



McMaster University Faculty Association

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MEMORANDUM

March 15th, 2019

TO: Members of the McMaster University Faculty Association on the Career Progress/Merit Plan and MUFA Librarians

FROM: Elkafi Hassini, Chair, Remuneration Committee 

RE: Joint Committee Remuneration Agreement, July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2022

Attached you will find a copy of the Remuneration Agreement negotiated in the Joint Committee by the MUFA and Administration representatives. This Agreement was approved by the MUFA Remuneration Committee on March 14, 2019, and by the MUFA Executive on March 15, 2019.

Negotiation Process

The remuneration committee started its meetings and data gathering process in early September 2018. To gauge the opinion of our members on salary and benefits matters, we have conducted a survey of our members in October 2018 that had a response rate of 49%. Informed by our membership priorities and after consultations with the MUFA Remuneration Committee, we prepared a Remuneration Brief. The brief was approved by the MUFA Executive and subsequently submitted on December 17, 2018. A series of negotiation meetings between the MUFA negotiating team and three members of the Senior Administration followed, with a deadline of March 15, 2019. An Agreement was reached on March 13, 2019. The negotiation meetings were guided by a time-tested Joint Committee terms of reference and a set of agreed-upon negotiation principles. This collegial process allowed us, once again, to reach an agreement that we believe is fair, reasonable and in the best interests of the University.

Contract Duration and Compensation

While MUFA proposed a two-year contract, the Administration proposed a three-year contract. Uncertainties in provincial funding led to a consensus on a three-year contract.

On the salary increase, we have agreed on a combination of percentage increase across the board (ATB) and a flat sum amount. There was a desire in the joint committee to use this model as it will favor MUFA members that are in their early careers. The increases will be 1.5% and \$250 in Year 1, 1.5% and \$500 in Year 2, and 1.5% and \$750 in year 3. These are approximately equivalent to ATB increase of 1.67%, 1.83% and 2.00% in Years 1, 2 and 3, respectively. These increases, in addition to benefits described below, are closely in line with total compensation increases at our comparator group that includes the 6 Ontario universities of the 15 leading research-intensive universities in Canada (U15), namely McMaster University, University of Ottawa, University of Toronto, Queen's University, University of Waterloo, and Western University (G6).

The structure of the CP/M plan and par units allocated is preserved in its standard form.

Health Benefits

Unlike many of our comparator universities, we do not currently have a **mental health** benefit plan despite the increasing concerns about mental illness on campus. There was a consensus on the importance and value of having such a benefit across the table. We have therefore agreed for maximum coverage of \$3,000 per person, including dependents per benefit year in total for services received by registered psychologists, social workers, and psychotherapists. We have also agreed to separate these three services from our current paramedical benefits.

To protect our faculty against catastrophic expenses for illnesses, we have agreed to add coverage for Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM), under **medical devices**, for a combined maximum of \$4,000 per person per year for receivers, transmitters or sensors for persons diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. Sun Life must be provided with a doctor's note confirming the diagnosis.

Our **hearing aid** coverage was last updated in 2013. To account for inflation, we have agreed to update it to a coverage of 80% of the costs of hearing aids prescribed by an ear, nose and throat specialist, up to a maximum of \$1,500 per person per ear over a period of three benefit years. Repairs are included in this maximum.

Finally, to simplify the payment of dental fees, MUFA members will only need to pay the dental office for the difference between the total bill and the amount paid by the McMaster plan.

External Spouse and Dependents Tuition Bursary/Reimbursement Program

Our members have clearly indicated in the survey their priority for extending tuition bursaries to other universities. We have agreed to form a maximum external tuition bursary/Reimbursement pool of \$250,000, with the maximum allowable amount per eligible spouse and dependent per year to be determined at a later time. This Tuition Bursary/Reimbursement Program for undergraduate and graduate programs where the student is enrolled at an accredited postsecondary Institution within Canada other than McMaster.

Basic Life Insurance

Our current life insurance was last updated in 1993. To account for inflation costs, we have agreed to increase basic life insurance to 175% of annual base salary to a maximum coverage of \$262,500 (where annual base salaries are limited to \$150,000 and if the salary is not an even thousand, it will be raised to the next higher \$1,000). Faculty members may also enroll in an employee paid optional life insurance plan which remains unchanged at a coverage of 25% to 1000% of their annual salary (insurable earnings max of \$100,000) to a maximum coverage of \$ 1,000,000.

Professional Development Allowance (PDA)

In our remuneration survey faculty have raised concerns about the increasing costs of doing research in an era of scarce research support and tri-council restrictions on spending eligibility for indirect costs of research. We have agreed to increase our regular yearly PDA amount by \$100 in each of three years of the contract. In addition, we agreed to an Enhanced PDA, for paid research leaves beyond the first awarded, that will double the PDA amount for MUFA members on 12-month research leave and increase it by 50% for those on research leave for less than a year. Finally, MUFA members will be allowed to use their PDA to cover non-emergency health and dental premiums, paid for international travel while on university business.

Family Friendly Measures

In an effort to create a progressive workplace environment and a fair process for handling emergency family situations, we have agreed on updating the **Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policy** and creating a **Compassionate Care Leave** framework for MUFA members.

After notifying the Chair/Director of the Department/Area, MUFA members will be able to take a leave of up to two weeks with no loss of salary or benefits. Where a MUFA member requires a leave in excess of two-weeks duration, the expected duration and terms of the leave shall be discussed with the Dean (or designate) in consultation with the faculty member and Chair/Director.

The Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policy has been updated in order to comply with changes in the federal government regulations.

Outstanding Matters

The Joint Committee members have agreed to establish two working groups to address outstanding matters. The first group will look into **pension** matters, namely, the changes in the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) that is transitioning to an improved benefit beginning in 2023, which is integrated with our current pension plan. Our plan is also not fully indexed to inflation. The second group will review **retiree benefits** given the cost of retiree benefit plans to the university, and the administrative complexity of maintaining multiple plans.

Summary

We have negotiated a Remuneration Agreement that on balance we consider to be fair and reasonable. It provides for comparator level ATB increases, improvement of our hearing aid and medical devices benefits and continued PDA increases, with an Enhanced PDA component to support our members during their research leaves. Most notable is the introduction of a new Mental Health benefit and Tuition Bursary that can be held in other Canadian Universities. The Agreement has been approved by the MUFA Remuneration Committee and the MUFA Executive. I ask for your endorsement of this Remuneration Agreement by voting 'YES' on the electronic ballot, by the deadline of noon on Friday, March 29, 2019.

If you have questions about the Agreement, please feel free to contact MUFA (ext. 20297/24682, mufa@mcmaster.ca) with any questions that you might have. We also welcome you to attend the special Information Meeting at 2:30 pm on Tuesday, March 19, 2019, in the Council Chambers (GH 111).

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my colleagues Michel Grignon (MUFA President) and Alison Sills (MUFA Vice-President) on the negotiating team for their tireless efforts and exceptional support. I would also like to thank the other members of the Remuneration Committee (Christina Baade, Gail Gauvreau, Rafael Kleiman and Laura Parker) for their great guidance and support. Thanks to Mara Giannotti and Jessica Weyman for their tremendous support through all phases of the negotiation process. Finally, I would like to thank our partners on the Joint Committee (David Farrar, Roger Couldrey and Susan Searls-Giroux) for their sincere efforts in working together with us to achieve an Agreement in the best interests of the University. Thanks are also due to Donna Gray and Abe Nasirzadeh, from OCUFA, for their continuing and valuable support.