

# NEWSLETTER

McGill Association of University Teachers Association des Professeur(e)s et Bibliothécaires de McGill

www.mcgill.ca/maut

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### **VP Communications...**

### **Terry Hébert**

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By now you have all heard about the postponement (again) of both across the board and merit increases. Brendan Gillon, the president of MAUT, sent all members a letter outlining the position of MAUT on this issue. It is frustrating, to be sure. He and (to a lesser extent) other members of the MAUT Executive have "taken it on the chin" from various members who would ask what use is MAUT if it can't prevent these things? It's a fair question and here is what I believe is a fair answer. First, MAUT agreed to this only reluctantly, and you can be sure that any comments we receive from you will be transmitted to the Provost and to the Principal. Second, the whole exercise made me think about MAUT, why and how I joined and what its value is.

When I came to McGill in 2005, I had never heard of MAUT, had no plans to join and was more or less content to track my own course through the system. One of my senior colleagues, Dr. Bernard Robaire, asked me pretty much every week when I was going to join. I ignored him for as long as possible — but for those of you who know him, it is impossible to do that for long. So I joined — oh well, another \$500 down the drain — but at least he stopped bugging me (about MAUT anyway)! I didn't go to any MAUT meetings or read the Newsletter (I am clearly not as virtuous as you, dear readers.) Like many of you, I was however interested in doing some university service, and so I decided to run for MAUT Council. I lost — badly, as I recall. Still, fortune favors the

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willing I suppose, and I was eventually asked to join as a member of Council. Wow, what an eye opener! I learned so much in that first year about how McGill works, met so many people from different faculties and departments. Eventually, I ended up as the VP Communications and get to meet even more colleagues *and* send you a lot of emails.

Yes, it has been personally rewarding in that sense. Along the way, and I do have a point in my ramblings, I learned about the many things MAUT has done and continues to do for academic staff (by this I mean Faculty and Librarians) here at McGill.

For example, MAUT persuaded the administration to restore a promotion-based salary increment for each level of academic promotion. MAUT responded strongly to the Quebec Government's ongoing attempt to take greater control in university governance, fighting against political oversight and interference in university affairs which threaten academic freedom. MAUT has continuing discussions with the administration to improve the working conditions and benefits for contract academic staff. MAUT members have represented the contract academic staff on both the Principal's and Provost's task forces that have been mandated to develop improved working conditions for the contract academic staff.

MAUT fought to maintain the academic status of Librarians at McGill and assisted in the drafting and adoption of suitable regulations to protect all academic librarians. MAUT successfully developed and sponsored a new policy defining more liberal eligibility for Emeritus status for retired McGill Professors and Librarians. MAUT persuaded the administration to improve policies for the protection of the intellectual proprietary rights of staff to their patents, copyrights and software, including a viable appeal process. This is but a sampling of the files MAUT has worked for on our behalf. I know it has been said before, but this is done in a collegial way which a union cannot match. So what some perceive as a weakness, I see as strength.

And while I'm at it, as a member of the MAUT recruiting committee, I have encouraged my

colleagues on Council to identify people in their departments and centres who might be interested in joining MAUT. I throw the same request out to all of you: help us find potential recruits and we can provide you with material to help them make their decisions.

In this issue of the *Newsletter*, we cover a wide set of issues of concern to MAUT members. Our VP External, Meyer Nahon, provides an update on Bills 38 and 100, the province's attempts to improve university governance and administration. Past President Malcolm Baines provides a summary of the recent meeting of the Coalition for Contingent Academic Labor. MAUT recently held a forum on grant management which is nicely summarized by Sean Swanick. You'll be hearing more on this issue later as MAUT is currently working with the university administration to deal with concerns raised during the forum. Finally, I am including some material I sent via the MAUT ListSERV on the Strategic Reframing Initiative. I think we should really get involved in helping determine McGill's future.

Before I leave you to the Newsletter, incoming MAUT president John Galaty attended the CAUT Forum for Presidents that was held from January 14-16, 2011 in Ottawa. At a recent MAUT Council meeting, he presented questions of interest that had been discussed at the Presidents Forum, some of which (but probably not all!) might be useful for MAUT members to consider.

### MAUT/APBM General Membership Meeting

Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 McGill Faculty Club Ballroom, 3450 McTavish.

Lunch: 11:30 / Meeting: 12 pm to 1:30 pm RSVP (required): <a href="mait@mcgill.ca">maut@mcgill.ca</a> / Tel: 398-3942 / Fax: 398-6937

## **CAUT Forum for Presidents: January 14-16, Ottawa.**

### John Galaty

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# **Balancing the Interests of a Diverse Membership**

How does an Association recognize and enhance diversity, at the university and in its own governance? Diversity includes gender, age and seniority, but also types of employment and university status.

For instance, should full-time and part-time faculty be maintained as two 'bargaining units'?

How can generational differences in representation be reduced, given the special burdens of young faculty?

#### Workload

Many of us work over 60 hours per week, often missing lunches and other "normal" activities. Does this added workload diminish collegiality? And does collegiality increase or decrease workload?

Is the workload negotiable, and should a 'local norms' model be followed, suited to the needs and practices of particular departments? The suggestion was made that unit-level norms should be explicit, especially regarding teaching and service.

Cross-appointed staff members have special workload problems, given that local expectations often do not take account of demands for time dedicated to other units. Accordingly, there should be common meetings between units to reconcile divergent expectations. What about inter-faculty equity in workload?

### **Leadership Succession and Association Renewal**

Many faculty associations find it difficult to attract new members or to recruit members for service, ensuring a healthy renewal of leadership. One approach is to convene social events where particular university achievements are recognized. Should MAUT be more proactive in holding social functions, for instance receptions for all retired members, or for those who have just received tenure? Should we provide incentives for bringing in new members?

# Increasing MAUT's Visibility and Political Effectiveness

The Forum asked whether Associations should define their mandates strictly in terms of faculty conditions of work and service, or aim to achieve greater outreach, both within the university and in the social and political domains.

For instance, should they increase coordination with other Unions and Associations? Some suggested that student support was critical, so greater liaison with student unions should be fostered. Should Associations form committees with other Unions on joint issues, for example concerning benefits?

To provide additional support for a V.P. Communications, should Associations have a professional Communications Officer or recruit someone to Council from Journalism?

Should Associations hold Workshops on political issues, or other issues of broad interest beyond the conditions of service for Faculty?

Should an Association meet with editorial boards of local newspapers, and establish close links in order to facilitate getting its messages out?

Should Associations sponsor All-Candidates meetings on Post-Secondary Education during Elections?

If 'We' are the University, should a Faculty Association provide public statements rather than leaving this role exclusively to the Administration?

# Recent Developments in Québec University Legislation Meyer Nahon (VP External, MAUT)

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Over the past few years, the Quebec government has made, or attempted to make, a few forays into the governance and management of Quebec universities. It is likely that the key motivation behind these is the ilot Voyageur fiasco at UQAM in 2007, which forced the government to intervene in UQAM's financial affairs. This, as well as other events at Quebec universities, including McGill, spurred government to undertake legislation aimed at greater oversight and constraint of Quebec universities. Over the past year, three key bills have been on the radar of Quebec university professors' associations: Bills 38, 100 and 130.

Bill 100 is a bill to reduce administrative spending at universities. It was adopted by the Quebec National Assembly last June. It mandates reductions in administrative salaries, advertising and travel expenses. The bill is not intended to have an impact on academic functions at the universities, though there is some concern that this may happen indirectly. Most Quebec universities appear to be putting plans in place to follow these directives, albeit reluctantly. It is unclear how each university will implement the mandated cost reductions; and whether those reductions will be to the extent required by the law. McGill Human Resources has posted a Q&A document, aimed at McGill support staff, on its web site: (http://www.mcgill.ca/hr/4/qadocument-relating-bill-100 ), but no specific information has been distributed beyond this.

Bill 38 is a 'new and improved' incarnation of Bill 107, both of which have been discussed at previous MAUT meetings. It is of greater concern due to its far-reaching impacts. It is essentially a bill to make the structure of university governance more uniform across Quebec. Generally, it will increase oversight of university management — in particular financial management (its original motivation comes from the UQAM *Ilot Voyageur* debacle). The bill specifies the composition of university Boards of Governors (BoG)

to be at least 60% 'independent' (i.e., people external to the university) — potentially as high as 75%. Greater powers would be given to the BoG and would require the creation of three committees to oversee, respectively: oversight, human resources and governance/ethics. These committees would be chaired by an external member and would only have a single member internal to the university community. Bill 38 also mandates the BoG to measure and control university 'efficiency'. The bill would impose more detailed financial oversight on university administrations; requiring more detailed accounting to be provided to the government.

Bill 38 is strongly opposed by student associations, professor associations and university administrations alike because it is viewed as taking power away from university constituents and giving it to external entities. University administrators also oppose the increased financial oversight and 'one size fits all' approach. It was thought that the bill would be introduced last spring. However, the strong opposition seems to have delayed its introduction. The bill was then further delayed by the change in the Minister of Education in August 2010. At the moment, the impact of the new Minister is unclear, as well as whether the government has the appetite to push through an unpopular piece of legislation. The present expectation is that Bill 100 will not be introduced at the present sitting of the Assembly. If it does reappear in the future, it may be changed substantially. Nevertheless, MAUT and the FQPPU (Fédération Québecoise des Professeurs Professeures Universitaires) are keeping a close eye on the evolution of this file.

Bill 130, which was recently adopted in principle, is a bill that merges the three Quebec granting agencies (FQRNT, FRSQ and FQRSC) into a single entity to be called '*Recherche-Québec*'. The domains of the three existing agencies roughly parallel those of the corresponding federal agencies (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC). The stated goal is administrative efficiency.

The FQPPU is opposed to this merger because it is being driven by a political imperative and does not respond to the needs of researchers. They are sceptical there will be any cost saving; they are concerned about whether the different domains will be fairly treated in the merged agency; and they believe it concentrates too much power in the hands of the Ministry of Economic Development.

Bills 38, 100 and 130 were key topics of discussion at the last few FQPPU council meetings, spanning the past year. The FQPPU joined student and staff organizations to organize a Study Day on November 25. The activities were held primarily at UQAM, with participation of non-Montreal universities by videoconferencing. A series of speakers and workshops were held to discuss university accessibility, funding, governance, and academic freedom. On the other hand, on December 6, the government held a 'Rencontre des Partenaires' to meet with university administrators, professor, staff and student organizations, and other stakeholders. Generally, this meeting was not well received by professor, staff and student organizations because they concluded that the meeting had a narrow and

thinly-veiled mandate to come up with mechanisms to increase tuition fees. The FQPPU is presently advocating the organization of a broad-based 'États Généraux' to discuss the issues and challenges facing Quebec universities, in their broadest form.

Unrelated to the above legislative initiatives, but nevertheless related to these issues, in October 2010, the FQPPU released a report on building maintenance costs. The report shows that university operating funds are being used for building maintenance due to the government's inadequate funding of this maintenance. This then has a deleterious impact of the primary missions of the university - teaching and research. The report shows that Quebec allocations for physical plant maintenance are down about 20% over the last 10 years, while student populations are up more than 20% in same period. The key conclusion is that about 50% of infrastructure costs are coming from operating budgets. The report calls on the government to revisit its approach for university funding.

# **COCAL IX:** Towards a united strategy for academic employment in North America

Malcolm Baines (Past President, MAUT)

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Every two years, the Coalition for Contingent Academic Labor convenes an international meeting to discuss issues of interest to university educators from Canada, the United States and Mexico. This year the meeting was hosted by Laval University, and the local committee created an impressive agenda interspersed with social events highlighting the history and scenery of Quebec City. In the welcoming address, David Robinson, the Associate Director of CAUT, gave a blunt assessment of the global trends in the university sector. While education is seen by the general population as the path to careers and prosperity, university funding and resources have declined. Enrolments continue to grow at about 3%

per year and the operating costs increase at an even faster rate. However, there are insufficient public funds available to support the public education system and governments have stated that private funding must fill the gap.

Neo-liberal promoters of the business sector are globally deconstructing public higher education by offering privately funded cost-competitive alternatives to traditional universities that include virtual internet universities and distance education institutes, to exploit the student demand while minimizing costs to maximize profits. To increase enrolment numbers, entrance standards are relatively low. To maximize degree completion rates, course

and program difficulty is modest. Most significantly, the course syllabus is created by extramural contractors and teaching staff are poorly paid on a course-by-course basis with few benefits. Even publicly funded universities are increasingly outsourcing academic work to private entities that offer distance education courses given by contract educators, with the assistance of contract or virtual tutors to assist the students and grade exams at international sites. The focus is on standardizing content, limiting program diversity and defining learning outcomes to meet basic universal benchmarks that remove any vestige of academic freedom from the teacher. While all agreed that our universities are unsustainable with the current sources and levels of funding for post-secondary education, the proposals from the business and government sectors were termed a "Bridge to Nowhere".

A number of university delegates reported that progress on improving the working conditions for contract academic staff [CAS] had been very slow and several directly ascribed this deficiency to a perceived lack of concern by the 'privileged' full-time academic staff. It was pointed out that all academic staff members need to understand that they have shared problems and concerns with their working conditions, and the costs of not acting now could be much greater in the longer term. Many CAS staff members described themselves as languishing in a teaching-only ghetto without access to the means for engaging in research of any kind.

Further, collective bargaining in universities is under increasing pressure from administrators who see hiring CAS as the solution to their financial problems. As a consequence, labor unions are approaching the course lecturers, research assistants / associates and contract professors with offers to assist them to certify as independent bargaining units. While it is easy for professors to say that they are busy, have research to complete and administrative work to do and no time to assess the situation or address these problems, the university will continue

to fragment and change inappropriately if we do not speak out. Solidarity among all academic staff is important and academic freedom is wasted if professors do not use it.

In the United States, universities are reducing their tenured staff and increasingly focusing on offering profitable academic programs and performing research in profitable areas, while imposing cuts to infrastructure, cuts to salaries and imposing mandatory unpaid holidays. Increasingly, full-time academic employment is awarded solely on the basis of the quantity of research funding and research productivity of the academic staff member. In Mexico the commoditization of professional university work is accelerating under pressures to cut budgets, and teachers are employed under temporary contracts without academic freedom, job security or benefits. In Canada, intractable university bargaining teams are freezing increases in staff salaries and benefits and requiring that any changes in the collective agreement must be funded from within the existing agreement ("mining the value of the collective agreement"). Senior administrators and nonacademic members are becoming a majority in the membership of some Senates and governing bodies, stifling the voices of the academic staff members.

The session summary addressed the fundamental relationship between full-time and part-time faculty in the union strategy. Contract academic staff members wish to know how they can achieve appropriate recognition and representation within the university. Their primary concerns are pro-rata salaries, benefits including pension, and reasonable levels of job security. There was a strong appeal for increased solidarity among all academic staff, and the identification of a need to overcome the general sense of apathy that appears to pervade the university environment. The delegates pledged to end the needless and harmful competition between full and part-time faculty. Joint action is vital to improve the working conditions and careers of all academic staff within our universities. The next meeting of COCAL-X will be in Mexico City in 2012.

# **MAUT Grant Management Forum for Academic Staff**

**Sean Swanick (Islamic Studies Librarian)** 

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On November 25, 2010 MAUT offered a half day session on grant management hosted at the McGill Faculty Club. Attendance at the forum was approximately 60 participants from just about every faculty, and department at McGill University.

The morning began with an introduction by MAUT president Prof. Brendan Gillon. The grant management forum was proposed by MAUT because of the importance of grant money for University faculty. It was also proposed because McGill, like many other universities in recent memory, has undergone many changes as well as having hired many new staff. These changes were the impetus for this forum. That is, the forum was created in hopes of exchanging information between academic staff information on what works best or what is confusing. It was an opportunity for colleagues to sit and discuss the system and entertain ideas of best practices in hopes of creating a clearer and more concise manner of managing grant money and on utilising that money to its maximum potential.

After a quick introduction, those present were instructed to divide themselves into four groups. Each group had a facilitator who worked with the group to encourage both positive and negative feedback. The group session lasted for two hours and was divided into two parts, each lasting an hour, with a short break between them. The first portion dealt with the question, "What works well with grant management at McGill?" and the second portion dealt with, "What could be improved with grant management at McGill?"

Some points representative of what was liked are: the new and improved Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) website as well as the detailed organizational chart. This, it was agreed, simplified the process of determining who was in charge of which particular aspect of a grant, and who was the best person to ask about particular aspects of a grant. Some participants

noted the complexities faced in trying to determine the appropriate person with whom to liaise, particularly after obtaining a grant. The Research Grants Office (RGO) also received many compliments for their responsiveness by phone and email, especially concerning deadlines and procedures to be followed. The Research and Restricted Funds (RRF) office was complimented as well, for their knowledge about restrictions on funds and about spending and managing grants, including advice on what grant holders ought to spend their money on.

There was much confusion over the use of P-Cards, particularly in their use in the system; the inconsistency across departments and faculties became evident as we broached this topic — some departments still use the P-Card system while others do not and have not in some time. For those who used the P-Card it was generally agreed to be good for material purchases such as computers, office equipment, etc. but not for travel expenses, which for many faculty members was the largest and most time-consuming expense for their research work. One other positive note that seemed to be consistent within all groups was the new monthly statements on Minerva. These were found to be more up to date, consistent and less time-consuming than the previous paper method.

The second half of the morning, again in groups guided by a facilitator, consisted of discussions concerning what could be improved upon for grants. This hour proved to be more eventful and filled with more discussion. There was an effort to remain positive throughout; however there are a number of ways in which the McGill administration should improve and simplify the system. Perhaps the most complicated and tedious portion of the grants procedures was the bureaucracy involved in obtaining one's grant money. Furthermore, many complaints were voiced concerning administration's demands to justify the spending of

said money. A real sense of lack of trust was widely felt, which complicates matters even more.

A few participants noted that they had to submit detailed lists of materials needed and reasons for each material. While the process is straightforward, it is time-consuming and felt to be unnecessary. Furthermore, hiring of a Research Assistant (RA) was noted as being a 'nightmare' for some participants, particularly if the RA was from another university. In both instances it was suggested by various participants that an honour system should be in place. This would alleviate the researchers from having to justify their purchases and, perhaps, make the grant process smoother and easier. Moreover, it was also suggested by a number of participants that if an honour system was agreed upon, perhaps the administration could do random audits of grant researchers. This would help both the researcher and the administration in loosening the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy was the biggest issue raised and one that was echoed repeatedly.

After completing the second portion of the session, all of the charts were distributed around the room. The participants were then asked to select their top three priorities in order to precipitate a strategy or strategies for McGill administration to help clarify the process of grant applications and assist in the coordination of research grants. Furthermore, this will help McGill administration understand where the fault lines are and what needs to be improved for researchers to continue to carry out their research.

It was noted many times that the system is not perfect. However, as one participant stated this was the first time in 30 years that such an effort was conducted to help foment changes in the handling of applications and the steps after obtaining grants. It was widely suggested that a second session concerning grant applications, processes and procedures be held in a few months. The second session would continue to generate necessary changes, and update the academic community on the changes that were identified during the first session. Finally, it was suggested that another session on the actual procedures and steps that need to be taken to apply for a grant would also be well received.

# McGill Strategic Reframing Initiative: MAUT Members should be heard

### Terry Hébert (VP Communications)

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By now, you may have heard of the Strategic Reframing Initiative (SRI) begun by the Principal, Dr. Monroe-Blum. MAUT and its members should be involved in the decision-making process for such a critical rethink of McGill's programs and operations, so I am sharing items that other members have sent me regarding various aspects of the SRI. These include a link to Dr. Munroe-Blum's description of the SRI and its mandate, some links to articles on the company involved, the McKinsey Group, and other material you may find interesting.

Please contact us with your concerns, suggestions and information to help us contribute in the most productive and collegial way possible to the future of McGill.

- A link to the Principal's Interview: http://www.mcgill.ca/principal/
- An article in the NYRB on the McKinsey Group's work on the university system in the UK: <a href="http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jan/13/grim-threat-british-universities/?page=1">http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jan/13/grim-threat-british-universities/?page=1</a>
- An editorial in the McGill Daily: http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2011/01/mckinsey-consulting-bodes-ill-for-mcgill-community/
- Information in the McGill Reporter: http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2010/11/stra tegic-reframing-initiative-to-help-mcgill-sharpen-focus-on-key-priorities/
- A link to the white paper presented by the Provost, Dr. Anthony C. Masi: <a href="http://www.mcgill.ca/files/senate/D10-09WhitePaperpresentation.pdf">http://www.mcgill.ca/files/senate/D10-09WhitePaperpresentation.pdf</a>.

## **MAUT Scholarship**

The MAUT Scholarship was established by the McGill Association of University Teachers in memory of the fourteen women murdered at the Ecole Polytechnique in December 1989 simply because they were women.

This scholarship is intended to encourage women to enter the Faculty of Engineering. It is awarded each year by the Faculty of Engineering Scholarships Committee to an undergraduate woman on the basis of academic merit. This year it was awarded to Caitlin Ronan, who is studying Electrical Engineering with minor in economics. Congratulations, Caitlin!

## **Schulich School of Music Benefit Concert**

### **Musicians join hands for Japan**

April 26, 2011; 7:30pm, Pollack Hall Price: \$25 (\$10 students)

Proceeds to go the the Canadian Red Cross in support of relief for Japan. No tax receipt will be issued.

Twelve Preludes for Piano (extraits/excerpts)

Rikuya Terashima (1964-)

I. Lento,

VIII. Scherzando

IX. Andante

Lullaby of Somber Green and Tombstone

Toshinao Sato (1936-2002)

(from the Light Colored Album (extrait/excerpt))

Rain Tree Sketch II — In Memoriam Olivier Messiaen

Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996)

Kimihiro Yasaka, Piano

From my Homeland

Bedřich Smetana

I. Moderato

II. Andantino - Moderato - Allegro vivo

Martin Karlíček, Piano Mana Shiraishi, Violin

INTERMISSION

Trio No. 2. Op. 66, C minor

Felix Mendelssohn

- I. Allegro energico e con fuoco
- II. Andante espressivo
- III. Molto allegro quasi presto
- IV. Finale Allegro appassionato

Mark Fewer, Violin Matt Haimovitz, Cello Kyoko Hashimoto, Piano

for more information: <a href="http://www.mcgill.ca/music/events/posts/29/03/2011/32392">http://www.mcgill.ca/music/events/posts/29/03/2011/32392</a>

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The MAUT / APBM Newsletter is published periodically during the academic year to keep members of the McGill Association of University Teachers / Association des Professeur(e)s et Bibliothécaires de McGill informed of concerns and activities.

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