel about **McGill's action** in this regard?
- How do MAUT members feel about a **non-subsidized solution** at McGill?
- Assess the **dynamics** of the situation by differentiating members with current daycare needs and members with past daycare needs.

The slides projected the questions and options and the responses were presented as graphs. She noted there were 20 pages of comments from 288 responders. Comments concerning the need for McGill to do better were consistently made. Selected comments at the end of the survey emphasized the importance of McGill to provide this service for its academics. MAUT was also encouraged to take the lead in this issue. B. Tallant commented on the difficulties she faced as she tried to get her children in daycare over forty years ago. She commented on the recent changes at the Royal Victoria Hospital and its existing daycare for its employees and that it could be expanded to accommodate academics at McGill. She mentioned the positive tie-in to the new Principal and the possibility of a teaching-research lab. She mentioned Educational and Occupational Therapy students could be involved in a creative daycare educational initiative.

D. Titone thanked A. Moores for undertaking this survey and emphasized that daycare is everybody's issue. She is on the Membership Committee and emphasized that daycare should be on MAUT's agenda to make it a relevant topic and increase membership.

C. Schultz is President of the McGill CPE and a member of the Board of Directors. She remarked the two failed applications and emphasized that having a daycare in the Royal Vic is advantageous for McGill. There are currently 60 spaces at the Royal Vic that are moving to the MUHC Super Hospital. There would have to be renovations for more spaces and expansion is necessary as there are 800 children on McGill's waiting list. It would be interesting to have MAUT's support for daycare spaces in McGill's proposal for the future Royal Vic. In reference to a comment made about the potential research value of daycare populations, M Richard asked about protocols on experimentation with human subjects. C. Schultz emphasized adherence to research ethic and the support from the Board of the CPE. D. Titone noted there is no research on children.

S. Turner [Senate Sub-Committee on Women] stated that the proposal for a two-year family resource coordinator was recently rejected. She noted this position would be an important resource for new people at McGill. She is interested in seeing what funds could be leveraged to support this position and will resubmit the application as a means to expand what is available at McGill.

7. Adjournment

K. Hastings introduced Bruce Lennox as the new President for the 2014-2015 year. B. Lennox thanked K. Hastings for his service over the past year and referred to summaries of his efforts

and persistence. K Hastings has always asked for feedback concerning communications and that MAUT needs to do a better job at communicating with its members. It has been a very busy year. He referred to K. Hastings' summary in the Newsletter. He looked forward to working with him as Past-President.

A. Saroyan moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by A. Van den Berg. There were no objections. The meeting adjourned at 2:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Honore Kerwin-Borrelli
MAUT Administrative Officer