



MAUT Newsletter: McGill Association of University Teachers

November 2016

Another Interesting Year



The story may be apocryphal but supposedly an old curse reads: "May you live in interesting times."

Welcome to the world of MAUT. I don't know if this is because the administration respects our [recently enacted policy regarding consultation](#) or if there are just more things going on than usual, but we've been pretty busy so far this year. Our VP Internal (Petra Rohrbach) and our President-Elect (Alenoush Saroyan) share the breadth of our recent consultation activities in their [reports](#).

Social Events

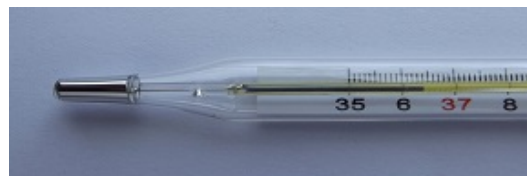
Our social events at the Faculty Club and at the Macdonald Campus were both extremely well attended and the [MAUT Membership Committee](#) continues to work hard to attract new members and sustain the interest of current members. I keep saying the social side of MAUT was long ignored - no more. I meet a lot of potential, new and long standing members at these events and you'll note I try to keep my speeches short. The collaboration of both the [downtown](#) and [Tadja Hall](#) Faculty Clubs is something we are very grateful for!

Don't forget to mark our Winter Brunch (January 22, 2017 from 11 am to 2 pm, [please RSVP](#)) in your agendas.

Staff Compensation, Travel Policy, Professional Development Allowance

Discussions at the Committee on Academic Staff Compensation (CASC) have addressed the, to us, unsatisfactory fact that people on parental leave have not been eligible for merit-based salary increases. These discussions have made real progress and we are expecting that going forward, salary policy implementation guidelines will include merit eligibility for people on parental leave using a formula based on their recent merit history. Keep your eyes open for news on this.

We've also, in concert with many individual and small-group efforts, convinced the administration that recently-implemented changes in the Travel Policy were problematic for academic staff. It is now agreed that research funds will be exempted from the requirement to use a university-appointed Travel Agent. We are pushing for a similar re-thinking of recent [changes to the use of our professional development funds](#) for the purchase of computer equipment and software.



Staff Benefits

Health and Dental Plans: The Basics

Our insurance plans are entirely self-financing and premiums for our insurance plans are entirely determined by the claims. Employees cover half the premium and the University the other half.

Increased Rates for 2017

The 2017 Health Care Plan premium was increased by 0.5% and the Dental Care Plan premium was increased by 2.5%.

2016 health plan premiums:

\$47.08 (Single), \$92.76 (Family)

2017 health plan premiums:

\$47.34 (Single), \$93.26 (Family)

2016 dental plan premiums:

\$24.05 (Single), \$53.78 (Family)

2017 dental plan premiums:

\$24.64 (Single), \$55.10 (Family)

We have had some very large claims in the past several years, most of which were covered by the Large Amount Pooling (LAP) insurance policy that protects our plan from major claims over \$75K per individual claimant. This premium has tripled over the past 4 years and is now \$967,872. We're still ahead: If we had to pay the LAP costs last year ourselves it would have totaled \$1.5 million.

Members with Temporary Residence in Canada

Faculty and Librarians who have temporary residency in Canada are only covered by RAMQ for 21 days of travel abroad. When RAMQ coverage runs out after 21 days, so does McGill coverage. So members with temporary residence planning travel for more than 21 days should consider additional travel insurance. Information can be found on the [HR website](#) and also on the [RAMQ website](#). We have asked that those affected be informed by HR.

Note to Members Close to Retirement

All employees who retire after May 31, 2016 pay 70% of the premium cost for the Health Plan, and 100% of



On salary policy, an ongoing battle. Discussions at CASC have focused on consolidating the gains made in our comparative standing in relation to other U15 universities during the last three years. The increases in academic staff salaries over the past three years were a deliberate action to improve our salary rank among the U15, and occurred in a setting of austerity regarding admin/support staffing that has itself had negative impacts on our working conditions. Academic staff salary increases over the next three-year horizon will not be so large, but discussions are in course to assure that there will be no loss of the ground we have gained over the past three years vis-a-vis our U15 colleagues. To this end, MAUT and the administration are in a data collection phase for pay increases going forward.

Communicating with the Membership

On the communications front, our VP Communications (Genevieve Gore) and the MAUT Communications Committee have been working on developing a social media presence for the organization ([reports](#)). I think this will solve two problems - many members think we don't communicate enough while others think we communicate too much. You can't win - but here at least the choice will be left up to individual members whether or not or how much to engage!

McGill University Retiree Association (MURA)

Many of you have heard of the [McGill University Retiree Association \(MURA\)](#). They just celebrated their first birthday this year; congratulations! MURA's mission is to represent retirees from all McGill employee groups, including retired academic staff. MAUT and MURA have been in discussions to determine the best way to divide responsibilities between the two associations, given that some of MAUT's activities likewise involve representing retired faculty members and librarians ([please see Marc Richard's report for more details](#)). This division of responsibility will not change the status of the MAUT Retiree Affairs Committee or of MAUT Retired Members, nor affect Retired Member participation in MAUT events and activities.

Pay Equity, International Hires

We are working on a lot of other issues which you will hear about in the coming weeks and months - the [pay equity issue for research assistants](#) and how that will affect other research staff (and others paid with soft money by researchers), gender and equity issues, and the ongoing struggle to improve conditions for international hires. With respect to this last one, McGill has created a new Associate Provost position specifically detailed to deal with such hires. Phil Oxhorn, [Associate Provost \(International\)](#), is now getting the lay of the land in his new job and we are following up.

the premium cost for the Dental Plan, not 50% as do all other Plan members.

Plan "Modernization" and Vendor Search

According to the guidelines of our Health and Dental Plan, we are due to review our vendor selection in the coming year. It was suggested to SBAC by the VP Finance that we also start looking at the "modernization" of the health and dental plans. This refers to Flex plans that can offer several different options for individuals. Currently, this approach has been adopted only by very few universities in Canada. This led to a spirited interaction between the employee groups and the Administration. The employees groups met and concluded that the current plan is fine and rejected the proposal. It was agreed that we would review the matter at CASC and that nothing would be done unilaterally by the administration.

[Read the full SBAC Annual Report here](#)

Al Shrier,
MAUT Representative on SBAC

Claudia Mitchell Awarded SSHRC Gold Medal

Claudia Mitchell, Professor in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education and member of MAUT, was recently awarded the [SSHRC Gold Medal](#) for her work linking research and practice through visual and participatory methods. With a passion for social justice, Prof. Mitchell's research has been used to educate and engage youth on issues such as gender, HIV/AIDS, and public health.

"SSHRC's highest honour, the prestigious Gold Medal is given to individuals whose sustained leadership, dedication and originality of thought have inspired students and colleagues alike."

Congratulations, Prof. Mitchell!

Bernard Robaire Co-Recipient of Guy-Rocher Prize

Bernard Robaire, James McGill Professor of Pharmacology & Therapeutics and Obstetrics & Gynaecology and former MAUT President, was co-recipient of the FQPPU's 2016 Guy-Rocher Prize in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the development of Quebec's institutions of higher learning and the promotion of equity, democratization, collegiality, and academic freedom.

Bravo Bernard!

Getting Involved

One other good thing was that MAUT Council is going to increase its participation on the various MAUT committees. A volunteer workforce requires a lot of good will and willingness to commit time to various activities. Engaging Council and the MAUT membership more generally helps foster solidarity and shares the heavy load we bear. I cannot stress this enough - get involved. There is a lot to do.

The People Doing the Work

Finally, Council is in the process of creating a position for a third person in the office to help engage new members and help Honore Kerwin-Borrelli and Joseph Varga in their increasingly complex tasks. Anyone involved with MAUT for any length of time realizes how much we rely on Honore and Joseph for the core of our activities, our institutional memory and as the public faces of our association. We thank them often for their hard work and devotion but I just wanted to add a word in writing to say how personally grateful I am to both of them, especially this year as President!

[Read the full report of the MAUT President here](#)

Terry Hébert,
MAUT President

Members' Input on Current Issues

Through an interactive presentation organized by Alenoush Saroyan, MAUT President-Elect, members attending the MAUT 2016 Fall General Meeting were asked to prioritize issues of concern to them, describe their use of the professional development fund, and identify their willingness to encourage colleagues to join MAUT. The results are [available on the MAUT website](#).



Revue de
presse
Enseignement supérieur et
recherche

Keeping Up with the English and French Press on Academia

The FQPPU regularly publishes a [Revue de presse](#) with English and French press clippings from a wide range of sources covering a wide range of issues relating to life in academia, educational policy, university governance and research. The Revue can be accessed from the [MAUT website](#). You can also subscribe to the Revue from [their website](#) or by [emailing them directly](#).

CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education



The CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education in Canada is now available at <http://www.caut.ca/resources/almanac>. The Almanac is a source for the most current statistical information available on post-secondary education in Canada. It provides statistics on university and college finances; academic staff salaries and gender; student enrolment and graduation rates; student-teacher ratios; university research funding; and national, provincial, and international comparisons.

[Read the full report of the VP External here](#)

Axel van den Berg,
MAUT VP External

MAUT Financial Snapshot

The MAUT financial picture continues on a sound and stable footing as it has for the past several years. [\[More information\]](#)

Membership Engagement Officer

At its November 9, 2016 meeting, MAUT Council indicated support for a proposal that a third MAUT staff member be hired, with primary responsibility as a Membership Engagement Officer. This additional staff person would play a central role in our ongoing efforts to increase MAUT's membership as well as to continue to improve the connections with our members. It is estimated that an increase of 100-150 in the total number of members (the current number is about 950), which seems realistic, would make the new position revenue neutral.

Reduction of the Membership Dues Mil Rate

Discussions about possible reduction of the membership dues mil rate have taken place at Council meetings this term, and are continuing. Reports to

Congratulations to MAUT Scholarship Recipient Anqi Li

On August 26, 2016, MAUT President Terry Hébert, via University Advancement Engineering, received a thank-you letter from Anqi Li, a second-year student from China majoring in Software Engineering at McGill.

The MAUT Scholarship was set up in the memory of the fourteen women who were murdered at the École Polytechnique de Montréal in December 1989.

Council from the Finance Committee indicate that it is financially feasible to both hire a third staff member and reduce the mil rate. It is likely that final decisions will be made at a Council meeting in the very near future.

[Read the full report of the VP Finance here](#)

**Ken Hastings,
MAUT VP Finance**

Column of Interest: Predatory (Illegitimate) OA Journals

Professors Madhukar Pai and Eduardo Franco recently penned a column called "[What Are Predatory Open Access Journals And Why Should We Worry?](#)"

The column looks at the benefits of open access while warning of the growing number of predatory (or illegitimate) journals: It's worth a read.

Check the [MAUT website](#) for the latest news, events, kudos and other happenings of interest.

 McGill University