



NEWSLETTER

McGill Association of University Teachers

Association des Professeur(e)s et Bibliothécaires de McGill

www.maut.mcgill.ca

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President's Message

Malcolm Baines

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Greetings for 2009.

I wish all McGill academic staff members health and happiness for 2009. Since becoming acting President of MAUT at the semi-annual general meeting on November 20, a number of new and continuing issues challenge our members.

McGill's tight financial situation continues to limit its abilities to address many outstanding needs such as retirements, renewal, and repairs to the university's aged infrastructure. Planning our lives is much more complex, as our pension fund assets have declined significantly due to the global loss of confidence in the financial markets at a time when the university is considering the offer of incentives for academic staff retirements. No doubt the world will regain some equilibrium but it will take time, commitment and creativity to weather these storms. I anticipate that the MAUT Forum on Retirement will be well attended this year.

In Quebec, the National Assembly appears to have embraced a new style of university governance that seeks to manage universities like corporations, threatening the traditional bi-cameral form of self-governance that has served the universities well. At McGill, there are concerns that the Board of Governors may be tempted to adopt this style of university management and pay less attention to the constructive role of the academic Senate in university governance. There will be an MAUT conference on university governance on February 27 that will be very interesting. [See announcement on page 4.]

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The past collegial practices of advice and consent on academic and personnel issues appear to be giving way to a more top-down mode of management that is causing some concerns within the entire university community. We could face more strikes in 2009 that will affect our ability to deliver the high-quality academic programs for which McGill is highly ranked and respected. MAUT remains front and centre in preparing for and responding to these and many other emerging issues that affect all the academic staff in the university. However, we need your support and input of new ideas and solutions, from both current and new academic staff members, to help solve the many challenges that face our university in the year ahead.

All the best for 2009.

Coalition of Contingent Academic Labour VIII: Report of the international meeting, San Diego, CA, August 8–10, 2008.

Malcolm Baines

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The plenary speakers at this meeting contrasted the contract academic staff (CAS) members' dedication with their vulnerability to termination without notice or cause. The delegates from Mexico focused on the "Neoliberal Corporatization" of the state educational system, resulting in the degradation of the academic workforce and workplace. True unions are often illegal in their universities and government-approved managers provide little help to the academic community. The university management oversees a government-approved curriculum in which the teachers have little academic freedom or time for professional development, research or creativity. Over 75% of the teaching staff members are part-time. Full-time teachers at the national university receive salaries in the same range as McGill lecturers teaching one course. The salary situation is better in the California Faculty Association (Statewide), but the contract faculty members are equally vulnerable and usually bear the brunt of state cuts to the education budget. The speaker recommended that contract faculty members be an active part of the university bargaining team to ensure appropriate presentation of their interests.

The obstacles to the development of an academic career for contract academic staff members (CAS) are many.

- The academic qualifications of international academic staff are often not recognized or accepted.

- CAS members are often employed for discontinuous periods on limited per-course workload.
- Since a per-course contract is usually a single fixed payment for teaching services including a fixed percentage in lieu of benefits and vacation, there is no paid time to engage in academic research and creativity.
- It is difficult to accumulate a full-time workload while working in several institutions at low pay scales.
- Since many contract staff are hired to address short-term problems, their performance is rarely evaluated and they receive no merit increments.

These factors make it virtually impossible for contractual academic staff members to build or even maintain an academic dossier that would permit them to be seriously considered for full-time employment, let alone a tenure-stream appointment.

In most universities, the Faculty Association, Union or a Part-timers Union represents part-time academic staff members in their search for some job security. Ideally, all academic staff should be represented by the same union to ensure consistency of bargaining for each subgroup, without conflicts. CAS members teach courses, work in research laboratories with graduate students and do administrative work in universities.

The following summary focuses on teaching staff as they constitute the largest group of CAS university employees and their workload is more easily quantifiable.

- Collective bargaining can achieve some improvements for contract academic teaching staff by negotiating appropriate per-course compensation as a fixed fraction of a standard permanent academic salary (e.g. per-course compensation could be 1/6 of the base salary of a full-time teacher).
- Since the per-course contracts would be indexed to the salaries of permanent staff members, the level of compensation would automatically increase with the cost of living.

Tenure Information Sessions

February 12, 2009: 2:00–4:00pm

- Faculty Lounge, Macdonald-Stewart Building, Macdonald Campus.
- Present at this meeting: Associate Provost (Policies and Procedures).

March 24, 2009: 12:30–3:00pm (Lunch: 12:00pm)

- Eighth MAUT Tenure and Mentoring Workshop, Faculty Club.
- RSVP required for both Workshop and Lunch: phone 3942 or e-mail maut@mcgill.ca

- Peer and student evaluation of the performance of all employees is essential to establish a factual basis for retention, continuing appointments, increased workload and salary increments. To ensure that probationary per-course teaching contracts ultimately lead to full-time regular appointments, it is essential to develop fair employment policies and processes.
- In general, teachers on individual per-course contracts should be able to continue teaching the same or similar courses from term to term as long as they receive satisfactory performance evaluations.
- Based on their demonstrated performance, they should have the opportunity to accumulate additional workload. After they have accumulated a defined minimum of part-time per-term work in an academic year, they should be annually appointed to a continuing position that provides a monthly salary including benefits.
- Part-time and full-time continuing contractual staff members who have successfully completed two or more years of satisfactory teaching services (or credit equivalent) should automatically receive a regular appointment.
- Regular staff members are entitled to salary increments for cost of living and progress through the ranks, benefits and job security. In this context, job security usually means dismissal can only occur for exigency (loss of funding) or redundancy (program termination) upon which the employee is entitled to notice and severance.

At the end of this session, several delegates voiced the opinion that the tenured staff members in the bargaining unit were often not aware of the plight of CAS, were not convinced of their need for improved working conditions, and were not helpful in bargaining for CAS the basic rights and benefits enjoyed by most other university employees. It was also apparent that CAS members often work simultaneously in several different universities or colleges, do not have time to participate in the academic union, and are invisible, unheard and unrepresented in the bargaining process.

Even in a unionized university the contract academic staff are often vulnerable. The employment of contract academic staff is usually associated with a tight budgetary situation that prevents the recruitment of full-time staff. The reporting of contract staff numbers both within the universities and to the state / provincial or federal agencies is often limited. As such, it is difficult to define the working conditions of members of the CAS community.

As they are only paid to teach one or more specific courses, they have few support services, no university office or phone or directory listing, and no role in university governance at any level. As they must make a living by combining per-course teaching at different departments or institutions, they spend little time with their students in each university and make no contributions to the university in the areas of creativity or service. If CAS members are wronged in any way, they often have no rights to grieve or seek redress from the university and such labor action would interfere with their obligations to their other employers. Their academic freedom is often limited, as a controversial teaching topic or teaching style can lead to termination or non-reappointment.

In Canada, there also is increasing pressure to limit permanence and liberalize trade in the service and education sectors. Governments and corporations are putting pressure on university administrators to develop cost-effective job training programs and private for-profit departments and colleges. Some are even controlling the selection and appointment of senior university administrators, rejecting applicants who do not agree with the corporate model.

Recent surveys confirm that contract academic staff constitute about 2/3 of the teaching staff and teach more than half of the students. In his final summation, one of the speakers advised teachers to work to create awareness and understanding for CAS and to work even harder to be annoying to those who would limit academic freedom and creativity. He then passed out pins that read:

I don't want to strike but I will.

Queer Talk: Sexual Diversity at McGill

Panel Discussion, October 16, 2008

Robert Leckey

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What does anybody's sexual orientation have to do with the classroom? Why should professors think about the impact their teaching has on their sexual minority students? How do the examples you use when you teach confirm for some students that they belong, while making others feel invisible? Panellists and participants discussed these and other questions at *Queer Talk: Sexual Diversity at McGill*, a lunchtime panel on Thursday 16 October sponsored by MAUT in collaboration with the Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) Office and the McGill Subcommittee on Queer People.

During the event, the panellists addressed a range of issues. Out professors Kim Brooks and Robert Leckey presented differing perspectives on how being openly queer matters in the classroom and in the university more generally, including choices made in managing that information. Students Scott Scambler (Law) and Sooyoun Seo (Science) discussed the controversies around the words used to identify different sexual minorities and the impact of heterosexism on students in their campus experience inside and outside the classroom. Gregg Blachford, Director, Career and Placement Services, provided the McGill context of recent issues on campus for trans and queer students.

Participants were asked to recall ways in which gay or queer content was included or excluded in classes they had taken. They were then asked to

imagine ways in which their classroom might be more open to members of sexual minorities. A key point is that making a genuinely inclusive classroom environment calls for more than an absence of homophobic comment. It requires tackling the pervasive heterosexism that can exclude students. The selection of readings is one way that professors communicate their values. Even apparently small things, such as professors' choices of examples while lecturing, make a big difference in queer students' perceptions of their inclusion. Examples that only ever refer to heterosexual relationships can make queer students feel invisible. As Sooyoun Seo reported from her science classes, heterosexism can even be present in Physics, as when the attraction of particles is analogized to the attraction of a boy to a girl. It's a point many professors may not have thought much about, although most probably understand by now that using exclusively masculine pronouns and examples could reasonably be seen as excluding women.

Participants left with much to think about, and we hope that MAUT members unable to attend will also think about the tacit exclusions they may make in their teaching. Those who want to learn more can attend a *Safe Space* workshop run twice yearly by the Teaching and Learning Services. See <http://www.mcgill.ca/queerequity/safespace/> for details. We thank MAUT President Edith Zorychta and MAUT for their support.

Conference on University Governance

Friday, February 27, 9:30am - 3:30pm (lunch will be provided).

RSVP required: maut@mcgill.ca or phone 3942.

The agenda is still being formalized, but guest speakers will include

- William Bruneau, former president of CAUT, Professor Emeritus of Educational Studies at UBC, and specialist in university history and the politics of post-secondary education.
- Cécile Sabourin, President of the Quebec Federation of University Teachers (FQPPU), professor at the University of Quebec at Abitibi-Témiscamingue, and is particularly interested in the political and social issues that flow from the dominant economic model.
- Principal Heather Munroe-Blum has also agreed to participate.

This promises to be a very interesting day of sharing information and discussing many aspects of University Governance in Quebec, such as the implications of the IGOPP Report, the role of Senate, the impact of Bill 107, etc.

Mark this date in your agenda, and RSVP today!

Notes from the Fall General Meeting, November 20, 2008

CALL TO ORDER

President E. Zorychta called the meeting to order at 12 noon, introduced the members of the Executive and Council, and welcomed FQPPU President Cécile Sabourin.

MINUTES OF THE APRIL GENERAL MEETING, AND BUSINESS ARISING

The minutes of the spring meeting had been made available on the MAUT website for prior consultation, and were approved with no corrections. Business arising from the minutes centred on the use of the surplus remaining from **Sun Life demutualization**: a decision has been made to fund the Quarter-Century Club.

K. GowriSankaran commented that the interest on the surplus was being used for this purpose, not the capital. Although the Quarter-Century Club event for 2008 was well handled, he doubted that it used the entire amount of interest available.

- E. Zorychta mentioned that the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee has asked for annual reports to be produced, accounting for the use of this surplus and interest.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT Edith Zorychta

Budget: McGill will be running a deficit budget again; the Ministry is insisting that accumulated deficits must be reduced, so cuts can be expected everywhere.

Salary Policy: McGill's long-term plan had been to match the mean of the top ten research-intensive universities in Canada; over the last decade, we were aiming for the average of the top three, but never got close to achieving this. The current average increase is only 2.5%, much lower than other years (distributed as 1% across-the-board and 1.5% merit.) Other components of the salary package are 0.3% for anomaly / retention and 0.35% for promotions, raising rank minima, etc., for a total of 3.15% (the \$500 per year professional development allowance is additional.)

For the first time, a three-year basic framework was agreed upon, with minimum increases of 4.15% for 2009-2010, and 5.15% for 2010-2011.

Although this didn't look particularly good at the time of negotiation, it's now looking better all the time!

- T. Velk noted that the salary policy used to have a guaranteed inflation component; this year's 1% across-the-board does not cover current inflation rates.

CASP: The mandate of CASP is being expanded to include total compensation rather than just salary — pensions, benefits, vacation, etc.

Gender Equity Study: It is still taking forever, but is being done extremely thoroughly. Preliminary observations indicate that nothing catastrophic is emerging, but some issues of concern remain.

- M. Smith added that not all of the delays are due to MAUT's demands; the analyses need to be run in different ways, not always in the same ways they've been run in the past.

Retirement Incentives: MAUT has been pushing for news, the Administration keeps insisting "it's just around the corner." A preliminary version suggests that general features will include a one-time offer for those over a certain age, a specific time window for this offer, an improved phased retirement policy, and the benchmark age for retirement moved closer to the actual average retirement age (around 68 rather than 65).

Any offers will be uniform across faculties, and should not be too affected by the current global financial turmoil. MAUT is also pushing for more interesting post-retirement engagement options, emeritus status, etc.

Emeritus Status: McGill seems to be out of synch with most other North American universities in our conferring of emeritus status. Discussions are progressing, but the Administration (and a number of academics) still want to maintain some form of elite-emeritus status.

Role of Collegiality in University Governance: MAUT is organizing a full-day conference to examine various aspects of governance at McGill. The Principal and some external speakers have agreed to participate. *[Update: other Quebec universities, following McGill's lead, are now planning their own day-long conferences on governance. All of these will take place on February 27, resulting in a province-wide day of discussion. See announcement on page 4.]*

Pension Contributions: MAUT is contesting the legality of the Administration's decision to stop contributing to pensions for employees over 69 years of age. On our behalf, Julius Grey is challenging this on the basis of age discrimination.

A few years ago, a suggestion was made to ask new hires to sign a document agreeing that the University's contributions to their pensions would stop at age 65. This hasn't been officially proposed yet, but MAUT will vehemently oppose it if necessary.

- Comment from the floor: the eligibility for the guaranteed minimum pension expires at age 65; this needs to be addressed, especially in view of current economic conditions.
- E. Zorychta noted that MUNACA and MUNASA are both collaborating with MAUT on pension and other issues, presenting a unified front in talks with the Administration.

Travel Policy: After Senate had debated and come to a decision about a travel policy, the Administration reversed the Senate decision, but then backed off. Proper input will be enabled.

Post-Doctoral Fellows: Until now, postdocs have been considered to be trainees, and their stipends were not taxed; Revenue Canada has now decided to impose taxes. McGill will still issue T2202A slips but is protesting and still unsure of how to deal with this policy. [See also page 9.]

Jackie Kirk Memorial Fund: A fund has been established in memory of Jackie Kirk, McGill adjunct professor and international aid worker who was slain by Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan on Aug. 13. The fund will help support actions such as scholarships for students from developing or conflict-affected countries. MAUT has contributed \$500 on behalf of McGill academic staff members.

Report on Membership: As of November 1, 2008, there are 1076 MAUT members, including Retirees. Of the 15 new members who joined between August and November 2008, 7 are regular faculty, 6 are new faculty and 2 are course lecturers.

REPORT FROM THE VP-INTERNAL Beverlea Tallant

Updates from the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee:

- **Employee Assistance Program**, June 2007–May 2008
 - Of the 415 clients who were seen, 8.4% were from the academic tenure stream and 18.6% were from the academic non-tenure path.
 - The main categories of problems were psychological (31.6%), marital (19.8%), work (16.1%) and family (15.9%).

Note: A Doctor's referral is no longer necessary to access the Employee Assistance Program. It covers 4 – 6 sessions per problem with a psychologist or social worker, and the client is reimbursed 80%.

Health and Dental Plans: Our plan administrator has negotiated a reduction in our administrative charges, resulting in a small refund / surplus that was used to offset premium increases.

- **Health Plan**
 - Increased usage has resulted in increased costs, and premiums will rise by a net 9%.
 - Single coverage will go from \$74.28 per year to \$80.96; family coverage will go from \$146.34 to \$159.51.
 - Rehabilitation services (any combination of occupational therapy and physical therapy) are covered up to \$1000 per year.
- **Dental Plan**
 - Due to decreased usage and the application of the surplus, premiums will go down 4%.
 - Single coverage will go from \$45.30 per year to \$43.49; family coverage will go from \$101.32 to \$97.27.
- **Long Term Disability Plan**
 - The proposed rate increase (3.4%) was completely offset by the surplus, resulting in zero net change to our premiums.

Possible MUNACA Strike

MAUT maintains a neutral position regarding the current negotiations between MUNACA and the University Administration. MAUT members are encouraged to check for updates and other information at

<http://www.mcgill.ca/hr/negotiations/> and <http://www.munaca.com/>

REPORT FROM THE VP-EXTERNAL

Brendan Gillon

FQPPU has done a thorough study of university financing, and has prepared a series of reports and presentations. These are posted at <http://fqppu.org/themes/financement-universites.html>

REPORT FROM THE PAST PRESIDENT

Malcolm Baines

The interim report of the Task Force on Non-Tenure-Track Academic Personnel was presented to Senate on April 16, and the final report on May 21. Work now needs to focus on how to structure and implement the necessary changes.

REPORT FROM THE VP-COMMUNICATIONS

Deanna Cowan

The report consisted of a review of the various forms of communication employed by MAUT.

- **MAUT Newsletter:** The next one will be published within a few weeks.
- **MAUTForum Listserv:** This is a one-way e-mail list, for distributing announcements from the Executive and Council to MAUT members.
- **MAUTCncl@lists.mcgill.ca:** Any MAUT member can send messages to this address to reach all the Executive and Council. There is an e-mail link on the MAUT website.
- **MAUT website:** <http://www.maut.mcgill.ca> contains basic information about MAUT, its committees and activities, the membership application form, forthcoming meetings, etc. It includes the archive of Newsletters, presentations from past workshops, reports and documents, and information about issues that MAUT is currently dealing with. There are also links to other useful sites, such as the Academic Personnel Office, the "Grey Book", etc.
- **MAUT EntreNous** is a new, unmoderated discussion group for members of MAUT. Not many people have signed up yet, and we haven't yet reached critical mass for discussions, but it is intended to be a forum for sharing information and airing opinions. Retirement strategies, collegiality and governance, daycare tips — all topics are valid, and all MAUT members are welcome to join. For more information, check the website or contact vpcomm.maut@gmail.com

REPORT FROM THE SECRETARY TREASURER

Estelle Hopmeyer

MAUT is not immune to the economic downturns affecting the rest of the world, but although our investments have suffered somewhat, we are still in good financial shape.

REPORT FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR RETIRED MEMBERS

John Dealy

MAUT retiree activities and concerns include:

- establishment of a standing Committee on Retiree Affairs [See update on page 9.]
 - lunch get-togethers for retirees
 - McGill online directory — inclusion of retired members of academic staff
 - proposed changes in titles and privileges of retired academics
 - upgrades for software covered by McGill site licenses
 - health benefits:
 - drug coverage
 - travel insurance
 - CURAC — automobile and home insurance through Waterloo Insurance Group
 - effect of market conditions on Pensioner Fund from which McGill annuities are paid
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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE LIBRARIANS' SECTION

Jim Henderson

See page 8.

FACULTY CLUB

Edith Zorychta

The Faculty Club is running well.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40pm.

Report from the Librarians' Section

Jim Henderson

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The Librarians' Section has been busy since the report to the April MAUT meeting.

The major event for the Librarians' Section began in May, when CAUT launched an Ad Hoc Investigatory Committee to examine the situation of librarians at McGill, particularly possible violations of academic freedom and other academic staff rights. As explained in a letter from Jim Turk, CAUT Executive Director, CAUT formed this Committee "after reviewing the material that had accumulated over the past several years." The initiation of the investigation was based on past contact between CAUT and MAUT and information provided by McGill librarians more recently, confirming that—again quoting Jim Turk— "long-standing difficulties ... were continuing."

MAUT officials have expressed the opinion that proper procedures were not followed in initiating the investigation and that internal efforts would have been as effective. The Librarians' Section believes that the situation is serious and that the concern demonstrated by CAUT is warranted. The members of the team undertaking the investigation have visited twice and have confirmed that they will visit again before completing and submitting their report to the CAUT Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee. The Committee has taken an objective stance and has been in touch with the Librarians' Section executive only for purposes of the logistics of their visits.

A recent development concerns vacations: all McGill librarians received notification in July that the vacation policy for librarians had been revised. This action was taken without consultation, process or input from librarians or MAUT. I wish to thank MAUT and Edith in particular for working with the University administration to have this policy reconsidered. Work is being done to expand the mandate of CASP to include vacation policy. We are hopeful that a proposed committee to include MAUT and MAUT Librarians' Section representatives will be formed to review the vacation policy for librarians.

Recently, representatives of the University administration, the Library administration, the Section, and MAUT have started to meet to discuss the situation in the Library and to move the Library forward. I wish to thank Edith and Malcolm for their time and assistance in this process.

The Section has been monitoring and responding as appropriate to the following:

- Over the summer, there was more staff turnover than usual, with a significant number of librarians resigning.
- The Provost and the Trenholme Director of Libraries have been holding breakfast meetings with librarians who have been hired in the past year or two.
- Librarians applying early for tenure under the new regulations have created a need to update the Library Tenure Committee. New procedures for selecting members were developed over the summer.

I wish to thank the Librarians' Section Executive, especially Karen Jensen, Past Chair, and various members of the Section for their thoughtful, hard work. It has been busy and not easy. I also wish to thank MAUT and MAUT Advisors for their work and time, especially Edith, Malcolm, and Honore, on behalf of the Librarians' Section members.

Request for Participation

Your cooperation is requested in research about psychological adaptation — the present study aims to measure the effectiveness of five psychological questionnaires. It falls under a broader study whose objective is to examine the various facets of psycho-socio-sexual adaptation and to target some of the factors contributing to this adaptation. Ms. Jocelyne Thériault of the University of Quebec in Montreal is heading this study, which is funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Participants will complete two questionnaires on psycho-socio-sexual adaptation. For further information, please see

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=4c4tBpphr_2buS5Etufc3NUg_3d_3d

MAUT Retiree Affairs Committee

John Dealy

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The MAUT Council recently approved the establishment of a standing Retiree Affairs Committee, whose members and portfolios are as follows:

name	e-mail	phone	portfolio
John Dealy	john.dealy@mcgill.ca	514-398-4264	Chair
Carol Cumming Spiers	carol.spiers@mcgill.ca	514-989-1397	Benefits (Privileges and Titles)
Peta Tancred	peta.tancred001@videotron.ca	514-271-0183	Activities for Retirees (Social, recreational, educational, volunteer, etc.)
Dorothy Thomas-Edding	dorothy.thomas.edding@mcgill.ca	514-032-8478	Benefits (health, drug, dental)
John Wolforth	j.wolforth@mcgill.ca	514-487-5210	University involvement

Issues currently of concern to the Committee include:

- drug insurance for those over 65
- proposed changes in titles and privileges for retired academics
- upgrades of software covered by McGill site licenses

- automobile and home insurance — best rates for retirees
- effect of market conditions on funds from which McGill annuities are paid

Members wishing to raise issues or make suggestions may contact the appropriate committee member.

Tough times ahead for post-doctoral fellows?

Terry Hébert

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By now, you have probably heard reports that the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is considering revoking the tax-exempt status currently enjoyed by postdoctoral fellows. A recent article in *Le Devoir*⁽¹⁾ referred to a letter that was sent this past summer by the Canada Revenue Agency to the Conférence des recteurs et principaux des universités du Québec (CREPUQ). The letter indicated that the Agency considers postdoctoral trainees to not be students according to the law and therefore not eligible to receive T2202A forms. Thus, they would not be allowed to deduct the full amount of postdoctoral salaries from their Federal income tax. In Quebec, the only province that officially registers postdoctoral fellows, they have been specifically defined as “trainees” (“stagiaires”) in documents from the Ministry of Education) since 1992 and, accordingly, the financial support they received from agencies or supervisors was treated

as monies to aid in their training. These were thus viewed as non-taxable “education amounts.” Entitlement for the deduction is dependent upon the postdoctoral fellow submitting a T2202A form or equivalent, indicating that he or she is registered in a qualified educational program. This form is normally supplied by McGill, and in a December 1, 2008 message distributed by the Associate Provost (Graduate Education), the University indicated its decision to continue to issue the T2202A forms to Postdocs.

Whether or not Revenue Canada will allow the educational deduction for postdoctoral fellowships is currently not clear. However, what does happen may ultimately be determined by the way we, as McGill faculty, respond to the very suggestion. Post-docs are the engines that drive discovery in the sciences and in medicine—the ability to

recruit and retain them from Canada and other countries plays a large and often unappreciated role in the whole enterprise of discovery, research and development in this country. This is likely true in the humanities as well.

A key issue here is that the CRA may actually want to do this for the 2008 taxation year. This seems mean-spirited and punitive, given that 2008 is over and the relatively small salaries we actually pay post-docs were likely earmarked for other things like rent, food and utility bills. As you may remember, many of us plan to start families while we are post-docs and this measure will be even more difficult for people in such a situation.

If this taxation happens, it will undermine the infrastructure of basic research in this country. The policy as it existed added value to money granted by CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC as well as from charitable organizations that fund research. As very good laboratories begin to lose personnel due to this new policy, so will their expertise and potential contribution to Canada be lost. This is a very inefficient way to conduct the nation's basic research.

A number of letter-writing campaigns and petitions have already been started in various places at McGill — from the post-docs themselves and from some faculty. You can find a draft letter to personalize on the MAUT website. In my department, we have decided that faculty members should write to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Finance as well as to their individual members of Parliament (MPs). Since the provinces will likely follow suit, we have also suggested that let-

ters be written to the Premier and to the Minister of Finance here in Québec, as well as to local members of the National Assembly.

- Canada: You can send mail to any MP free of charge; go to <http://www.parl.gc.ca> and follow the link "Members of Parliament" (in the "Current Parliamentarians" section) to find your MP and his/her address.
- Quebec: Postage is required for these letters; members (Députés) of the National Assembly and their contact information are listed at http://www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Membres/deputes_lst.html

Many of you will remember how the scientific community reacted to the chronic underfunding of basic research by bombarding our political leaders with letters. We have to protect our trainees, who will be the next generation of researchers. Please write...

1. Haroun, Thierry. Revenu Canada déclare que les "post-docs" ne sont pas des étudiants. *Le Devoir*, 8 Octobre 2008. Page D3.

MAUT Scholarship

The MAUT Scholarship, established in 1989 in honour of the female engineering students killed in the Ecole Polytechnique tragedy, is awarded every year to a female student in McGill's Faculty of Engineering.

Congratulations to the 2008 recipient, Leila Ingrid Pieper, in Civil Engineering. Ms. Pieper comes to McGill from Ottawa, and combines an excellent academic record with an impressive resumé in athletics and community service.

Last-minute notes

A task force is investigating the **status of GFT-U and GFT-H professors** as a part of the study of the status of Non-Tenure Track Academic Employees; a number of issues are emerging.

Emeritus professors: A proposal to revise the way in which the designation "emeritus" is awarded has been drafted and revised, and is close to being presented to Senate. It provides for a more liberal application of the title "emeritus" while maintaining a means of acknowledging exceptional merit.

Pension plan: The Crawford Commission's report on the ABCP crisis has been accepted, and these investments will be converted to long-term notes. Evaluations of McGill's holdings will be done over the next few weeks, and MAUT hopes that some resolution is possible for the employees whose accumulated pension funds are most severely affected.

MAUT EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL November 2008 - April 2009

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