



MAUT – APBM Newsletter

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McGILL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS
ASSOCIATION DES PROFESSEUR(E)S ET BIBLIOTHECAIRES DE MCGILL

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Editor's Remarks

Bruce Shore has now begun his term as MAUT President, and with this, our last newsletter of the 1999-2000 academic year, he brings us an extensive report on the past year's activities and plans for the coming year. One theme that emerges, and bears repeating, is the degree to which we have benefitted from the tireless work of a number of our members on important matters such as intellectual property and salary policies. Among many effective contributors, past Presidents Myron Frankman and Barbara Hales have been especially active on our behalf.

Next, Jodie Hebert reviews the state of the various plans covered by the staff benefits committee. As Jodie notes, substantial changes are under way with respect either to the costs or the administration of various of the plans, and new information will be distributed shortly. Please get in touch with a member of the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee if you have questions or concerns after looking at that new information booklet.

Finally, on a matter of particular interest to your Editor, please do send in as soon as possible your ballot indicating your approval, or disapproval, of the proposed changes to the MAUT Constitution; remember that approval of the changes requires not only a majority in favour, but also a sufficiently large number of ballots received.

– John Galbraith

Report from the President

For the final newsletter of the 1999-2000 academic year, I thought it would be useful to give the membership an overview of some of the main items that have occupied MAUT over the past year and that are continuing or emerging as issues for the year ahead.

Intellectual Property Policy

Things must be getting better in some ways around McGill when one of the big stories of the year—a story with the prospect of a reasonably happy ending—is partly how we shall share the wealth. The wealth in question, hoped-for revenue from inventions and software, so far derives from a few ideas per decade, but the optimism is encouraging. Nevertheless, the most visible general issue addressed by the MAUT Executive and Council this year has been the revision of the Intellectual Property Policy. In 1999 a revised policy proposal was put on the table by Vice-Principal (Research) Bélanger. MAUT Past-President (at the time,

■ Reminder

Don't forget to send in your ballot
on the proposed changes
to the MAUT Constitution
before June 30

■

President) Myron Frankman was alerted to several serious problems with the proposed new policy, ranging from the collapsing of categories (copyright and patent) that are governed by different sets of law, to provisions that would declare the creative products of members of the University as the University's property. This, perhaps more than the wealth some inventions might generate, is a concern to us all. The entire community owes Myron an enormous debt of gratitude for leading first an MAUT Committee and then chairing a joint MAUT and Administration committee that has had immense success and is major testimony to the value of the consultative process. Vice-Principal Bélanger has been open to suggestions, but they had to be made and argued point by point. This task has overtaken Myron's year, but as this newsletter was drafted a few days before the special May 31st meeting of Senate called to deal with the IP Policy, there was only one issue left about which the Committee had proposed an amendment, namely the definition of ownership prior to agreeing to McGill's right of first offer to commercialize software or an invention. The most critical changes have been won. For example, copyright is totally unaffected—it belongs to authors, the division of anticipated revenues is not distorted in favor of the University, course material that might be posted on a web or burned on a CD may be used within the University but not exploited for profit and ownership remains with the author. There are a couple of loose ends that will not likely be resolved at this time, for example, the right of the University to first offer with regard to commercialization rather than the right only to make a competitive bid (as some of our members have proposed). Review and appeal mechanisms were also added to the proposed policy, assuring opportunities to make further improvements as needed in an area that is evolving rapidly.

Salary Policy and Equity

Behind the scenes, considerable progress was made in salary discussions for professors. Under the leadership of Barbara Hales, the MAUT members of the Academic Salary Policy Subcommittee dealt with two issues. The year before, ASPSC achieved agreement that we must catch up with the mid-range of other major research universities in Canada, and eventually aim for the upper part of that range. We started at the bottom. The process began with national surveys of salaries and benefits, and action has begun with salaries. The Administration has also been eager to catch up the "merit year" that we have been behind, and MAUT agreed that it is inconvenient and confusing to be giving increases based on performance from 6 to 18 months prior. MAUT was also insistent that a part of annual salary increases be across-the-board (either fixed amounts or percentages or a combination of the two) and that the amounts available for merit-based increases are sufficient to ensure that the average merit-based award is around \$1350 when the maximum is \$2000. The first global amount proposed by the Administration (an envelope totaling about 4% of the salary mass) was rejected, but a subsequent offer of 5% met the above conditions and achieved several current objectives. We now anticipate a 1% across-the-board increase and a 2% pool for merit-based increases relative to the 1998-1999 year and paid starting in December, 2000. These amounts will be retroactive to June 1, 2000, and a merit-based increase of 2% of the new amount will then be applied for the 1999-2000 year. This will not be retroactive, and it will be paid starting December 1, 2000 (just six months after the year under review). By this process and from that point forward we shall be basing the merit-driven part of salary increases on the work year just concluded, the exercise

will be conducted early in the autumn, and the increases will be paid starting in December of the same year (rather than June of the following year). At present, since payment only occurs two Decembers later, faculty members need to wait an extra six months to get their raises. The dual merit-driven component will this year also double the envelope of funds (from \$100,000 to \$200,000) available for redressing salary anomalies either by categories or in individual cases. Everyone at the table senses, however, that this envelope eventually needs to be more than doubled again and permanently. Very important to monitoring our progress toward the salaries paid in other major Canadian universities, the Administration

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has agreed to conduct another salary survey. The recently presented budget estimated that we are still about 5% away. That may be an underestimate in the face of some notable increases elsewhere this year, but we have received the public commitment of the University to address

this matter of compensation resolutely: not to let us fall further behind, and to catch up. For two years running, this commitment has been met and it is explicit in the introduction to the latest University budget. MAUT is extremely grateful to Barbara Hales who just completed her three year service as President-Elect, President, and Past-President. Barbara has led our ASPSC Delegation and will do so for another year.

In the year ahead ASPSC will be looking at a number of issues already on the rolling agenda, for example, whether or not we are in fact catching up, at restoring promotional increases at the point of promotion to the rank of Professor, part-time faculty compensation, pay equity at a global level, and pay equity at the level of individual anomalies. We may also need to address benefits as a component of an overall compensation package (not all of ours are the best in Canada by a long measure), criteria for promotion to the rank of Professor, real starting salaries (not scale minima—the most salient element in earnings across a career is actual starting salary), and the whole question about the philosophy behind merit-driven salary increases and how best to make any such increases more “user-friendly.” New items always manage to find a way onto the ASPSC agenda, and suggestions are welcome at any time for issues to address.

Equity

Salary equity is being addressed on several fronts. MAUT convened and conducted the election of faculty-member representatives to the new provincially mandated Equity Committee. This committee is required to operate under conditions of some confidentiality but we and they are well aware that for it to have any impact under the legislation we need to identify—in concert with all groups of employees at McGill—categories of

employees and compare the comparable amongst these categories in terms of gender-related salary treatment. In order to be designated as female-dominated, an employee group must be composed of 60% or more female members. In some parts of the University this is very difficult to do, but among MAUT members it applies very clearly to Librarians, and some combination may be possible that places Nursing, Physical and Occupational Therapy, Human Communication Disorders, and perhaps all or parts of Education into identifiable groups to which the ensuing norms can be applied. Only such identified groups can ultimately benefit from these legislated adjustments. We shall have to see how much benefit can be derived from this process for MAUT members. The law allows five years to make adjustments once the need is determined, the adjustments are made at the group level, and the institution can request a delay of a further five years to implement the revisions.

The second front is a sustained by a special equity task force that is trying to deal with gender differences in salaries. These are harder to pin down at group

MAUT APBM Newsletter

The *MAUT APBM Newsletter* is published monthly during the academic year, by the McGill Association of University Teachers, to keep all members informed of concerns and activities.

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levels because of differences in gender distributions in different disciplines, years of service, numbers at different ranks, etc. Two solution paths are possible, one at the policy level, and another at the level of dealing with individual anomalies. The largest contributor to later salary differences at the individual level, whether or not one considers gender, is starting salary. The difficulty in analyzing these thoroughly is that starting salaries are not available on the University's computerized database for the majority of professors and librarians, because the data base is not old enough, and this information has not systematically been recorded anywhere except in the letter of appointment.

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This task force is directly represented in MAUT's five members of the Academic Salary Policy Subcommittee, and the topic is raised at the ASPSC meetings. We are not imminently close to a resolution of the equity issue. The good news is that the anomaly reserve funds will be doubled this year. This may therefore be a good year to make a request for an adjustment

of salary based on suspected anomalous salary. The presently available means for redressing such anomalies depends totally on the support of your Chair and Dean in forwarding the request to the Vice-Principal (Academic). If you experience roadblocks in your attempt to get a fair hearing on such a request, please do call MAUT. We look forward to having more to say about systematic rather than ad hoc means of redress of inequitable or anomalous low salaries in the months ahead.

Academic Renewal and Merit-Driven Salary Increases

As the representative body of professors and librarians at McGill, MAUT's mission includes promoting policies that respect the well-being of our current academic staff and also to ensure continuing and growing opportunities for employment of professors and librarians. Our discussions with the Administration on the need for academic renewal have found us in considerable agreement. These have been conducted essentially through ASPSC. Several details remain to be addressed, but those are not presently matters of dispute; they simply have not been explored. One remaining impediment to renewal is the deduction from unit budgets of the former “merit” component plus 10% of a retired professor's salary. The principle that some such funds need to be recycled has not been re-examined in detail. The deduction of an earned “merit” component of salary makes the retirement of a colleague with an excellent merit history a greater burden on a department. The other problem is that there is no longer any “merit pool”; it was never enough in the past to pay the annual merit-based increases but the number of senior retirements expected in the few years ahead could drastically reverse that. We need to review the principle itself and the use of any such funds, and we now have a

confusion in the salary structure and nomenclature that perhaps should be resolved: there are merit-driven salary increases (so-called “merit pay”), there is no “merit pool,” but merit-based portions of salary disappear from unit budgets at retirement. If a budget-line “claw back” can still be justified at retirement, providing for a less ad hoc salary recovery scheme that also ensures a minimum left in the budget (e.g., some point in the Associate Professor range) upon a normal or delayed retirement might bring logical consistency and help ensure a smooth process of replacement and recruitment. The Administration has been consistent in its commitment to renewal, to regenerating the position losses of recent years, and recruitment at upper as well as entry ranks. This has been very welcome.

Among the emerging topics, merit-driven or performance-based pay is on the front burner. ASPSC has recently kept a part of the annual increase separate from merit-driven decisions; more generally, annual increases need to be handled in a way that avoids presuming that a sizable number of the contributions are without merit, and the meaning of a zero merit award needs to be examined and limited so that it is not the result of trying to divide the envelope. We need to examine whether or not it makes sense or is even possible to evaluate the “apples and oranges” of annual contributions in as many as five graded categories, and we need to examine the rhetoric surrounding the exercise. People getting less than the maximum award may well feel they are being reprimanded. That may not be the intention of the process, but there is probably not a more extensively evaluated profession in the world than university teaching and research, and perhaps we can take steps to make the merit process work more positively for us, to build the feeling of community and personal worth rather than challenge it. Some positive

changes are reported above, but the process itself needs review. Norm White and Richard Koestner provided MAUT Council with a thoughtful discussion paper about the motivational issues in merit-driven pay decisions and the discussion has begun.

Sabbatical Salaries

The last salary issue that has been lingering on a back-burner but may now move to the front is sabbatical salaries. It has come to the attention of the MAUT executive that there is varying practice around the University. Current regulations state that on the granting of a sabbatic leave the awarded salary will be 90%, but if the sabbaticand is unable to secure funds that would pay the remaining 10%, the balance "shall" be paid. We used to have 100% sabbatical salaries automatically. The change came to maintain eligibility for leave grants from the funding councils. Those leave grants have long ago disappeared, but we still have the 90% rule. For a minority of professors or librarians who earn money elsewhere during a leave or hold grants that allow personal salary replacements, the 10% rule does not directly lead to a financial penalty; for sabbaticands in many areas, there are no sources of such funds. Present rules do not provide discretion as to whether or not the 100% shall be paid, but such discretion appears to have been practiced. This is a matter on which we need to gather data and ensure that financial penalties are not imposed on colleagues who have earned sabbatic leaves, and who further enrich the learning community with the benefits of their activities when they return.

Other Issues

Faculty Club

MAUT has extended its hand very actively to the Faculty Club over the past

year and more. We regard our Club as an important component of the quality of academic life at McGill. The Club has struggled to keep up its patronage and, for example, lunch is no longer normally served in the Ballroom. Perhaps too many of us are now being forced to eat or lunch on the fly or at the keyboard. Or do we eat lunch? Nonetheless, the Manager has been extremely creative in generating additional sources of income, and MAUT's small committee, spearheaded by Edith Zorychta, has worked quietly but effectively behind the scenes to convince the Administration of the need for a long-term fiscal plan that will ensure the success of the Faculty Club. The University's direct subsidy to the Club is winding down, but efforts appear to be on the right track toward removing the ongoing threat of years not too long past that the Club was at risk. The most useful support each MAUT can provide is to join (the fees are miniscule) and to use the facility regularly.

Rank of Professor

Three questions have been on the back burner regarding the rank of Professor at McGill. First, the actual process of promotion seems to be more time-consuming at McGill than elsewhere. Second, a few years ago we lost the 6% automatic salary increase at the point of promotion. Both these situations need to be corrected.

Emeritus Professorships

A third issue is that of Emeritus Professorships. Presently they are accorded selectively to a subset of Professors, other ranks not being eligible. This is contrary to practice at the majority of other institutions with which McGill regularly compares itself. Emeritus status is widely conferred on every Professor who retires, and in some cases on Associate Professors. The inclusion of Associate Professors is

relevant at this time because we have numerous colleagues who retire at that rank but who, at another institution, would have been granted the rank of Professor; part of the reason is that McGill has not granted equal weight to teaching and service (notably administrative service) in promotion to Professor. It is time to review these issues. If we are going to be hiring hundreds of new colleagues in the year ahead, what can they look forward to in this regard? McGill University has, through its Honorary Degrees and Convocations Committee, a joint body representing both Senate and the Board of Governors, has been reluctant to change the system, arguing that Emeritus Professor is a distinct honor, in the same league as an honorary degree (which is why that committee has jurisdiction over the rank). Other institutions have found alternative titles, however, such as Distinguished Emeritus Professor to select the special few whose continuing or prior contributions may call for an extra nod of thanks, but the argument against universal award of Emeritus status ignores the potential no-cost gain to the University in retaining post-retirement contributions and saying thank you in a way that is universally understood in the academic community. It was reassuring to see in the spectacular Tomlinson gift to McGill that the emphasis was on people. Perhaps the issue of Emeritus Professorships can be moved from the focus on the singularity of the honor to the people whose retirements can be enriched and loyalties sustained by this link.

Academic status of professional Librarians

The academic status of professional Librarians has emerged as this summer's topic of concern. The head librarian at Macdonald campus is retiring in June. The Vice-Principal (Information Systems and Technology) has proposed to give the



Bruce Shore, President, MAUT

library considerably more high-tech capability and stronger accountability lines with the Dean of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. These goals are not a problem, but at the same time the proposal would change the position from "academic" to "M" category middle management. MAUT has informed the Vice-Principals that this is not acceptable, and, in a follow-up letter at the end of May, provided details of the difficulties this will entail. We welcome the prospect of new challenges for the Macdonald Campus Library, but this is one example of a position where contemplation of a change from Academic to Management is not in the best interests of the University, nor of our members. We hope to convince the Administration that their goals can not only be achieved, but better achieved, by maintaining the current status of that position. For the moment the Director of Libraries has appointed an Acting Head under the present categorization, and MAUT is seeking a meeting with Vice-Principals Pennycook (to whom the Library System reports since last year) and Vinet (who remains responsible for the career appointments and progression of academic librarians).

A general issue affecting the academic status of librarians is that of the revision of Chapter 2 of the Handbook of Regulations on the Employment of Academic Staff (the "gray book"), concerning librarians. Four years ago an updating was begun, and we had agreement on the main points some two years ago. This year Senate instructed the University to create a working group of two librarians representing MAUT and two vice-principals to wrap up this task and report back. The group was finally able to convene on May 26th, and the administration brought back some further proposed changes that increased the parallelism with Chapter 1 (on Professors), for example defining academic responsibilities that explicitly

specify scholarly responsibility. The Librarians Section was actually very pleased to have their academic role strengthened in this way. Only one proposal was brought to the table for which support or not is not yet decided, namely which Vice-Principal will sign appointment forms for tenure-track, academic librarians. At present it is the Vice-Principal (Academic). This will have to be discussed in the weeks ahead.

Part-Time Instructors

Questions about the position of Part-time instructors at McGill University continue to arise. Led by Malcolm Baines, an MAUT committee is actively pondering the situation of a moderate number of instructors, some with 20 years and more of service, who are in effect full-time or nearly full-time, but have never been granted the status of Faculty Lecturers. Most teach languages and writing. This affects minimum salaries, benefits, and the feeling that they are in fact permanent members of the teaching community. A second group, about which Senate expressed an interest at its May 24th meeting, is sessional lecturers, whose salaries for teaching a single course are highly varied. This group includes some practicing professionals for whom the money is not an issue to people who earn their principal living by teach a course or two combined with other activities elsewhere because they have special expertise that mates with a shortage of instructors or occasional need in a teaching unit. McGill typically pays much less than Concordia or CEGEPS for these services and a low scale could make it harder to recruit such teachers. Some of this teaching is done by our own senior graduate students.

Special Category Assistant Professors

Another group of non-tenure-track instructors is Special Category Assistant

Professors. MAUT remains very concerned that this appointment is routinely used inappropriately in some quarters as a stepping stone or holding pattern for a future regular appointment. There are inequities in this arrangement, the most serious being that accomplishments in teaching, research, and service do not count toward tenure until an appointment is made on tenure-track. While in this category, persons do not have the protections of the “gray book.” MAUT has had a committee that started to look at this issue two years ago and this committee has been re-mandated this spring.

Departmental Tenure Committees

A joint MAUT-Administration committee is reviewing the details of operation of Departmental Tenure Committees (DTCs). Almost nothing is said about DTCs in the “gray book,” they vary widely in composition and procedures around the University, and they do not have access to the same information as the University Tenure Committees. The committee is exploring how DTCs and UTCs might to a reasonable degree follow comparable procedures with a view toward reducing problems arising from unspecified procedures. This committee has met about a half-dozen times and will meet into June; its work will not be finished for a few months, at which time the suggestions it develops will be shared for feedback from the community.

Senate

Senate is the academic parliament of the University. It is therefore an extremely important forum for the academic staff. But we are a self-governing community in all respects other than money and the physical plant. Those are administered “as trustee” by the Board of Governors. The relationship between the Senate and the Board has been cordial, but it is not between equals and the need for a “watching brief” has been constant as

items of considerable concern to senators (the academic community) have turned up on Board agendas without having the benefit of the advice from Senate. The clearest example last year was software policy. This has found its way into the Intellectual Property Policy, but a separate deadline for a default new policy has had to be extended several times always with expression of concern for whether or not the Board had the “patience” to wait a little longer. MAUT is very concerned to ensure that Senate retains and expands the respect it garners from the Board. It is the nature of the academy that its advice will be considered and only in true emergencies be available on short notice. For these and all reasons related to effective participation in the governance of this University, MAUT convenes a caucus of faculty Senators who are not senior administrators prior to each Senate meeting; this caucus is not limited to Senators who are MAUT members. The Deans and senior Administration caucus at the same time. This caucus has been very effective in addressing critical issues on the Senate agenda, and in working within the rules of Senate to assure that the academic community plays the most active role possible in the effective and collegial governance of the University.

Canada Research Chairs

Finally, the Canada Research Chairs are turning into a controversial issue. While the injection of major new funds into creating academic positions is welcome, the flaws in the plan are becoming apparent. At the end of April, CAUT’s annual Council meeting voted strongly its protest that the process that created the program (originally called Canada Millennium Chairs) was created behind closed doors without consulting CAUT. They came up in the opening days of the Learned Societies meeting in Edmonton late in May. Specific problems that could haunt the program are that the

distribution of Chairs is based on research funds allocated through the federal councils. This leads to more than half the positions going to Toronto, McGill, UBC, and Montréal, and 80% of the Chairs going to science, engineering, and medical sciences. Yes, it can be an important windfall for McGill, but it is not leading to much good feeling across the country or in all disciplines. In addition, the three councils differ greatly in budget, so the 20% of positions designated for the social sciences and humanities is actually higher than the funds would generate, but over 40% of students are enrolled in those fields. Another potential problem is that the promised funding is only for three years. What happens after that? Will universities be forced to reallocate internal funding to sustain tenure-track commitments for the persons appointed? And why are immigration regulations being relaxed only for these searches, and not others where talent needs are just as great but the funds may be internal or from endowments? MAUT delegates voted with CAUT’s protest that the academic community should be consulted, but we have not taken a position that we should not work with the program at McGill. However, it is important that the McGill community as a whole discuss how we shall deal with or, better, avoid, the potential interdisciplinary stresses that the Canada Research Chairs could conceivably create within the McGill itself, in addition to our relations with other institutions.

MAUT Operations

The MAUT Office is in the middle of changes. **Nada Abu-Merhy** is replacing Catherine Macaulay (who is doing well, we are pleased to report) as **Administrative Officer** on an extended basis. After nearly a full academic year with “casual” assistance we are now trying to get our operations into good order once again. High on Nada’s priority list are working

with Treasurer Marilyn Miller to create a budget with sufficient detail to monitor our expenses well, to create a master calendar of meetings, committee representation decisions, and special events running at least a year ahead, and preferably 18 months (the University Secretariat has a perpetual calendar and they have kindly offered to share the manner in which it works with MAUT), to update the MAUT Web page, and to work with membership recruitment. We hope to report progress on all these fronts by September. We have also opened discussions that seem to be moving toward a positive conclusion to fix up the tattered condition of many parts of 3495 Peel Street, and this is expected to lead to MAUT having slightly more space at its disposal, and a more attractive working environment for our professional staff as well as for committees, Council, and the Executive.

Members are invited to contact **Joseph Varga**, our **Professional and Legal Officer** with any questions regarding their career progress or related needs. MAUT is not a union, so our role is advisory, but Joseph is well placed to inform you of your rights in any situation. His responsibilities also include helping your Executive and Committees to have the most current relevant information on topics such as have been reviewed above.

When members need assistance in dealing with administrative procedures, official **Advisors** can be found through MAUT. We have a cadre of experienced and effective advisors. When a University procedure allows you the presence of an advisor, don't leave your office without one. We are examining ways to increase our pool and to ensure on-going updating of their knowledge and skills.

Feedback

An item that has recently found its way onto our formal agenda, but not yet made it to actual discussion, is to find ways to get feedback on the effectiveness of our services to our members. This needs to be done with care, since some of those services are in confidential zones. Nevertheless, our work is increasingly complex, and since providing services to members is an important part of our mandate, whether it is the contents of a newsletter, the list-serve, advice given to solve a problem, or materials forwarded by the office, we should systematically gather feedback that will help us improve what we do.

Membership Drive

Finally, MAUT will be implementing a formal Membership Drive at this, the beginning of our 50th year. Our immediate goal is 50 new members. A further 50 would be very welcome! Over the summer Council members will try to recruit new members from among existing McGill academics. In the fall we shall seek to enroll at least 50 new appointees. MAUT will be represented at the August 31st orientation of new faculty members. We also suggested to the Vice-Principal's office that a second meeting would be a good idea a year later. The Special Assistant to the Vice Principal (Academic), Lindsay Bignell, called many of last year's hirees. They were pleased to be called back and were generally very pleased to be here. We shall be looking at other ways to mark the important anniversary in the history of higher education in Canada, and look forward this fall to inviting you to take part in marking this event.

Other committees are also working hard in the background, such as on benefits and pensions, and representing us provincially and federally. We shall keep you informed about their work in later newsletters. I thank you for your support through membership and wish everyone an enjoyable summer.



"... the beginning of MAUT's 50th year ... "

– Bruce Shore

Staff Benefits Update

During the past year the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee (SBAC) members and LTD Trustees have been examining the performance of the McGill employees' Dental, Supplementary Health and LTD plans and making decisions to ensure the continued viability of these plans. David Crawford and Jodie Hebert have been the academic staff representatives on both committees. Since management of our group benefit plans was switched from Sun Life to Aetna in July of 1998, the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee has been receiving much more detailed information on plan usage, and some trends are evident.

SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH

Claims under this plan have increased by an average of 15% each year for the last few years. The increased usage is mainly for the kinds of services that an aging staff operating under stress can expect: physiotherapists, osteopaths, psychologists, hearing aids and other health devices, and especially for drugs. With the rapid increase in the introduction and cost of new drugs, we are looking at a variety of ways to slow down the rate of cost increase: greater reliance on generic drugs and drug cards are two possibilities to investigate.

DENTAL PLAN

Claims under the Dental plan increased moderately for several years and then jumped up by 31% in 1999. The biggest increases were seen in the categories of Diagnostic/Preventive, Surgical/Restorative, Major Restorative and Orthodontic services.

Premium rates for both plans had remained unchanged since at least 1994, and a major premium adjustment was urgently needed. The Staff Benefits Committee decided to bring in the new

rates in two stages, both to minimize the effect and to allow for further adjustment when the complete 1999 claims experience has been analyzed. The second stage of the increase will come into effect June 1, when single coverage in each plan will increase by \$1.50 per semimonthly paycheque and family coverage will similarly increase by \$3.00.

An urgent priority for the Staff Benefits Committee is to see up-to-date information about staff benefit plans distributed to all staff members. New booklets are being prepared and should be received by June.

LONG TERM DISABILITY PLAN

Two main concerns occupied the LTD Trustees this past year: premiums, and whether or not to keep the Trust. Major rate increases were necessary to cover the expected liabilities under the LTD plan, and to recover the unfunded liability, regardless of whether the plan is outsourced to a commercial insurer or kept as an in-house Trust. After much discussion, including input from all staff groups covered by the plan, it was decided to keep the plan as a Trust for the year 2000, with the proviso that the nature of the plan be re-evaluated annually, along with the plan financial performance. Premiums were raised accordingly, from the .44 rate set in 1994 to .88, beginning January 2000. A further increase to .95 will come into effect June 1.

LIFE INSURANCE SHARE BENEFIT

As you know, Sun Life of Canada demutualized recently. McGill University owned a quarter of a million shares through our Life Insurance plan, which were sold for about \$3,000,000. What percentage of this sum should come to employees and what to the university's

administration is under discussion, but there is a strong case for 100% ownership by the employees who paid tax on all premiums paid on their behalf as a taxable benefit received. The SBAC is also looking for expert tax advice on ways to maximize the expected benefit to employees.

— Jodie Hebert,
Staff Benefits Advisory Committee



MAUT Executive 2000/2001

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