

MAUT Spring General Meeting

April 21, 2016

President's Report for 2015-2016

The last year has been very busy for the Executive and Council of MAUT. As always, there have been several background issues that have stretched over several years and will continue into the future. In addition, there were many short term items that were addressed by the MAUT Executive, Council and professional staff. MAUT has worked hard during the year with a general goal of improving the workplace environment for its members, as well as addressing specific issues which have affected particular segments of the membership. Some of the highlights of 2015-16 are given below:

Academic Freedom

Following the report to the membership at the Fall General Meeting, further discussions were held between MAUT and the Administration. This resulted in agreement on the wording of a Statement of Academic Freedom. The Statement was then presented to the Academic Policy Committee, who passed it and referred it to Senate for acceptance. It was accepted by Senate at the meeting of March 23 and was sent to the Board of Governors for approval. Once approved, it will be placed on the McGill Website with the Mission Statement. In proposing the motion to Senate for the acceptance of the Statement, the Provost stated that "going forward, the Statement of Academic Freedom would be taken into account when developing new policies and revising existing ones". This is now in the Senate Minutes of the meeting and MAUT will be watching to make sure that this commitment is honored. This goal was achieved thanks to the hard work of many MAUT members, particularly the Ad-Hoc Committee who drafted the original statement and provided the replies to the Administrations responses.

Collegial Governance

Throughout the year, the strategy to hold both formal and informal meetings with members of the Administration has continued. The intention has been to provide the Administration with feedback on issues of concern to MAUT members.

- (i) As a result of requests from the Administration for consultations with MAUT, several working groups were set up during the year, and others are in the process of being set up, with the intention of providing feedback to the Administration on proposed changes to Regulations, etc. A detailed list of these is provided in the report of VP (Internal) Alenoush Saroyan. On many of these, MAUT has worked closely with Angela Campbell, the Associate Provost (Policies, Procedures and Equity). More recently, requests have been received from the Dr. R. Goldstein, Vice-Principal Research and International Relations for input into the Regulations governing the Conduct of Research and the Policy on Intellectual Property. It was agreed that these should become formal consultations with the formation of Working Groups.

- (ii) The Conflict of Interest reporting form. This was an issue raised by MAUT in 2015 and a new form has been created by the Associate Provost which addresses the problems raised by MAUT in the 2015 reporting cycle. This form is to be presented at Senate for information on April 20, 2016.
- (iii) MAUT has continued discussions with the Principal and Provost on issues related to the French language requirements for permanent residency which have impacted several members. A meeting was held with the Principal and one of the members concerned and the Principal is pursuing this issue with the Government.
- (iv) At the urging of the other employee groups within the University, MAUT has been invited to the meetings held regularly by the VP Finance and the Provost for the purpose of providing updates on the financial situation and other factors affecting employees.
- (v) The Principal has initiated twice-yearly lunch meetings with the leaders of all the employee groups at McGill, including MAUT, to allow issues of importance to members of the McGill community to be discussed and common problems identified.
- (vi) Throughout the year MAUT has been asked for its input on issues such as McGill's Internationalization strategy, the plans for the RVH, the IT Services – CIO Cyclical Review, etc.

Lines of Communication

A key component of collegial governance is keeping open lines of communication for consultation and dialog with the other groups in the University. Following the recently developed tradition, senior members of the University Administration met with Council to share perspectives and concerns. These included Deputy Provost Ollivier Dyens and Provost Manfredi. In addition, Associate Provost Angela Campbell made several presentations on particular issues in the regulations and policies. Additionally, the President-Elect, President and Past-President met with Principal Fortier and Provost Manfredi on a regular basis and the entire Executive met with Principal Fortier for lunch on two occasions. These meetings have provided valuable opportunities to discuss issues of concern to all parties including mental health problems which are affecting students and staff alike. Unfortunately, one MAUT-hosted event from previous years, "Coffee and Conversation with the Principal" was not implemented this year due to very busy schedules for all concerned. It is hoped that this can be brought back next year to provide members with a chance to communicate directly with the Principal.

Committee on Academic Staff Compensation

CASC is a committee consisting of approximately equal numbers of MAUT and Administration representatives. It is chaired by the Provost with the VP Finance present. Its role is to allow an

open discussion on the salary and benefits policies for academic staff. It usually meets four or five times a year and, before November, determines the salary policy for the upcoming year. Thus the across the board salary increases and merit awards for 2016 were agreed to in the Fall of 2015 and the University abided by the agreement set up in 2013-14. The resulting salary increases were very significant. An issue arose over a document containing Guidelines to Deans and Chairs for the merit allocations, which did not appear to be publically available. Of particular concern was the issue of merit awards and maternity leaves which was addressed in the Guidelines. The Provost agreed that the document should be public and a copy was issued to all academic staff with the information on the salary increases for this year. Further discussions on the awarding of merit during a period of maternity leave will be held next year. MAUT members also raised an issue related to possible changes to the benefits package and it was agreed that this should also be discussed at CASC in the future. The three-year agreement from 2013 is now at an end and a new agreement on salary is being discussed. Currently benchmarking is being carried out with sister institutions in the U15 to try to gauge the rank of McGill in terms of compensation across the country. These discussions will continue into the Fall.

MAUT Business

Each month, MAUT Council deals with a range of issues, some of which are urgent and some deal with longer term issues such as the problems with child-care, etc. In addition, the Standing Committees are very busy as can be seen by their reports to the membership. A few examples of the work are:

- (i) The updating of the MAUT Constitution and By-Laws. The changes passed over the last few years were implemented in the documents and they were placed on the MAUT website (thanks are due here to Marc Richard, Ken Hastings and Joseph Varga). The versions there are now, hopefully, consistent and correct and the intention is to keep them up to date as we move forwards.
- (ii) Committee mandates and memberships were updated and placed on the website.
- (iii) Several Working Groups were formed from the members of MAUT. This seems to be a growing area of work for MAUT and involves it in the contents of the Regulations, etc., that govern the lives and careers of academic staff at McGill. In order to be able to respond faster to requests for consultation for the administration and to spread the work around, a registry of member capabilities and interests has been created and will continue to evolve going forwards.
- (iv) Discussions with the newly formed McGill University Retirees Association (MURA) were held in the Fall but there has been little progress on this front since then.
- (v) MAUT members on SBAC (the Staff Benefits Advisory Committee) reported to MAUT on potential changes to the benefits package that were being discussed and a possible survey of

members that would be conducted by the Administration. As a result, a letter was sent to SBAC members to stress the point that only the member associations can legitimately survey their members on changes to the package.

- (vi) The MAUT Professional and Legal Officer continues to provide assistance to members who have employment issues. The ability to provide such advice is seen as one of the primary roles of MAUT and, as such, a report from the Professional and Legal Officer will be provided to the membership.
- (vii) The Membership Committee has been hard at work during the year and organized several events for members and their families. Some of these were open to non-members. These were very well attended and will probably be repeated next year. In addition, several other initiatives for members have been discussed and are in the planning stages.

Overall, this has been a busy year and significant progress has been made in the collegial relationship with the administration. Several issues of concern to the membership have been, or are being, addressed and MAUT intends to continue providing a path to bring member's issues to the attention of the Administration.

I would like, as part of this report, to thank all the members of the Executive and Council, and, especially, the staff (Honore and Joseph) who worked extremely hard to reduce the stress on the President and helped make the year a great experience. I have been honored to be able to work with and for the members of the Association.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.A. Lowther', with a stylized flourish at the end.

D.A.Lowther

President