



MAUT Newsletter: McGill Association of University Teachers

March 2017

Andrew Potter and academic freedom

MAUT's core principles are the protection of academic freedom and the promotion of collegial governance. MAUT was instrumental in the development of McGill's [Statement of Academic Freedom](#), from which the Principal quoted in her message on March 23 regarding the resignation of Prof. Andrew Potter from his position as the Director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada (MISC). At this point, all that is known is that Prof. Potter has apologized for his controversial March 20 Maclean's article "[How a snowstorm exposed Québec's real problem: social malaise](#)" and has resigned as Director of MISC, while remaining an Associate Professor (Professional) in the Faculty of Arts. Now, it is crucial to hear from Prof. Potter and the administration the facts of the case. MAUT has reached out to Prof. Potter and I urged the Principal to make clear, both to the McGill community and the broader public, the role of the administration in the chain of events preceding his resignation. Further action on our part will depend on the facts as they emerge.

Many have raised concerns about a chilling effect regarding academic freedom implicit in the [tweet](#) sent by the administration in response to Prof. Potter's article. Whether the McGill administration should comment on any opinion expressed by academics, however controversial or not, is a question that we will pursue at Senate.

The Potter affair has become a national concern: On March 27, CAUT -- after informing MAUT -- [sent a letter requesting information from the Principal](#) and raising the possibility of a CAUT investigation.

Terry Hébert
MAUT President

This, that and the



MAUT Spring General Meeting

Apr. 19, 2017, noon-2pm
Preceded by lunch
Faculty Club Ballroom
Please [RSVP](#)

Reminder: MAUT Executive and Committee reports will be available on the website prior to the SGM and are [archived here](#).

Death by forms: An interactive session during the Spring General Meeting on what is making you mad

Most of us are concerned about the increasing amount of non-academic work that is being downloaded on academic staff, including clerical tasks such as filling out forms to justify our activities and purchases. We are dedicating part of our Spring General Meeting to learning more about specifics and the impact that this type of demand has put on our members.

To prepare this interactive session, we ask that you send us up to three examples of clerical and administrative tasks that you have to do even though you feel they take time away from your main academic duties. Where relevant, please provide back-up documents for your examples. For instance, if you are now required to fill out a particular form to purchase equipment, [send me](#) a screenshot of the form and specify how much time this task consumes. Please forward your email to alenoush.saroyan@mcgill.ca by April 12.

We will compile your responses and use it as the

other thing...

I hope your semester is going well! I just wanted to update you on a few things that are going on at MAUT. We've been busy as usual and as my term as President approaches its end, I want to provide you with a sense of how the year has gone, what we've accomplished and where we still need some additional work.



The social side of MAUT

This academic year included four MAUT events. Two were open to all academics, members and prospective members (our Welcome Gathering in September and our Octoberfest Apple Picking Event at Mac campus in October), and two were members-only events (our Winter Magic Brunch in January that drew a full house to the Faculty Club and an event at the Redpath Museum in March for young families focused on learning about whales). Other members-only events include a workshop to educate us about resources available to help our students learn to write better (Beyond "Awkward": Strategies for Improving Your Student's Writing) and our annual MAUT Tenure and Mentoring Workshop.

The Membership Committee, led by Stefano Algieri, continues to impress me with their commitment to ensuring and increasing the value of being a member of MAUT.

Child care, merit on parental leave

One thing that many on this committee, and indeed many in Council have worked on, is the arrangement with Kids & Co. to provide [guaranteed daycare slots to MAUT members](#). That and our successful efforts to have [academic merit recognized during parental leaves](#) are two things I am really proud of this year.

Membership Engagement Officer, reduction of mil rate

We are also well along in the process of defining the duties of hiring a third staff member, whose focus will be member recruitment and engagement. We are also in the penultimate discussions regarding a reduction in the membership dues mil-rate, so MAUT membership will be an even better deal going forward. At the March 23 Council meeting, Council approved a mil rate reduction that will be brought to the Spring General Meeting for discussion.

Consultation process, travel spending

basis for an interactive session during the Spring General Meeting.

16th Annual Tenure and Mentoring Workshop

Apr. 19, 2017, 9am-11:30am
Followed by lunch
Faculty Club Ballroom
Please [RSVP](#)

MAUT will offer its Tenure and Mentoring Workshop for pre-tenure MAUT members in the morning of April 19. Comments from past participants highlight the value of this workshop as they prepare their dossiers for reappointment and tenure.

"Very helpful and interactive. Very practical and immediately relevant to my situation."

"For me, the most helpful aspects were getting a sense of how the criteria are interpreted. We generally understand that we have to show excellence in research, teaching, and service etc, but knowing what counts, how it is interpreted, and getting some insight into creating a narrative to frame one's work and dossier is what is most helpful."

Alenoush Saroyan
MAUT President-Elect

Accommodation for primary care responsibilities of academic personnel



[Nearly half of Canadians 15 years and older](#) will care for a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, disability or aging needs.

Following the guidelines for family care obligations will make practice across the university equitable,

You may not be aware of this, but over the last few years, MAUT has developed and deployed a well-defined [consultation policy](#). When we are asked to vet, approve or comment on new or revised university policies, we do not accept to do such consultations unless we are given enough time to do it right. That means identifying the right people and taking the time to review the material in an iterative fashion as many times as necessary. In the last year, we've consulted on McGill's new sexual violence policy, intellectual property guidelines, changes to regulations for contract academic staff, changes to the guidelines for conduct of research, among others. We have also pressed hard for rational changes to McGill's travel spending and reimbursement policies. The process may seem slow, but the thoroughness of our consultation policy results in well thought out and well-crafted MAUT input into university policies.

Committee on Academic Staff Compensation (CASC)

We've also been highly engaged through the Committee on Academic Staff Compensation (CASC). In this current academic year, merit and across the board salary increases capped a three-year cycle which saw more than 15% cumulative increases in the academic staff salary mass - a deliberate effort to improve our salary ranking among our U15 peer institutions in Canada, a consistent MAUT message at CASC. Going forward, the plan for the next three years is to preserve those gains with a three-year cumulative increase of 7.5% (minimum, to be increased if there is evidence of erosion of our position during the period). We have also led a current CASC initiative to form a working group involving MAUT and the administration which would be tasked with developing a long-term strategy for moving us up in the U15. The activities of this working group would represent a forward-looking expansion of the capabilities of CASC which otherwise has a focus on immediate and near-term issues. CASC is also dealing with such issues as the [Professional Development Fund](#), the [Academic Laptop Program](#), improving the situation for international hires with respect to health insurance and permanent residency and salary anomalies for non-ranked contract academic staff. Our work on CASC is a constant effort to maintain and improve our compensation and working conditions.

McGill University Retirees Association (MURA)

This year, we've been in discussion with the executive of the newly-formed [McGill University Retirees Association \(MURA\)](#) to provide an easy path for our own retiring members become members of MURA. Our discussions have been wide ranging,

provide a better work environment, maximize academics' productivity, and minimize the impact of an academic personnel's family care obligations on their university responsibilities.

Minimum accommodations are provided by government regulation (see table below). McGill has [guidelines for tenure-track/tenured academics](#) with each situation being managed on a case-by-case basis. The [Canadian Human Rights Commission has provided guidelines](#) to help employers and employees to negotiate accommodations. [Analysis of recent legal cases](#) establishes the responsibility of employers to accommodate requests.

Experience across McGill indicates that the current status results in a wide range of accommodation experienced, Given the implications for academic personnel and the McGill workplace environment, this is an area that deserves further attention.

Jurisdiction	Purpose of leave	Period of leave
Canada	Serious illness of dependent with significant risk of death within 26 weeks	26 weeks within 52 weeks (eligible for EI benefits)
Quebec	Family obligations – short term absences related to care, health or education	10 days / year (leave without pay)
Quebec	Family obligations – long term absences for a dependent with a serious accident or illness	12 weeks / year (leave without pay)
Quebec	Family obligations – long term absences for a minor child with serious and potentially mortal illness	Up to 104 weeks

For more details, please see:

Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/reports/compassionate-care.html#h2.1>

Quebec: <http://www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca/en/situations-of-life-at-work/work-and-family-obligations/>

Susan Gaskin
MAUT Council Member

Merit for academics on maternity or parental leave

In the "FY2017-2018 Academic Salary Policy" email message which was sent out on Jan. 19, 2017 to academic staff eligible for merit, the following information was provided regarding the



covering shared and unique areas where we help our retired members, the costs of MAUT members becoming MURA members and getting MURA a seat on the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee (SBAC). You'll hear more about this at the Spring General Meeting.

Some initiatives that we didn't get to complete include a broader discussion of the elements of academic salary policy and the uniformity of its application within and between faculties -- but this is something I will push during my year as Past-President. In addition, we are still working on getting institutional support for McGill researchers whose budgets will be or have been affected by the pay equity settlement for research assistants and changes in employment status for postdoctoral fellows. We have repeatedly stressed to the Provost, and will continue to do so, the importance of such measures to preserve the dynamic research ecosystem that drives so much of McGill's national and international stature.

I'll sign off by reminding you that we serve as volunteers and encouraging each of you to take an active role in your association and make a positive contribution to our diverse and exciting academic community. It has been an honour serving you as President.

Terry

Terry Hébert
MAUT President

Survey results: Use of out-of-pocket funds to subsidize research at McGill

In December, MAUT sent out a survey on academics' use of out-of-pocket funds to subsidize their research at McGill. The [survey](#), with 242 responses, indicated that 64% of respondents (154) had used their own money to subsidize their research in the last year ("money that did not come from a research grant, professional development fund, or other targeted funds, i.e., money that you paid out of pocket and that was not reimbursed to you through the University or a grant").



Out of 145 of the 154 who had used their own funds:

- 81% indicated having subsidized "travel and/or accommodation for meetings, professional conferences or seminars"

calculation of merit pay for academics on maternity or parental leave during the reference period:

"For staff members on leaves associated with the birth or adoption of a child that last 13 weeks or more during the reference period, the salary increase attributed to merit will be calculated based on the average performance category of the last two years of active service."

The documentation can be found online on the [Academic Salary Policy](#) webpage.

Calculation of merit

At the Feb. 22, 2017 MAUT Council meeting attended by Provost Manfredi, Council Member Marc Richard sought clarification on how the dollar amount over the two years of service would be calculated if the merit categories for the two years resulted in a .5 intermediate category (for example, if a category 2 was assigned the first year and a category 3 the next). Provost Manfredi confirmed that the dollar amount of the merit increase would be equivalent to the dollar amount that reflects the average of the amounts allocated to each of these two categories: For example, in the illustrated case, the dollar amount of the merit increase would be equivalent to the mean of the dollar amounts for categories 2 and 3.

We wish to thank Provost Manfredi and Angela Campbell for these clarifications.

Saving for your retirement

Should you be putting more money away for your retirement? McGill University Pension Plan (MUPP) members can find out using the Retirement Income Calculator: [Log in to your account](#) and complete the Investor Profile Questionnaire (open the Investments bar to reveal the link), then open the Retirement Income Calculator to enter what percentage of your current salary you would like to retire on. Based on your investment mix and projected retirement age, you can determine if the MUPP and your other retirement savings are estimated to be enough.



If you find you need to save more, McGill has offered, since early 2014, the option of contributing to a Group Retirement Savings Plan (GRSP). Fees in the McGill GRSP are low because members are only charged what it costs to run the program: There are no sales commissions or added profit margins. "The low rates are possible due to the relationships that the University has with investment firms under the endowment and pension plans. The Group RSP

59% had subsidized "computer or computer-related hardware or software"

- 44% had subsidized "association memberships or registration for scholarly meetings that support your research"

In terms of amounts spent, of the total 242 respondents:

- 7% estimated having spent \$51-\$200 in the last year
- 18% estimated having spent \$201-\$500
- 21% estimated having spent \$501-\$1500
- 11% estimated having spent \$1501-\$50,000

Respondents provided useful suggestions in terms of areas for improvement in the reimbursement process (decreasing wait times, simplifying the process) and areas in which they could use additional support (such as guidance on claiming work-related expenses when filing income taxes, advocating for funding, reconsidering allocation of internal research funds).

It would be interesting to administer future surveys of this kind to allow us to monitor changes in the use of out-of-pocket funds.

We would like to thank Prof. Andrew Bateman (Division of Endocrinology & Metabolism) for supplying the questions and for prompting MAUT to look into this matter.

Link to survey and further information:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/maut/files/maut/maut-out-of-pocket-survey-results-comments-limitations.pdf>

Genevieve Gore
MAUT VP Communications



Coffee and Conversation with the Principal and Provost

Feb 2, 2017

About 20 MAUT members engaged the Principal and Provost in a coffee hour question/answer

(...) arrangement benefit(s) from preferential pricing." (John D'Agata) Members can also transfer funds from other existing RRSPs into the MUPP or GRSP.

Fees and management expense ratio

The record-keeping fees for the GRSP are \$55.72 per year and the MER is 0.20% - 0.30%.

Membership is optional and it is your responsibility not to exceed your RSP limits for the year.

We invite you to find out more about the [Group Retirement Savings Plan](#) as well as other [McGill pension-related issues](#). [Information sessions](#) are also scheduled.

We wish to thank John D'Agata (Director of Pensions, Benefits and Payroll) for providing us with details regarding the plan.

Genevieve Gore
MAUT VP Communications

CAUT and FQPPU

Brendan Gillon (Linguistics) has agreed to serve as MAUT's representative on the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee of the CAUT.



At MAUT's behest, Dan Guitton (Neurology and Neurosurgery) was elected member of the FQPPU's Executive Committee. He also sits on the Commission de l'enseignement et de la recherche universitaires of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. Bernard Robaire (Pharmacology and Therapeutics) has agreed to sit on the FQPPU's Comité sur la gestion des universités. It is important that McGill be well-presented at all levels of the provincial post-secondary education system and we are very happy to have experienced colleagues like Dan and Bernard that we can count on.



The FQPPU is organizing a two-day colloquium on Les transformations actuelles des universités on May 8 and 9th as part of the 85th annual Conference of the Association francophone pour le savoir (Acfas) which will be hosted by McGill. For more information visit <http://fqppu.org/?s=Acfas>.

Good news about the University's Travel Management Program:

conversation in the Faculty Club's newly-renovated Billiard Room.

Questions/comments from MAUT members addressed a range of topics including how can the university foster a supportive community for academic staff throughout the ups and downs of a real-life academic career, the stresses faced by young faculty in a very difficult climate of external research funding and a tough academic publishing model, and how can McGill contribute positively to society in a new era of intolerance and misinformation. Also discussed were the status of efforts to modify the provincial government's university funding formula, the difficulties faced by units within the university due to recent reductions and centralization of admin/support staff, and how can the university help recognize when mental health issues arise among academic staff.

These Coffee and Conversation meetings are a unique forum for informal discussions with the administration that directly communicate the concerns and aspirations of the academic staff. They are part of MAUT's efforts to promote and enhance collegial governance and engagement at McGill.

Ken Hastings
MAUT VP Finance

Catherine Lu (Political Science) has volunteered to represent MAUT on the University's Travel Management Steering Committee to monitor the implementation of the new Travel Management Program (TMP). As you may remember, there was quite an uproar last summer over the proposed new TMP which would have forced faculty members to use the University-contracted travel agency, Vision Travel. Since then, Catherine Lu has done an absolutely stellar job on our behalf, making sure the TMP would be modified to reflect the varied needs of the faculty and that these modifications would be spelled out unambiguously by the University. The resulting modifications constitute a major victory for collegial governance. In addition to Catherine we should thank François Pouliot and his team at Procurement Services for their readiness to accommodate our concerns and help formulate a travel program that responds to faculty concerns and interests.

Here is a link to Catherine's update on the TMP:
<https://www.mcgill.ca/maut/files/maut/travelmanagementprogram-lu.pdf>

Axel van den Berg
MAUT VP Internal

Family Discovery Workshop on Whales

My 7 year-old son and I attended the Workshop on Whales at the Redpath Museum on Sunday, March 19, 2017. We have been regular attendees of the Sunday workshops as my son is a future "Wildlife Biologist" (or so he tells us).



These Sunday workshops are about nature and animals, and are run by undergraduate student volunteers with unending enthusiasm and kindness for the endless questions of the young attendees.

My son enjoyed the whale presentation immensely with hands-on props and crafts. My son was having such a good time that he made both crafts (an origami whale and a underwater scene to put him in). This wonderful visit was brought to us by MAUT, who sponsored our and many other children's visits. Thank you very kindly and we would be happy to go again.

Dr. Robert Scott Kiss
MAUT Member

On Sunday, March 19, 2017, the MAUT Family Discovery Workshop on Whales took place at the beautiful Redpath Museum. There were 16 children in attendance, ranging in age from approximately 4

to 8, accompanied by either parents or grandparents, many of whom seemed to be enjoying themselves as much as the kids. There was a very good presentation by two students, as well as one of the curators of the Museum with information about whales, dolphins, and other related marine mammals from Canada's northern waters.

The slide show was appropriate for the age of the participants and gave them a chance to show off their knowledge by responding to questions, and there was also an opportunity to get involved by touching the exhibits and seeing part of the Museum's collection. This was followed by a craft activity, with each child making an origami whale to take home. The workshop moved at a good pace and was sufficiently interactive to hold the attention of all the kids. It never hurts to introduce prospective students to the Campus at an early age!

Valerie Fortin
MAUT Member

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