

**Statement to Senate on the issue of
“Tenure Regulations for Librarians”**

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Provost**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the working group committee on librarian regulations (Janine Schmidt, Pat Riva, Sharon Rankin, Robert Clarke, Anna Stoute, Marc Richard, from the Libraries; chaired by Professor Hudson Meadwell, Department of Political Science; with Carole Renahan, Area Personnel Officer of the McGill Libraries, and Vilma Di Rienzo Campbell, of Legal Services, as resource persons), for their efforts at producing modifications to Chapter 2, Section 5. I believe these regulations will satisfy the need for an interim arrangement for tenure procedures while at the same time paving the way for further progress on designing a more permanent set of regulations for our academic librarians.

At or immediately after last Wednesday’s Senate Steering Committee meeting, the executives of the MAUT were given a copy of this proposal, representing an adaptation of the text of “Section 5 for faculty” that the working group tailored specifically for librarians. The proposal represents significantly more than the housekeeping envisioned by the original notice of motion, brought to Senate last May and referred to me by Senate in September.

In addition to achieving broad consensus among the members of the regulations working group, the concepts and text of this rewritten section of the regulations were brought to two meetings of librarians (the first with nearly 40 participants, the second with about 20), and once again, broad consensus was reached. The working group committee forwarded the revised version to me. I made no changes to the document, believing as I do that they were acceptable as “interim tenure regulations”.

I propose to bring the amended Chapter 2, Section 5 regulations to the earliest possible meeting of Senate after MAUT has had time to examine them. I trust that this collegial consultation will result in being able to bring the regulations forward to Senate shortly and that they will be passed.

Progress has been made and continues to be made, but admittedly more slowly than I had hoped.

Almost exactly three years ago, at an assembly of librarians, in a presentation, I proposed a framework for a new set of regulations that would govern their employment at McGill.

There were five “planks” in the platform I proposed:

- (1) librarians would remain an academic, but not a tenure-track, category;
- (2) special secured employment status would be guaranteed and be based on procedures appropriate to the librarian role;
- (3) instead of sabbatical leaves, librarians would benefit from regularly spaced professional development leaves;
- (4) all librarians occupying permanent positions would be on a single, unified, career path, but we would still need and have “project librarians” to satisfy short-term needs;
- (5) procedures would be found to migrate current library professionals to the new single, unified career path, given recognition to their years of service on time-limited contracts.

Let me be clear about the last point. The library professional category is the backbone of the current academic renewal in the McGill Libraries. In order to solidify the gains we have been making, we need to get these librarians onto a long-term career trajectory as soon as possible. Based on a recommendation by the Director of Libraries, I have already adjusted their salary levels so that they are competitive with their G-10 counterparts and I have agreed that when we renew their contracts they will be for an “indefinite term”, after of course an appropriate review and in anticipation of the changes to the regulations.

Once agreement on Chapter 2 Section 5 is reached and passed by Senate, the working group has agreed to continue to meet to discuss ways of turning that framework into a coherent set of regulations to govern the employment of academic librarians at McGill. This will take time, but if we get it right these efforts and their resulting regulations for the employment of academic librarians will serve the librarians, the McGill Libraries, and the entire McGill community well in the decades ahead.