



**McMaster University Faculty Association**  
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## **GENERAL MEETING**

*Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023*

*10:00 a.m.*

*This meeting will be held virtually via zoom*

*Join Zoom Meeting*

<https://mcmaster.zoom.us/j/91619221788>

*Meeting ID: 916 1922 1788*

*Passcode: 606408*

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### **AGENDA**

- 1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (attached)**
- 2. Business Arising**
- 3. ORDER OF THE DAY:  
OCUFA'S Priorities for the upcoming year: Nigmendra Narain, OCUFA President and Jenny Ahn, Executive Director**
- 4. Notice of Motion: re. changes to the MUFA Constitution and By-Laws**
- 5. President's Report – Catherine Anderson**
- 6. Other Business**



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**MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Great Hall, University Club**

**1:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Approximately 45 members, K. Cuff (Chair)

- 1. MINUTES of the Emergency Meeting held November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 and the General Meeting of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

**MOTION**

**That the minutes of the Emergency Meeting held on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 and the General Meeting held of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 were approved as circulated.**

**P. Faure/P. Andrews**

**Carried Unanimously**

- 2. BUSINESS ARISING**

There was no business arising from the Emergency Meeting of November 22, 2022 or the General Meeting of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

- 3. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a) Association Standing Committees.** There were no questions from the floor regarding the reports from these committees.

**b) University Committee and Boards.** There were no questions from the floor regarding the reports from these committees.

**MOTION**

**That the Committee Reports be accepted as submitted.**

**K. Nainar/P. Faure**

**Carried Unanimously**

- 4. RETURNING OFFICER'S REPORT – C. Anderson**

Acting as Returning Officer for the election of an Executive Committee for 2023-2024, I hereby report that an Election took place via Simply Voting. Simply Voting has tabulated and certified the following highlighted results for the vacancies on the ballot. Positions not highlighted were acclaimed prior to the election.

**The 2023-2024 Executive is as follows:**

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	<b>Liss Platt</b>	<b>Professor</b>	<b>Humanities</b>
<b>VICE-PRESIDENT</b>	<b>Paul Andrews</b>	<b>Associate</b>	<b>Science</b>
<b>PAST-PRESIDENT</b>	<b>Katherine Cuff</b>	<b>Professor</b>	<b>Social Sciences</b>

**MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

Ana Campos	Professor	Science
Rita Cossa	Associate	Business
Kirsten Culver	Assistant	Health Sciences
Robert Fleisig	Associate	Engineering
Kim Jones	Associate	Engineering
Lesley MacNeil	Associate	Health Sciences
Suzanne Mills	Associate	Social Sciences
Ali Reza Montazemi	Professor	Business
Spencer Pope	Associate	Humanities

**The floor was opened up for questions and comments:**

K. Nainar asked how many members voted in the election. C. Anderson confirmed that 418 members voted out of the 1002 total members we currently have.

**5. TREASURER’S REPORT – A. Juma**

This is my last meeting with MUFA members at large and I would like to take this opportunity to thank MUFA for allowing me to serve as Treasurer of the Association from September 2020. I am a faculty member with the DeGroote School of Business in the Accounting and Financial Management Services Area, and an MBA, CPA, and CMA.

More particularly, I would like to thank:

1. The past 3 presidents I served under: Elkafi Hassini, Nicholas Kevlahan, and our current president Kate Cuff for their exemplary leadership.
2. Mara Giannotti and Jessica Weyman for the invaluable support so I could perform my duties optimally.
3. And the MUFA executive committee for the support they provided in my decision making and the confidence they had in me, as Treasurer of the Association.

Here are some of the highlights in my 3-year service to MUFA:

1. MUFA saw the reserve funds grow from about \$250K to just over \$1M in the past 3 years. It took some time to convince MUFA executives that even though we are a NFP, we need to have sufficient returns to ensure that we can remain one of the lowest mill rates in Ontario, and we can continue to increase the service to our MUFA members without increasing the mill rate despite the soaring inflation. This could be achieved through the returns on the investments and saving the reserve for a rainy day. To achieve this, we would have to eliminate the Christmas period MUFA due holidays, which have a minimum impact on an individual MUFA member, but collectively have a large impact on MUFA’s cash inflows. After all, currently, MUFA is just breaking even on its operating expenses without the increased service of legal support to its members. It was my goal that the reserves would grow to about \$2M, which would equate to two years of operating expenses. This would also ensure a sufficient ROI to provide more

- services to MUFA members. What helped to increase these reserves was also a \$500K refund from Sunlife for an adjustment toward health benefits.
2. MUFA was able to maintain the lowest mill rate in Ontario at 5 mills or 0.5%. It is likely the lowest in Canada. We were able to maintain this, despite the soaring inflation between 2020 and 2023, and yet increase our services to MUFA members, by streamlining operating expenses.
  3. MUFA introduced a budget of \$100K per year to support MUFA members for their legal costs, without increasing the mill rate or adjusting for inflation.
  4. As a CPA, I was able to analyze McMaster's financial statements and available notes to financial statements, to make recommendations to the Caucus committee, for negotiations with McMaster on remuneration before July 2022. This resulted in better benefits for its members despite the 1% salary cap due to Bill 124 through better fringe benefits e.g., CPM, health, retirement, and sabbatical benefits.
  5. As treasurer of the organization, I was actively monitoring Pace Credit Union through news stories, and it came to light that the institution was in the news for fraud and liquidity concerns. I quickly identified this to our current president, who immediately put together a sub-committee comprising me, and another MUFA executive member Dr. Kevin Veenstra who is a CPA, CMA, CFA, and CA, and Claude Elliers who is also a MUFA executive member. This sub-committee and Mara did exhaustive research and in-person visits to several financial institutions and settled at TD Bank to move our funds to. This was important to protect the financial interests of MUFA and its members. The transfer is not yet complete as it began in December 2022 and there was lots of research, paperwork, and consultation. I hope the new treasurer will continue goals to move the funds and invest them to generate a return for the members. The transfer would also eliminate any operating costs for the bank accounts, which were significant at Pace Credit Union. This move will also ensure a minimum of \$300K in protection by CDIC as opposed to \$100K protection that we had with Pace. In addition, the transfer would allow MUFA to purchase GIC's from third party institutions through a secure trading account at Pace.
  6. The previous structure at Pace Credit Union allowed for single signatories to access the funds. As a CPA, CMA, I was able to identify internal control gaps and consult with two other faculty members in the Accounting and Financial Management Services area to recommend closing these gaps to better protect MUFA members who were signatories on the financial accounts. The new structure at TD will eliminate exposure to funds. The concern was never whether a MUFA exec who has access to the funds would go rogue. The internal control analysis assessed the probability as low. However, the concern was that fraud is much easier when the fraudster wants to impersonate one person who has access to the account than when two signatures are required for all transactions, which in turn protects the MUFA members and staff who manage the bank accounts. These gaps will be eliminated through the new proposed structure by the sub-committee once the funds move to TD Bank.
  7. An internal control measure that was recommended by the treasurer was auditor rotation every 3 years. For now, we will be proposing to go with a new auditor in 2023. We thank the old auditor Les Lucyk for past devoted services.

It is not necessary to have a qualified accountant to be a treasurer of the association because we do have external auditors. I do not believe the new slate has such people with designations anyway. But it is my recommendation that we have members with some accounting or finance designation to be treasurer of the organization.

Once again, I profoundly thank MUFA for the opportunity to serve on the committee for the past 3 years.

I would now like to table two motions. Whoever is seconding should say their name out aloud when picked for the record.

- a) Preliminary Budget for 2023-2024 and Annual Statement of Cash Receipts and Expenditures as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

**MOTION**

**That the preliminary budget for 2023-2024 be adopted.**

**A. Juma/M. Veall  
Carried Unanimously**

- b) Appointment of Auditor for 2023-2024

**MOTION**

**That Marco D'Ercole, CloudCPA LLP be appointed as the Auditor for the Faculty Association for 2024-2025**

**A. Juma/P. Bennett  
Carried Unanimously**

**The floor was opened up for questions and comments:**

Members had questions about the approval and consultation process in the decision to move from PACE to TD, and it was noted that while the bylaws are not specific in mentioning what motions the Executive should bring to the membership and it's really a judgement call, however some members felt that decisions of this importance should be brought to the membership.

It was explained that there was a sub-committee struck by the Executive and a thorough investigation was conducted on the various banking institutions and after discussion it was decided that the funds would be moved over to Toronto Dominion and because of the fraudulent and liquidity concerns of PACE the decision to move was approved by the Executive to protect the interests of our members in a timely manner.

K. Cuff acknowledged that this information was announced at the General Meeting in December and there were no concerns expressed at that time. In addition, she noted that it is sometimes difficult to bring matters to the membership because there are only two annual meetings a year and to run an election for every single decision would be very costly but the Executive had to move quickly in order to protect the interest of its members and going forward the Executive will work harder to increase communication and work more diligently with it's membership.

**6. ORDER OF THE DAY:****OCUFA's Priorities for the upcoming year: Sue Wurtele, OCUFA President and Jenny Ahn, Executive Director****Reforming the CCAA and BIA**

Under the banner, [Protect Our Public Universities](#), OCUFA and its member organizations continue to call upon the federal government to remove all public institutions from the scope of the *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* (CCAA) and *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* (BIA), to ensure that the crisis at Laurentian University is never replicated.

Under pressure from the public outcry, the federal [Liberals](#) and [NDP](#) pledged to reform these laws in their 2021 election platforms.

In advance of the 2023 Federal Budget, OCUFA met directly with the offices of Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland and Innovation, Science and Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne calling on them to act on their election commitments.

OCUFA followed these meetings up with a broad-based public campaign to flood the inboxes of Freeland, Champagne, and Prime Minister Trudeau with personalized emails calling for reforms to the CCAA and BIA.

Our solidarity action was shared widely, with nearly 3,000 emails sent in just under 2 weeks.

With continued support from across the country, we believe it is possible to change the law to ensure the Laurentian crisis cannot play out on another campus. Please consider adding your support: <https://ocufa.on.ca/neverhappenagain/>

**Bill 124 declared unconstitutional**

In January 2020, OCUFA joined a coalition led by the OFL that includes some 40 unions representing more than 250,000 Ontario workers, which launched a coordinated Charter challenge against the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act*—formerly Bill 124. The union coalition coordinated arguments against the 1 per cent wage cap, and strategized about which union would speak to various issues at the hearings.

Hearings took place over two weeks in September and, in November 2022, Justice Markus Koehnen ruled that Bill 124 was "...void and of no effect". He rejected the argument put forward by the government that meaningful bargaining could occur with Bill 124 in place.

Justice Koehnen declared the Bill unconstitutional and indicated that it interfered with collective bargaining in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: limiting the scope of bargaining, preventing unions from trading salary demands for non-monetary gains, limiting the usefulness of the right to strike as well as the independence of interest arbitration, and significantly affecting the power dynamic between bargaining parties.

This ruling was a significant and hard-fought win for labour, and well worth celebrating.

Unfortunately, the Ford government has moved to appeal the decision to strike down the bill, despite public support to scrap it and its own admission that the [legislation doesn't exist](#).

The government has since submitted its factum, the motions of three intervenor groups will be heard in mid-April, and the OFL coalition's response will be filed in early May. The Court of Appeal will then hear the government's case from June 20 to 23.

At this time, the government has not sought a stay, which would in effect pause Justice Koehnen's decision. OCUFA has been advised by our legal counsel at Goldblatt Partners that the longer the government waits, the harder it becomes to justify the need for a stay. Some of our member organizations had reopener clauses in their collective agreements, or arbitration decisions where the arbitrator reserved the right to reopen compensation in the case of a successful constitutional challenge or repeal of Bill 124. Member organizations that have approached their respective employers have been met with varying responses. We continue to support member organizations at all stages of bargaining around Bill 124, regardless of whether or not they were able to negotiate reopener clauses.

OCUFA continues to closely monitor settlements in the sector, meeting with our member organizations to get updates on what is happening at each campus and provide support. We provide updates on post-Bill 124 bargaining settlements and updates on the legal proceedings regularly in [OCUFA report](#) and on [our website](#).

#### **Advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigenization (EDII)**

OCUFA applies an equity lens in all our work, internally and externally. In the spring, we circulated an equity survey to Board Directors, committee members, and member organization presidents with the aim of learning more about equity concerns, priorities, and actions that may guide OCUFA's focus. One key area of interest that we heard about through that survey was Indigenization in collective bargaining. As a result, the Collective Bargaining Committee will host a panel on Indigenization and collective bargaining on May 12, 2023, as part of their meeting.

#### **Bill 26 – Protecting Sexual Violence Survivors and Faculty Rights**

On October 27, 2022, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities introduced Bill 26, *Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act, 2022*. This dubiously named act is designed exclusively to address employee sexual misconduct toward students and overrides institutional policies outlined in collective agreements. It offers only a vague definition of sexual abuse, focuses narrowly on instances of sexual violence on campus perpetrated by faculty and prohibits the use of non-disclosure agreements, unless requested by the student.

On November 22, 2022, OCUFA President Sue Wurtele spoke at the Bill 26 Committee hearing to share OCUFA's concerns about the bill. OCUFA's submission highlighted our commitment to promoting safe campuses for students, staff and faculty, and shared our members' concerns about the prevalence of sexual violence on campuses as evidenced through the 2018 [Ministry survey](#) around campus sexual violence. However, OCUFA also expressed concern that the bill proposed no meaningful changes to stop sexual violence on campus, ignored prevention strategies previously suggested by OCUFA, and offered no funding for education, investigation, or remedies in cases where violence occurred.

Additionally, OCUFA called for a trauma-informed, survivor-centric approach to addressing sexual violence on campus and called into question a process that codifies one set of standards for faculty and one for everyone else, while simultaneously undermining collectively bargained rights and the right of individual faculty members to due process.

Following a swift committee process, Bill 26 received Royal Assent on December 8, 2022, and will come into force on July 1, 2023. In addition to our continued advocacy and collaboration with sector stakeholders, OCUFA has sought legal advice about the impact of the provisions of the Bill and provided analysis to our member organizations.

In line with OCUFA's mission to advance EDII through all our work, our aim is to support associations in conducting outreach and education with their own members on how to reframe cultural understanding of power differentials in cases of sexual misconduct. To that end, OCUFA is planning a virtual panel discussion on April 28 that will help unpack the implicit power imbalances on a campus and what it means to implement and enforce institutional policies mandated under Bill 26.

Read OCUFA's legislative brief: "[Bill 26: What We've Learned](#)"

### **OCUFA's Advocacy Day 2022**

After two years of virtual advocacy events, faculty and academic librarians from across the province came together at Queen's Park on November 15, 2022, to meet with Members of Provincial Parliament to outline OCUFA's priority proposals. In particular, members advocated for increased and sustained funding for post-secondary institutions, improved working conditions for contract faculty, and for changes to Bill 26 with the aim of altering campus cultures around consent and sexual violence prevention.

Advocacy Day, including the training session and the breakfast reception, offered opportunities for our members to hear directly from MPPs and political staffers, convey OCUFA's priorities, and share their own experiences on important issues affecting our members, and our sector.

OCUFA leadership and representatives of its member organizations spoke with more than 25 MPPs from all political parties. Our conversations were influential, with four MPPs specifically referencing our Advocacy Day during the question period. During the meetings, several MPPs directly asked us for advice on how to respond to Bill 26.

We are hopeful these meetings will be the basis for continued productive meetings and collaborations.

### **Blue Ribbon Panel**

In March, the Ontario government announced the creation of a Blue-Ribbon Panel to "[keep \[...\] the postsecondary education sector financially stable](#)," with a purported focus on optimizing student experience. While the terms of reference, secretariate and consultation process, have yet to be announced, the government is forecasting that panel recommendations will be released by Summer 2023.

Typically, Blue-Ribbon panels convene sector-specific experts to apply their knowledge and experience to guide a transparent and non-partisan process that produces recommendations to the government. However, this expert panel lacks experts. The hand-picked government appointees over-represent business and administrative interests, to the conspicuous exclusion of current faculty and student voices.



OCUFA is concerned that any recommendations arriving from a panel that excludes faculty will fail to provide sensible recommendations by Summer 2023. This shortened consultation period signals the panel is performative, and its recommendations have the potential for real harm to the sector.

OCUFA is coordinating with other sectoral allies and stakeholders to constructively intervene in the panel's consultations and deliberations and to advocate for a strong and sustainable funding model that protects public colleges and universities from private influences. We will provide updates as they emerge.

### **Tuition Freeze**

Concurrent with its launch of the Blue-Ribbon Panel, the Ontario government announced the continuation of the tuition fee freeze for domestic, in-province students, in the 2023-2024 academic year. However, in doing so the province continues to allow international tuition fees to increase without constraint, and has introduced, for the first time ever, differential tuition fee increases for out-of-province students.

While the provincial government has recognized the financial barriers imposed by Ontario's already-exorbitant tuition fees, it has provided no new funding to Ontario's universities to address the chronic conditions of underfunding that lead to an institutional over-reliance on private sources or revenue, like tuition fees.

### **2023 Provincial Budget**

The 2023 Ontario budget once again failed to invest in a robust, sustainable future for the province's public universities and continued a troubling trend of underfunding the post-secondary education sector writ large. Ontario sits last in the country in terms of per-student funding from the government, so there should be nowhere to go but up.

Among the meager measures affecting the post-secondary sector, the government announced additional seats for medical and nursing students but provided no details on the allocation of those seats, no funding commitment for faculty to teach new students, and no assurance that instruction won't be privatized.

Read OCUFA's [2023 Ontario budget analysis](#)

### **Funding Policy Conference**

As part of our strategic priority to achieve stable public funding for public universities, OCUFA will be hosting a conference tentatively titled "*Funding Our Common Future: Keeping Universities Public.*" The conference will be held over a day and half from November 30 to December 1 and will bring together faculty, administrators, government officials, and experts in funding post-secondary education, both domestically and internationally.

The goal of the conference is to produce a White Paper with recommendations for a new funding model that promotes strong and sustainable public universities, across election cycles. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) Ontario office has been commissioned to draft the conference framework paper, and an advisory panel of experts has been appointed to help guide the process.

Promotional materials and further details will be released shortly.

**Faculty Association Staff Workshop**

After a three-year hiatus, OCUFA relaunched its biennial Faculty Association Staff Workshop to bring together member organization staff, across their various roles, to network, develop skills, and share experiences.

This year's session attracted 40 participants for a social reception and a daylong workshop that included a keynote address by TMU journalism professor Sonya Fatah, called "Engaging our members, sharing our stories." Other presentations and panels focused on member mobilization, internal and external communications, pensions and benefits, job evaluations, and the local implications of Bills 26 and 124.

**The floor was opened up for questions and comments:**

Questions were raised about the SOS campaign – Save our Sudbury and the current situation at Laurentian University. J. Ahn indicated that this situation affects not only Laurentian University but everyone that lives there as well. OCUFA worked closely with CAUT and anyone that would listen to try and make changes to the CCAA and BIA to ensure that legislation was changed to ensure that this would never be used again for public institutions.

A question was raised to seek out if there would be any criminal proceedings against Laurentian since they knowingly spent graduate dollars from the operating budget? Both S. Wurtele and J. Ahn confirmed that they have not heard anything in regard to any upcoming criminal investigations.

**7. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – K. Cuff**

Back in August, I emailed a number of past MUFA Presidents to ask them about their experiences with the Administration. Their responses were thoughtful, insightful, illuminating, supportive, and just plain helpful. I thank them all. And, while my term does not end until August, I would like to take this opportunity to say what a great experience it has been to serve as the MUFA President. This is owing to the work of many others at the association, and I want to begin by acknowledging and thanking them.

First, the MUFA Executive who has helped steer the faculty association through many new and challenging issues this year. The differing perspectives, experiences, and opinions that they bring to the Executive from across campus was a real highlight for me. Their feedback and advice at our meetings every two weeks mirrored that of the past Presidents and for which I am deeply grateful. I thank them for their hard work and dedication.

Second, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Special Enquiries and Grievance Committee. Lydia Kapiriri and Kevin Veenstra. I thank them for their endless time and energy spent providing support to individual MUFA members, members with a wide range of concerns and who are often facing stressful situations. These are incredibly important roles for the association and Lydia and Kevin have simply done a tremendous job.

Third, the two other members of Joint Committee –the Vice-President, Liss Platt, and the Remuneration Chair, Kirsten Culver. They have each put in an incredible amount of work into their roles and I have benefitted immensely from their support and advice (and most of all their laughter). It has been a true pleasure working with them.

And finally, the two people who keep us all together and the association moving forward. Our Executive Director, Mara Giannotti and Executive Officer, Jessica Weyman. I cannot thank you enough for everything you do on behalf of the association and its members.

Before getting into the details of what MUFA has been doing this past year and plans going forward, I want to acknowledge what a truly unique moment in time this is. While the pandemic itself has receded, it continues to reverberate in our daily lives – making acute issues that predated Covid, such as graduate funding, and creating new challenges, such as classrooms filled with students who have only experienced remote learning for the past two years. This has put greater pressure and stress on faculty. So, I would like to take a moment to thank all of you for your commitment to your work and service as teachers, scholars, researchers, department/university colleagues and department/area chairs and program directors. It has not been an easy few years, but we've persevered.

This year began with a much higher than normal number of faculty grievances and I am pleased to say that many of these grievances have now been resolved with MUFA's support. Two years ago, MUFA enlarged the membership of its Special Enquiries and Grievance (SEG) committee, adding a more formal structure to build and maintain institutional knowledge and develop a legal support policy to provide financial aid to members seeking legal advice and representation. To this end, we retained the services of Goldblatt Partners, who specialize in labour law and have built capacity for supporting faculty associations. As noted in the SEG committee's report, a survey of faculty who have received MUFA legal support found they were pleased with this service. The terms of reference of the SEG committee were recently revised to better reflect how responsibilities on the committee have been shared in practice and the MUFA legal retainer with Goldblatt was renewed for another three years.

The best practice review of investigation processes under the Research Integrity, Sexual Violence and Discrimination and Harassment Policies has gotten under way. This is a joint review by MUFA and the Administration. An external lawyer, Michelle Flaherty, and her team has been retained to provide recommendations on a number of aspects of the investigation processes, including procedural fairness, the role of intake office staff, timeliness, implementation of interim measures, confidentiality, and reporting. The external review team has now met with MUFA's current and former grievance officers, MUFA's former Presidents, and most of the University intake officers. They will soon be meeting with the Ombudsperson and the Academic Integrity Officer, and most importantly individual respondents and complainants of completed investigations. A public communication about the review and a call for community input should be going out shortly.

University tribunal hearings are held under a number of university policies, and for many of these policies a MUFA observer is allowed to attend the hearings with the permission of the faculty participant. Recently in Joint Committee, we negotiated the terms of reference for a Joint Administration-MUFA Ad Hoc Drafting Committee to review all policies that include faculty observers. This committee, consisting of two appointed members, was approved by both the MUFA Executive and the Senate Committee on Appointments this term. Its main responsibilities are to ensure that the MUFA observer has the capacity to thoroughly review hearing proceedings and that there is a transparent and accountable process for incorporating these reviews into improved hearing procedures and policies.

Late last year, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice deemed Bill 124 (the Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019) to be unconstitutional. The Provincial government has mounted an appeal of this decision and the appeal hearings will be held in [June](#). MUFA did not negotiate a wage reopener in the case of Bill 124 being stuck down, but rather if Bill 124 is not in effect on July 1, 2023 (and this is very likely to be the case), then all MUFA members will receive an increase to their base salary of \$1050 in addition to the 1% across-the-board increase, along with any pay increases through the career progress and merit (CP/M) plan. For 2022, there was an increase in the pool of CP/M par increments per 100 faculty members from 120 to 130. This will go back down to 120 for 2023 in the likely event that Bill 124 will not be in effect on July 1, 2023.

In the fall, MUFA negotiated at Joint Committee a [revised CP/M plan policy](#) to ensure that these additional par increments points for 2022 were distributed down to the departments. Further, it was agreed that for CP/M year 2022 and going forward par increments could be awarded in increments of 0.1 rather than 0.25. At our MUFA Faculty Council last month, a council member said that this smaller increment improved the CP/M allocation process in their department. This is the only feedback we have received so far about CP/M assessments this year, so I will take that as a good sign.

Changes to the language in the CP/M plan were also made to address the use of student evaluations for CP/M assessment purposes, but the agreed upon language did not prohibit the use of student evaluations. What is clear is that if such evaluations are to be taken into consideration for CP/M, then they need to be used in conjunction with other information on the faculty member's teaching. The CP/M Plan policy, however, remains on the Joint Committee agenda and student evaluations will be one point of future discussion. The CP/M plan also needs to be made clearer on the procedures to follow for faculty members with joint appointments and ensure it aligns with the relatively recent MUFA initiated changes to the [university policy on joint appointments](#) (SPS A5) regarding merit assessments.

The issue of the use of student evaluations in tenure/permanence and promotion decisions is still not settled. The University adopted a [new platform for student course experience surveys](#) (Blue by Explorance) this year and while the system has much greater capability in analyzing collected data, what information should be collected and how it is should be used remains unclear. A post-doctoral student who was jointly supervised by the Vice President, Teaching and Learning and the past MUFA President who co-authored the [2019 Report of the MUFA ad hoc committee on student evaluation of teaching](#), has been piloting alternate student experience surveys and will be writing up a report shortly to be shared with MUFA and the Administration for further discussion. The perennial problem of low response rates also needs to be addressed.

The Joint Administration-MUFA working group on teaching-stream faculty has been very busy this term, meeting regularly and even weekly at one point and should be providing an update to Joint Committee later this spring. The recommendations from this working group will likely set the agenda for some of the MUFA Executive's work over the next couple of years.

The MUFA Faculty Council is made up of representatives of every department on campus and is meant to facilitate communication between MUFA and its membership. The Council met on Zoom once a term this year, as has been the practice. The topic of the winter term meeting was student accommodations (a topic I will return to below). The Executive is planning to host an in-

person social event in the Fall for MUFA faculty council members and is looking for other ways to continue to improve the lines of communication with MUFA members through the Faculty Council structure.

At our first Executive meeting this year, there was discussion of a proposal to remove the role of 'Returning Officer' in the [MUFA by-laws](#) since all of MUFA's voting is now done, and verified, online by a third party company. However, with the immediate need to replace two Executive Committee members in the fall, it was agreed to appoint a new Returning Officer for 2022-2023 and leave the removal of its role to, if and when, the by-laws needed to be revised for other reasons.

Often it is said you do not know how well a policy works until you start using it and the same could be said for the MUFA by-laws and running elections for Executive. This was the first time (in know) history that MUFA had to hold an election for Vice-President and for the Executive members-at-large. The by-laws are clear that if there is a further nomination for Vice-President, an election for the Vice-President must be held and that all candidates for Vice-President will also stand for member-at-large. The by-laws also state the ten candidates for members-at-large receiving a majority of votes shall be declared elected subject to the provision of Article 4(b) of the [MUFA Constitution](#). This article states that at least one member of the Executive Committee shall hold a teaching stream appointment. Given the composition of further nominations and the Nominating Committee's slate, a single ballot for all members-at-large could have resulted with an elected, but unconstitutional Executive Committee.

There was a lot of discussion about what to do and in the end, it was decided to follow the established practice of MUFA Nominating Committees of trying to draw up a slate of Executive Officers that has at least two representatives from each Faculty. The election was modeled on this practice and ensured that given the distribution of candidates that any elected Executive would necessarily satisfy Article 4(b) of the MUFA Constitution. All this to say, the MUFA by-laws need to be revised to ensure there are clear and sensible rules to follow when running an election for the MUFA Executive Committee and the role of Returning Officer could also be reconsidered then. More work on the agenda for the incoming 2023-2024 Executive.

The MUFA Executive has been busy this year with policy work. Most recently, in reviewing and providing feedback on the draft [Accessibility Policy](#). And, while both the Executive and individual faculty members have provided significant feedback on the current Sexual Violence and Discrimination and Harassment policies, MUFA is still waiting to receive draft versions of the two policies for comment. The Executive has, however, already engaged with lawyers at Goldblatt regarding how to approach the incorporation of the [Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act, 2022](#) ('Bill 26') in university policy. The terms of reference for Department Chairs is also currently under revision and the MUFA Executive has commented on an early draft. Any new terms of reference for Department Chairs needs to be seen by the MUFA Executive in conjunction with any revised faculty code of conduct given the role a Department Chair might play in the latter policy. The Joint MUFA-SCA ad hoc drafting committee to revise the Faculty Code of Conduct has not yet submitted a draft policy for MUFA's consideration. Again, likely another item that will be on next year's Executive agenda.

This year MUFA has been working more closely with the [Graduate Student Association](#) given our shared interests in graduate funding and supports and the student-supervisor relationship. The PhD Supervision policy is currently being redrafted and it is expected that MUFA will have an

opportunity to provide feedback on the revised policy as it did on the original policy. The School of Graduate Studies underwent an external review and MUFA was asked to meet with the external review team. We look forward to receiving the final report and are pleased to see that the Administration is now making external reviews of central units publicly available on the [Provost's website](#). As many of you will likely know, the University's [graduate funding task force](#) has now published some initial data on graduate funding online. We understand that the financial precarity of graduate students has negative impacts for students, faculty, and the future of the academy. Graduate funding will be the focus of many discussions at MUFA going forward.

The Budget forecast at the University has dimmed with lower than expected growth in international enrolments and the lack of any additional provincial funding for the post-secondary sector except for some expansion in [medical school education](#). The provincial government has put together a [Blue-Ribbon Panel](#) that will be providing recommendations on improving the financial sustainability of the postsecondary sector in Ontario, including a long-term tuition-fee policy although no timeline for these recommendations have been published.

We have been told McMaster has always budgeted conservatively and relative to some peer institutions is doing well. But this is something MUFA and its membership needs to be better informed about. To this end, the MUFA Executive has re-constituted its [budget advisory committee](#) to serve as a way of gathering University budget information and data. This will also help in preparation for MUFA's upcoming remuneration negotiations in 2024-2025. A promising development for the association is the recent approval at the [Senate](#) and [Board](#) of a revision to their by-laws that would allow for a MUFA observer on the University Planning Committee. This came out of discussions at Joint Committee.

Furthermore, the University is planning a town hall later this spring on the University budget. The presenting panel will include faculty members from the [Budget Committee](#), and we will be sure to inform the membership when we receive those details.

On a more local financial matter, MUFA is currently in the process of moving its financial operations to TD Canada Trust with the intent of better insuring the association's own financial investments.

The excellent and thorough [report of the MUFA ad hoc committee on working conditions](#), published this term, showed overwhelmingly that faculty workloads are increasing. The sources of increased workload are varied but concerns about the increased toll on faculty from handling the growing number of student academic accommodations – both through the use of self-reported absences (MSAFs) and Student Accessibility Services (SAS) – were voiced by faculty from across campus. Both types of academic accommodations have been increasing over time without any sign of tapering off.

Having a committee as part of our collegial governance system that reports on academic accommodations could serve to facilitate discussion and information exchange between faculty members, Student Accessibility Services, Faculty staff accommodation liaisons, and students, and could potentially help to find better and more effective ways for faculty and SAS staff to ensure students are accommodated as needed. This is something MUFA will be working towards in the coming months.



Another identified source of increased workload was the use of standardized course outlines or course portals. A good amount of time has been spent at Joint Committee this term discussing [Simple Syllabus](#), the course outline portal that the University has signed a license with. We have received numerous concerns from faculty about the portal, including about the storage of course information on servers in the US, the data-mining capabilities of this software and the ramifications for both faculty and students, privacy issues, the potential loss of academic freedom and faculty autonomy, and, of course, the potential increase in faculty workload.

The use of the course outline portal is not required per the [Undergraduate Course Management policy](#), but it is available for use this spring/summer for those who want to try out the system. We are now working with the Administration to create reasonable pathways for those faculty who choose not to use the portal this Fall and for a viable opt-out process going forward. The lack of faculty input more broadly when it comes to educational technology at McMaster has also been raised at Joint Committee and will continue to be an area of advocacy.

And speaking of technology, [ChatGPT](#) is on everyone's mind these days and if you haven't tried it yet you should. I asked it to write a report for a faculty association general meeting and I am pretty sure what it wrote was better than this (and shorter). For those teaching this Fall, a task force on the impacts of generative AI on teaching and learning at McMaster is currently being constituted to provide guidance and recommendations for fall instructors (and hopefully this information arrives before your course outline is due)

MUFA represents faculty members with a diverse set of faculty appointments, including teaching-track, tenure-track, tenured, permanent, special, contractually limited, continuing appointment without annual review (CAWAR) and senior academic librarians. MUFA needs to work on ensuring policies support and protect all of these different faculty groups. In the short term, a review of policies affecting Senior Academic Librarians is needed. In the longer-term, MUFA might want to consider looking more closely at the CAWAR appointments and the policies affecting faculty with CAWAR given the potential precarity of these appointments (see, for example, [SPS A10](#)).

Finally a couple of months ago, a [directive](#) came down from the federal government that stated: "Grant applications that involve conducting research in a sensitive research area will not be funded if any of the researchers working on the project are affiliated with a university, research institute or laboratory connected to military, national defence or state security entities of foreign state actors that pose a risk to our national security." We have recently heard that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) is actively assessing national security on [University campuses](#). If you are approached to speak with CSIS, please feel free to reach out to MUFA.

Thank you to all of you for coming today and thank you very much to the incoming Executive Committee members for taking on this important work!

**The floor was opened up for questions and comments:**

Questions and concerns were raised about the terms of reference for Department Chairs and what that would mean for Chairs/Directors who a member of MUFA are also. Senior Leaders of the University consider Chairs/Directors to be part of the Administration and that is problematic especially during a work stoppage.

It was also acknowledged that the Faculty Code of Conduct has been under review for a long time and there has been no information or updates on the where it currently stands. K. Cuff confirmed that MUFA has heard nothing from the committee or information. However, she reassured members that MUFA representatives are part of this committee and that they must still be working through the changes and recommendations. In addition, when the changes are completed, the revised policy will be sent to MUFA for review and comments just like all other policies that are jointly owned with the University.

#### **8. PRESENTATION OF CAUT DEDICATED SERVICE AWARDS – K. Cuff**

K. Cuff notified members that the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) invites MUFA every year to nominate members who should be recognized for exceptional service to the Faculty Association. This year the MUFA Executive felt that both C. Anderson and E. Hassini should be presented with this award because of their outstanding contributions that they made during their time with MUFA.

#### **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

#### **9. PRESENTATION OF MUFA SERVICE AWARD – K. Cuff**

The MUFA Award for Outstanding Service provides annual recognition for faculty and professional librarians who have made an outstanding contribution to the mission of the University through the provision of exceptional service to faculty, librarians, staff and/or students.

The 2023 awards winners are Jamal Deen and Gerry Wright.

The selection committee, chaired by the Past-President Nicholas Kevlahan (Professor, Math & Stats), Roger Jacobs (Professor, Biology), Madeline Van Impe (TMG), Kathryn Ball (MUALA), Shemar Hackett (MSU), Zarwar Saquib (GSA), and Beth Couchman (Unifor).

K. Cuff read the following citations at the MUFA Annual General Meeting on behalf of the selection committee.

**Jamal Deen** is a 2023 recipient of the MUFA Award for Outstanding Service.

Dr. Jamal Deen has made impressively deep, broad, and sustained service contributions throughout McMaster and beyond since he joined McMaster's Department of Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering in 1999. His service to the scientific community includes participation on grant committees for NSERC Discovery, RTI and Major Facilities awards and building and directing the Micro/Nano-Systems Labs, which hosts around 70 faculty and students each year.

In addition to being a stellar researcher and role model, Dr Deen has devoted much of his time to supporting the careers of colleagues and students. He has served as Honorary Co-Chair of the African Caribbean Faculty Association of McMaster (ACFAM) and Chair of the ACFAM Mentoring Program. Dr Deen has been an inspiring mentor to many Black and racialized students at McMaster, and throughout Canada as a Mentor in the Canadian Black Scientists Network. He co-



authored the proposal leading to McMaster's successful Black Academic Excellence Cohort Hiring Initiative. His mentoring of graduate students was recognized by the 2022 MSU Macademics' Lifetime Achievement Award and by the 2021 President's Award for Excellence in Graduate Supervision.

Collectively, his contributions demonstrate that Jamal has enriched the McMaster community far beyond his own research discipline and department. He exemplifies the contributions the MUFA Outstanding Service Award is intended to recognize. On behalf of the 2023 MUFA Service Award Committee, it is a great honour to present this award to Dr Jama Deen in recognition of his distinguished record of service to the University.

**Gerry Wright** is a 2023 recipient of the MUFA Award for Outstanding Service.

Dr. Wright has been a MUFA member for almost 30 years since he joined the Department of Biochemistry & Biomedical Sciences as an Assistant Professor in 1993. He served as department chair from 2001-2007 and helped found the Michael G DeGroot Institute for Infectious Disease Research (IIDR) in 2007. During his time as director from 2007 until 2022 IIDR trained over 1000 graduate students and post-doctoral fellow. In 2019 IIDR's activities led directly to a second institute, the David Braley Centre for Antibiotic Discovery at McMaster and, more recently, to Canada's Global Nexus for Pandemics and Biological Threats, which Dr Wright now directs. To further McMaster's EDI goals, Gerry worked with Indigenous Scholars to develop a Two-Row governance model for the McMaster's Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF) application.

It is clear from this list of impressive accomplishments that Dr Wright has provided outstanding service to his faculty colleagues, students, and post-doctoral fellows over many years by founding and developing several world-leading scientific institutes. This service removed administrative obstacles and allowed his McMaster colleagues to focus on research and graduate teaching. This research, in turn, has enhanced McMaster's international reputation as a leader in infectious disease research.

Gerry's leadership has enriched the McMaster community for over 30 years, and it exemplifies the contributions that the MUFA Outstanding Service Award is intended to recognize. On behalf of the 2023 MUFA Service Award Committee, it is a great honour to present this award to Dr Gerry Wright in recognition of his distinguished record of service to the University.

**There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:21 p.m.**