March 20, 2020

The MAUT Executive and Council would like to extend a message of support and encouragement to our members during this time of uncertainty and rapid change. We want to reassure you that we have been, and will continue to be, in daily communications with the senior administration of the university to ensure that the concerns and perspectives of the academic staff are considered throughout the ever-changing decision-making process. We have seen that the administration is listening carefully, and that this dialogue is having an impact on the outcomes.

Many of you are preoccupied with preparations for remote teaching during the final two weeks of the term starting March 30th. The administration has released much information about this, which we will not repeat. We will, however, point out that many departments are developing a buddy system in which instructors using distance teaching tools for the first time can be connected with more experienced colleagues. If your department has not done this, you should press your Chair to take action if you would benefit from experienced advice. If you cannot find the help you need in your department, contact MAUT (maut@mcgill.ca) and we will connect you with knowledgeable colleagues.

Another preoccupation for academic staff is the halt in in-person research activities. There are many aspects to consider, including graduate students nearing thesis submission, research trainees and staff - at all levels - idled (apart from online activities), implications of a possibly prolonged period of research interruption on tenure/reappointment decisions, and many more. These topics are also addressed in our discussions with the administration and your thoughts and ideas are a very important resource as we feel our way forward through this unprecedented situation.

We encourage you to share with us concerns or issues you may be facing during this challenging time, regarding teaching, research, or other aspects of academic life.

Other MAUT messages will follow, but these will be few and brief as to not overwhelm you with duplicate messaging.

Stay safe!

Petra Rohrbach
MAUT President