

President's Report for Fall General Meeting- November 17th, 2016

Another interesting year

The story may be apocryphal but supposedly an old curse reads: "may you live in interesting times". Welcome to the world of MAUT. I don't know if this is because the administration respects our recently enacted policy regarding consultation or if there are just more things going on than usual, but we've been pretty busy so far this year. Our VPs Internal (Petra Rohrbach) and External (Axel van den Berg) will no doubt share the breadth of our recent consulting activity in their reports. Let's start with the "simple" stuff. Our social events at the Faculty Club and at the Mac campus were both extremely well attended and the MAUT membership committee continues to work hard to attract new members and sustain the interest of current members. I keep saying the social side of MAUT was long ignored- no more. I meet a lot of potential, new and long standing members at these events and you'll note I try to keep my speeches short. The collaboration of both the downtown and Tadjia Hall Faculty Clubs is something we are very grateful for! Don't forget to mark our Winter Brunch in your agendas!

CASC

Although we don't have it in writing yet, the Committee for Academic Salary Compensation (CASC) has got an agreement in principle for people on parental leave to have merit attributed more fairly than before. Instead of not being eligible for merit, the plan is now to have merit based on the last two working years. This is a good thing- not only will people be eligible, but they will not have this non-eligibility compounded over the years of their careers. Keep your eyes open for news on this. We've also made the administration see reason on the Travel Policy they tried to implement- they've finally agreed that research funds should not be included in such a policy. The administration I suppose was trying to (over)interpret new provincial procurement policies and apply them in a one-size fits all approach. The good news is they have backed off and we hope a similar decision will be made regarding changes to the use of our professional developments funds for the purchase of computer equipment and software. On salary policy, an ongoing battle. Basically, we are going to consolidate the gains made in the last three years and get an additional 7.5% while the university attends to other needs such as returning administrative positions to units and departments. MAUT and the university are in a data collection phase for pay increases going forward and we have agreed that we will not slide back in the U15 rankings so that this 7.5% increase may go up but cannot go down.

Communicating with the membership

On the communication front, our VP Communications (Genevieve Gore) and the MAUT Communications committee have been working on developing a social media presence for the organization. I think this will solve two problems- many members think we don't communicate enough while others think we communicate

too much. You can't win- but here at least the choice will be left up to individual members whether or not or how much to engage!

MURA

Many of you have heard of the McGill University Retiree's Association or MURA. They just celebrated their first birthday this year. Congratulations. MURA is a pan McGill group that will also represent MAUT members when they retire. We've been in discussion with them as to how best to divide up our labours to help them get a good start and to continue to allow retired academics and librarians to participate in MAUT events and activities.

Ongoing concerns

We are working on a lot of other issues which you will hear about in the coming weeks and months- the pay equity issue for research assistants and how that will affect other research staff (and others paid with soft money by researchers), gender and equity issues and the ongoing struggle to improve conditions for international hires. In this last one, McGill has created a new Associate Provost position specifically detailed to deal with such hires. Phil Oxhorn is now getting the lay of the land in his new job and we are following up. One other good thing was that MAUT Council is going to increase its participation on the various MAUT committees. A volunteer workforce requires a lot of good will and willingness to commit time to various activities. Engaging council and the MAUT membership more generally helps foster solidarity and shares the heavy load we bear. I cannot stress this enough- get involved. There is a lot to do.

The people doing the work

Finally, council is in the process of creating a position for a third person in the office to help engage new members and help Honore Kerwin-Borelli and Joseph Varga in their increasingly complex tasks. Anyone involved with MAUT for any length of time realizes how much we rely on Honore and Joseph as the core of our activities, our institutional memory and as the public faces of our association. We thank them often enough for their hard work and devotion but I just wanted to add a word in writing say how personally grateful I am to both of them, especially this year as president!

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Hébert
MAUT President