



NEWSLETTER

McGill Association of University Teachers

Association des Professeur(e)s et Bibliothécaires de McGill

www.maut.mcgill.ca/

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A Word from the President

Frank Mucciardi

This is my last newsletter as MAUT President. On Thursday, April 14, 2005, at noon, MAUT will hold its Spring General Meeting at the Faculty Club. As usual, lunch will be provided and you are all invited. My term as President ends at that point. Prof. Michael Smith from Sociology will take over as the MAUT President. I've enjoyed working with Michael during the last year. He has much to offer and will be a terrific President.

I can state in all honesty that MAUT is fortunate to have a number of distinguished, knowledgeable and perceptive individuals at the controls. During the past year, I watched Nick Acheson (V.P. Internal), Jacques Derome (VP External), Jamshid Beheshti (VP Communications), Estelle Hopmeyer (Secretary-Treasurer) and Michael Smith (President-Elect) as they steered the MAUT vessel. They performed admirably and accomplished much. They are to be congratulated.

Continued on page 2

Upcoming MAUT Forum on Retirement Issues

May 10, 2005

McGill Faculty Club

FAQ's and Answers

Details to follow

MAUT Spring General Membership Meeting: April 14, 2005 - McGill Faculty Club

11:30 – light lunch – RSVP Required

12:00 – business meeting

RSVP: maut@mcgill.ca

Tel: 3942 / Fax: 6937

A Word from the President

Frank Mucciardi

Continued from page 1

In addition to the above, there is one individual who, in my humble opinion, is a ‘superstar’. He is the Past-President, Prof. Bernard Robaire. Bernard is a highly effective communicator. I know most of us think we have sufficient knowledge and insight to come up with the answers to resolve whatever problems ail the McGill community. How many times have I heard (and have you heard) ‘They should do it this way’ or ‘They don’t know what they are doing because...’ etc.. The fact of the matter is that many of us are simply armchair quarterbacks (this term includes both the women and the men). Bernard is a cut above the rest – the “real thing” and a first-rate quarterback. His knowledge of McGill and MAUT, I believe, is unparalleled.

In the past, he has served in the central administration of McGill as Associate VP Research and has been the President of MAUT. He is an exceptional scholar. As detailed in a recent issue of *The Reporter*, Bernard was the third highest newsmaker at McGill during 2004. He sits on Senate and its Steering Committee. He is involved with university education on a provincial level (chairs and sits on several key government and inter-university committees) and he sits on numerous committees at McGill. His knowledge of the McGill community, his insight into the mechanics of how the University

works and his dedication to help improve McGill are virtually unmatched. On a personal level, it has been a delight to have learned from Bernard’s knowledge and wisdom. As they say – there was never a dull moment.

One of my reasons for using this space to praise Bernard and the other MAUT executives as opposed to telling you about ‘routine’ MAUT matters (I have left this to the other contributors to this newsletter) is because there is currently, at McGill, a howling wind of change. The administration is undergoing wholesale changes. When appointments to key upper management positions are considered, it is important for us, the academics at McGill, to have them filled with individuals who understand and appreciate what the McGill community is about. We need to make sure that our internal talent is promoted within the McGill ranks. I would like to have MAUT given a bigger role in such matters. At McGill we use a collegial approach and a number of issues such as salaries, benefits etc... are discussed with the administration and resolved year after year. MAUT has proven to be a responsible association with a balanced viewpoint. Its input to key hiring decisions would be a plus.

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MAUT Open Forum:

Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and Learning in a Time of Expansion

Andrew Kirk

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Overview

The MAUT Open Forum on Teaching and Learning took place on January 25th 2005, starting at noon in the Ballroom of the Faculty Club. It took the form of a panel discussion with 9 panelists: Nicholas Acheson (Department of Microbiology and Immunology, representing an instructor), Kalanga Joffres (Student senator, representing students), Luc Vinet (Provost), Kendall Wallis (Acting McLennan Librarian), Alan Shaver (Dean of Science), Anthony Masi (Deputy Provost and Chief Information Officer), Morty Yalovsky (V-P Administration and Finance), Cynthia Weston (Interim Director of Teaching and Learning Services) and Andrew Bryan (SSMU V-P University Affairs). The forum was moderated by Andrew Kirk (Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering).

The forum had been created in response to discussions among MAUT members and others on issues of teaching and learning over the last two years. The McGill Mission Statement in part claims that McGill offers undergraduate students the best education available. However in a variety of venues

that range from Senate to informal discussions, concerns have been raised by various members of the McGill community over issues such as class sizes, the quality of teaching and learning, and teaching facilities. These issues are being raised at a time when student numbers at McGill are projected to expand further, when new professors are being engaged at a rate of 100 per year, and when technology is making new methods of teaching and learning possible. The forum was therefore intended to be a venue at which some of the many complex issues surrounding teaching and learning could be aired and discussed – not just problems but also solutions and ideas.

All the speakers took their assigned topics seriously and gave excellent presentations. In general the mood among speakers was somewhat optimistic. Many stated that teaching and learning is highly valued at McGill and that excellence in teaching is becoming a more important part of the tenure process. There were several main themes which were addressed by the speakers. One was the issue of large class sizes and whether these were hindering the learning process, together with the challenge in managing large classes from an instructor's point of

view. Some suggested solutions, apart from simply reducing class sizes, were: making better use of TAs; utilizing some large classrooms which are not currently scheduled for general use; and retiring some small courses, thus freeing up instructors to teach more sections of large courses. The issue of room scheduling was the most frequent topic of comments from the floor, with several people complaining of various problems that they had encountered in recent years in regard to room availability.

One issue that was raised by some speakers (Andrew Kirk, Nicholas Acheson and Alan Shaver) was that of institutional support for teaching and learning at McGill, and the perceived need for a champion for teaching and learning at the highest levels of the administration. It was proposed that this could take the form of a Vice-Principal of Teaching and Learning, as exists at some other

universities. This person would be able to bring together some of the ‘delivery’ issues, which currently are the responsibility of the office of the Deputy Provost and Chief Information Officer, with those of curricula, program reviews and student numbers, which fall directly under the responsibility of the Provost. A V-P Teaching and Learning could also steer the program review process by considering all aspects of teaching and learning.

Another common theme was that of engagement of students with the learning process, by teaching real issues and ideas, and by ‘unboxing’ learning so that students can connect ideas and topics from different courses. The opportunity presented by academic renewal was raised by several speakers, who suggested we should be using this time to strengthen teaching and learning at McGill.

* * *

Summary of the panelists’ presentations:

Andrew Kirk welcomed the audience and introduced the panelists. He stated that he felt that teaching and learning at McGill was in good shape but that we should continue to ask ourselves how it could be further validated. He pointed to the Principal’s Prizes for Teaching as a positive example of support for excellence in teaching but went on to ask whether teaching and learning has a real champion at the highest levels of the university. He

suggested that the current structure divides responsibility for teaching and learning between the office of the Deputy Provost-Chief Information Officer and that of the Provost. Although we are fortunate to have excellent people in both those positions, teaching and learning is not the main pre-occupation of either office and as a result does not receive as much attention as it deserves. Several other universities have a Vice-Principal of Teaching

and Learning whose sole task is to ensure excellence in that domain and he urged the administration to consider creating such a position.

Nicholas Acheson provided the perspective of an instructor by addressing several issues. One of the foremost was that of class sizes. He presented statistics on very large classes at McGill, showing for example that within the faculties of Arts and Science there are currently 100 classes that have more than 200 students and that 41 of these have more than 300 students. He questioned whether students in very large classes are receiving the best possible education, given the often crowded conditions in lecture theatres and lack of access to the instructor. In terms of solutions he pointed out that some faculties divide their large classes into smaller sections. The Faculty of Arts has recently introduced the “Great Books” U0 curriculum, which is designed to allow smaller lecture classes, with more exposure of students to tutorials and small groups. He also supported the view that there is a need for an officer at the Vice-Principal level who would consider overall issues of the quality of undergraduate education. This person would be able to propose solutions and lobby both the administration and the faculties to come up with a better deal for our first and second-year students. Committees may give good advice but they are not very effective in carrying out change. Appointing a respected academic who is familiar with undergraduate education and who is given some power and voice would seem to be a good way of

bringing real solutions to the table. He also addressed writing skills, suggesting that the writing skills of some incoming students are inadequate and that all new students should take a “writing” test, with those in need then being enrolled in a writing skills course. Teaching assistants (TAs) should also be better used as a resource for improving learning. Finally he stated that some professors at McGill do very little undergraduate teaching and devote most of their time to research and small graduate classes. He suggested that these people have skills and expertise that would greatly enrich undergraduate teaching and that the university should seek to bring them more into contact with undergraduates.

A questioner from the floor followed up on the comments on TAs, citing an example of one class where the availability of more TAs would have been very helpful for students, but there were insufficient resources.

Kalanga Joffres, representing the undergraduate students, addressed the important issue of student engagement. He proposed that McGill should seek ways to ‘unbox’ learning so that students see the connection between ideas and topics that are currently fragmented between different courses. Such an approach would help to instill a passion for the material. There is also a need to improve the student-instructor link. For example, instructors could talk more about their own research and link it with the material being taught. Even relatively

simple steps such as posting their biography with their course outline would help to show students the bigger picture. He also suggested that instructors should include ‘tantalizing hints’ in their lectures to lead students to explore further.

Luc Vinet also referred to the McGill mission statement and suggested that in order to live up to it we need a reflective process, focused on teaching and learning. Learning is an individual activity but we have an institutional responsibility for it. He also suggested that courses must address real issues in order to be relevant to students. It is very important that discussions of the sort engendered by this forum also take place in departments and units. The academic renewal process provides us with an important opportunity to develop a culture of excellence in teaching. He cited the recently introduced program review process as an important part of the reflective process to improve teaching and learning at McGill, and also to increase originality and efficiency.

Kendall Wallis, representing the libraries, reported that library budgets are now much healthier than before, but that most of new acquisitions are ‘invisible’, i.e. electronic. Due to the huge increase in electronic resources, both inside and outside McGill, we have moved from a culture of information scarcity to one of information superfluity. This however provides new challenges for instructors and librarians. The library is now available on the desktop of all students, but it is only

one information source among many. As a result it is difficult for students to compare the relative authority of different sources. In order to simplify searches of the library databases, the library is introducing a new tool called Metalib, which will allow users to search the same terms across many different sources. He concluded by discussing the idea of information literacy. It is very important that students learn the methodology necessary to use information resources, since this is a skill that will be portable to many different domains of activity and research.

Alan Shaver provided the perspective of a dean. In terms of opportunities, he applauded the high value placed on teaching by instructors and the administration. He pointed to various initiatives such as the Tomlinson Science Teaching project, which privileges innovation in teaching. The academic renewal process means that there are new courses available for students, and there is an increasing integration of research into teaching. In terms of challenges, there is too much to learn (for students). Some courses should be retired. This could help the class size issue by freeing up instructors to teach more sections of classes that are currently oversubscribed. He also stated that we need to get more professors into classrooms and we need funds for renovation of teaching facilities. One example is the difficulty in getting funds for computer labs, despite the increase in the use of computers by students within their courses. He also supported the idea of a V-P level officer who would

focus on undergraduate teaching and learning at the highest level.

Anthony Masi provided the perspective of the Deputy Provost and Chief Information Officer. He started by reviewing the structure of his office and stated that his office covers much of what it had been suggested a V-P (Teaching and Learning) would do, and that this structure is unique in Canada. He also stated that there is much to be proud of. For example: we have 1500 courses available on the web (via WebCT), Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) is now positioned to commission research on teaching and learning at McGill, a survey of student engagement found McGill to be the top in Canada, and McGill is ranked as one of the top 10 international feeder schools for US universities.

Morty Yalovsky, Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance), presented various statistics on use of space for teaching at McGill. According to the norms of the Ministry of Education of Quebec, we currently have enough teaching space given the number of students, so it is not easy to obtain funding for any expansion. The alternative is to make better use of our space. Faculties are now being asked to account for the use of classrooms that are not currently within the scheduling system, which will help us to consolidate our teaching space. A new scheduling tool is being introduced which should enable larger classes to be better

accommodated and which will make better use of existing space.

There were several questions on issues of class scheduling, with complaints of courses being moved around several times before a room was permanently allocated.

Cynthia Weston presented information on the various activities of TLS, including the teaching portfolio seminar (in December each year), the Course Design and Teaching Workshop, and the McGill Teaching and Learning Improvement Fund.

Andrew Bryan, representing undergraduate students, stated that current issues faced by students include large classes and assessment of learning (including the use of text matching software). He suggested that TAs could be better used as a resource to improve teaching and learning. Their effectiveness could be enhanced by providing more instructional training for TAs. He also proposed that there should be a standard for language fluency for instructors. One advantage of small classes is that instructors are able to get to know their students better and can act as informal advisors to them. He suggested that the university should decrease class sizes where possible. He also proposed that this would reduce many of the issues surrounding the assessment of learning and plagiarism as instructors would be able to develop a better feeling for what their students are capable of

and that it would become immediately obvious whether or not a student's work was his or her own.

* * *

Questions from the floor

The first question concerned class scheduling and room allocation. An instructor was only told after the beginning of the semester that insufficient space was available for one particular course. Tony Masi replied that units may need to consider sectioning classes that may become too large. Another questioner asked whether grades awarded to students have risen with the increasing numbers of students. None of the panel were able to answer this directly, although Tony Masi replied that all the statistics should be available.

There was a comment on rooms which are reserved but then not used for teaching ('room hoarding'), leading to less available space. Morty Yalovsky and Tony Masi replied that they are asking units to explain how space is being used. One questioner addressed the timetable used by the Faculty of Medicine, which currently is not synchronized with the rest of the university, resulting in large lecture theatres which are only sparsely used but which cannot be used by courses outside Medicine. In responding, Morty Yalovsky and Tony Masi again stated that all faculties, including Medicine, are being asked to provide information on the use of space. They also stated that one important aspect of

getting a better understanding of space usage is that it may then free up more space for research. One speaker from the floor requested an expansion in the wireless network to cover classrooms. Tony Masi replied that this was being done already in some faculties. Finally there was a question about whether very large classes should be replaced by using a distance education model, since students may actually get more out of that than sitting in a huge lecture theatre.

Concluding remarks and next steps

Andrew Kirk closed the forum by thanking all of the panelists and the organizers. He also reviewed some follow-up activities which had been proposed. These include a suggestion that TLS should stage a meeting to address one or two of these topics in greater depth, with attendance by TLS affiliates and any interested members of the McGill community. There has also been a suggestion for a similar general forum to take place at Macdonald campus and this will be followed up in order to gauge interest. It has also been proposed that there should be a discussion forum on undergraduate teaching and learning at regular intervals, possibly organized by MAUT or by the university administration.

The forum was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

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University insurance plans and drug insurance for people 65 and over

Nick Acheson - Vice-President, Internal

You have been notified of modest increases in rates, as well as some new and extended coverage, for supplemental health and dental insurance as well as long-term disability insurance. MAUT members successfully argued for a new provision in the supplemental health plan that refunds charges for eye examinations (maximum \$70 per two years). For details, see:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/hr/news/notes/2004/1216/>.

We are keeping a close watch on these plans via the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee, and they presently are in good financial shape.

The issue of drug insurance for McGill employees and retirees 65 years of age and over has been discussed during the past two years by the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee at the urging of MAUT representatives. In my written report to the November 15 semiannual MAUT meeting, I described in some detail the increased financial burden that we must face on reaching the age of 65, due to the requirement by the Quebec government that we subscribe to the Quebec drug insurance plan or to an equivalent (and costly) private plan. The McGill supplemental health plan does not cover most drug costs for people 65 and over, or for their dependents.

Although there does not appear to be any “quick fix” to this problem, the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee has agreed to bring this issue to the attention of the McGill administration. The rapid increases in premiums paid by individuals to the provincial drug insurance plan (currently the rate is a maximum of \$494 per person per year, depending on income), and reductions in drug benefits paid by the plan, place increasing costs on both active and retired McGill staff 65 and over. For the same overall coverage, McGill staff 65 and over presently pay almost 2 1/2 times the rate as McGill staff under 65. At some point, the University might consider changing its health insurance plan to cover drug costs of all McGill staff so that we would avoid being caught up in this spiraling rate increase. Obviously, this would need serious consideration and would require rate increases for all McGill employees. It could be argued that we should all be considered part of a single group independent of age, rather than suddenly placing people who turn 65 in a separate group. Furthermore, McGill staff may very well have better health and therefore less usage of drug insurance than the general population, with which the over 65 group is presently lumped in the provincial drug plan.

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Dial-up Access Service for academic staff

Nick Acheson – Vice-President, Internal

It has been brought to our attention that many academic staff continue to use dial-up access service (DAS) to connect their home-based computers to the internet and to McGill services, such as those made available by the libraries. Academic staff presently are offered 4 free hours of DAS usage per month, and are charged \$.30 per hour beyond that usage. (For users of WebCT, a special arrangement allows free DAS usage: if, in any given billing month, there is at least one DAS session that connects to WebCT, then usage for that entire billing month will be free. Otherwise, all usage for that billing month will be charged. Furthermore, if you have commercial high-speed connection to the internet, access to McGill services can be arranged without extra charges.)

Because online access is so important for academic tasks, many of which have been downloaded to McGill academic staff over the past ten years, we believe that this is a vital service that individual staff members or their departments should not be paying for from departmental budgets, research grant funds, or personal funds. Furthermore, free access should not be limited to those of us who use WebCT, which is only one of a variety of uses that we make of computers from home doing our professional work.

We have therefore asked the administration to reconsider billing academic staff for DAS connections beyond 4 hours per month. It would appear that the cost of making DAS access free to academic staff is minimal, and therefore it would make sense to do this. We hope to have a positive answer soon.

* * *

Parking

Nick Acheson - Vice-President, Internal

If you drive to work and park at the downtown campus, or if you come to work by car occasionally on evenings and weekends, you might be interested in the following. Parking Services (part of Ancillary Services) will be sending out a revised notice along with permit renewals later this year. We are encouraging Parking Services to make these annual notices more user-friendly. We hope that this notice will include a listing of alternative parking areas if a designated area is full, and preferably a map showing where those areas are located. We have requested that any planned increases in parking fees be discussed with MAUT before they are implemented; we have no information that any increases are planned this year.

Our suggestion that after-hours parking be facilitated for McGill staff who work on evenings or weekends has so far not met with success. We were told that the software that runs the parking gates on the downtown campus is not able to accommodate different rates, but that it will be updated in the near future. We continue to hope that the University will show some flexibility on this subject. When University staff, particularly women, drive to work in the evening or on weekends, at times when public transportation is less available, they should be able to park near their place of work without paying excessive rates. Parking nearby most University buildings is available at these times, and it should be possible for occasional drivers to have some kind of reduced rates for safe and convenient after-hours parking.

A new Senate committee is being set up to allow for discussion and complaints concerning a number of items, including parking that affect campus life. This may be an effective way of bringing to the attention of the University our needs concerning parking.

You may have noticed a recent article in the Gazette about a new McGill Master Plan that is being developed. One element of this plan is to reduce or eliminate surface parking on the downtown campus. If this were to be done without providing suitable underground parking, it could make life difficult for those of us who drive to work. This dossier should be followed carefully.

* * *

Study of overall benefits program available to academic staff

Nick Acheson - Vice-President, Internal

Ten years ago the University sponsored a study that compared both salaries and benefits of academic staff at McGill with those of the other Canadian medical/doctoral universities. Since that time, due to MAUT and administration efforts, our salaries have caught up to the mean of the G-10 universities. We continue in an effort to catch up to the mean of the top three Canadian universities. However, there has been little attention given to catch-up in our benefits package. MAUT has suggested to the administration that it would be time to update this comparison of benefits packages by carrying out a follow-up survey. We hope that such a study will be carried out in the near future, and can help us in our discussions with the administration on overall academic compensation. This study should include a large variety of benefits and services available to university employees, including insurance and pension plans, access to athletics facilities and faculty clubs, parking and daycare, etc.



The MAUT Professional and Legal Officer

Joseph-John Varga

MAUT Professional and Legal Officer

Please note - As a regular feature of the Newsletter, Joseph Varga, our Professional and Legal Officer, will be contributing a short column.

According to the MAUT BY-LAW GOVERNING SERVICES, full members, associate members and retired members have access to the MAUT Professional and Legal Officer for consultation. What does this mean?

In the broadest sense it means that you, as a member, have someone you can share with on a confidential basis, if you so choose. Please feel completely at ease and know that talking to me does not constitute a grievance or a complaint and being seen with me does not brand you as a trouble-maker

or a problem. I am here to listen to your concerns. I am a source of useful information and can help you find solutions in the context of your employment relationship at the level of your department, faculty or broader McGill University context. When you see me, please don't be a stranger.

What do I bring to our professional relationship? I bring my open mind, energy, time and experience. I enjoy sharing with you my eleven years of experience as your MAUT Professional and Legal Officer, thirteen years as a Lawyer, my Academic background including Labor Management Relations (Economics), Law, Arbitration and Mediation, all to your benefit.

Please feel free to contact me at (514) 398-3089, or by e-mail at jvarga2@po-box.mcgill.ca

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New Category: Past Professor

Thanks to Professor Ralph Harris' tireless efforts and the support of MAUT, the University Senate in its January 12th meeting adopted a resolution to introduce a new category for retired professors. The new category of *Past Professor* has been created to designate retired professors, while the category of *Emeritus Professor* will be maintained.

Past Professors will have full library privileges including library cards and access to electronic journals and data bases.

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The FQPPU: The State of Play

Jacques Derome (Vice-President, External)

Marc Richard (Librarians' Section)

Michael Smith (President-Elect)¹

The *Fédération* is currently in crisis. Almost all of the Quebec university academic staff unions and associations, about 20 of them, are currently members of the *Fédération québécoise des professeurs et professeurs d'université*. MAUT is a founding member of FQPPU, and is its only non-unionized member.

Background and characteristics of the crisis

- ◆ One of the core activities of the Federation has been to provide assistance with grievances and collective bargaining. Some part of this support to collective bargaining was embodied in the *Service optionnel des relations de travail (SORT)*, access to which required an additional fee. Other than during a transitional period lasting two years after the founding of the Federation in 1991, MAUT has neither paid for nor made use of this optional service.
- ◆ The Federation has also carried out various

lobbying activities on behalf of academics - chiefly at the provincial level, since education is a provincial responsibility, and to some extent at the federal level.

- ◆ Even though support to collective bargaining was concentrated within *SORT*, some of the broader resources of the Federation, beyond *SORT*, have been allocated to provide support to collective bargaining to all members - for instance, by analyzing subjects that affect all academics.
- ◆ A first crisis for the Federation was provoked last year by the decision of the Université de Montréal union to withdraw from the *SORT*. The Université de Montréal union's fees were a large enough proportion of total fees that its withdrawal made the service non-viable.
- ◆ The next crisis came with the increasing disaffection of the Laval and Université de Montréal unions. The Laval union has voted to withdraw from the Federation and will do so as of June 2005. The Université de Montréal union has also voted to withdraw, but has combined its decision with a motion that allows them to change their minds if they wish.
- ◆ If both these unions withdraw, the budget of the Federation will fall substantially - requiring major changes in its pattern of expenditures and, by implication, some change in its activities.
- ◆ There is some possibility that, without the

¹All three authors represented the MAUT at the FQPPU Councils at which these issues were addressed and were joined by Jodie Hebert (Librarians' Section), Daniel Guitton (former Vice-President, External) and Bernard Robaire (Past-President) at the November Congress. Joseph Varga assisted the McGill delegation at all these meetings.

Université de Montréal and Laval unions, the Federation will collapse altogether.

- ◆ In addition, a case can be made that the departure of the Université de Montréal and Laval unions, which like MAUT represent the academic staff at large research-intensive universities, might reduce the extent to which the Federation reflects MAUT's preferences.

What has upset the academic unions at Laval and the Université de Montréal?

- ◆ The current voting system in the Federation gives a much larger weight to the small members than their size would justify. The membership fees, on the other hand, are proportional to the 'salary mass' of the unions. The Université de Montréal and Laval unions, in fact, provide about a third of the Federation's annual revenue. They have nowhere close to this proportion of the Federation's votes. This imbalance between their financial contributions and their voting power has become a major problem.
- ◆ Up until recently, there has been an almost complete unwillingness on the part of most members of the Federation to countenance a change in representation, to relate it more closely to membership size.
- ◆ There is a sense that the Federation has not been sufficiently active in lobbying efforts in recent years. For example, when the provincial

government cut the budgets for university-based research, the Federation's response was viewed as inadequate by many.

- ◆ The Université de Montréal union, in particular, has argued for a smaller Federation oriented mainly to lobbying rather than to collective bargaining and grievance services, and for a Federation with a much smaller budget.

What has been the position taken by McGill's representatives regarding the Federation's recent difficulties?

- ◆ We share the preference of the Université de Montréal union for a Federation which lobbies more effectively and is smaller, although perhaps not as very small as the UdeM union would want it.
- ◆ We share the preference of the Laval and UdeM unions for a system of representation that reflects more closely the number of members that a union or association has, and the size of the financial contribution it makes to the Federation.
- ◆ We think that there is a need for a Federation that reflects university faculty concerns to government -- in particular, to the Quebec government.
- ◆ We think that MAUT needs to be represented within the Federation to defend the distinct interests of McGill academics when policies are being developed and lobbying activities

organized.

- ◆ We feel that the ability of academics to lobby the Quebec government would be greatly reduced if the present Federation were to disband. Starting a new federation from the ground up would likely represent a major effort and that new body would not immediately benefit from the name recognition that the FQPPU has acquired.
- ◆ Consequently, we have been pressing for reforms to the Federation rather than for its disbandment.

What *is* the current state of play?

- ◆ As of June 2005, the Laval union will be out of the Federation and will probably stay out of it for at least a year.
- ◆ The Université de Montréal union is engaged in a dispute over finances with the Federation. When the optional *SORT* program was terminated last year there was a deficit in its account. The *SORT* members were asked to make additional financial contributions to erase the deficit. The Université de Montréal union objects to the way its contribution was computed. Secondly, the UdeM union argues that it has not received adequate replies from the Federation executive to its questions as to how the Federation budget is spent. It has decided to stop paying its dues to the Federation until these matters are resolved. In return the Federation has started procedures which could lead to the suspension of the UdeM union membership if its fees are not paid.
- ◆ A special Congress of the Federation took place in November to discuss possible reforms proposed by a committee made up of Jacques Derome from the MAUT, colleagues from UQAM and the *Université du Québec à Trois Rivières*, and representatives of the current Federation executive. All the major protagonists participated, including Laval and the Université de Montréal union representatives.
- ◆ A set of substantial reforms was adopted at the Congress. Lobbying now features much more centrally in the definition of the mission of the Federation. Its bureaucracy has been slimmed down by eliminating the biennial congress and all four standing committees, and by reducing the membership of the Executive Committee. Voting has been modified to make it approximately proportional to the membership of the different unions. All the reforms would shift the Federation in the direction preferred by the MAUT representatives. Most of the proposed reforms were approved either unanimously or with a very large majority.
- ◆ To take effect, these constitutional measures have to be ratified at a Congress in early May.
- ◆ It seems likely (but not certain) that, if ratified,

these measures will induce the Laval union to return to the Federation after a year. What the Université de Montréal union will finally decide to do is unclear.

- ◆ Different budget scenarios for 2005-2006 are being prepared. One adjusts expenses to allow financial viability after the Laval union's (confirmed) withdrawal. Another looks at the financial consequences if the UdeM union also withdraws. These scenarios should be available in February. One key question will be whether the Federation can be expected to survive, even for one year, without the unions at Laval and the Université de Montréal.

The dilemma we face

At the last General Meeting of the MAUT, members voted overwhelmingly to amend the constitution to withdraw from the Federation but, at the same time, to allow MAUT Council to suspend that decision, should the Federation evolve in directions of which we approve. The reforms adopted at the Special Congress in November marked a first step in the direction of which we approve. Their ratification at the May Congress would constitute a second step -- one that seems likely, given the majorities with which the reforms were adopted in November.

Two issues remain, however. First, it has yet to be shown that the Federation can survive without the dues of both the Laval and Université de Montréal unions, should the latter decide to withdraw (or if it is suspended). The budget scenarios discussed above should be available soon. At that point, we will be able to judge what they mean for Federation functioning and how plausible they are. Second, there are the implications of the change in the composition of the Federation's membership that would be caused by the withdrawal of both the Laval and the Université de Montréal unions. The benefits of the changed voting arrangements - giving more weight to the unions of universities that are more likely to share McGill's views on a variety of academic matters - would be substantially lost if they both withdraw, especially if they withdraw for more than a year. Internal politics make it difficult to forecast what the Laval and the Université de Montréal unions will finally decide to do.

The Federation will hold a Council meeting on March 10-11, to which MAUT will send representatives. We expect that the future of the Federation will be discussed at some length, and our own MAUT Council will subsequently analyse the outcome.

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Tsunami Relief Fund

The MAUT Council at its last meeting of February 23, 2005, passed a motion to donate \$2500 to UNICEF, and \$2500 to Education International Solidarity Assistance Fund, as its contribution to aid victims of the Tsunamis in Southeast Asia.

Andy Kirk a MAUT Council member, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, writes: “UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund) is one of the largest international organizations to focus on the long-term well-being of children in developing countries. (More details on UNICEF from <http://www.unicef.org/about/who>) It is independent of national governments and religious organizations. Its efforts focus particularly on education and on children’s rights ...Within the tsunami-affected zone it is working to rebuild schools and education systems. In the short term it has been providing food and water to children in refugee camps, and educational materials such as the ‘school-in-a-box’ (supplies and materials for a teacher and up to 80 children). A large number of

schools lost all their materials and supplies in the disaster and this is a very effective way of ensuring that education can continue. Children are the future of the tsunami-affected countries and UNICEF is playing a key role on their behalf.”

Education International (www.ei-ie.org) established a solidarity assistance fund to assist teachers and their families hit by the Tsunamis on December 26, 2004. EI member organizations in South East Asia look after the interest of 7.1 million teachers. EI estimates that more than 10,000 teachers, directly or indirectly have been affected by the disaster and need humanitarian assistance. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), of which MAUT is a member, is a member of EI, and has also donated funds to EI for the Tsunami victims.



MAUT Fall General Meeting: A summary

Jamshid Beheshti – V-P Communications

Tuesday, November 16, 2004

McGill Faculty Club

Agenda

1. 12:05 MAUT members and guests welcomed by Frank Mucciardi
2. Agenda adopted
3. Minutes approved
4. Business
5. Salary policy: effective June 1 base increase; tables based on years of experience and rank will be published shortly. Across the board increase of 1.25%, an increase added to salaries effective December 1st, merit increases (already distributed), plus a \$990,000 envelope allocated to correct salary anomalies and for funds needed for retention, establishment of the professional development fund up with to \$500 per faculty member. See the website for details: <http://www.mcgill.ca/vpadmin/forms/>

We will know shortly whether we have reached the mean of G10.

6. Upcoming MAUT Forum: *Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and Learning in a Time of Expansion*. A motion to withdraw MAUT's membership from FQPPU (please see the article on **The FQPPU: The State of Play** in this Newsletter)
 - a. MAUT proposes two motions: To withdraw from FQPPU as of May 31, 2005
 - b. MAUT Council to suspend the application of the first motion to withdraw from the FQPPU, if the situation improves.

Much discussion pursued and finally questions were called. The result of the votes for the first motion was 96 for, 5 against, and 3 abstentions. The result of the votes for the second motion was 88 for, 11 against, 5 abstentions. Both motions passed.

7. Discussions about proposed MAUT forums.
 - a. Collegiality
 - b. New tenure regulations
 - c. Retirement issues
8. Librarians' status:
 - a. Ten new librarians joined MAUT.
 - b. Ongoing discussions concerning changes to the Librarians regulations in the Grey Book, at the Administration's behest.
9. Benefits
 - a. Health: contributions – we need to accumulate surpluses so that we don't pay interest charges on deficits – health costs run at an increase of 10% to 15% per year, our consultant proposed a 9% increase for health plan and a smaller increase in dental plan. New benefits are now added: an eye examination every two years, an increase in the amount allocated for consultations with a psychologist, and several other new benefits as of January 1, 2005.
 - b. There were discussions about drug insurance, long-term disability, sabbatical leave, salary, status of

retired professors, daycare issues, adoption leave policy, parking, food services, athletics fees, tenure regulations, the policy on harassment and discrimination prohibited by law, and revisions to the guidelines for research centres.

10. Recruitment: We have signed up 79 to date, and expect to exceed the target of 80 new members by December.

11. Auditor's report: Dues reduction of 9% (mill rate decreased from .55 to .5). Motion to approve the auditor's report was passed unanimously.

12. Update on new guidelines:

- a. Tenure regulations: new draft guidelines for tenure includes significant improvement over the past guidelines. The expectation is that the new guidelines would be in effect for September 2005.
- b. Adoption leave policy still under consideration. It is suggested to increase the number of leave days

from the current 5 days to what is practiced in other universities in Canada.

c. Harassment policy: a taskforce began in 2003; in February 2004 a serious case resulted in drafting a temporary policy. A Task Force will be drafting a revised guideline shortly.

d. Research centres: The University is proposing a new set of guidelines and policies for establishing research centres. Presently 50 centres of various sizes are operating at McGill.

13. Faculty Club: the Club is financially sound, and is attempting to increase its collaboration with MAUT.

14. Other Business: The issue of DAS usage was brought up by Professor Glenn Cartwright.

15. Adjournment: 1:45 pm



Membership Recruiting Update

Ralph Harris, Chair

Alain Nepveu, K. 'Gowri' GowriSankaran, Guys Mehuys, John Hobbins, Andrew Kirk, Patrick Neilson
2004/05 MAUT Membership Recruiting Committee

To date, the 2004/05 Membership Recruiting Campaign has enlisted 104 new members: 66 regular staff, 36 'new-hires' and 2 faculty lecturers. We also have a record number of retired members at this time. Membership rates at Macdonald Campus are exceptionally high, there

being not more than one non-member new-hire there!

The aim of the incumbent Membership Recruitment Committee is to greatly increase the membership rate amongst the downtown new-hires and to this end, personalized recruitment packages

were sent to each and every non-member, new-hire since 2001. In addition, a devoted group of individual MAUT members around McGill has been asked to visit each and every one of these people personally and encourage them to join.

The Faculty of Medicine represents the toughest challenge with respect attracting new members so all existing Faculty of Medicine MAUT members, and there are quite a few of you though you are pretty quiet, are asked to wave the flag for MAUT and increase the value of your present membership fee.

Lastly, the climax of the MAUT Spring Recruiting Campaign is a luncheon to be held,

March 10 at noon in the Faculty Club. All devoted individuals who have been asked to recruit along with any of the non-member new-hires in their area are invited to attend - please RSVP Honore at 3942 or MAUT@mcgill.ca. The format will follow the Fall Campaign's luncheon when there was an open and very active discussion of matters of general interest to the membership.

On behalf of the 2004/05 Membership Recruitment Committee, I wish to thank all those who have done a stellar job this year in boosting our membership.



MAUT, the Environment and You

Frank Mucciardi - President, MAUT

A couple of weeks ago, the Federal government tabled a new budget. It contains a renewed commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to comply with the Kyoto agreement. Canada's involvement is highlighted by the fact that Montreal will host a Kyoto conference in late November 2005. Reduced emissions are everyone's responsibility and not only the government's. So what are you doing to reduce greenhouse emissions? Are you aware of the one tonne challenge?

Let's assume that you are not making a concerted effort to reduce emissions. In fact, let's

assume that you have a limited knowledge of the one tonne challenge. For those who do know, bear with me. In a nutshell the statistics state that the average Canadian produces about 5 tonnes of greenhouse gases (primarily CO₂) annually. The target as formulated by the federal government is to reduce our emissions by 20%, hence the one tonne challenge.

From my personal perspective, I feel that McGill's approach to the issues of the environment and of the reduction of greenhouse gases lacks both imagination and commitment. Notwithstanding my

views, MAUT would like to determine where McGill's policy is at and where it is going. Thus, the MAUT executive body is exploring the possibility of creating a committee that will focus on issues of the environment and how to address and disseminate the information. I am now gauging the interest of the members by asking those of the MAUT membership who would like to play a role to contact me at frank.mucciardi@mcgill.ca or by telephone at 398-1329. With sufficient interest, a committee will be formed.

To help you understand what sort of issues we may wish to explore, let's consider the transportation of McGill employees to and from work. MAUT members get to work by 1) driving to McGill, 2) taking mass transit, 3) walking, 4) biking, 5) getting a lift etc.... At present, McGill does not play a role. It does not promote one form over another. The only issue that it is actively involved in is 'parking'.

So what else can McGill do? This is something the committee will explore. However, I have several ideas of my own I will share with you to stimulate the thought process. McGill can

promote mass transit by, for example, subsidizing a fraction of the cost of monthly passes and it can use the opportunity to promote mass transit. McGill can promote carpooling by subsidizing the parking fees of the participants. There are many possibilities. A major challenge will be to get the administration to embrace these ideas and to be concrete in its response. I am determined to reduce the idle chatter that seems to permeate discussions on the environment.

While I have not mentioned students (or other McGill organisms) specifically, there is no question in my mind that they can, should and, I hope, play a pivotal role. I see MAUT forming alliances with student societies in developing strategies and policies.

I hope you will join me and support the formation of this committee. If you believe in helping society use the planet's resources in a responsible, sustainable and efficient manner, then drop me a note. I would like to find out who you are.

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Executive and Council members 2004 - 2005

We are here to serve you. Please contact us with your questions and comments.

MAUT Executive

Position	Name (Dept)	Phone	Fax	Email
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MAUT Council

The MAUT-APBM Council consists of the seven elected executive officers, plus the following elected Council members.

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The MAUT- APBM Newsletter is published during the academic year, by the McGill Association of University Teachers, to keep all members informed of concerns and activities.

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