

MAUT Council Meeting

MINUTES

Monday, March 10, 2014

McGill Faculty Club 12:00 noon

Present:	
Executive:	K. Hastings, A. Shrier, B. Lennox, A. Saroyan, C. Ragan, B. Reed [remote participation] G. Mikkelson
Council:	M. Nahon, A. Moores, H. Durham, R. Sieber [remote participation], L. Kloda, P. Caines, K. Siddiqi, A. Kirk, K. GowriSankaran
Regrets:	L. Glass, A. Paré, K. Hashimoto
MAUT Staff:	H. Kerwin-Borrelli, J. Varga

K. Hastings called the meeting to order at 12:16 pm.

Open Session

1 Adoption of Agenda

Council considered the previously-circulated (March 4, with revisions on March 8 and 9, 2014) proposed agenda. K. Hastings proposed two additions: 1) under Business Arising, to continue the discussion of merit and retirement that was initiated as New Business at the February 27, 2014 Council meeting, 2) under New Business to discuss the issue of the municipal tax bill MAUT had received. Council accepted these additions by consensus without objection.

P. Caines, referring to an email message from A. Paré suggesting that Item 3: Member Discussion Forum be tabled, made the following Motion: *that the Member Discussion Forum be discussed today but not voted on*. Seconded by K. Siddiqi.

C. Ragan proposed that no action be taken on this issue until Council has reached a resolution. B. Reed noted the Discussion Forum was announced at the Fall General Meeting [November 15/2013]. K. Hastings suggested that the issue remain as is and be tabled until a vote is taken at the next Council meeting. R. Sieber agreed with tabling the discussion on the Open ListServ until a committee is formed to discuss this issue before it comes up for a vote. B. Reed noted the Open ListServ had already been discussed by the Communications Committee. B. Lennox emphasized that the Communication Committee should make a report to Council. H. Durham noted the report should have proposals for several options. A. Moores stressed that a MAUT Committee must come forward with a proposal before any further action is taken.

On the basis of this discussion P. Caines presented the revised motion: *that discussion of the Member Discussion Forum be tabled until the Communications Committee submits a report*. Seconded by K. Siddiqi. C. Ragan proposed a friendly amendment that the Communications Committee Report be circulated to Council one week prior to the next meeting. K. Hastings further proposed that:

- (a) there would be a ten minute discussion today on the Member Discussion Forum.
- (b) there would be no vote or motions today – these would be tabled to the March 25th Council meeting
- (c) the Communications Committee would be asked to prepare a written report with recommendations to be presented at Council on March 25, 2014
- (d) several options would be included in the report

This approach was supported by Council: 14 in favor, none against, and two abstentions.

2. Approval of Minutes

Council reviewed the October 23 and November 8, 2013 Minutes (circulated March 8, 2014). A. Kirk noted that he had in fact attended the October 23 meeting. With this correction, A. Saroyon moved to adopt the Minutes of the October 23 and November 8, 2013 Council Meetings. Seconded by C. Ragan. Adopted by consensus.

3. Member Discussion Forum

On February 11, 2014 VP Communications B. Reed opened an unmoderated open-discussion listserv entitled OPENMAUTFORUM. There was a great deal of email traffic, accelerating during the day, including an increasing number of unsubscribe messages. Finally the listserv was stopped by B. Reed in the late afternoon. Notwithstanding that B. Reed had announced at the November 15, 2013 Fall General Meeting his intention to launch an open discussion forum, several members on Council and Executive felt strongly that the launch of the listserv was premature and had not been sufficiently discussed at Council.

Because K. Hastings wished to speak on the topic he ceded the Chair to President-Elect B. Lennox for this agenda item at 12:35 pm.

K. Hastings noted that an opt-out system, such as the OPENMAUTFORUM listserv, is more intrusive than an opt-in system and that it is important that communications mechanisms are adapted to members' needs.

A. Moores pointed out that an open listserv forum is not as useful as forums such as at LinkedIn where conversations are organized in a thread easily accessible for members. C. Ragan supported the utility of discussion organized into threads.

A. Saroyan noted that a blog/listserv can generate a negative reaction if it annoys people, that whatever decision is made must have Council's approval, and that a committee/task force must be set up to produce concrete plans.

L. Kloda remarked that technological expertise and a high level of skills are required to set up a manageable system that would appeal to members. As communication with members is essential, they must be able to receive interesting information in a timely way. The system has to be simple to use.

A. Moores referred to existing technology, similar to *LinkedIn*, where students in *My Courses* can survey a list of proposals and respond accordingly.

M. Nahon noted that the opt-in/opt-out feature exists on many McGill ListSers and members can choose to opt-out without informing the entire ListServ, that the Open Forum ListServ is a complicated topic and the initial run produced issues that must be revisited, and that the option of operating in digest mode could be useful for those annoyed by a high level of email traffic.

G. Mikkelson noted that some of the messages circulated on the OPENMAUTFORUM listserv on February 11 were very positive about the forum. He also felt the *unsubscribe* instructions were clearly presented.

The time allotted for this discussion came to a close and K. Hastings resumed the Chair and moved on to the next agenda item.

In the course of the above discussion, and in the light of the earlier discussion of this topic during adoption of the agenda, there was a general understanding that the OPENMAUTFORUM listserv would remain idle until the issue had been directly addressed by Council following recommendations from the Communications Committee. However, this view was not shared by B. Reed, who wished to reopen the listserv very shortly. Unfortunately, because he was communicating remotely through speaker phone with some technical issues with sound quality, his intentions were not well understood and he therefore sent an email clearly outlining his position, which was not directly considered by Council until later in the meeting, during the consideration of Business Arising (see below).

4. Reports from Standing Committees

K. Hastings noted that Council has two major roles vis a vis MAUT Standing Committees. First it must review the membership of these committees and it must receive their reports. The former process was almost complete for the 2013/14 Council, but the latter process had not yet begun. To start this process he, as Chair of the Remuneration Committee had previously (March 8, 2014) circulated to Council the

Report from the Remuneration Committee. He asked if there were any questions or comments from Council regarding that report and there were none. After some discussion of process it was decided by consensus that at each meeting at which committee reports are received by Council, the minutes for that meeting would record that Council had received the report(s), and also the substance of any discussion of the report(s) at Council. In addition the reports would be appended to the minutes. The report from the Remuneration Committee is appended to these minutes.

5. Plans for the April 25, 2014 Spring General Meeting (SGM)

K. Hastings noted that the only Constitutionally required business of the SGM is to report the results of MAUT Election, and that the results of the 2014 election will be presented at the SGM on April 25, 2014. He also noted that there had emerged over the years a tradition of a lengthy series of reports from Executive and certain Committees and wondered whether a lighter, faster-paced agenda could be developed. He circulated a copy of a previous agenda for a Spring General Meeting and asked Councillors for feedback.

There was active discussion leading to the following suggestions:

(a) The reports are important, but rather than have them presented in full during the meeting, they should be circulated to the membership along with the Agenda a week before the meeting. At the meeting a "90 second" highlights of each report would be presented by the relevant person, and approximately 5 minutes could be set aside for questions/comments from the membership.

(b) by thus abbreviating the 'reports' part of the meeting, there could be time to address several "meatier issues" that could be of general interest to the membership.

It was noted that a quorum is often not present at the General Meetings and it was thought that the above approaches may make the meetings more interesting, this encouraging attendance.

6. Business Arising

Plans for Statement on Academic Freedom

K. Hastings wished to have a discussion of process for the adoption of a MAUT Statement of Academic Freedom. At the December 11, 2013 Council meeting B. Gillon, Chair of the MAUT Committee on Academic Freedom had presented a draft Statement of Academic Freedom. It was expected that the committee would respond to issues raised during that discussion at Council by revising the statement and K. Hastings indicated his hope to have a revised statement available for consideration for possible adoption by Council at its March 25 meeting. If adopted by Council, the statement would be brought to the Spring General Meeting on April 25, 2014 for ratification by the membership. There was a consensus view that this approach was appropriate, and regarding timing issues, Council preferred to have a discussion on the statement of Academic Freedom at the March 25 rather than the April 17, 2014 meeting.

Salary inequality

G. Mikkelsen presented a possible motion to frame a discussion on increasing salary inequality at McGill (previously circulated to Council by K. Hastings on March 9). He referred to a Gini analysis he had previously circulated at Council (appended to the Minutes of the January 28, 2014 meeting). He felt there was a basic issue of fairness involved since people do the same job but do not get the same salary. He noted the divergence among faculties, ranks and quartiles. He noted the increase in salary inequality and the decline of MAUT membership, suggesting a possible relationship.

The text of the possible motion was:

Council charges the MAUT appointees to CASC to discover, and explain to Council by the latter's first meeting in September 2014, facts related to salary inequality among faculty at McGill, including the following:

- 1. What has the overall Gini index, calculated across all salaries of McGill faculty members, been at each five-year interval from 1970 to 2000; and what has it been each year from 2001 to the present?*
- 2. What has caused any significant trends shown in #1, including the significant increase in salary inequality that occurred from 2006 to 2012?*

2b. In particular, what has caused the fast-widening gaps between salaries paid to members of different faculties, and the widening gaps between salaries paid to faculty at different ranks (with full professors' salaries rising faster than associates', which in turn rose faster than assistants') from 2006 to 2012?

2c. What are the relative importance, as factors causing the 2006-2012 increase in salary inequality, of raises given to professors with offers at other universities, endowed chairs, administrative stipends, new hires, "merit" pay, and other factors?

K. Siddiqi added that in such an analysis one should pay particular attention to gender inequality issues. He mentioned the cluster of female faculty and librarians at the Associate Professor / Librarian level, which could be a contributing factor to overall inequality.

B. Lennox supported the notion of creating a sub-committee to look into salary distributions to provide a better overall understanding of the facts. A. Shrier noted that on February 14, 2014, there had been a gender-equality payment made to areas mostly dominated by female academics and librarians. H. Durham stressed that if this data were to be acquired, there would need to be a plan in place as how to use it. A. Kirk asked what MAUT's plan would be if an increasing divergence is found. For example, if a divergence was found and thought to be objectionable, would the resulting proposal be to pay those getting less, more (and if so, how), or to pay those getting more, less? R. Sieber stated there was not enough information for Council to make an informed decision concerning the type of data needed. She proposed that the CASC members could take on the task of defining the key data to be sought.

C. Ragan suggested adopting a neutral motion framed in language aimed at understanding the data. He was concerned whether the MAUT CASC Caucus would have the time to take on the proposed project and suggested that the Provost might be in a better position to generate the data. L. Kloda noted this type of analysis would be useful in that it would provide more information to the membership. K. Siddiqi noted that some aspects of the data could be obtained readily, but that there are confidentiality issues that may complicate aspects of the analysis.

On the basis of this discussion, it was felt that the possible motion was premature at this point, but that further development of this topic at future Council meetings would be useful.

Merit and retirement: further discussion

At the February 27 2014 Council meeting K. Hastings had reported on a letter he had received from a MAUT member who had planned to retire as of May 31, 2014 and who considered it unfair that the salary increases scheduled to take effect June 1, 2014, including merit increases based on the previous two-year period, would not be applicable to her. K. Hastings had asked the member what type of mechanisms might address her concerns and at the March 10 meeting he read from her reply to him, which was received after the February 27 meeting. It was clear that the member wished for a system in which merit was awarded retrospectively, so that those who performed well during their final year could be rewarded for that effort. Although there was sympathy for those whose retirements occurred during periods of low increases or freezes (as in the 2012/13year), it was clear in discussion of this issue that Council felt it was essential that merit awards be permanent increases in base salary going forward and that, e.g., a retrospective lump sum payment as a merit award payment for service rendered would not be a preferable merit award system.

Further discussion of the Member Discussion Forum

A. Moores brought to Council's attention the content of B. Reed's email message sent earlier during the meeting during discussion of the Member Discussion Forum (Agenda Item 3). The message, reproduced below, was read to Council.

Process:

It seems to me that the Constitution clearly tasks the VP communication with communications with the membership, especially the nuts and bolts of such communication. This is one of many tasks which is assigned by the constitution to an officer or committee of the association. Having an open listserv was discussed at Council and an opt-in un-moderated listserv was announced at the Fall AGM. It falls squarely within my remit, and is currently in operation.

Substance:

I was elected with a mandate of open communications. An opt-out listserv is a key part of this open communication. This open communication can include much more such as a blog (we currently have one, it could be more visible), and a more interactive website. Although there were teething problems, the communications committee has discussed the issue and decided how to move forward. Absent any vote to shut down the listserv by Council, I will be opening it for messages in the next few days.

A. Moores pointed out that this proposed re-opening the Open Forum Listserv was not consistent with the prior discussions that the Member Discussion Forum should be the subject of a written report, with recommendations, from the Communications Committee and discussed and adopted by Council. She moved that Council directs B. Reed, VP Communications, to cease all communications by the Open Forum ListServ until Council has considered the member forum issue and has made a decision. Seconded by K. Hastings. A vote was taken and the motion carried with 11 votes in favor, one vote against, and one abstention.

7. New Business

Senate Reform

G. Mikkelson presented a possible motion to frame a discussion on Senate reform (previously circulated to Council by K. Hastings on March 9).

The text of the possible motion was:

MAUT calls for the reform of the McGill Senate in the following three ways:

- 1. So that all members of Senate are elected, rather than appointed, to the positions in virtue of which they serve on Senate;*
- 2. So that the chair of Senate is elected from among its members, rather than serving ex-officio; and*
- 3. So that any member of the McGill community who is otherwise eligible may, regardless of membership in any union, be elected to Senate.*

G. Mikkelson noted that these three proposals had been discussed at meetings of the Citizens' Council. He asked if any MAUT members were serving on the Senate Committee to Reform Senate and asked Councilors for feedback. A. Saroyan asked how effective the Senate Committee to Reform Senate was and emphasized that it should include MAUT members. C. Ragan commented that before the motion is debated, it should be preceded by a general discussion at Council of what Senate is, what Senate does well and why, and what Senate does poorly and why.

A. Saroyan suggested that MAUT could provide its own report. B. Lennox suggested that Council appoint an ad hoc committee on governance to gather facts for an informed discussion. A. Shrier suggested asking CAUT for data on Senate composition in other institutions. G. Mikkelson proposed that the Collegiality Committee look into this issue. H. Durham noted the Terms of Reference for the Collegiality Committee have yet to be presented.

Time did not permit further discussion of this issue and it was set aside for revisiting at a later meeting.

Ville de Montréal Municipal Tax Bills

K. Hastings noted that MAUT had recently received municipal tax bills addressed to the Association. This is something new; university buildings used for academic purposes are not taxed, and up till now the McGill building housing the MAUT offices at 3495 Peel has not been taxed. M. Nahon asked about city's consistency with the occupants of other buildings such as Thomson House and offices that house the SSMU. K. Hastings replied it was his understanding that SSMU pays municipal tax, at least in part because their building houses commercial activities. There are also commercial activities associated with Thomson House which houses PGSS but PGSS apparently does not pay taxes because Thomson House is structured as a "club". K. Hastings proposed that the Executive should take up this issue at its next meeting, and there was consensus agreement with this approach.

Election Update from the Nominating Committee

A. Shrier, Chair of the Nominating Committee asked to present a very brief update on the election and there was consensus agreement to receive that update. He noted that four candidates have come forward for Council seats and three for Executive positions. At least two additional Council candidates must be sought, as well as candidates for two Executive positions.

9. Adjournment

A. Saroyan moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by C. Ragan and accepted unanimously. The meeting ended at 2:19 pm.