

MAUT Council Meeting

MINUTES

Friday, November 8, 2013
McGill Faculty Club 12:00 noon

Present:	
Executive:	K. Hastings, A. Shrier, B. Lennox, A. Saroyan, B. Reed
Council:	M. Nahon, K. Siddiqi, K. GowriSankaran, L. Kloda, A. Moores, K. Hashimoto, A. Kirk,
Regrets:	G. Mikkelsen, C. Ragan, P. Caines, L. Glass, R. Sieber
MAUT Staff:	H. Kerwin-Borrelli, J. Varga
Guests:	O. Dyens, K. Massey, A. Walsh, S. Algieri, M. Richard, A. Laywine, D. Titone, I. Henderson, S. Turner, J. Galaty, B. Gillon,, L-F. Brodeur, C. Riches

K. Hastings called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm. He welcomed Council members and guests and noted that Deputy Provost O. Dyens, Registrar K. Massey and Assistant Registrar A. Walsh would join the meeting in progress to discuss the classroom scheduling parameters.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Because of time limitations K. Hastings asked to defer consideration of the professional licensing issue to the November 13 meeting. Also, given that O. Dyens, K. Massey and A. Walsh were scheduled to arrive at 12:30 pm, he suggested that the item MAUT Election Process be considered immediately after Approval of Minutes. With these changes the agenda was adopted by consensus.

2. Approval of Minutes

Council had received the draft minutes of the May 8, 2013 Joint Council Meeting. B. Reed commented that some information was missing. He proposed to forward the missing information to H. Kerwin-Borrelli. K. Hastings proposed that approval of the May 8, 2013 minutes be deferred until the November 13 Council meeting, and this was agreed by consensus.

3. Professional licensing issue

Deferred to the November 13 meeting.

4. MAUT Election Process

K. Hastings referred to confusion concerning the results of the 2012 MAUT elections. He described that he and V.P. Communications B. Reed, following discussion at Executive Committee, had begun to consider possible changes to the MAUT election process that would prevent the recurrence of such confusion.

B. Reed moved that Council adopt Amendments to Constitution Articles VI and VIII, that after friendly amendment, read as follows:

Article VI.1.c: to add *whose term ends at the end of the Spring Annual General Meeting after their co-option,*

Article VIII to add *11. If, when an election is held, there are vacancies on council for different term lengths, then each candidate for a council seat will be nominated for only*

one specific term length. A candidate may only be elected for the term length for which the candidate is nominated. Each member can vote for as many candidates for a specific term length as there are vacancies on Council of that term length.

Seconded by A. Paré. Unanimously approved by Council.

Because constitutional amendments must be approved by the association membership, either at a General Meeting where a quorum is present, or by referendum following their presentation at a General Meeting where a quorum is not present, it was agreed that these suggested amendments be presented for adoption at the November 15, 2013 Fall General Meeting.

A third possible amendment, on a procedure to break tied votes, was also briefly considered but from the discussion it was clear that this needed further development and it was not presented for adoption by Council.

5. Classroom scheduling parameters

At 12:30 pm, O. Dyens, Deputy Provost, Student Life and Learning, K. Massey, Registrar and A. Walsh, Assistant Registrar, joined the meeting. K. Hastings thanked them for agreeing to meet with Council to discuss the classroom scheduling parameters and asked O. Dyens if he would like to make some opening remarks.

O. Dyens described briefly how this issue has evolved. He listed the groups within the university that had been consulted on the proposed parameters, but agreed that consultation should have been more extensive. When the parameters were circulated to the community, there was strong negative feedback, including from MAUT, regarding the perceived lack of consultation, limits on the time allotted for academics' research, and the manner in which the needs for child care accommodation had been addressed. He has personally answered many emails that arose from these responses and is working to resolve these problematic issues.

He noted that the curriculum, and the need for students to be able to complete their programs in a timely fashion, must take precedence. He also noted that the scheduling problem is extremely complex and is very sensitive to the amounts of time blocked off from teaching by individual academics. Recently, the scheduling software has been overwhelmed. At the same time he acknowledged that McGill is a research-intensive university and academics need time for research, and that academics with young children in day care, or other family care situations, need accommodating schedules to achieve a functional work-life balance.

He indicated that he is responding to reactions to the initial draft parameters, and that he and his team have pledged to work to achieve the right balance among the conflicting issues that the scheduling problem entails. He mentioned that already he is introducing three significant changes: 1) a simplification of the appeal process, which some had felt to be complex and intimidating, 2) new wording regarding research, with the option of a full-day research block-off, and 3) opening up of the childcare issue for all cases of family life special needs, including disability or age-related infirmity.

There followed a general discussion. K. Siddiqi described the overwhelming workload and responsibilities of an average academic's life, including teaching, research, and family life. He noted that professors are often in email contact with their students at all hours of the day. He also noted that child care at McGill is mostly unavailable, so that children must be placed elsewhere, which exerts additional time pressure. He characterized the attitude that seemed to emerge from the classroom scheduling parameters as out of touch with these realities.

A. Saroyan and A. Paré noted the inadequate consultation with academic staff in the development of the parameters.

M. Nahon asked about the scale of the problem involving daycare. K. Massey noted that this is a difficult question to answer because the conversations between chairs and instructors are confidential. However daycare-related blockoffs appeared to account for a minority of blocked-off hours.

K. Massey noted that scheduling involves two priorities: available classroom space and conflict-free course structuring. The latter is significant; currently there are thousands of issues concerning course combinations. K. Massey noted that about one-half of the scheduling problems that could not be resolved by the software were settled manually during a first run, and in making these adjustments, the team was working to establish fairness across departments.

C. Ragan stressed the need for an effective communication strategy to report on the number and nature of the problems being solved. K. Massey commented that one of the problems has been expressed in the form of students' complaints concerning limited access to courses, and conflicts that make desired courses unavailable. A. Paré noted that access to courses is a 30 year complaint and that there are currently too many students, too few academics, and the expectation that the latter are to solve the problems. C. Ragan asked how the situation has changed over the years and if scheduling problems are worse today. K. Massey noted that problems are more evident now because there are more multidisciplinary programs so that many courses are facing a wider range of students, with a wider range of co-requisites which increases the scheduling limitations and complexities. B. Lennox commented on the great scheduling difficulties that arise from 1) increasing enrolments and class sizes, and 2) no increases in the number of large lecture halls available on campus. Classes that for many years had fit in classroom X were now too large for that room, which generates a whole series of scheduling issues. He stressed the need for a planning process in which student enrolment over the next 3-5 years is projected and in which the Advisory Committee has a mandate to explore the long-term scheduling implications.

D. Titone commented on the lack of adequate data regarding childcare needs. S. Turner, Co-chair of the Senate Sub-Committee on the Status of Women (SSCOW), thanked O. Dyens, K. Massey and A. Walsh for addressing the childcare/family care issue and disclosing the issues involved in the scheduling process. The SSCOW has been flooded with emails from pre-tenured academics concerning the blocked off times and situations arising with their requests to deans. On this basis SSCOW was proposing a moratorium on the scheduling parameter changes until data on daycare needs are available. O. Dyens stated that there could not be a moratorium on the scheduling parameters but that evolution and change would occur in order to seek the right balance. He commented that he attended Council today to learn about the issue as seen by academic staff. He

stressed that the university must be seen as a whole. He pledged to consult more extensively to make this situation less painful. He offered to return for further discussion and follow up, and it was agreed that the meeting of December 11, 2013 would be a good setting for this.

K. Hastings thanked O. Dyens, K. Massey, and A. Walsh for their participation in this important discussion. The panel left at 1:21 pm.

6. Process for Committee selection

During the Council meeting on October 23, 2013, four alternative approaches had been briefly discussed to resolve the inability of the Working Group on MAUT Nominees to University Committees to arrive at a consensus proposal for the membership of Committee on Academic Staff Compensation (CASC): (a) to continue the discussion at the next Council meeting; (b) to delegate to the President the selection of the team for 2013-2014; (c) to adopt the Working Group's list of candidates and President will make a selection; and (d) to put the membership issue to a vote.

B. Lennox raised the question of whether Council needs to approve members of CASC, since it is not clearly specified in the Constitution that this is a University Committee – he referred to it as a parity committee. This led to some discussion where both opinions were expressed. K. Hastings indicated that, even if not directly specified as a University Committee in the constitution, the general idea that Council has overall responsibility for nominating MAUT representatives or MAUT candidate-representatives on external committees would argue that Council should play a key role in the membership of CASC.

K. Hastings noted the review of committee membership by Council is a new effort within recent years, and that in terms of process, we are to some extent feeling our way forwards. During the Working Group's effort to generate names of potential nominees, ten people expressed interest in participating in the CASC. This is considerably more than the allotment, which is the President plus 5 additional members.

A. Paré commented that the Working Group should select people who have appropriate expertise, however K. Hastings noted that the Working Group did not limit the list in terms of expertise, but included the names of all who expressed an interest. A. Shrier emphasized the importance of having President-Elect and Past-President on CASC to ensure continuity. M. Nahon suggested that the list be constrained to eight candidates, from which the President could select the needed five members. B. Lennox noted the discussion should centre on finding the best team with expertise and leadership. Selection of the team by the President would respond to that imperative, whereas election of a set of members individually would likely result in a less functionally-organized team. L. Kloda indicated that gender balance should be addressed, along with areas of expertise. A. Kirk said that Council should endorse the best and strongest team possible and suggested this task could be delegated to the Nominating Committee, however K. Hastings noted that this would require a constitutional amendment because the duties of the Nominating Committee as described in the constitution are limited to the MAUT election process. C. Ragan proposed that the President put the team together (a) after consultation with Council; (b) which will be ratified by Council; and (c) for continuity purposes, the three Presidents should be members. He recommended that the President, after consultation with

Council, choose the remaining three candidates and bring this recommendation to Council for approval. There was a consensus agreement that the President should present a proposed slate for CASC for Council's approval at the next Council meeting.

7. Academic Freedom Committee Report.

K. Hastings asked Council to review the report of the Academic Freedom Committee with the intention of bringing it to the Fall General meeting [Nov 15/13] for information and then back to Council. The statement is copied here:

Statement of Academic Freedom

by the MAUT Committee on Academic Freedom
members: Jane Aitkens, Daniel Cere, John Galaty, Brendan Gillon (chair) and Ian Henderson.

Academic freedom is central to McGill University's mission of advancing learning through teaching, scholarship and service to society.

The scholarly members of the university have the freedom to conduct research and disseminate its results, through teaching and publication, without being constrained by the imposition of any orthodoxy, political or disciplinary, without being directed to pecuniary ends and without being subject to punitive measures as a result of their academic pursuits. They may exercise this freedom in the service of both the university and the wider society by promoting and informing debate, encouraging independent thinking and critical reflection, preserving and disseminating knowledge and fostering innovation.

The exercise of academic freedom requires both good university governance and vibrant scholarly life. The former depends on the full participation of scholarly members in administration and governance, who in that setting retain the right of free expression, including the freedom to criticize one another, the university, its policies and its administration.

The university and its officers have a duty to protect the academic freedom of its scholarly community, both individually and collectively, from infringement by other members of the community as well as agents or agencies external to it. An essential element of academic freedom is the obligation of the university, its officers and its members to defend the community from the undue influence of governments, accreditation bodies, corporate and individual donors or societal pressures.

Finally, members of the university are, as citizens, entitled to participate in public forums and debates. In doing so, they should represent their views as their own and not as those of the university.

B. Gillon presented the document and background. He attended the 2011 Fall CAUT Council meeting with then VP External M. Nahon following which a decision was made to review the situation of academic freedom at McGill. A committee consisting of J. Galaty, J. Aitkens, D. Cere, I. Henderson and B. Gillon as Chair was struck at the December 2011 MAUT Council meeting. Members of this committee also attended the CAUT sponsored Harry Crowe Conference on Academic Freedom. The Ad Hoc Committee hosted a two-hour Open Forum on Academic Freedom on February 8th, 2013. After many months of study this draft statement was developed.

L. Kloda asked who are “scholarly members”, and A. Kirk raised an issue regarding the use of the phrase “in that setting”. He also asked about the freedom to criticize colleagues and asked when criticism becomes harassment. B. Gillon noted the problem of drawing lines.

B. Reed referred to discussion and motions regarding the CAUT Policy on Academic Freedom in the November 7, 2012 Council minutes. He asked for the difference between the draft statement presented today and the CAUT Policy Statement. He emphasized the importance of protecting academic freedom, that the document needed lengthy discussion, and that Council should have a separate meeting to discuss the statement. B. Gillon emphasized that the Committee worked to develop a McGill referenced statement on Academic Freedom. He said it was farfetched to expect the University would adopt the CAUT’s statement, and that J. Turk [CAUT Executive Director] had encouraged each university to develop its own statement. The draft document would be presented at the Fall General Meeting [Nov 15/13] as a point of information. J. Galaty emphasized that the CAUT statement was always considered by the committee. B. Reed asked about the differences in the draft document when compared to the CAUT statement and I. Henderson stated that the Committee designed the statement with McGill in mind. The draft is designed to ultimately be something that that McGill could officially adopt as its own statement on academic freedom (which would allow McGill to distance itself from the odious UACC statement). A. Shrier noted the Committee was charged with developing a statement and has fulfilled its mandate. K. Hastings noted the goal is not to present this statement as the final version. It is for information only at the Fall General Meeting. The discussion will continue with members’ feedback and the current statement is a working document that will be clearly presented as a draft statement.

K. Siddiqi proposed that, in the presentation of the Statement of Academic Freedom to the Fall General Meeting, extensive excerpts of the November 7, 2012 Council minutes regarding the CAUT statement be presented as background information. A vote was called as to whether or not to include the added information. The result was five in favor and five opposed with one abstention. K. Hastings indicated he would take the close division of Council on this question into account when preparing material for the Fall General Meeting.

8. Fall General Meeting [November 15 2013]

Council briefly discussed the agenda for the Fall General meeting and arrived at the following outline: President’s Report (to address the new Principal and Pension/Salary Policy), Auditor’s Report, reports by Chairs of the Librarians’ and Retirees’ Sections, the Statement of Academic Freedom, the proposed constitutional amendments on the election process, a report from the VP communications, a report from SBAC which will include the steps taken to resolve the situation

of travel insurance for retirees in a fair way, and presentations on the Charte des valeurs and on the Classroom Scheduling Parameters.

9. Discussion: 2014 merit versus across the board

10. Slate of MAUT nominees for university committees (Closed Session)

11. Appointments to MAUT Standing Committees (Closed Session)

Because of time limitations K. Hastings asked to defer consideration of these items to the November 13 meeting. Several Council members had left and those remaining agreed.

12. Adjournment

A. Paré moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by K. Hashimoto. Carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:31 pm.