

# NEWSLETTER

**McGILL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS**

Vol. 25, No. 10

APRIL, 1999

*We are pleased to finally distribute this issue of the Newsletter, as we were waiting to send it until we could report the outcome of the revisions to the Parental Leave Policy, and we now have good news to convey. A new policy has just been approved by MAUT, Senate, and the university administration, which will soon be presented to the Board of Governors. The following article summarizes the problems encountered with the present policy, and their successful resolution.*

## PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY REVISITED

Under the current regulations for maternity and adoption leave provided to full-time members of the academic staff at McGill, fathers of adopted children may be entitled to a paid adoption leave of a maximum duration of 20 weeks. In contrast, biological fathers are not entitled to ANY parental leave. As a result of this alleged discrepancy in entitlement, a biological father filed a complaint with the Quebec Human Rights Commission against the University's parental leave policy. It was apparent to both MAUT Council and to the administration that something had to be done to correct this situation, and they jointly created an ad-hoc Parental Leave Committee to work out an alternative, "non-discriminatory" policy. The elimination of our current Adoptive Leave Policy, without simultaneously replacing it with a new policy, would not be in the interest of academics who have children in this time period, as their status would be left in limbo.

The joint committee was successful in formulating a new policy that gained acceptance by both MAUT and the university administration. It was officially approved at the joint meeting of

the 1998/99 and 1999/2000 MAUT Council members, held on April 29. On May 12, it was also approved by the university Senate. In addition, Senate approved a second motion which recommended a grandfather clause for the old adoption leave policy, to cover members of the staff who are currently on waiting lists to become adoptive parents.

The proposed new regulations fall under three categories: maternity leave, parental leave and extended maternity and extended parental leave. Under the maternity leave regulations, the University would continue to grant a maternity leave of a maximum duration of 20 weeks to full-time members of the academic staff. As in the current policy, staff members who have acquired twenty weeks of employment with the University would receive an indemnity equal to 100% of their regular salary. However, under the new policy, staff members will be asked to apply for Employment Insurance benefits; as a consequence, the McGill contribution would be the difference between the Employment Insurance benefits and their regular salary.

Under the parental leave regulations, a paid leave of up to five days would be provided for the father following birth, and to either parent following adoption of a child. The staff member would also be entitled to add an extended maternity or extended parental leave which may consist of an unpaid leave or a full-time reduced load appointment of a maximum of fifty-two weeks. Staff members who have acquired twenty weeks of employment with the University would receive an indemnity for the first eleven weeks of the Extended Leave equal to 60% of their regular salary, reduced by the Employment Insurance benefits which they receive.

Under the new regulations staff members maintain the right to choose whether they wish the period of the Leave to be counted as credited service for the purpose of tenure consideration or not.

As expected, there are gains and losses associated with the change in policy, depending on the situation of the individual staff member. The "cons" of the new regulations are that it would no longer be possible to offer an indemnity equal to 100% of their regular salary for 20 weeks to the parents of adopted children, and that we will now have to fill out the forms for Employment Insurance benefits (available by mail from the Employment Insurance Offices).

The "pros" of the new regulations are that there

is no longer a distinction between adoptive and biological fathers. Furthermore, the choice of parent caregiver is up to the couple. All families benefit from the additional indemnity available under the extended maternity or extended parental leave.

This new policy was discussed extensively at several meetings of MAUT Council before its approval on April 29. While no policy is likely to be ideal from all perspectives, this policy is attractive to most. In the near future, it will be presented to the Board of Governors for ratification. Staff members who would like additional information should contact the MAUT members of the Parental Leave Committee - Barbara Hales (Pharmacology, tel 3610), Jodie Hebert (Libraries, 4782), Karen Jensen (Libraries, 4789), or John Richardson (Pathology, 5324).

**Barbara Hales**  
**Past President**

*Correction: Vol 25, No 6. In part 1 of the article on collegiality by E. Zorychta, it was stated that "... on February 3, ... Senate was informed of changes in the parental leave policy, previously approved by the Board of Governors.", when in fact, changes had not been approved by the Board prior to the discussion of the policy in Senate on February 3. We regret the error.*  
E. Z.

### **MEMBERS VOTE NO TO UNIONIZATION**

The outcome of the mail ballot on unionization was decisive. In response to the straightforward question: "MAUT should seek certification as a union under the labour code, yes or no", approximately 60% of MAUT members voted, and the response was 25.8% yes, 74.2% no.

# THE MAUT ELECTORAL PROCESS

*MAUT has recently conducted its annual election for new Council members and Executive Officers, and it may be worthwhile at this point to review the electoral process we use.*

Major features of our present system are:

**1. Universal access.** Any member of MAUT can run for any position on the Council or Executive. No recommendation or approval from any group or committee is needed. Nomination forms are sent to every single member each year, and all that is required to run for election is that you sign the form along with any two other members who wish to nominate you.

**2. Non-adversarial.** Candidates submit a brief biographical sketch of no more than five lines, listing their name, department, relevant background, and any statement they wish to make. These sketches are distributed to the membership along with the ballots, and voting takes place by mail. Confrontational activity between the candidates is not incorporated into the electoral process.

**3. Representative.** MAUT has traditionally considered it desirable that a member from each of the major faculties (Agriculture, Arts, Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine, Music, Science) and the Libraries, be present on the combined Executive and Council every year. This is achieved in two ways. There is a nominating committee that will try to find additional candidates to run in the election, if there are no nominations from a major faculty within the university. If no candidates from a particular sector are elected, Council can decide to co-opt additional members. These are chosen by consensus, then asked if they are willing to serve.

Similar procedures incorporating these three features are also followed during the electoral process at CAUT.

**Composition:** The Executive consists of the six Officers, (President, three Vice-Presidents,

President-Elect and Secretary-Treasurer), plus the immediate Past President. The Council consists of the Executive plus ten full members elected for two-year terms, (with five being replaced each year), the Chairperson of the Librarians Section, and not more than 3 co-opted full members. If there are more than 50 Associate or Retired members, then each of these groups can also elect a Council member. The combined total is a minimum of 18, and a maximum of 23 representatives.

**Nominating Committee:** The electoral process is described under Article VIII of our Constitution, and the composition of the Nominating committee is the immediate Past President, as Chair, and additional members appointed by Council, usually including at least one other member who has served on the Executive at some time in the past, in order to benefit from their detached experience. If a range of nominations is received from the members, the Nominating Committee is not required to do anything other than check that the ballots are prepared and distributed on time, and participate in counting the votes. The Chair of the committee then announces the results of the election at the Spring General Meeting. If an insufficient number of nominations are received, or if, by chance, all the nominations were to be from one sector of the university, the committee is required to actively look for additional candidates. The names of the two members who sign a candidate's nomination form are not included on the ballot, and there is also no indication of whether or not candidates were approached by the committee.

There are always adequate numbers of nominations for positions on Council, but sometimes the Nominating Committee has had to actively recruit candidates for positions as

Executive Officers, presumably because of the greater responsibility and workload involved. Among the previous Executive Officers, four were elected (Hales, Hebert, Guitton, Zorychta), and two entered office by acclamation (Frankman, Wallis), while all of the executive for the upcoming year have been elected by majority vote.

**Ten years reviewed:** In the last ten years you have been represented by over 50 different individuals, and over a 20 year span MAUT has had 58 Executive Officers, and 108 different Council members, for a total of 166. During the last decade there has been one attempt to change our electoral system. A motion by Myron Frankman was discussed at the Spring General Meeting in 1994, designed to amend the MAUT Constitution regarding the procedure for elections. As required by our Constitution, notice of the motion was distributed in advance, and the motion read as follows: "Be it resolved that a second call for nominations will be added to the MAUT nominations process. The second call will contain a report listing the slate of candidates which has emerged from the first round nominations and the work of the Nominating Committee." During discussion of the motion, those in favour said that adding a second phase to the nomination process would give the membership the opportunity to respond to nominations which would otherwise appear to be chosen by acclamation, and would involve the membership more fully. One member stated that it was frustrating to find out who the candidates were after it was too late to nominate other candidates, and another felt that controversy generates participation. Those

against the motion stated that the current, conventional procedure permits full participation of members, and the proposal would create an invidious second round, so that if we don't like the candidate(s) we can do what should have been done initially - nominate someone we do like. The proposal was characterized as targeting - going after someone you don't like, for whatever reason, in contrast to the current procedure which is intended to elicit positive nominations. It was felt that this proposal would allow focused antagonism, and negative campaigning, and should not be welcomed. Another negative aspect of the proposal was the impact it might have on getting people to stand for election in MAUT, which is not the same as a political system where people are paid for their service. Opponents felt that if we add a negative campaign feature, fewer people would be willing to participate. This proposed amendment was defeated by a mail ballot during the 94/95 academic year.

Several years ago MAUT did institute a change, not in the electoral process itself, but in the way in which the changeover of representatives takes place. There is now an overlap between the activities of the outgoing and incoming representatives, and MAUT holds joint meetings of Council and Executive following the elections in the Spring. This allows newly elected members to become acquainted with current matters of importance, and to benefit from the knowledge and experience of the previous representatives before the summer begins.

**Edith Zorychta**

## **REPRESENTATIVES FOR 1999/2000**

The results of our election, as announced at the general meeting, are: **MAUT Executive** (see back page) - **Bruce Shore**, President-Elect, **Johanne Hebert**, VP Internal, **Daniel Guitton** VP External, **John Galbraith**, VP Communications, and **Cheryl McWatters**, Secretary-Treasurer (**Barbara Hales** is now Past President). **Council** - **Heather Durham** (Neurology) **Celeste Johnston** (Nursing) **Marie-Claude Premont** (Law), **Rodger Titman** (Natural Resource Sciences), and **Norman White** (Psychology). Continuing members of Council are **Jane Aitkens** (Libraries), **Shaun Lovejoy** (Physics), **Michael Mackey** (Physiology), **Marilyn Miller** (Obstetrics and Gynecology), and **Saeed Mirza** (Civil Engineering).

## A NEW SPACE PROGRAM AT MCGILL

MAUT members have probably noticed that we are physically crowded at McGill. Indeed, even by Ministry of Education of Quebec (MEQ) space norms we are short the equivalent of several Leacock Buildings. In 1992 McGill prepared a Master Development Plan in consultation with Deans, and proposed 10 projects for the ensuing decade. To quote a recent document from the Planning Office, of those 10 projects, "six are completed (or under construction), one (Music Project) is in the design phase, one (Music Project) was cancelled and two (Arts, Allied Health Sciences) are not yet realized." It is time to create a new master plan, and the input of professors and librarians is essential to the task.

A new memo has gone to Deans and the Director of Libraries, following consultation with both the APPC Subcommittee on Policy and Priorities and the Senate Committee on Physical Development, with a request that they "discuss with their constituent units and comment on the following subjects:... a) Quantity of Facilities b) Quality and (Location of) Facilities c) Type of Facility Use".

There are two very welcome elements in this new space-planning exercise: the explicit

request to consult with units, and an intentional effort to relate space-development proposals to the scholarly and pedagogical needs of the university. This is not only a request for new construction ideas, but also for upgrading existing spaces. All kinds of spaces are covered: offices for faculty members, graduate students and support staff, research and teaching laboratories, large and small classrooms, undergraduate study areas, computer and other technological needs, library spaces of various types, lounges, cafeterias, residences, museums, handicapped access, lighting and security, air quality, etc. This is a "wish list" activity.

If you have ideas about the development of space at McGill, in general or particular to your needs, please share them now with your Chair or Area Librarian and Dean or Director. This is a matter that directly affects the quality of our working environment, and there are not many opportunities to have input at this level.

**Bruce Shore**  
President-Elect

**MAUT** has formed an ad hoc **Committee on Intellectual Property (IP)** to participate in the development of the new IP Policy, which covers inventions and patents, copyright, and software. Members of the committee are: Myron Frankman (Economics), Chair, Daniel Boyer (Law Library), Peter Burpee (Educational and Counselling Psychology), Glenn Cartwright (Educational and Counselling Psychology), Jean Gotman (Neurobiology, MNI), Rod Guthrie (Mining and Metallurgical Engineering), David Lametti (Law). A draft version of the new policy is accessible via the MAUT or McGill websites, and more details on the topic can be found in the Committee section of the MAUT web.

## OUR NEXT ISSUE

The present Newsletter and the upcoming issue are being jointly edited by John Galbraith, our new Vice-President Communication and Edith Zorychta, as we complete a series of reports on the 1998/99 academic year. Our next issue will contain an article by Patrick Farrell (Pat will provide a written, and expanded version of his much-acclaimed talk at our October conference), advice for new academic staff, some information from our Committee on Collegiality, an update on the Faculty Club, and a few reflections from E. Zorychta as she ends her regular participation in the Newsletter.

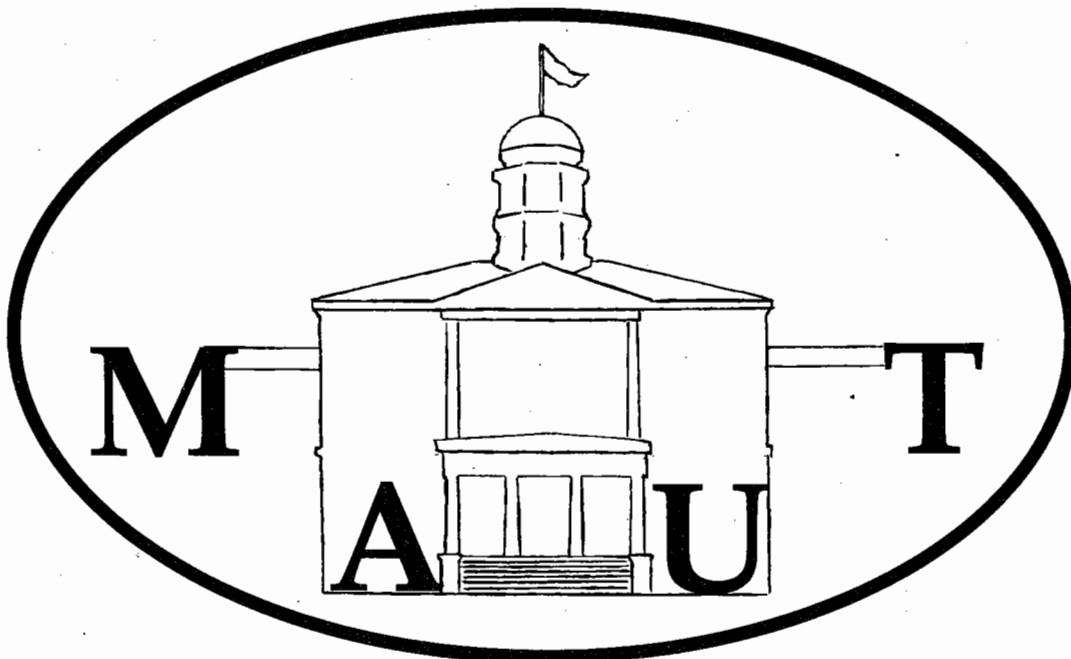
**WELCOME TO  
THE NEW MEMBERS OF  
MAUT  
EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL**

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**MAUT EXECUTIVE AND STAFF 1999-2000**

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