

TO: Senate

QUESTION FROM: Senators Brooklyn Frizzle and Darshan Daryanani

RESPONSE FROM: Senator Christopher Manfredi, Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)

SUBJECT: Question Regarding the Withdrawal of an Emeritus Designation

MEETING DATE: November 18, 2020

PREAMBLE: The Regulations on Retirement of Academic Staff¹, which set out the general terms and conditions relating to the retirement of academic staff, delineate the protocols for honorific designations.

The Regulations clearly outline the procedures for awarding the "Emeritus/Emerita" designation. Under the Regulations, the designation is granted to retired full Professors and full Librarians at the discretion of the University, on the recommendation of the relevant Dean(s), in consultation with the relevant Chair(s).²

The Regulations also provide that the designation may be withdrawn by the University, although these procedures are less clearly defined. Under the Regulations, the designation may be withdrawn in the event the Emeritus staff member fails to maintain the standards for which the status was granted, or for misconduct occurring prior to or after retirement.³

With 417 Emeritus/Emerita staff members, as of October 28, 2020,⁴ there remain ambiguities around the exact protocol for the withdrawal of an Emeritus status.

QUESTION:

- 1) How is misconduct defined in relation to the Regulations on Retirement of Academic Staff?
- 2) If misconduct is not defined, what types of misconduct would warrant the removal of an Emeritus designation?
- 3) Specifically, who is responsible for determining whether an instance of misconduct warrants the removal of an Emeritus designation?
- 4) Do specific procedures exist by which the withdrawal of an Emeritus designation can be requested or otherwise initiated?
- 5) If so, what are those procedures?

¹https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/retirement_of_academic_staff_regulations_on_may_2013_final_formatted-amended_oct_2017.pdf

² Regulations on Retirement of Academic Staff s. 5.2.1 and s. 5.2.2

³ Regulations on Retirement of Academic Staff s. 5.2.7

⁴ <https://www.mcgill.ca/provost/academics/distinguished-professorships/emeritus-emerita>

RESPONSE:

Thank you for these questions related to the designation of emeritus status at McGill, Senators Daryanani and Frizzle.

Emeritus status is an honorific designation; it does not confer an appointment or employment status at McGill. Hence, an emeritus professor is not a University employee or “Member of the University Community, as this term is normally defined by our policies and regulations, unless that person also concurrently holds a post-retirement appointment.

The term “misconduct” as used in s. 5.2.7 of the [Regulations on Retirement of Academic Staff](#) (“Regulations”) is interpreted as misconduct defined by McGill regulations and policies that apply to tenure-track and tenured academic staff. In other words, any behaviour that would have been deemed misconduct while one was a professor with active status at McGill would constitute misconduct for the purposes of s. 5.2.7 of the Regulations.

As Provost, I am responsible for confirming an emeritus designation, upon recommendation by the relevant Dean and Chair/Director (s. 5.2.5 of the Regulations). As such, were I notified of a complaint in regard to an emeritus designation, it would be my responsibility to assess whether such designation should be withdrawn under s. 5.2.7. In such a case, the first step would be to determine whether the complaint reported – if taken at face value – constitutes misconduct. If not, then the matter ends there. If so, I would then proceed to assess whether there is evidence that misconduct warranting a disciplinary measure had occurred. In this context, the emeritus professor whose designation is called into question would be given a chance to be heard before a final decision is reached. An emeritus professor whose designation is revoked must cease to use this designation.
