

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR MAUT MEMBERS

Dear Member,

One of the most important functions of MAUT is performed in confidence, without public attention; that is, the provision of advice, guidance and support for MAUT Members during any procedures that might threaten their well-being or security of employment. This includes but is not limited to matters that relate to contract renewals, tenure or promotion hearings, grievances and/or disciplinary matters. This year, MAUT has received over 150 requests for advice by faculty members covering such matters as: access to information, benefits, child/day care, conflicts of interest, consulting, discipline, harassment, leaves of absence, post retirement appointments, pensions, promotion, reappointment, resignation, retirement, sabbatical leave, salary, severance, space/lab allocation, spousal hiring, student grievances, tenure, vacation, etc. Also, MAUT has provided advice and support in over 15 formal dossiers concerning such matters as university appeals, workplace discipline, grievance, access to information, sabbaticals, harassment, research misconduct and student grievances. In this, MAUT relies on the MAUT- Professional and Legal Officer and a corps of academic advisors.

Lawyer Joseph Varga, the MAUT-Professional and Legal Officer, has over 27 years of experience in handling the concerns of MAUT Members. He receives annual training from the Quebec Bar, the CAUT and the FQPPU. He maintains the list of Advisors and supports the MAUT Orientation for Advisors. The List of Advisors includes MAUT Members that have relevant knowledge and experience. Advisors are invited to attend the MAUT, CAUT and FQPPU training sessions.

If you wish to serve as an Advisor, or require an Advisor, and/or if you need information, assistance, and/or legal advice concerning a work-related issue please contact Joseph Varga at jvarga.maut@mcgill.ca to make an appointment. His office is located at [3495 Peel](#), Room 302, Montréal, Québec H3A 1W7.

The following are some of the MAUT Members who have been involved in Advising: Paul Clarke, John Hobbins (Retired), Kohur Gowrisankaran (Retired), Richard Janda, Steven Jordan, Andrew Kirk, Kris Onishi, Marc Richard, John Richardson, and Edith Zorychta. Most have many years of experience.

Looking forward, we are working on renewing the current list of Advisors with the hope of achieving greater balance in terms of gender and faculty/department representation. We plan to hold annual MAUT orientations for Advisors and provide further training for Advisors.

For your interest, please find here further:

- General Principles for Advising (MAUT Orientation for New Advisors 2013-14, A. Pare and J. Varga)
- Chart of the Grievance and Disciplinary Machinery: General Overview (MAUT Orientation for Council, J. Varga)

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GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ADVISING

1. Advisors are not advocates. Ideally, the colleagues that you advise will prepare and make their own case, with you as a consultant, editor, confidant, and supporter.
2. Your primary task is to help your advisee prepare the best possible case. That begins with a careful analysis of the situation, a review of the relevant regulations, and the drafting of position statements. Advisors enter when colleagues find themselves in difficult situations, and advisors provide both strategic and emotional support.
3. In the early stages of a case, and throughout, you should rely on Joseph Varga's expertise and advice, and consult with a more experienced advisor if you wish. Meetings with the advisee and Joseph at the start of the process will allow for a thorough review of the events leading to the situation and a discussion of the pertinent regulations. There are often deadlines that must be honoured and procedures that must be performed in sequence.
4. Advisors should make certain that all documents (e.g., responses to DTC and UTC letters) are well written and accurate and respond to the relevant concerns. They should help the advisee prepare to speak at any meetings that are required. It helps to have a handout for meetings that summarizes key points and lists all submitted documents.
5. During meetings, it is best if the advisee presents the case and answers all questions. Advisors should be alert to the exchange and ready to fill-in missing information or arguments; advisors might also summarize key points in closing. However, it is not required that advisors speak.
6. Advisors are not required to take a case, and may wish to advise a colleague to drop an appeal, a complaint, or a grievance. What is in the colleague's best interest? A complaint or grievance that has no hope of positive reconciliation might be more damaging to the colleague than letting it go.
7. Because emotions can run high during the situations in which you advise, one job of the advisor is to provide a calm, rational presence. Advisees do themselves no good by ranting or shouting, and the best written and oral presentations are focused only on the issues of relevance.
8. In tenure hearings, when the colleague is responding to DTC or UTC letters which report a "tending to a negative," it is important to remember that some percentage of the DTC/UTC might be allies, and that a single DTC/UTC member can force a committee to call the tenure applicant in. A careful consideration of the make-up of the DTC/UTC is useful; are there members with a personal grudge against the applicant? Who are the UTC members from outside the discipline, and might they be unclear about disciplinary culture?
9. Most situations in which advisors work are not adversarial or confrontational. Sometimes it's just a question of educating a committee or administrator, and sometimes it's a process of meditation to reach a mutually agreeable solution. Appeals and grievances can become more charged, but even there it is possible to avoid hostility.

(A. Pare and J. Varga, MAUT Orientation for New Advisors, 2013-14)

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CHART:

