



### **MAUT Spring AGM (Zoom)**

RSVP required by Thursday, April 20: 12-2pm

RSVP to: [membership.maut@mcgill.ca](mailto:membership.maut@mcgill.ca) (by April 19)

(Zoom link will be provided on registration)

### **Members Gathering/Social (in-person)**

Thursday, April 20th: 4-6pm

Faculty Club

Drinks/Snacks will be Served

**MAUT Newsletter | McGill Association of University Teachers**

**April 2023**



#### **From the President**

**Renée Sieber, President MAUT**

It's been a very busy year, full of chronic and acute issues, a new union, numerous meetings with the administration, and some successes. Here's what MAUT has been engaged with:

[Asbestos](#)

The end of January, buildings at Mac campus shut down. The following month, Stewart Biology was closed. Both were because of asbestos. Professors and students were told to vacate their offices and labs; instructors were told to teach online or cancel classes. MAUT hosted two townhalls in February for both sets of affected members, where we worked collectively to construct action items. We held an emergency meeting with the Principal and Provosts about Stewart Bio. We continue to work with individuals to help them mobilize and to ensure our members are protected.

#### [Law 14](#)

MAUT is monitoring the impact of Law 14 (which requires the use of French in public sector institutions) on our members. We've discussed the issue a few times with the provosts. The administration is convinced that their offerings are sufficient, which they are not.

#### [NewMad](#)

The administration has proposed innovations in university instruction with a concept called the New Model of Academic Program Delivery. NewMad hopes to combine lessons learned from teaching during Covid with new teaching initiatives elsewhere. In our meetings we've stressed that NewMad must serve as a set of guidelines and not mandates; it must give ultimate decisions about development of new programs to departments and instructors; it must not create new burdens for existing faculty; it must not use new programs as a way to create a precarious set of instructors; and it must elevate health and wellness of instructors teaching in these programs to the same level it desires for the students in these programs.

#### [Covid](#)

Covid remains on our campus and in our academic community. Throughout the year we have continued to advocate for greater protection for our members. We've reiterated MAUT's resolution that instructors must be able to select the mode of instruction best suited for their courses. We continue to advocate for greater support for any members who develop long covid, in such a way that doesn't let Human Resources dictate how we care for our academic community.

#### [Academic Freedom](#)

In response to a demand from the Quebec government, the administration has proposed an academic freedom policy. We responded with numerous revisions and are monitoring the drafts.

#### [Research Ethics Boards and Human Participants](#)

The administration proposed a revision to the policy on research involving human participants (aka human subjects research, research ethics board submissions). We responded with numerous revisions and will monitor the drafts.

#### [Committee on Academic Staff Compensation \(CASC\) and pushing back](#)

We negotiated with the administration a salary envelope of approximately 14.5 percent over three years. We definitely did not achieve all we wanted and pushed back as much as we could and explained our efforts in the newsletter, including a call for greater transparency in the merit process and requests for appeal.

#### [Staff Benefits Advisory Committee \(SBAC\)](#)

We worked this year to arrange for the very first set of SBAC pre-meetings, similar to pre-Senate meetings. SBAC covers benefits for all McGill employees. MAUT over the years has discovered the limits of this committee, which is consulting-only. In the recent past MAUT has advocated against a particular policy and convinced the other employee groups to agree. The administration just ignored the collective will. The first pre-meeting generated a list of conditions that the members return to at each meeting.

### [The Association of McGill Professors of Law \(AMPL\)](#)

The Faculty of Law professors voted to form a union called AMPL, the first faculty union in McGill's history. The union has been certified by Quebec's Labour Tribunal and the union is involved in collective bargaining. Three things are important for MAUT. 1. MAUT should not stand in the way of instances of bottom-up governance by its members and that has been our official position vis-à-vis AMPL. Law faculty members wanted a union and MAUT voted not to stand in the way of that desire; 2. According to our constitution, these individuals can remain a part of the MAUT until they receive a collective agreement, and 3. MAUT looks forward to collegial cooperation on matters affecting both of us.

### [Grievance Policy](#)

After six years of work on this issue, MAUT managed to get passed updated regulations on academic staff, disciplinary and grievance. These regulations fixed one important loophole in the prior version in which contract academic staff had no path to grievances.

### [Libraries](#)

Academic librarians, who are members of MAUT, have had a difficult relationship over the years with the administration (and MAUT, at one point) being respected for their important role in academic life. Many current administrative initiatives have negatively impacted academic librarians. These include not providing adequate working environments at Schulich Library, the Fiat Lux program and at 550 Sherbrooke. 550 Sherbrooke was the site of the New Model of Work (NMW) pilot, concluded this year. We have had numerous meetings with provosts to make sure librarians' voices are heard. For example, in those meetings, we've continued to assert that the NMW, even after the pilot's ending, is not suitable and not a productive working environment for its staff. We're heartened that the new Dean of Libraries, with whom the presidents of MAUT have met, is a strong advocate for her faculty.

### [Proliferation of Exams](#)

During Covid, an additional version of some instructors' final exams was demanded. This would constitute a seventh version to the up to six versions of an exam that some faculty members already have to create in advance of holding the exams and whether or not the extra versions are necessary. We brought to the provosts our concern that this will become standard operating procedure. We continue to monitor the situation.

### [More Representation in MAUT of Contract Academic Staff \(CAS\)](#)

MAUT serves multiple constituencies besides tenure stream faculty. The other constituencies (academic libraries, retirees) have had reserved seats on Council and associated committees/councils to organize concerns. CAS, who also can be part of MAUT, has had no formal

representation on Council (i.e., a reserved seat). We plan to introduce at the 2023 AGM an amendment to the constitution and to the bylaws to remedy this situation. This also will require establishing a committee and CAS Council, which is part of the amendment.

#### Not enough staff

We've been short-staffed this year and are looking to increase the number of staff to support these varied activities.

#### Graduate Student Funding

McGill's traditional model of decentralizing graduate student funding largely to individual faculty members is fundamentally broken. The solution thus far seems to be occurring at the faculty-level as deans and unit heads standardize minimal levels of funding. This only reinforces the decentralized model and places graduate students out of reach of numerous faculty. So this solution is not working either. This is problematic since there's wild unevenness of funding of graduate students, leading some students to seek assistance from food banks and mutual aid associations. We began working with the post graduate student society (PGSS) to find ways to shift student funding to the deans and central administration. The goal is to adequately and equitably fund graduate students while not placing the burden solely on individual researchers. A secondary goal is to ensure that PGSS's and MAUT's efforts are aligned and that the administration does not pit us against each other.

**PLEASE VOTE!!! : MAUT Elections are open until Monday, April 17th**



The annual elections for MAUT Council members and Executive officers are now open, and we need you to vote. This year the MAUT Nominating Committee, and many other colleagues, have worked very hard to convince a large number of MAUT members to put themselves forward. We have two candidates for President-Elect, two candidates for Vice-President Communications and an unprecedented (we think) twelve candidates for MAUT Council! Please honour your colleagues' commitment by voting. Full details of the voting process and the candidates' names and statements are available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/maut/about-us/elections> . **Polls close at noon on Monday April 17<sup>th</sup>.**

To vote, follow the steps outlined below:

1. Go to <https://mcgill.omnivox.ca>
2. Login using your McGill Username and Password

Note: Your McGill email address is generally the same as your McGill username. However, Omnivox will only allow you to login with your McGill username only.

1. Click on Surveys and Election on the left hand side of the page
2. Select the “**MAUT** Election 2023-2024”. You will find a ballot to vote for each of the following positions:
  - One President-Elect position
  - One VP Communications position
  - Five Council member positions

\* Vote by following the instructions on the screen

\* Confirm your selection

VOTE HERE!

## MAUT merit procedures survey



In Winter 2023, MAUT surveyed McGill administrators with an aim to understand the University-wide procedures used for merit calculation, assessment, and assignment. The survey was sent to 98 Chairs and Deans, yielding a 54% response rate. Overall, the results indicated varying merit allocation practices across Units with limited transparency of the process. Most Units use an in-house customized points-based scoring system to quantify performance in the main categories of academic duties (research, teaching, service), with the resulting merit score and merit category typically decided by the Unit Chair/Dean/Director based on the score cutoff, budget, or performance benchmarks. Weighting of academic duties across research, teaching, and service varies across Units with diverse practices in the allocation of merit categories, with some Units assigning as many as possible faculty to the highest \$value Category 1 merit and others assigning the most faculty to the next highest \$value Category 2 merit. Merit category appeals and anomaly requests are infrequent, with on average less than 5-10% of faculty within each Unit requesting merit

reconsideration or salary anomaly on an annual basis. 75% of respondents believe the current merit system is fair and should not be replaced. If you would like to know more the results of the survey will be discussed at the **AGM on April 20th**.

Full report can be accessed at

[https://www.mcgill.ca/maut/files/maut/spring2023\\_maut\\_merit\\_proceduressurveyreport.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/maut/files/maut/spring2023_maut_merit_proceduressurveyreport.pdf)

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Jelena Ristic, VP-Internal



### **MAUT in Quebec and Canada**

MAUT has long been a proud member of several provincial and federal federations of faculty associations. These federations meet regularly to discuss matters that pertain to all academics and to put pressure on governments and university administration to improve the academic and living conditions for university faculty. The *Fédération québécoise des professeures et professeurs d'université* (FQPPU) had its federal council in October, attended by MAUT VP-External Víctor Muñoz-Fraticelli, where the need to protect academic freedom in light of recent provincial legislation, the responsibility of universities to account for climate change, and the commitment to constructive engagement with the new minister of higher education were foregrounded. The *Canadian Association of University Teachers* (CAUT) met in general



### **MAUT Retiree Affairs Committee (RAC) - Events for ALL MAUT Members**

On **Tuesday, April 11th at 1 PM, on Zoom**, Professor Lesley Fellows of the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery at the Montreal Neurological Institute will give a **presentation and lead a question-and-answer session** based on her research on **Brain Health** and its implications for **care-giving**. All MAUT members receive invitations to these no-charge talks. When you receive the announcement, just click on the Reply Now red button and you will receive the Zoom link and a reminder ahead of the event.

council in November. MAUT was represented by President Renee Sieber and VP-External Muñoz-Fraticelli. CAUT addressed pressing concerns about faculty salaries and employment conditions, lagging investment in university education, and administrative accountability to faculty.

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Víctor M. Muñoz-Fraticelli  
Vice-President, External

## Industrial Action on Quebec Campuses



This academic term has witnessed significant gains in salary and working conditions for faculty associations in other universities across Québec.

The faculty union at the *Université de Sherbrooke* obtained reductions to workload and gains to equity and transparency in the negotiation of its collective agreement. The administration's reluctance to make concessions on salaries occasioned a last-minute vote authorizing strike action, although the strike was not called because the university quickly capitulated.

The faculty union at the *Université de Québec en Outaouais* successfully negotiated workload reductions, salary increases and protection against cuts in faculty positions, as well as an increase to \$2,250 of their professional development fund, and a separate faculty research fund.

Please do join us for this final presentation of 2022-2023.

On **Wednesday, April 26th at noon, in the Faculty Club** Billiards Room, RAC has organized a **Pre-Retirement Workshop** for MAUT members. Representatives will be present from the Office of Associate Provost responsible for academic appointments, but there will be special emphasis on the human rather than administrative side of planning for retirement. The event begins with a no-charge lunch. To reserve a space (these are limited in number), please email the MAUT office at [membership.maut@mcgill.ca](mailto:membership.maut@mcgill.ca)

We look forward to seeing you at either or both events!

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Bruce M. Shore, Emeritus  
Professor  
Chair, MAUT-RAC

## New Faculty appointments are now automatically members of MAUT



As most MAUT members probably know, MAUT has

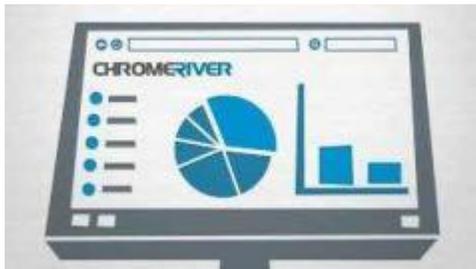
The situation was more contested at the *Université de Laval*, where the faculty union went on its longest-ever strike since the creation of the union in the 1970s. The demands of Laval professors were essentially the same as those of other professors across the province and the country: a reduction of administrative and teaching workload, better access to research funds, the protection of academic freedom and more transparent and genuinely collegial governance, and assurances for vulnerable academic staff, including untenured and contract academics.

After more than four weeks of strike, and with the intervention of a mediator, the Laval professors were successful in all of their demands, including a commitment of 80 new tenure-track faculty lines, a shift in decision-making power to the faculty, and a salary increase of 15.6% over the next three years. It should be noted that the union covered the full net salary of all union members for the duration of the strike, and maintained their life and health insurance coverage.

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Victor M. Muniz-Fraticelli  
Vice-President, External

### **Consultations on the Chrome River electronic expense management tool**



MAUT Executive and Council were asked to comment on the promotional

always previously had 'Opt-in' membership, meaning that faculty members who wished to join had to actively request membership. After reflecting on this situation for the past several years, we decided to move to an 'Opt-out' process for new faculty. Going forward, all **new** eligible faculty who join McGill will automatically be enrolled as MAUT members. However, they will also be able to opt-out using a straightforward process if they do not wish to remain with us. It has taken several years of discussions with the McGill HR office (interrupted by Covid-19 and not aided by Workday) to implement this, and we are very grateful to our Administrative Officer Jo-Anne Watier for her relentless efforts to put this in place. We hope that this new process will increase MAUT membership at McGill. I would also like to reassure existing non-members (who are presumably not reading this anyway!) that they will not be opted in against their will. However, if you do come across one of these people in the corridor, please urge them to join MAUT anyway!

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Andrew Kirk, Past President

videos showcasing the new expense management software Chrome River. Council raised concerns regarding the system's flexibility, ease of use, steep learning curve, and potential impact on faculty workload. Additional concerns included the system's compatibility with unique expenses (such as travel to remote destinations), handling of credit card statements (in particular, compliance with privacy regulations), and level of customization capabilities. Additionally, there were concerns regarding handling of multiple currencies, splitting expenses, and reporting of taxes and non-eligible expenses. We asked the task force to conduct an independent workload-assessment and consultations with other universities where Chrome River has already been implemented. Furthermore, extensive testing on a variety of platforms and operating systems with a subgroup of users before university-wide deployment was requested. It is crucial for McGill to address these concerns to ensure that the new expense management software is an improvement over the current one, is user-friendly, efficient, and meets the diverse needs of our faculty members.

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Jelena Ristic, VP-Internal and Peter Grutter,  
President-Elect



### **MAUT Advising is here for you**

MAUT provides an advising service for members on issues ranging from the reappointment and tenure process, to disciplinary measures brought against members by administration. If you are experiencing problems that you think may adversely affect your career at McGill, MAUT has several experienced advisors who may be able to help you out. For more information on academic advising, contact MAUT's legal officer: Joseph Varga ([jvarga.maut@mcgill.ca](mailto:jvarga.maut@mcgill.ca))

**MAUT Retirement Workshop**

Have an event to promote on the MAUT e-Newsletter? Send all details, including date, time, location, event title, and contact information at least 10 days prior to the event to: [membership.maut@mcgill.ca](mailto:membership.maut@mcgill.ca).  
For the latest MAUT news, events, and information, be sure to visit our website and social media feeds on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

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