

Newsletter



McMaster University Faculty Association
DECEMBER 2005/JANUARY 2006,
Volume 32.3
Ian Bruce, EDITOR

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President's Report

delivered at the General Meeting on January 5, 2006



My first six months as President of the Faculty Association have galloped by. Despite being a faculty member at McMaster for more than three decades, I have been humbled by how little I know about the inner workings of our University. Fortunately, guidance of the Association lies in the extremely capable hands of our Executive Director, Phyllis DeRosa Koetting, and our Administrative Assistant, Kelly McCaughey. These gals keep me and your Executive in line and well informed. I am so grateful to both of them. Below I will summarize some of our major initiatives.

Policy Matters

- 1. Guidelines regarding Interactions with the Media.** A statement in this policy, "Further, a member shall not refer to McMaster University if the statement expresses a personal opinion, and that opinion is unrelated to the area of academic or professional expertise of that member", was raised as a concern by CAUT and by some of our Association members. After consultation with the original authors of the policy and considerable discussion in the Executive and with the Joint Committee, the Joint Committee agreed that this statement served no useful function and its intent could be misconstrued. Consequently, the Joint Committee has recommended to Senate that the 'offending' statement be removed from the policy.
- 2. Principles Governing Contractually Limited Appointments (CLAs) At McMaster University.** This policy statement has been revised to clarify the terms and benefits for short-term CLA appointments. The revised version has been sent by the Joint Committee to Senate for final approval.
- 3. Sub-Committee to Review Issues Related to Contractually Limited Appointments.** We are grateful to this excellent committee for their report with recommendations for the establishment of long-term contractually limited appointments (Teaching Professors).

The report was discussed by the Senate Committee on Appointments. Their concerns were then discussed by the Joint Committee who, after minor changes, agreed to forward these recommendations to Senate for their approval.

4. Pregnancy/Parental/Paternity Leave Policy for Faculty (SPS 19). Those faculty members, librarians and Chairs who have tried to use this policy will readily agree that this policy is out of date and almost impossible to understand. Murray Lapp presented a revision of the policy to the Joint Committee. While much simplified and easier to use, further changes/clarifications may yet be required. This policy revision will be discussed again in the Joint Committee.

5. Spousal Hiring Policy. The spousal hiring policy has been approved by Senate and can now be used to facilitate hiring couples when positions are available for both partners.

Issues of Concern Over the Past Term

1. MURA. We are happy to inform you that MUFA joined with MUSA and the Administration in a financial plan to provide stable funding for the McMaster University Retirees' Association. We hope to see our retirees play a more active role in our campus life: with age comes wisdom! We look forward to continued participation and leadership from our retired colleagues. My personal thanks for the wonderful Christmas lunch and friendship we shared in December.

2. Tuition Bursary. The bursary is now taxable to the employee rather than the student recipient. This change was determined by the Canada Revenue Agency. Attempts to argue against this change by our sister institutions have met with no success. The Remunerations Committee will be happy to receive views of the membership on the perceived value of this benefit given its change in taxation status.

3. Changes in Payroll Schedule. Over the next year, pay schedules for faculty members and librarians will change from monthly to bi-weekly. The exact date for the switch has not yet been announced. Transition assistance will be available for the month of the switch, but we should all start examining our personal payments such as automatic bank deductions for mortgages, bills etc., to ensure a smooth transition to the bi-weekly pay arrangement.

4. Day Care. Although we have two excellent McMaster Day Care Centres, there is no formal preference policy for the children of faculty and librarians. Waiting lists can take more than two years. We also have no infant care. Encouraged by the Administration's interest in better serving this need, largely in recognition of the recruitment and retention benefits from providing day care services, a plan for an enlarged day care with infant care capacity has been developed and is part of a proposal forwarded for consideration for the next fund-raising campaign. This is a long-term solution, but it would include a preferential policy for children of our membership. We await news on the proposal's fate.

5. Collegial Behaviour. Our last newsletter outlined the Executive's concern regarding reports of inappropriate forms of behaviour on the part of faculty and librarians. Maintaining an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for all members of our community is critical in an academic setting. Academic debate is cherished but we cannot confuse academic freedom with mean behaviour intending to intimidate and embarrass. The Joint Committee agreed that our Codes of Conduct for faculty and for librarians outline procedures for dealing with 'bullies'. Although we are hesitant to endorse the use of punishments, we are unwilling to see any individual or groups become victims of inappropriate forms of interaction. We will encourage the Administration to enforce our Codes of Conduct should it become necessary.

6. Coca-Cola Contract. During the past term a group of students initiated a successful referendum asking the University to cancel the exclusive contract with the Coca-Cola Company at the end of its current term. Their concerns, like ours, are the lack of choice this imposes on our community, in addition to reports of serious human rights violations associated with foreign workers of the Company. The Association formally asked the Board of Governors to reconsider its support of this contract in view of our Code of Labour Practices for University Suppliers and Licenses and a Fair Trade Purchasing Policy for University Suppliers and Retailers. The Board received the letter but showed little response to it. In a later meeting between Roger Trull and the Executive, Mr. Trull raised doubt that our Code of Labour Practices in fact applied to the exclusive contract with Coke. Consequently, I met with Robert O'Brien, our representative on the Labour Practices Committee; he will ask the Committee to examine changes in the Code that make it very clear that the Coca-Cola contract is governed by our Labour Practices agreement. Although the contract renewal is several years away, we can assure the Administration that the Faculty Association will be watching to ensure that the students' views are not set aside.

7. Parking. Oh god no! Well, we're moving! There is now an agreement to build a one-storey parking garage under the stadium playing field. This will restore the parking losses due to construction in that part of campus. Karen Belaire informed the Board of Governors that plans for an above-ground parking garage on the west side of campus are under development. The parking priority policy is under review. New buildings will all be considered for underground parking. The parking issue is now front and centre. We hope for long-term relief.

8. Mandatory Retirement. The legislation to abolish mandatory retirement at 65 has now been passed and will become law in December, 2006. After that time, University employees will be free to choose their retirement date. There are no plans to offer additional incentives to retire or to encourage faculty to stay on. Because, unlike many of our sister institutions, our working and retirement benefits are very similar, few changes will be required to adjust to this change. Human Resources is working on policies that mention the 65 age cut-off. The transition should be very smooth for us.

9. Hiring. New hiring is a matter of great concern to many of our Association members. The Rae report is in; the Ontario government has promised money for renewal; other universities are advertising new positions; why is McMaster slow to approve new positions? One explanation being offered by the Administration is that we are in difficult financial times with one major problem being the pension liability. We understand that we are legally required to show that we can fund our pension liability. Does this have to be taken from operating funds in a three year period, thus stressing ability to hire? This is a point that will be discussed during negotiations. We hope other ways to fund the liability can be found and that hiring can commence rapidly. Our faculty members are carrying too big a work load: our classes are unacceptably large. We must pursue our academic mission and find relief for our members. New hiring is mandatory!

10. Negotiations. The briefs are in and we now begin the negotiating process. If agreement is not achieved by March 15, 2006, we will go to final offer selection. We prefer a negotiated settlement but we believe that our faculty are outstanding and that they work incredibly hard to maintain the research and teaching reputation that McMaster enjoys. We have the right to expect good working conditions and good compensation for our excellence. Let's hope the Administration appreciates us in a tangible fashion!

11. MUFA Awards. The call has now gone out for nominees for the MUFA Faculty/Librarian Awards for Outstanding Service. There are so many of our colleagues whose contributions to McMaster should be acknowledged. The nomination process is not

onerous. Please bring candidates forward. We want to recognize the excellence of our members.

It has been a busy first term and the Executive expects to continue working hard on behalf of everyone. I have particularly enjoyed my lunches with the new faculty and librarians hired in the past year. Your ideas and comments are very welcome. When I meet the impressive new members, I know that McMaster's future is in good hands. Let's continue to work with our Administration to make McMaster a desirable place to work and to build a long career.

I end on a note of sincere thanks to the members of the Executive for their support and hard work. I must single out Mike Veall, Chair of our Remuneration Committee. Mike has prepared a sensible and well argued brief. He will lead our negotiations and knowing that gives me confidence that we are well represented at the bargaining table. Thank you for taking on this huge task for a second year, Mike. And finally, thanks to the membership for their participation in our Association.

Betty Ann Levy



Call for Nominations

The MUFA Faculty/Librarian Awards for Outstanding Service

PURPOSE

The purpose of these awards is to provide an annual recognition for faculty and professional librarians who have made an outstanding contribution to the University through the provision of exceptional service to faculty, librarians, staff, students or alumni.

THE AWARDS

Each year there will be a maximum of three awards in the amount of \$1,500.

ELIGIBILITY

The awards are open to all members of the McMaster University Faculty Association (MUFA).

PROCEDURES

1. The MUFA Executive has appointed a chair and committee drawn from amongst the categories of faculty, professional librarians, staff, students, and alumni. The Secretariat to the committee is the MUFA Executive Director.
2. The period of the award is a calendar year.
3. Nominations

a. Nominations must be e-mailed (mufa@mcmaster.ca) or mailed to MUFA (Hamilton Hall 103A) no later than

MARCH 15, 2006

b. The nominator must attach a supporting narrative of not more than 750 words.

c. Each nomination must be supported by a minimum of 2, and not more than 4 reference letters. These reference letters must be e-mailed or mailed, either through the nominator or independently. Reference letters should not exceed 500 words.

d. Position and contact information for the nominator and all references must be clearly indicated.

4. The Committee will review the nominations. Among the factors considered by the Committee will be:

- enhancement of the reputation of McMaster University
- provision of excellent service
- demonstrated innovation
- breadth and depth of impact
- strength of support in nomination

5. The faculty/librarians selected to receive the awards will be invited to attend a special reception following the Annual General Meeting in the spring and will be presented with their awards at that time. Pictures of the individual recipients and a brief summary of the rationale for their award will be published in the MUFA Newsletter and on the MUFA Web page.

6. Each faculty/librarian who is nominated for an award will receive a letter of commendation from the MUFA President.



New Members

Qiyin Fang
Deda Gillespie
Daniel Goldreich

**Engineering Physics
Psychology, Neuroscience &
Behaviour
Psychology, Neuroscience &
Behaviour**

Ann McKibbon
Allison
Thompson

**Clinical Epidemiology &
Biostatistics
Health Sciences Library**

MUFA Appointments

Many thanks to the following for agreeing to represent MUFA: Don Wells on the Fair Employment Coalition and Mary Silcox (English & Cultural Studies) on the MUFA Council.

Housing

Apartment for Rent

Spacious and bright apartment for rent in Locke Street area of southwest Hamilton. Three bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living room and dining room on upper two floors of historic house. Newly renovated with hardwood throughout. Ample parking. Available immediately. \$1200/month includes all utilities. Call Karen at 905-385-0978.

House for Sale (private): \$459,900 A 2-floor Westdale vintage House, 5 minute walk from McMaster, red brick exterior, over 2000 sq. ft. living space; major renovations in 1991; 4 bedrooms, 3.5 washrooms, large finished attic, living and family rooms (hardwood floors), large kitchen (maple cabinets and pantry), oak bookcase, partly finished basement, gas heating, central vac and AC. Contact: 905-525-4471 (evenings). Custom bungalow on ½ acre, private lot in Grand Vista Gardens, Greenville. Gas fireplace in living room, large deck, new roof (2004), 2 bathrooms, 2+ bedrooms, double attached garage. Large partially finished rooms in basement. 1 owner. Further information/appointment to view — call Carol @ 905-628-5732 and leave message.

House for Rent Large fully furnished house on Dalewood Crescent in Westdale. Three bedrooms plus large study/guest bedroom. Three bathrooms. Garage. Quiet street close to conservation area and a short walk to McMaster and local parks and schools. Available August 20, 2006 for up to a year (dates negotiable). Non-Smokers and no pets. \$1,400/month plus heat and utilities. Contact 905-525-9140, x 23024 or x 27245.



Passages

Oded Bar-Or, Professor Emeritus, Pediatrics, December 8, 2005

Harold Wood, Professor Emeritus, Geography, December 24, 2005

**Barbara Ferrier, Professor Emeritus, Biochemistry & Biomedical Sci,
January 3, 2006**

2006/2007 Executive



If you are interested in serving on the Faculty Association Executive or know of someone who would make an excellent candidate, please contact us: Hamilton Hall 103A; Ext. 24682; mufa@mcmaster.ca). **DEADLINE — FEBRUARY 15, 2006.**

Volunteers Needed!

A voluntary organization such as the McMaster University Faculty Association can succeed in serving the interests of its membership only to the extent that the members participate in formulating and executing policy. At any given time, approximately two dozen individuals carry the burden for all of the members and after a few years most of them are exhausted by the tasks which they have voluntarily borne. Their valuable experience and wisdom is then lost to us. The best way to lessen this attrition of talent is for more of the membership to give some time and effort to the Association. If you are not interested in putting your name forward for the Executive Committee, please use the form below to let us know if you would like to participate in MUFA's efforts by serving on one of the following committees.

Yes, I am interested in working more closely with the Faculty Association. My interests are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| MUFA Council ___ | Pension ___ |
| Academic Affairs ___ | Public Relations ___ |
| Human Rights ___ | Remunerations ___ |
| Library ___ | Grievances ___ |
| Membership ___ | Tenure ___ |
| <i>Ad Hoc</i> Committees ___ | Special Assignment ___ |

Are there other areas where the Faculty Association might be useful to its members?

NAME _____

EXTENSION _____

DEPARTMENT _____

E-

MAIL _____

Return form to McMaster University Faculty Association, HH 103A

January 23, 2006

pdk