



McMaster University Faculty Association

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GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, January 7th, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Virtual meeting via Zoom

<https://mcmaster.zoom.us/j/93300206534>

Meeting ID: 933 0020 6534

Passcode: 558961

AGENDA

- 1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held April 29th, 2024 and the Special GM held on June 3rd, 2024 (attached)**
- 2. Business Arising**
- 3. MUFA By-Laws Dissolution Clause – R. Kleiman (for information) (attached)**
- 4. Remuneration Brief – M. Harada
(see **MUFA Brief**, dated December 16th, 2024; **Administration Brief**, dated, December 16th, 2024) (attached)**
- 5. President's Report – P. Andrews**
- 6. Other Business**



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**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday, April 29th, 2024**

Present: Approximately 55 members, C. Anderson (Chair)

C. Anderson read the following Land Acknowledgement:

The building where we're meeting today sits on the territory of Haudenosonee nations, of the Attiwonderonk nation, and of Anishnaabe nations including the Mississaugas. As I acknowledge the history of this land, I also want to acknowledge that the work we're doing here on this land is inescapably colonial.

Our employer, McMaster University, was created by "Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario", that is, by the colonial government. One of the foundational goals of a university founded by a colonial government is to uphold and transmit colonial structures of power and privilege.

Our association, MUFA, derives its legal right to operate as a non-profit corporation from Letters Patent issued by Ontario's Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, in other words, from the colonial government. MUFA's constitution, our election process, and how we conduct our meetings are further constrained by Bourinot's Rules of Order, which happen to be the same rules that hold in the House of Commons of the Canadian Parliament, in other words, the colonial government.

I say all this not to imply that these colonial structures are good or correct or even inevitable, but to remind myself that these structures are arbitrary. They were created by humans and can be dismantled or transformed by humans.

As I was preparing for today's meeting, I revisited a book I read last summer, by Kelly Hayes and Mariame Kaba. Of the many wise things these two authors say, the one I want to share today is this: "The world is not transformed primarily by what we think of it. Transformative change happens when we are willing to build the things that we know must exist." (Hayes & Kaba, 2023). May our work here today and throughout our careers be work that transforms the world.

1. **Minutes**

MOTION

That the minutes of Annual General Meeting held on December 7th, 2023 are approved as circulated.

M. Harada/H. Schellhorn

1 abstention

Motion carried

MOTION

That the minutes of Special General Meeting held on March 25th, 2024 are approved as circulated.

**A. Juma/P. Mhaskar
1 abstention
Motion Carried**

2. Business Arising

There was no business arising.

3. New Terms of Reference for the MUFA Faculty Council

C. Anderson shared that the terms of reference were drafted to provide structure to the role and to provide guidance on the primary components of the job. Further, it outlines the expectation that the process within each Department be a transparent one.

C. Anderson opened the floor for discussion.

S. Igdoura stated that Chairs should not be part of the process. C. Anderson noted that departments could decide that their Chair is not involved in choosing the faculty council member, but that Chairs are MUFA members and the main point of contact for MUFA staff to find out who is representing each department.

M. Gough shared that other institutions elect their council members and asked why MUFA wasn't doing the same. C. Anderson explained that MUFA doesn't have the resources for departmental elections. She noted that some departments may choose to hold their own elections, but that these terms of reference were meant to be a starting point.

MOTION

That the membership approve the Terms of Reference for the MUFA Faculty Council.

**K. Jones/K. Culver
1 opposed
1 abstention
Motion carried**

4. Standing Policy on Solidarity with Other Faculty Associations

C. Anderson shared that when faculty associations go on strike other CAUT faculty associations send monetary contributions in solidarity.

C. Anderson noted that in November the MUFA Executive agreed to send \$1,000 to NUFSA and in February another \$1,000 was sent to MSVUFA in solidarity.

The Executive agreed that it would make sense for MUFA to have a standing policy on these solidarity contributions instead of having to discuss it each time.

P. Bennett wondered if there would ever be a situation in which MUFA would not want to be obligated to make a contribution.

N. Kevlahan noted that MUFA has previously had the unofficial policy of not making contributions because they would not be reciprocal and MUFA has limited financial resources. He wondered why MUFA is reversing that stance now.

C. Anderson stated that there is a cap to ensure that MUFA's finances are protected and that the proposed cap represents a tiny fraction of MUFA's budget. She noted that there was enough interest on the Executive to be in solidarity that this policy was drafted.

P. Faure wondered if this policy would prevent discussion by the Executive. C. Anderson stated that the MUFA President could still bring it to the Executive if it was questionable.

P. Andrews suggested changing the language from "shall" to "may". K. Cuff noted that this change would change the intention of the policy, which is to avoid discussion for each contribution.

C. Quail stated that she liked the policy because it allows the Executive to work efficiently. She suggested that she could not imagine a scenario in which a strike would not be supported.

V. Watts suggested that the policy could be tested for a year and then revisited if there are any issues to be found.

M. Gough indicated that while there may be no financial reciprocation, there is reciprocity in spirit and that MUFA benefits from the ecosystem of other faculty associations. C. Anderson agreed and noted that other faculty associations' bargaining gains are used as comparators for MUFA.

S. Igdoura suggested that the policy gives too much power to the President and that he does not support its approval. He stated that other faculty associations have not given any actual support to MUFA as MUFA is not a union.

C. Anderson indicated that if the membership approves the proposed policy the power is not in the hands of the President. C. Anderson shared that the non-financial support from other faculty associations was invaluable when she was Remuneration Chair, as she met with other Remuneration Chairs weekly during that time.

A. Montazemi asked what would happen if the President were to reject a request for support. C. Anderson stated that it would be a violation of the policy, as it states "shall".

MOTION

That MUFA adopt this proposed standing policy effective immediately.

**K. Cuff/K. Nainar
7 opposed
9 abstentions
Motion carried**

5. Motion by David Shore

C. Anderson read the following statement:

Before I open the floor for discussion, I would like to respond to some inaccuracies and omissions in our colleague's motion.

First, Section 26 of *Bourinot's Rules of Order* is from the chapter titled "Rules and Usages for Assemblies Generally" – in other words, rules for how meetings should be conducted. The book's advice on how an association should determine its own policies and by-laws is an entirely different chapter. It cannot be the case that the executive's adoption of these two policies violated Section 26, because Section 26 does not apply.

To the claim that any decisions about policies must be referred to a committee, I point out that the decisions on both policies were made by your duly-elected executive committee. Since both policies are binding only on members of the Executive, the Executive is in fact the appropriate committee to make those decisions.

Dr. Shore claims in the motion that these two policies were decided "quickly", and on the mufagab email list that they were decided "haphazardly". I can assure you that this is not the case.

You might recall that, the day after the October 7 Hamas attacks, a representative of CUPE local 3906, which represents sessional instructors and TAs at McMaster, tweeted in support of Palestinian resistance. Two separate columns published in *The National Post* quoted CUPE's tweet and wrongly attributed it to "the union representing McMaster faculty". As soon as I discovered the error, I contacted the *National Post* and asked them to issue a correction. In the subsequent days, a few MUFA members asked me what MUFA's position was on the conflict and suggested that MUFA should make a statement of some kind.

MUFA has had a long-standing tradition of not commenting on political matters. As a labour organization at a Canadian university, commenting on geopolitical affairs is well outside our mandate. Any public statement we could make would have no effect on the violence abroad and would very likely lead to harm and conflict among our members. If the executive had to spend our time (a) deciding which world events warrant public statements, and (b) trying to arrive at a statement that we all agree on, we would not have the time to do the work we were elected to do, namely:

- to promote the principle of academic freedom and the interests and welfare of McMaster faculty and senior academic librarians, and
- to promote excellence in teaching and research

So for all these reasons, I proposed at our October 19 meeting that that MUFA formalize this long-standing tradition into an official Policy on Public Statements. The policy that we adopted has no impact on the freedom of expression of individual MUFA members, nor of members of the Executive. It refers only to official statements made representing the Association as a whole and suggests that the appropriate scope for any such statements is the university sector in Canada. The concept of "freedom of expression" in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to individuals, not to associations or corporations, so is not relevant to this policy.

At the October 19 meeting where we discussed the policy, 13 of 15 executive members were present. The motion to adopt the policy carried unanimously. At its November meeting, CAUT Council debated a similar matter and voted against issuing a public statement.

As for the Policy on University Elections, Dr. Shore's assertion that it was "a specific reaction to one email sent from one individual senator to a small number of other senators" elides much of the context. The "one individual senator" who sent one email was MUFA's Vice-President Paul Andrews, and the email made recommendations to Senators about how they should vote in the election to the Senate Committee to Recommend a President. Paul identified himself in the email as a Senator, not as a member of the MUFA Executive, but the email nevertheless created the widespread impression that the MUFA Executive was attempting to interfere in the election to this Senate committee. I know that this impression was widespread because I received an unusually high number of messages from members expressing that concern.

To be clear, MUFA does not have a position on the composition of the Committee to Recommend a President. That Committee was formed in accordance with the Senate By-Laws.

The Executive's responsibility was to address the harms that our members experienced. Specifically, some of our members were dismayed that the association's Vice-President was on the record recommending that Senators not vote for them. These members wondered how they could trust that the association would represent their interests fairly in the future, under the circumstances.

The Executive discussed our members' concerns and the Policy on University Elections extensively.

At the December 10 meeting, 14 of 15 executive members were present; nine spoke on the matter.

On January 10, 14 of 15 members were present; six spoke, the executive deferred the vote to our next meeting so we would have enough time.

On January 24: 14 of 15 present; 13 spoke. The motion to support the policy carried. We discussed the policy at three separate meetings, every member had the chance to speak, most spoke more than once. It is simply not true that the decision was rushed. Furthermore, since the policy governs only executive members, it is appropriate that the executive be the body that makes the decision.

If you subscribe to mufagab you'll know that, in his email of April 22, Dr. Shore urged members, "Please do not perceive this as a personal attack against any one person or group of people." In light of this comment, I think the membership should be made aware that Dr. Shore's first attempt to reverse this policy came in an email to me on February 5, which the executive read and discussed at our February 28 meeting. The email advised me to "take remedial action" on the policy, described my actions as *cryptic, inappropriate, self-aggrandizing, and smacking of administrative bullshit* and

implied that if I didn't do as he wished he would seek to undermine my reputation. I offer these facts to allow you to decide whether this motion constitutes a personal attack or not.

I will now open the floor for discussion of the motion.

P. Andrews stated that the chair should be neutral and not involved in the debate. He asked C. Anderson to step down and have someone else govern this portion of the meeting. C. Anderson asked K. Cuff to chair.

D. Shore indicated that the Senators who thought the Provost had a conflict of interest put together their own slate and were just doing normal democracy. He suggested that if this is to be prevented in the future, it should be in the Senate By-Laws, not a MUFA matter. He stated that this policy prevents freedom of expression for members of the future Executive and undermines collegial governance when MUFA is unable to keep the Administration accountable. D. Shore further suggested that the policy should be thought of with a long-term perspective.

V. Watts stated that it is highly irresponsible to suggest that those on the slate prepared by the Senate Committee on Appointments were bought and paid for by the Administration. She noted that the policy still allows for the expression of private opinions by Executive members.

E. Zuroski wondered what the threshold would be to make it clear that one is not speaking on behalf of the Executive. She asked if saying explicitly that the opinion is not representing MUFA's opinion would be enough, and wondered if an explicit preface of the same would have to accompany any criticism of the Administration on social media. E. Zuroski asked if the Executive would be able to make public statement of support if their students were involved in a public protest.

C. Anderson noted that the proposed policy doesn't prohibit statements made by MUFA.

S. Igdoura stated that someone breached confidentiality by sharing the closed session information from Senate with MUFA. He indicated that P. Andrews sent the email with an alternative proposed slate and encouraged the recipients to have discussions with colleagues. He suggested that any backlash was an exaggeration based on hurt egos.

V. Watts stated that if there were issues with the proposed slate it should have been discussed at Senate rather than via secret emails. She suggested that would have been a more respectful way of dealing with the issue.

N. Kevlahan noted that the policy refers to public communication and questioned if email was considered public.

K. Jones suggested that the email was private but became public and noted that the onus is on Executive members to be careful.

E. Zuroski asked again if an up-front statement about not speaking on MUFA's behalf would be enough. K. Cuff stated that her sense was that it would not be as there is still the perception that the person is a representative of MUFA.

P. Andrews stated that the Chair should be neutral and not involved in the debate. K. Cuff indicated that she was only answering the question that was asked.

S. Mills shared that the Executive discussions indicated that a preface would not be enough.

J. Daniel stated that she agreed with V. Watts and found the email to be offensive to those on the SCA slate. She noted that the Executive should be neutral in all contexts regarding members.

P. Bennett suggested that the policy doesn't require Executive members to be neutral, it requires them to be quiet. He noted that he would prefer to know what Executive members are up to.

S. Mills indicated that she would like to see McMaster be more democratic and that McMaster has a long history of very little debate.

M. Gough agreed that debate is a good thing and expressed concern that this policy was decided upon by the current Executive but binds future Executive members.

P. Andrews noted that the policy was passed in response to his email. He stated that while he is MUFA VP, he was also an elected Senator and the email was written in his capacity as a Senator.

P. Andrews indicated that the email was widely discussed in various bodies, and it was agreed that it did not violate any existing Senate, MUFA, or University by-law or policy. He stated that the new policy was intended to prohibit similar emails from being written in the future.

P. Andrews stated that the email was normal political speech, which receives the highest degree of protection under free speech principles and that the new policy violates free speech principles. P. Andrews also indicated that the policy would prohibit other members of the MUFA Executive who also serve on the Senate or the Board of Governors from engaging in protected political speech.

P. Andrews noted that the powers and responsibilities of members of the Senate and the Board derive from the provincial government and that the MUFA Executive has no authority to regulate the speech of members of the Senate or the Board of Governors.

P. Andrews stated that the MUFA Executive makes public endorsements of select faculty all the time such as when it nominates a slate of candidates for the next year's MUFA Executive or appoints representatives for committees.

K. Nainar recommended that policies be thought of in terms of whether they are enabling or restricting. He indicated that the policy being debated was restricting and thought that MUFA should be careful about enacting these sorts of policies. K. Nainar suggested that the intent matters and that the email that was sent by P. Andrews was meant to be private.

V. Watts noted that P. Andrews's email included an encouragement to circulate the suggested slate, so it was not intended to remain private.

MOTION

The Policies on Public Statements and University Elections be immediately suspended until the membership receives from the Executive a subcommittee report assessing the relation between these policies and the bylaws and constitution of the organization.

**21 in Favour
16 Opposed
8 Abstentions
Motion Failed**

6. 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.

**A. Sills/S. Mills
2 Abstentions
Motion Carried**

7. Returning Officer’s Report: Clifton van der Linden

C. Anderson spoke on behalf of C. van der Linden.

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 results for election of the 2024/2025 Executive Committee:

Members Elected to the Executive for 2024-2025:

VICE-PRESIDENT:

Bhagwati Gupta Professor Science

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:

Ana Campos	Professor	Science
Qiyin Fang	Professor	Engineering
Melinda Gough	Professor	Humanities
Megumi Harada	Professor	Science
Aadil S. Juma	Assistant	Business
Kim Jones	Associate	Engineering
Suzanne Mills	Associate	Social Sciences
Ali Reza Montazemi	Professor	Business
Brian Timmons	Professor	Health Sciences
Eugenia Zuroski	Professor	Humanities

Officers Appointed to the Executive:**PRESIDENT** (succeeds from office of Vice-President per By-Law 1b):

Paul Andrews Associate Science

PAST-PRESIDENT (appointed per Constitution Article 5b):

Rafael Kleiman Professor Engineering

8. Treasurer's Report: Aadil Juma

- a. Statement of Cash Receipts and Expenditures as of March 31, 2024 and Preliminary Budget for 2024/2025

MOTION**That the preliminary budget for 2024-2025 be adopted.****A. Juma/K. Culver
Carried unanimously**

- b. Appointment of Auditor for 2025/2026: Marco D'Ercole, CloudCPA LLP

MOTION**That Marco D'Ercole, CloudCPA LLP be appointed as the Auditor for the Faculty Association for 2025-2026.****A. Juma/P. Andrews
Carried unanimously****9. President's Report: C. Anderson**

I have had a hard time writing this report because it has been a hard year. As this meeting itself has shown, there are a lot of tensions within MUFA, among our members and within the executive. Many of the conflicts that we are acting out here at MUFA are local instantiations of conflicts within the university sector in Canada, and indeed of global conflicts. And some of them are particular to McMaster's situation.

So what I want to do with this annual report is (briefly!) share with you my understanding of the shape of some of these key issues and point in a direction that I hope MUFA will move in coming years. Perhaps not all of the issues I highlight will resonate with all of you – MUFA has more than one thousand members who all have different lived experiences. My understanding of the present moment is shaped by my six years of service on the MUFA Executive and nineteen years as a McMaster faculty member, so I hope that my observations will ring true to many of you. I believe a primary underlying source of the tensions and conflicts we've experienced this year is that we are trying to build something new in a rapidly changing world, but we're not unified as to what that new thing is. It's clear to me that, as an organization, MUFA has not evolved quickly enough to keep up with our members' changing needs. What I highlight here is a call to action for all MUFA members to play a role in the work that lies before us.

The first issue I want to talk about is Academic Freedom

I'm sure that you, like me, have watched with concern as our colleagues in the US have had their academic freedoms abridged by laws banning the teaching of whatever lawmakers categorize as 'critical race theory' or 'gender ideology'. In the last couple of weeks, an astonishing number of US universities have shown themselves willing to evict, suspend, teargas, handcuff, taser, arrest, and set snipers on students and faculty. Canadian lawmakers often seem to take their cues from what happens across the border; so it is not inconceivable that we could see similar restrictions at Canadian universities in the coming months and years. Some faculty are already seeing their research questions and admissions decisions constrained by federal rules about national security. Federal legislation about income reporting affects the level of confidentiality we can offer to research participants, which has direct impacts on the kinds of research questions we can investigate. In the classroom, provincial governments in Saskatchewan, Alberta and New Brunswick have already restricted the ways that primary and secondary teachers can interact with their queer and trans students; it would not surprise me if Ontario tries to do the same before long. And it's not just a hypothetical about populist lawmakers that worries me – it was less than a year ago that my colleague Dr Katy Fulfer was stabbed along with two of her students in the classroom of her 2nd-year Gender Studies course at the University of Waterloo, by a former student who objected to the course content.

In my one-on-one meetings with the President and the Provost we've often discussed how McMaster's strategic priorities depend crucially on the academic freedom of our faculty, which in turn depends crucially on our safety on campus. Those one-on-one conversations are only a small part of the work:

Working within existing structures, we could:

- Work to formalize McMaster's "Statement on Academic Freedom", by embedding it into policies such as the code of conduct and course management policies.
- Continue to seek more detailed reporting on how data in institutional repositories, such as the course outline library, the record of activities, MacExperts, etc. is aggregated, secured, used for reporting and metrics.
- Participate actively in curriculum committees, IQAP reviews, admissions committees, search committees: the venues where decisions about what we teach and research are at the forefront.
- Support students in bringing their requests through the existing structures. For example, last month a group of young people engaged in a brief, largely quiet protest at the beginning of a Senate meeting, but because they were not listed on the Senate agenda, there was no further discussion of their demands.

Working to transform structures, we could:

- Expand solidarity with other faculty associations in Canada and abroad, to learn from them and support their goals.
- Expand support for each other's academic freedom by enriching our policy definitions of what kinds of work "count" as scholarship in assessments of merit, tenure, permanence and promotion; for example, including community-engaged work, advocacy work, service to the institution, public outreach, innovative teaching work, just to name a few.

Another issue that keeps recurring is Privilege and Power

I have the sense that, collectively, we are grappling with questions of privilege and power. On the one hand, our entire formation as scholars is in a system of peer review that tells us everything that's wrong with our work but rarely highlights what we've done well. This can exacerbate the imposter syndrome that still lingers from our grad student days to make us feel powerless. And there is a sense in which that powerlessness is quite real, because we do not have a collective agreement that allows the association to carry grievances or file for arbitration on behalf of our members when they're treated unfairly. Our voice in policy development rests on a collegial tradition rather than a legally recognized contract. Within this existing non-union structure, then, it is vital that we continue to be attentive to our policies: updating, clarifying, and improving them where needed. This is one area where MUFA simply needs more person-power: the members of the executive simply don't have the time or expertise to keep a close eye on all the policy revisions that come through governance. It will be important to set up a standing committee that specializes in this work.

But another angle to this issue is that, when we feel beleaguered, it is all too easy to overlook the immense privilege and power we have relative to other labour groups on campus and the attending responsibilities we have to each other and to our students. I hope that, as we continue to work towards solidarity with each other within MUFA, we also deploy our privilege to:

- Develop practices for teaching and learning that relate to our students with generosity and care, not just rigour.
- Engage in collegial relationships with our many non-MUFA colleagues, (technicians, admin assistants, finance folks, custodial staff, TAs, librarians, educational developers, and many others) that respect their particular contributions to our academic mission.

Neoliberalism and Individual Merit

The last issue I want to allude to is the neoliberal sludge that we are all swimming in, that seeps into nearly every decision we make. I could spend a long time describing the many symptoms of the neoliberal illness, but I'm going to skip right over denouncing SMAs and KPIs and BIUs and instead talk about CPM and T&P.

We assess our performance annually, using apparently objective scores and spreadsheets, but what counts as meritorious is different in every unit, depends on what field you're in and how many members are in your department and whether your chair thinks your service really counts and whether your big paper came out in December or January. Chairs and Deans work really hard to make the scores fair and somehow everyone's always mad about their score. And we also have our performance judged in high-stakes tenure, permanence and promotion decisions, but these are completely dissociated from the annual performance assessment.

Working within the system, last year's executive achieved a change in the system so that scores are quantized to 0.1 instead of 0.25, allowing for greater flexibility in scores, and the previous year's bargaining team achieved a one-time addition of points to the pool to offset the 1% cap on ATB increases.

But what might we accomplish if we worked to transform the system?

- We could incentivize collaboration and generosity in addition to individual excellence.

- We could reward innovation and creativity in teaching even if it's not popular on the student experience surveys.
- We could reward public-facing work that influences public opinion (and maybe even MPPs' opinions) about the value of higher education!
- We could recognize the work of faculty who spend time mentoring new colleagues and sessional instructors, who spend time writing reference letters, who spend time building relationships with community partners, even if all that time doesn't lead to peer-reviewed publications with high impact factors.

What's next?

As I said at the outset, we are in the midst of building something new, but we haven't quite figured out what the new thing is yet, and we certainly don't yet agree on what it should look like.

Our mandate at MUFA is pretty simple, "to promote the principle of academic freedom and the interests and welfare of faculty and senior academic librarians [...] and to promote excellence in teaching and research". But the context in which we have to achieve that mandate has grown increasingly complex, and we need to work together to figure out how we're going to do it. Having more clearly-defined structures and policies within MUFA as an organization will help with getting our work done in this complex environment. Mobilizing more of our members to participate in governance will help too.

The most important thing that will help is to work together.

Because I'm a linguistics nerd, I spent a bit of time with the Oxford English Dictionary and a Latin dictionary trying to figure out if the words *collegial* and *collective* are cognates. I think so: I think both derive from the Latin *colligere*, which means 'to gather'. (But I might be wrong because there's also a Latin verb *colligare* which means 'to bind'). Regardless of the etymology, the two words are conceptually linked: having a voice in the collegial governance of this institution necessitates showing up and doing the work. And working collectively to transform the world also necessitates showing up and doing the work.

This year has been a hard one. Our colonial structures and processes are not designed for justice or for being in community. But I still have some hope, inspired by Hayes and Kaba who teach us,

"Transformative change happens when we are willing to build the things that we know must exist." (Hayes & Kaba, 2023¹)

And they also remind us, "Everything worthwhile is done with other people."

There are more than 1000 MUFA members. We can build the things that we know must exist, if we do it collegially, collectively, together.

10. **Other Business**

There was no other business.

¹ Hayes, K., & Kaba, M. (2023). *Let this radicalize you: Organizing and the revolution of reciprocal care*. Haymarket Books.

11. Announcement of CAUT Dedicated Service Award: C. Anderson

C. Anderson 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 Lydia Kapiriri and Nicholas Kevlahan should be presented with this award because of their outstanding contributions that they made during their time with MUFA.

12. Announcement of MUFA Service Award: C. Anderson

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 2024 awards winners are **Gillian Goward, Geoff Hall, and Doug Welch.**

Citation for Gillian Goward, read by Alex Adronov:

This award is meant to recognize an outstanding contribution to the mission of the University. I would argue that Gillian probably deserves at least 3 or 4 of these for all that she has done for McMaster!

Many of us know that she is the current Chair of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, now serving her 2nd term. In this role, Gillian has transformed our department, not just by hiring and mentoring a multitude of new colleagues, or navigating the trials and tribulations of departmental politics, but by truly leading by example! She has instilled a new culture within our department; one where collegiality takes precedence over bravado, teamwork takes priority over individualism, and clear, honest communication is of utmost importance. During her tenure as Chair, the department has undergone a massive renovation, launched a new undergraduate program (Sustainable Chemistry), hired numerous new faculty, attracted major investments in multiple core facilities, established Lab Stores that has become a campus-wide resource to researchers, and has overseen a near complete renewal of staff in the department. Beyond all the new initiatives, hiring, and accomplishment, she has also fundamentally changed the way the department operates. She is one of few leaders that makes people feel that we don't work for her, but she is working (day and night!) for us. In fact, several colleagues who wrote letters for this award clearly stated that she is one of the most effective Chairs our department has ever had!

Apart from her role as Chair, Gillian has held many other positions within our department, the faculty, the University, and beyond. She served as Associate Chair of Research, which she did so well that she was chosen for a one-year acting role as Associate Dean of Research in the Faculty. Beyond the Faculty, she has served on the University Planning Committee amongst others; and beyond the University, she has served as a member of NSERC's Discovery Grant Evaluation Group and as Editor of the Journal of Physical Chemistry! In all these roles, she has handled her duties with integrity, enthusiasm, and dedication. I really don't know when she finds time to sleep!

But I would argue that her contributions to McMaster go beyond all these service roles. At her core, Gillian is a world-class researcher, studying important problems pertaining

to the performance of lithium-ion batteries through the use of cutting-edge fundamental solid state NMR spectroscopy. She leads a large, highly productive research group, which she mentors with the same care, integrity, enthusiasm, and respect that she shows to her colleagues. It is no surprise that her students are highly successful, publishing amazing papers in top journals every year. They have a fantastic role model to look up to! In addition, Gillian has been extremely successful in attracting research funding, having raised millions of dollars, both from national bodies like NSERC, and from private industry (which has included a major grant with General Motors). This ground-breaking and highly creative work is internationally recognized, and it places McMaster on the map in battery technology! This work and recognition are a major contribution to the overall mission of this university, which depends on the reputation of its world-class researchers, like Gillian.

I'll close with something that I often say to Gillian whenever there is a crisis in our department. As Chair, there is never a dull moment! But I hope that this well-deserved award will allow Gillian to look back on her many moments with a sense of accomplishment, and to celebrate all that she has done to advance the mission of McMaster University.

Thank you, and congratulations again to Gillian on this well-deserved award!

Citation for Geoff Hall, read by Louis A. Schmidt:

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Louis Schmidt, and I am a professor in the Department of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour. I was honored to serve as a co-nominator, along with Dr. Mel Rutherford, in support of Dr. Geoffrey Hall's nomination for a 2024 MUFA Outstanding Service Award.

Today, I have the pleasure of saying a few words about my close colleague and friend, and award recipient Professor Hall. I have known and worked very closely with Geoff for over the last 20+ years. We have collaborated on many projects together (which have ranged, over the years, from examining psychophysiological responses in shy children - to examining fMRI BOLD responses with reward processing in depression and activation - to cross modal emotion processing in children with autism), we have published many papers together, and we have served on countless graduate students' supervisory committees together.

There are many things that I admire about Geoff, but there are at least three that stand out to me: his modesty, his passion for his science and his students, and his dedication to improving the quality of life for individuals with mental health problems, particularly children, through his service and research. But perhaps, most important to me, and many others, is that Geoff is simply a good person.

Geoff has been a dedicated member of MUFA for over 20 years; first as a professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, and, since 2011 as a professor in the Department of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour. While Geoff has demonstrated excellence in service to McMaster in many ways over these past 20 years, there are two that I would like to highlight.

First, Geoff was instrumental in the creation and development of the Research and Clinical Training (RCT) PhD stream in PNB, a unique clinical psychology stream accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). While embedded within PNB, its' strength is the partnership among the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neuroscience (DPBN), and St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton. Geoff served as the inaugural Program Director and chaired the executive committee from 2014 to 2022. The program stream has successfully trained approximately 50 graduate students to date -- many of whom have gone on to establish and apply new knowledge to improve the quality of life for people with mental health problems.

Second, a focus of research in Geoff's lab has been the development of computer-based child assessment and cognitive training tools. One such project combined a task-sharing training program for community health workers with a technology-supported tablet-based assessment for common childhood mental disorders and was piloted on 200 children in rural Kenya. Another project has involved the development of a game-based cognitive training program for children with Autism. This project has targeted key developmental cognitive barriers including set shifting, response inhibition, shifting attention and emotion recognition and has integrated games-based computer tablet activities that challenge the child by increasing in difficulty adaptively.

Another point that I would like to mention is Geoff's supporting letters for this award. His letter writers represented a diverse set of academic researchers and clinicians. All of his references were from peers who have received outstanding service awards themselves in their representative fields, and all converged in their strong support of Geoff's nomination.

I would like to highlight just a few of their many stellar comments:

"Dr. Hall has made outstanding contributions to the academy...his service to students and faculty through his teaching, supervision, and collaboration across faculty departments has been extraordinary"

"Dr. Hall's exceptional contributions to the scientific literature have enhanced McMaster's reputation and provided opportunities for student success in research"

"I cannot imagine a more deserving candidate for the award and offer him my highest level of support for this nomination, without reservation"

In sum, Professor Hall is highly deserving of the 2024 MUFA Award for Outstanding Service. He is the very definition of a Leader, Scholar, and Mentor who has dedicated himself to serving McMaster, his many students, and the broader community for more than two decades. I am happy to call Geoff a very valued colleague and friend. Please join me in congratulating Geoff.

Citation for Doug Welch, read by Alison Sills:

Dr Doug Welch joined McMaster's Department of Physics & Astronomy in 1988. Over the next thirty-six years he continually enhanced McMaster University through his commitment to the areas of research, teaching and, particularly in his administrative

service to students. Doug has been a valuable mentor to me since I first interviewed at McMaster, and the story of that mentorship mirrors the story of Doug's service to McMaster as well.

One of the things that attracted me to McMaster in the early 2000s was that the Department of Physics & Astronomy clearly embraced both parts of the phrase "student-centred and research-intensive". Doug, as department chair, had worked to revamp our introductory physics course using methods that were based on the latest physics education research of the time – small sections, peer instruction, and workshop physics. My first teaching assignment was in this course. I was so impressed with the significant improvement to the student experience at the time and continue to be impressed at the way these changes have been infused through the department teaching culture.

Doug was also critical in developing the reputation of McMaster as a leader in the Canadian astronomical community. He has served in many roles for the Canadian Astronomical Society and for international observatories and research organizations. These activities have significantly shaped the infrastructure and research environment for astronomers nationally and internationally. Personally I have always benefited from Doug's clear-sighted understanding of the Canadian astronomy landscape, and how best to navigate it when writing research grants, advocating for national infrastructure, or serving on various kinds of selection committees.

Finally, Doug's contributions to university service have spanned his entire career and has been a cornerstone of his commitment to the University and its students. Beyond his time as Department Chair, Doug served on many university committees and held leadership roles in Graduate Studies, including Associate Dean for both Science and Engineering, and ultimately as Vice Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies. During my own forays into leadership positions, Doug was always a source of excellent advice and institutional knowledge, and set an excellent example of a dedicated, caring, and compassionate leader.

In order for these words about Doug to be an accurate representation of what he has brought to the university, I should end either with a really bad pun or a quote from a movie of the 70s and 80s. But in these areas, Doug's mentorship was not sufficient to overcome my lack of basic skills, and I never managed to come close to the expertise he continuously showed. So I will not embarrass him, or me, by trying. Instead I will simply say thank you, Doug, for everything you have done for all of us, and congratulations on your well-deserved MUFA Award for Outstanding Service.



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SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING
Thursday, June 3rd, 2024

Present: Approximately 170 members, C. Anderson (Chair)

C. Anderson read the following Land Acknowledgement:

The building where we're meeting today sits on the territory of Haudenosonee nations, of the Attiwonderonk nation, and of Anishnaabe nations including the Mississaugas. As I acknowledge the history of this land, I also want to acknowledge that the work we're doing here on this land is inescapably colonial.

Our employer, McMaster University, was created by "Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario", that is, by the colonial government. One of the foundational goals of a university founded by a colonial government is to uphold and transmit colonial structures of power and privilege.

Our association, MUFA, derives its legal right to operate as a non-profit corporation from Letters Patent issued by Ontario's Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, in other words, from the colonial government. MUFA's constitution, our election process, and how we conduct our meetings are further constrained by Bourinot's Rules of Order, which happen to be the same rules that hold in the House of Commons of the Canadian Parliament, in other words, the colonial government.

I say all this not to imply that these colonial structures are good or correct or even inevitable, but to remind myself that these structures are arbitrary. They were created by humans and can be dismantled or transformed by humans.

C. Anderson reviewed the rules of order.

- Only one member may hold the floor at a time. The chat function will be disabled for the meeting.
- Each member may speak exactly once on each motion, for no more than two minutes. Members are advised to prepare their remarks in advance.
- If a member cannot attend the Special General Meeting, they may designate a proxy member to read prepared remarks on their behalf. The proxy must identify the absent member by name. A member who reads proxy remarks is also entitled to speak on their own behalf.
- The MUFA Constitution and By-Laws do not allow proxy voting.

Motion

To reorder the agenda to put item 3 first.

D. Feinberg/J. Bramson

Amendment to the Motion

That the agenda be put in the reverse order (reordered to be discussed in the order 3, 2, 1).

R. Dukas, A. Pinheiro Walla, and G. Wolkowicz spoke in favour of the motion.

W. El-Dakhakhni, Y. M. Haddara, and A. Joseph spoke against the motion.

D. Shore/B. Honig
60 in Favour
88 Opposed
13 Abstentions
Motion defeated

Motion

To strike agenda items 1 and 2 (Motions 1 and 2) on grounds on antisemitism.

B. Honig, A. Pinheiro Walla, and D. Shore spoke in favour of the motion.

I. Dworkin, S. Greene, W. El-Dakhakhni, T. Marois, and S. Ritz spoke against the motion.

D. Feinberg/A. Pinheiro Walla
39 in Favour
110 Opposed
10 Abstentions
Motion defeated

Motion 1

Be it resolved that MUFA establish a faculty committee dedicated to the following objectives:

- **Comprehensive Audit:** A full audit to assess McMaster's potential complicity in arming Israel through its association and material connections to institutions and corporations. We seek a comprehensive audit of all investments, including but not limited to names of holdings and portfolio shares, endowments, pension fund, short-term working capital assets, and financial holdings of the University.
- **Divestment:** The divestment of the university's investments, endowments, pension fund, purchases, and other financial holdings from companies linked to genocide, human rights violations, occupation, and apartheid in Israel.
- **Review of Cooperation:** Reviewing, with the goal of ending, McMaster's cooperation with Israeli academic and cultural institutions complicit in apartheid including exchange programs, institutional research collaborations, partnerships, scholarships, and fellowships, in line with the [Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel](#). Importantly, this

boycott is of institutions, not individuals. The affiliation of Israeli cultural workers to an Israeli cultural institution is not grounds for applying the boycott to them as individuals.

L. Beutin, K. Boothe, S. Ritz, and A. Joseph spoke in favour of the motion.

B. Ruffle, S. Sciaraffa, B. Honig, J. Rajchgot, D. Earn, C. van der Linden, A. Pinheiro Walla, L. Platt, R. Kleiman, R. Dukas, and I. Dworkin spoke against the motion.

P. Gardner suggested amending the language to a partial boycott but there was no seconder.

D. Shore suggested an amendment to the motion that was determined to be counter to the original motion and was therefore not accepted as an amendment.

**Y. Haddara/E. Zuroski
86 in Favour
68 Opposed
6 Abstentions
Motion carried**

Motion 2

Be it resolved that MUFA issue a statement calling upon University leadership to safeguard the civil rights of Palestinian and pro-Palestinian students, faculty, and staff engaged in nonviolent protests against the decimation of life in Gaza, including:

- **A public guarantee that administrators will not authorize Campus Safety Services or the Hamilton Police Service to interfere with protest actions or encampments on the basis of trespassing or other nonviolent charges;**
- **A public guarantee that faculty and students will not face any form of disciplinary action or academic reprisal for their participation in nonviolent protest, including but not limited to suspension, expulsion, or the withholding of grades or degrees earned.**

E. Zuroski, S. Ritz, N. Andrews, S. Greene, W. El-Dakhkhni, and A. Sajed spoke in favour of the motion.

B. Ruffle, D. Feinberg, A. Pinheiro Walla, R. Dukas, C. Fradin, C. Fradin on behalf of D. O'Dell, I. Dworkin, B. O'Shaughnessy, A. Klein, and Y. Berson spoke against the motion.

D. Shore proposed an amendment to the motion that was determined to be a completely new motion and therefore was not accepted as an amendment.

**Y. Haddara/E. Zuroski
88 in Favour
60 Opposed
10 Abstentions
Motion carried**

Motion 3

Individual members of the Association, including members of the MUFA Executive, shall not be prohibited from taking positions on political issues that reflect their own opinions. However, neither the Association as a whole, nor the MUFA Executive, which represents the Association, shall adopt a position on an issue that does not directly relate to the shared professional interests of its members.

D. Feinberg, G. Luke, and B. Honig spoke in favour of the motion.

R. Khedri, Y. Haddara, D. Woods, S. Ritz, B. Iqbal, W. El-Dakhakhni, K. Boothe, A. Sajed, and N. Andrews spoke against the motion.

**D. Feinberg/B. Honig
56 in Favour
90 Opposed
7 Abstentions
Motion defeated**

C. Anderson reminded the attendees that McMaster has resources available to support the community.

The meeting adjourned at 12:28pm.



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BY - LAWS

(Amended April 1987; April 1989; May 1990; March 1994;
May 1995; August 1997; July, 2008, June 2010, December 2014, January 2017, January 2025)

1. (a) NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Executive and shall normally consist of the President, the Vice-President, the Past-President, and three full members of the Association in good standing. The President shall normally serve as Chair.

(b) NOMINATIONS

After consulting with the membership, the Nominating Committee shall draw up a slate of candidates for the Executive consisting of:

- (i) at least one individual for Vice-President
- (ii) at least ten individuals for Members-at-Large.

The incumbent Vice-President normally succeeds to the office of President. If the Vice-President declines right of succession, or if the office of Vice-President is vacant, or if there is an Acting Vice-President, the office of President shall be filled by election, in which case the Nominating Committee shall normally nominate at least one candidate for the office of President. At least four weeks prior to the annual general meeting, the Nominating Committee's slate of candidates shall be mailed to all full members, whereupon any full member may nominate further candidates for President, if the office of President is to be filled by election, for Vice-President or for members-at-large.

(c) FURTHER NOMINATIONS

If further nominations are submitted, evidence of the nominee's consent together with supporting signatures of five full members in good standing must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Nominating Committee within two weeks of the mailing. A candidate for the office of President, when the office is to be filled by election may also be a candidate for the office of Vice-President and for member-at-large. If there are further nominations for the office of Vice-President, then all candidates for Vice-President will also stand for member-at-large. An electronic ballot containing the Nominating Committee's slate, together with any further nominations duly made, shall be circulated to all full members at least ten days prior to the annual general meeting. The Executive shall appoint a Returning Officer, nominated by the President, who will be responsible for conducting the election. One week shall be allowed for balloting. The method of voting shall be a preferential balloting system. When there is an election for the offices of President or of Vice-President, the candidate(s) who receive(s) the majority of votes shall be declared elected. Subject to the provisions of Article 4(b) of the Constitution, the ten candidates for members-at-large receiving a majority of votes shall be declared elected. The Returning Officer shall announce the results of the election at the annual general meeting.

(d) BY-ELECTIONS

By-elections shall be conducted in the following manner. A Nominating Committee as specified in By-Law 1 (a), shall nominate a candidate for each vacancy and shall invite further nominations as specified in By-Law 1 (b). If there is more than one candidate for each vacancy, by-elections shall be conducted at a general meeting or by electronic ballot within one month of the occurrence of the vacancy.

2. (a) VACANCY IN OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

If a President fails to serve a full term of office and the Vice-President agrees to succeed for the remainder of that term, the Executive Committee may call a by-election for the office of Vice-President in accordance with By-Law 1 or may appoint an Acting Vice-President. If such an appointment is made, it shall be put to the membership for confirmation at a general meeting or by electronic ballot within one month of the occurrence of the vacancy.

(b) BY-ELECTION FOR PRESIDENT

If a President fails to serve a full term of office and the Vice-President declines to succeed for the remainder of that term, the Executive Committee may call a by-election in accordance with By-Law 1 (d), or may appoint an Acting President. If such an appointment is made, it shall be put to the membership for confirmation at a general meeting or by electronic ballot within one month of the occurrence of the vacancy.

(c) BY-ELECTION FOR VICE-PRESIDENT

If the Vice-President fails to serve a full term of office, the Executive Committee may either call a by-election, in accordance with By-Law 1 (d), or appoint an Acting Vice-President. If such appointment is made, it shall be put to the membership for confirmation at a general meeting or by electronic ballot within one month of the occurrence of the vacancy.

3. (a) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting shall normally be held in April.

(b) QUORUM AT GENERAL MEETING

Fifty full members shall constitute a quorum of a general meeting.

4. ELECTRONIC BALLOTS

An electronic ballot on any outstanding matter (including ratification of the remuneration agreement) may be ordered by the Executive, or by decision of the membership at a general meeting, or by written request to the President of fifty full members in good standing.

5. STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees of the Association shall be:

Academic Affairs	Membership	Remunerations
Budget Advisory Committee	Pension	Special Enquiries & Grievances
CAUT & OCUFA Policy	Public Relations	Tenure/Permanence
Human Rights and Equity		

6. AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad hoc committees may be established by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee or of a general meeting of the membership.

7. JOINT COMMITTEES

Joint committees with other University bodies, such as the Senate and the administration, may be established by negotiation between the President of the Association, acting with the approval of the Executive Committee or of a general meeting of the membership, and the President or Provost of the University.

8. MEMBERSHIP FEES

Changes in the membership fees may be proposed by the Executive Committee. The Committee shall inform the membership by written notice of the reasons for the proposed change in fees. An electronic ballot on the matter shall be sent to full members. Approval by a simple majority of members voting is required.

9. MEMBERSHIP - ANOMALOUS CASES

A person otherwise eligible for membership, but not on the regular, full-time University payroll, and hence not subject to fee deduction from salary, may become a member of the Association. Fees for such members shall be equal to one-half of the fee for the salary floor of the individual's rank, paid on a quarterly basis. Membership shall begin upon payment of the first quarterly fee.

10. (a) MEMBERSHIP

McMaster University has made membership in the McMaster University Faculty Association (MUFA) a condition of employment for faculty on the CP/M Scheme and senior academic librarians.¹ New faculty and librarians who are not required to be members of the Association may join the Association at any time during the first year of their appointments. Their membership fees will be calculated from the beginning of the month in which they join. For all other faculty and librarians not required to join the Association, the membership year begins on July 1 of each year. Fees for faculty and librarians who join after the beginning of the membership year will be payable from the beginning of the membership year (July 1).

(b) MEMBERSHIP - WITHDRAWAL

When a faculty member on the CP/M Scheme or a senior academic librarian objects to membership in the Association and directs the University by letter copied to the Association, giving 30 days notice prior to the first day of the month in which the change is to take effect, not to pay to the Association the amount equal to the membership dues that have been deducted from his/her salary, such amount shall be paid to a recipient agreed upon from time to time by the Joint Committee. For faculty and librarians not required to join the Association, withdrawal from the Faculty Association shall be by written notification to the Association or, in the case of a person remitting fees directly to the Association office, when six month's fees are owing. In the latter case, membership may be taken up again at any time in the year; however, fees for faculty and librarians who rejoin after the beginning of the membership year will be payable from the beginning of the membership year (July 1).

11. FACULTY ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

The Executive Committee may establish a Council to serve in an advisory capacity to the Executive Committee and as a means of communication between the Executive and the membership. If established, the Council shall consist of one representative from each teaching Department, Area or School or from the University libraries when the constituency concerned has at least three full members of the Association. Representatives of Departments/Areas/Schools will be identified and invited to serve on Council by the Nominating Committee as constituted in By-Law 1 (a). Council shall meet at the call of the President.

¹The term "senior academic librarians" refers to those librarians who are excluded from the McMaster University Academic Librarian Association.

12. RETURNING OFFICER

The Executive Committee's appointment of the Returning Officer for the annual election shall be made known at the time the Nominating Committee's slate for the Executive Committee is mailed to the membership. The Returning Officer shall also serve in any elections held during the following year. The Returning Officer may not be a candidate in any election.

13. INDEMNIFICATION

The Association shall indemnify and save harmless, out of the funds of the Association, every director, officer, or employee of the Association and other person who has undertaken or is about to undertake any liability on behalf of the Association or any organization controlled by it, and their heirs, executors and administrators, and estate and effects respectively, from and against:

- (a) all costs, damages, charges and expenses which a director, officer, employee or other person sustains or incurs in or about any action, suit or proceeding which is brought, commenced or prosecuted against them, or in respect of any act, deed, matter or thing whatsoever, made, done or permitted by them, in or about the execution of the duties of their office or in respect of any such liability;
- (b) all other costs, damages, charges and expenses which a director, officer, employee or other person sustains or incurs in or about or in relation to the affairs of the Association;

Except such costs, damages, charges or expenses as are occasioned by willful neglect or default.

14. DISSOLUTION

The corporation may be dissolved by special resolution of the members at a meeting called for that purpose. Upon dissolution, the directors shall: (a) apply the property of the corporation in satisfaction of all its debts, obligations and liabilities; (b) after satisfying the interests of the corporation's creditors in all its debts, obligations and liabilities, if any, the directors shall distribute the remaining property, **rateably to its members according to their rights and interests in the corporation**; and (c) in distributing the property of the corporation, debts to employees of the corporation for services performed for it due at the commencement of the dissolution or within one month before, not exceeding three months' wages and vacation pay accrued for not more than 12 months, shall be paid in priority to the claims of the ordinary creditors, and the employees of the corporation are entitled to rank as ordinary creditors for the residue of their claims.



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McMaster University Faculty Association (MUFA) Remuneration Brief

OPENING STATEMENT

MUFA is a non-unionized faculty association (representing 1028 active members) that works with the McMaster University Administration to advance our shared interests of excellence in research, providing a superb learning environment for our students, and engaging the external community in our work. In the specific domain pertaining to faculty issues, the primary forum for direct discussion is the Joint Committee (JC), which meets regularly under the terms of agreement set out in the Terms of Reference (TOR) of The Joint Administration/Faculty Association Committee to consider University Financial Matters and to discuss and negotiate matters related to Terms and Conditions of Employment of Faculty. Since faculty remuneration (defined as salaries and benefits) is a vital issue to our members and to the University, it takes precedence in the year prior to the expiry of a collective agreement. MUFA represents its members' interests through a well-defined process of negotiation as outlined in the JC TOR. This year's negotiation process will begin with an exchange of remuneration briefs on December 16, 2024, and is expected to be completed by March 17, 2025. In the event that agreement is not reached through negotiations by this deadline, both sides prepare a "final offer", only one of which will be selected *in toto* by a labour arbitrator (the arbitrator is selected and mutually agreed upon before the start of negotiations). This process encourages both sides to negotiate in good faith and also to present their most reasonable positions. It is in that spirit that we present this MUFA Remuneration Brief. Past experience supports our successful use of this process. Indeed, in the last 25 years, negotiations have proceeded to Final Offer Selection by an arbitrator only once.

In addition to the negotiation framework of the JC TOR, we are fortunate to have a set of agreed-upon principles to guide the negotiations, providing an important context for our discussions. MUFA remains committed to the Principles for Negotiation of Faculty Remuneration as agreed to by the Joint Committee, attached in Appendix 1. We will refer to these principles throughout the discussion of our bargaining proposal, using the numbering system therein (i.e. PN1, PN2...). Principles 1-6 concern individual compensation and Principles

7-11 refer to working conditions. For the sake of clarity, we have categorized our proposals into different sections: e.g., Salary, Extended Health Benefits, etc. However, many of the principles for negotiation transcend all three categories and will appear more than once.

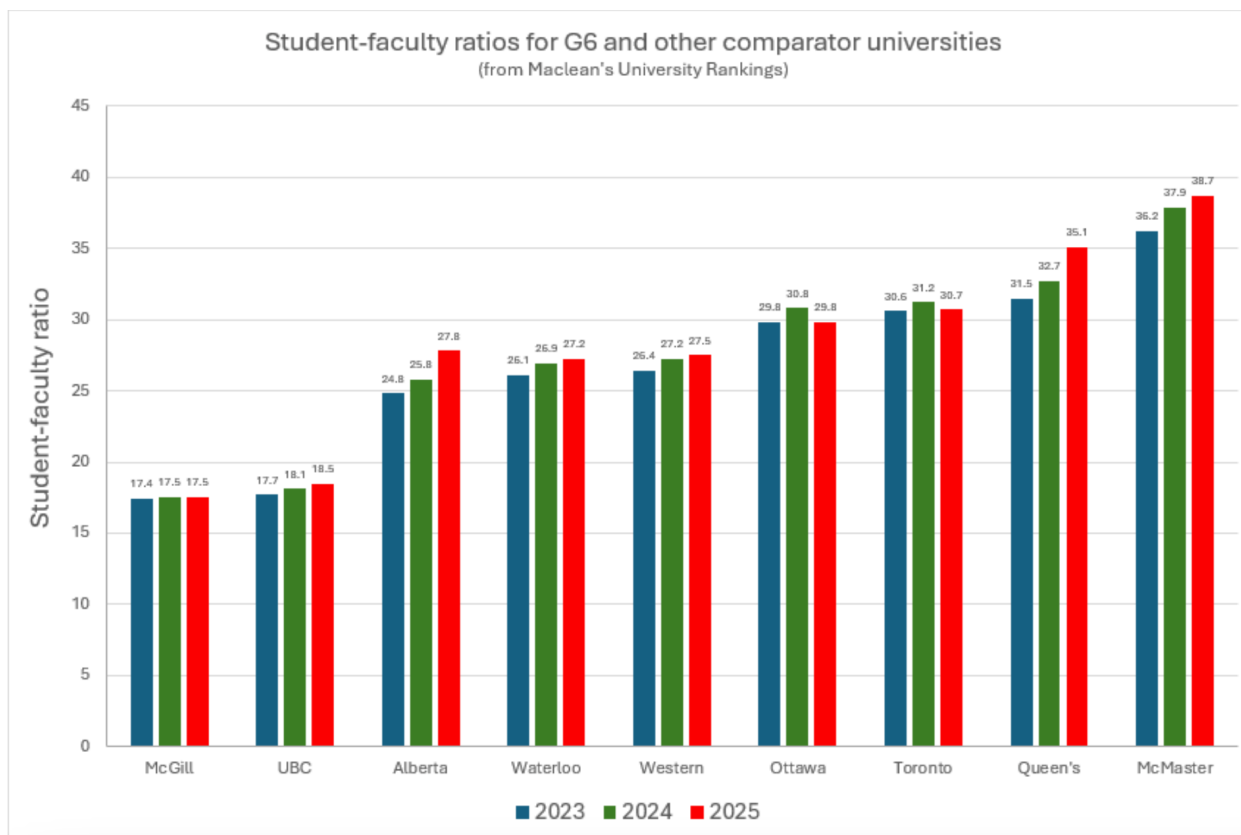
CONTEXT FOR NEGOTIATION

Rising faculty workload and increasing student-faculty ratio

The strongest message we have heard from our members over the last several years is that they are deeply concerned about two related issues: an overwhelming and unsustainable rise in faculty workload, and the increasing student enrolments without a corresponding increase in faculty complement. We highlight both of these issues for two reasons: they relate directly to the working conditions of our faculty members (PN 7-11), as well as to the fundamental academic mission and the global reputation of the University.

Historical context is useful to appreciate the gravity of the situation and the urgency of our concerns. We begin by noting that in 2001, the number of FTE undergraduate students at McMaster was 12,691, and in 2023-2024 the FTE undergraduate headcount was 35,344, for an increase of **178%**. In that same timeframe, the number of faculty went from 749 in 2001, to 1,028 in 2024, representing a much smaller increase of **37.2%**. It follows that the undergraduate-student/faculty ratio at McMaster has risen from 16.9 in 2001 to 33.7 in 2024, representing a **99.4% increase**. Indeed, as publicized in the recent Maclean's University Rankings, McMaster currently has the *highest* student-to-faculty ratio of all Canadian universities¹:

¹ The McLean's student-to-faculty ratio is slightly different from the undergraduate-student-to-faculty ratio given previously in the paragraph, due partly to differences in the definitions of the terms "student" and "faculty".



Among Ontario universities, and using the MacLean’s student-faculty ratio data, the average student-faculty was 30.1 in 2024. To appreciate the magnitude of the issue, MUFA observes that McMaster either has to reduce its student enrolments by roughly 5,000 students, or, hire roughly 150 more faculty members (or, some combination of the above) in order to reduce its student-faculty ratio to the Ontario average.

The student-faculty ratio has a direct effect on faculty workload, teaching/learning effectiveness, and the student experience. PN7 and PN9 speak to these concerns. The concerning trend in increasing student enrolments and the detrimental effect on the quality of teaching and the faculty work environment was already noted with urgency, together with a call to action, in the July 2007 MUFA Executive’s “Reflections on the State of the Academy” report [1]. MUFA remains strongly committed to the views expressed in its 2007 report, specifically in its last paragraph:

“The combination of increased enrolment and the lack of renewal of professorial positions will pose an increasing challenge. As faculty, we should continue to demand a robust accounting of the University administration, particularly with respect to budgeting and enrolment projections. Faculty members on the MUFA Executive, Senate and the Board of Governors have special responsibility to

question plans and assumptions that may ultimately endanger the quality of the teaching and research environment. “

PN8 specifically addresses the issues of student-faculty ratio, and the lack of faculty hiring to keep pace with enrolments, with the imperative that “the University’s operating budget should enable the appointment of new faculty, both to replace those who have retired (or resigned) and to compensate for an increased number of students”.

Another point of concern is the increasing number of non-academic staff at McMaster. It was reported in the 2021 MUFA Remuneration Brief that since 2017, “the number of McMaster staff has climbed by **27%** in that period”, while “the ranks of MUFA faculty have actually *shrunk slightly* in the same timeframe.” Since that report in 2021, the non-academic staff complement has again increased, this time by **18%**, while in that same timeframe the MUFA complement has seen a more modest increase of 8.9% -- i.e., less than half the increase of the staff.

In addition to the systemic challenges posed by increasing enrolments, there are additional headwinds that faculty face. The 2021 MUFA Remuneration Brief specifically addressed the effects and challenges of the Covid pandemic on our research and teaching mission. As the University community has emerged from Covid in the past several years, MUFA members have experienced a cascade of substantive changes in our teaching and administrative duties, some of which are arguably Covid-related, while others are arguably manifestations of broader societal trends. For example, our members are inundated and exhausted by the substantial additional administrative work placed upon them in recent years by, e.g., increasing SAS and MSAF requests, the expectations to provide hybrid instruction even when a course is classified as “in person”, and the expectations to be emotionally available to, and supportive of, the increasing numbers of students experiencing mental health challenges. In a different direction, our research-stream faculty face increasing reporting, accountability, and other bureaucratic requirements involved in research-related work, as well as significantly increased pressures to apply for research grants to sustain their research programs in a tight fiscal environment. Decreased administrative assistance for faculty within departments and schools has exacerbated the situation, by downloading more and more bureaucratic tasks to faculty members. In the area of service to the university, our members are increasingly under pressure to contribute to recruitment, outreach, and fund-raising events, to name a few, as part of their service work. Such events often run outside of regular business hours, forcing our members to sacrifice work-life balance and time with their families. The degree to which MUFA members are overworked and overwhelmed is unsustainable and, in the long run, is likely to lead to lower productivity, high levels of stress, mental health challenges, and burnout. [2]

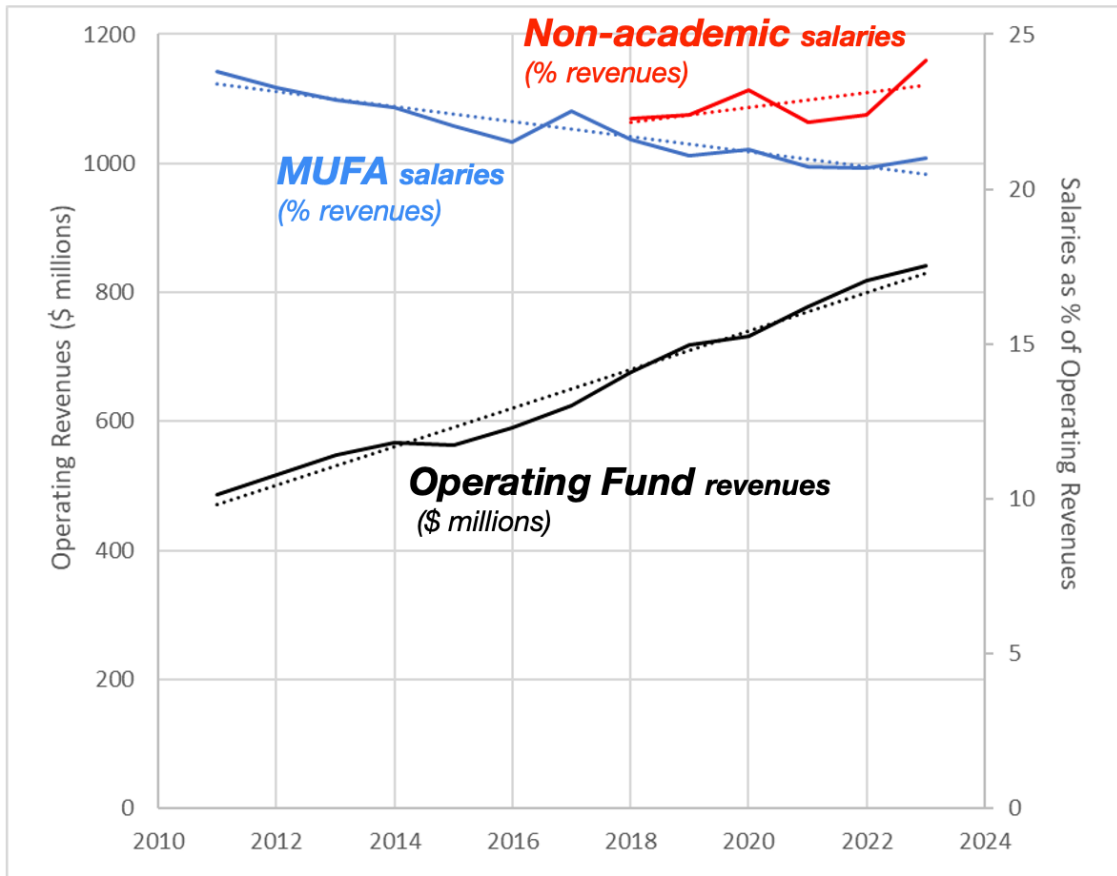
We observe that our rankings in the highly cited world university rankings have consistently slipped in the last 5 years; we include the Times Higher Education rankings for the last 5 years as an example in the table below. While we certainly do not claim a direct causal relationship, MUFA asks whether these slips are an external and objective reflection of the situation described in the above paragraphs. Perhaps the cracks are starting to show. The table clearly shows that other well-regarded Canadian universities have roughly maintained their rankings

while McMaster has dropped from 69th in the world down to 116th, now tied with University of Alberta.

Times Higher Ed Ranking	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
McMaster	69	80	85	103	116
U Toronto	18	18	18	21	21
UBC	34	37	40	41	41
McGill	40	44	46	49	45
Queens	251-300	251-300	251-300	251-300	301-350
U Ottawa	145	162	137	177	191
Waterloo	201-250	201-250	201-250	158	163
U Alberta	131	125	118	109	116
Western U	201-250	201-250	201-250	201-250	201-250
U Montréal	73	88	111	111	125

Despite the above data, MUFA agrees with the Administration that our faculty complement is high-performing, and that McMaster absolutely deserves its global reputation for innovation in teaching and learning, as well as its world-leading research excellence. Our common pride in our incredible achievements is showcased, for instance, in the McMaster Brighter World website [3]. What is remarkable is the dedication and work of our faculty members even during such challenging times, and their unparalleled commitment to the excellence which has historically placed McMaster in such high regard. We trust that the Administration recognizes that McMaster’s continued excellence in both teaching and research is directly attributable to its faculty members.

From MUFA's perspective, the lack of faculty hiring to keep pace with the increasing student enrolments is inexplicable in light of the relative financial health of the University. Indeed, while the University Administration may insist that further hires are difficult in challenging financial times, with e.g. provincial tuition caps and restrictions on the number of international students, we note first that, in the last 5 years, the McMaster Annual Financial Reports have reported Operating Fund *surpluses* of \$28.9 million (2019/2020), \$2.2 million (2020/2021), \$28 million (2021/22), \$34.9 million (2022/23), and \$20.6 million (2023/24). Moreover, as the following graph indicates, MUFA salaries have been a *declining* proportion of the University’s operating budget since 2011.



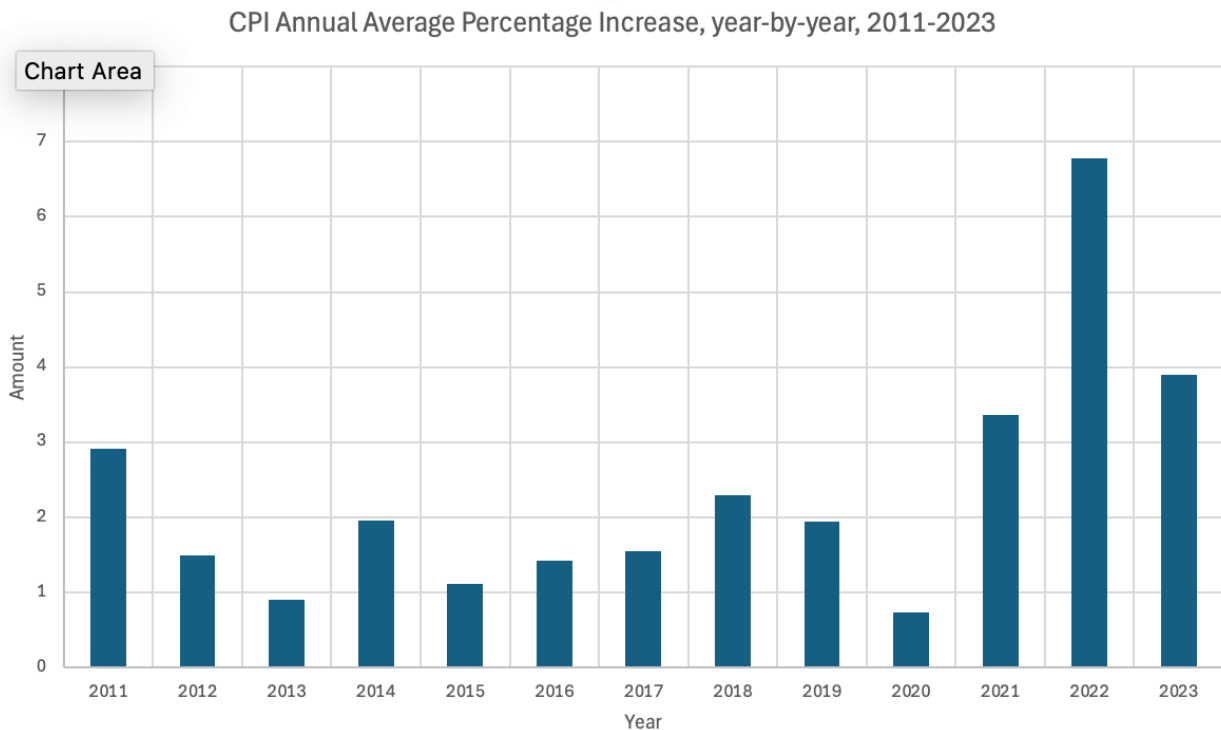
To preserve the essential mission of the University, it is imperative to initiate a sustained and strong commitment to increasing faculty complement. This is possible due to the robust financial health of the University. MUFA trusts the University Administration agrees that, even in challenging times, an institution should invest in its *most essential* asset that allows the institution to carry out its *defining mission*. That asset is McMaster’s dedicated and high-achieving faculty, who daily carry out the research and teaching mission of this University. For instance, MUFA estimates that hiring 50 new tenure-track Assistant Professors would add \$6.5 million to the University’s annual expenses. We note that this is well within the Operating Budget surplus in 4 of the last 5 years (the only exception being, understandably, the Covid year 2020-2021), and would be an initial step toward moving us in the right direction in terms of student/faculty ratio.

MUFA looks forward to a robust discussion with the University Administration to address these challenges, as well as the possible root causes of McMaster’s drop in the international rankings.

Salary erosion

While faculty continue to work hard to achieve excellence, their income has not kept pace with inflation or with comparator universities.

In view of a spike in the annual average of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the years spanned by our previous Collective Agreements, the salary erosion is particularly impactful. Indeed, the graph below shows that in the years 2022 and 2023 there were abnormally high changes in CPI. The CPI rose 3.9% on an annual average basis in 2023, following a 40-year-high increase of 6.8% in 2022 and a 3.4% increase in 2021. Aside from 2022, the annual average increase in 2023 is the largest since 1991.



Viewed in this context, MUFA member salaries have eroded significantly in the last ~5-6 years. The table below lists the cumulative academic salary increases at the G6 universities (compounded over the period 2020-2025), as well as the CPI increase over the period January 2020 – October 2024 (data beyond Oct 2024 is not currently available on Stats Can). We can see that McMaster salaries have *decreased in real terms in comparison to inflation*, and, McMaster has *not kept pace with our comparator universities*, many of which have seen salary increases tracking inflation more closely than at McMaster.

Cumulative/Compounded Academic Salary Increases in G6, 2020-2025:

	Compounded salary increases, 2020-2025
U Toronto (*)	22.25%
Queen's U	13.68%
U of Waterloo	13.46%
Western U	10.72%
U of Ottawa (**)	15.24%
Weighted average of our comparators	16.7%
CPI increase, Jan 2020- Oct 2024 (***)	17.7%
McMaster	8.64%
Differential between McMaster and weighted average of comparators	-8.06%
Differential between McMaster and CPI increase for Jan 2020 – Oct 2024	-9.06%

(*) U of Toronto – uses estimate of CPI annual increase for 2023, 2024

(**) U of Ottawa – uses estimate of CPI annual increase for 2024

(***) CPI increase data after Oct 2024 not yet available on Stats Canada website

Specifically, the table above shows that McMaster has fallen significantly behind, with a differential of **over 9%** in comparison to CPI, and a differential of **over 8%** with the weighted average of the cumulative salary increases of our comparators, over the last 5 years. The erosion with respect to our comparators is also clearly shown in *absolute terms* in the table below, where we document average salaries at the G6 in the last 5 years.

Average academic salaries (in \$CAD) at G6 Universities, 2020-2025:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
U of Toronto (*)	177,150	179,325	193,671	206,841	214,907
Queens	165,750	172,925	179,925	185,323	190,883
U of Waterloo	163,850	166,500	169,550	178,832	187,237
Western U	157,100	162,275	164,400	171,082	174,504
U of Ottawa (**)	166,150	167,700	171,900	177,487	184,409
McMaster (***)	170,832	175,059	177,875	181,933	186,702
McMaster rank among G6	# 2	# 2	# 3	# 3	# 4

(*) U of Toronto – uses estimate of CPI annual increase for 2023, 2024

(**) U of Ottawa – uses estimate of CPI annual increase for 2024

(***) Non-McMaster data collected from UCASS; McMaster data is from the McMaster Office of Institutional Research and Analysis (IRA). Note that the IRA data is systematically higher than UCASS so the data above is conservative.

We note in particular that McMaster has dropped to a #4 ranking in average salary levels in the G6.

Development of the current MUFA proposal

Our internal process for developing a proposal for salary and benefits has been based on two complementary approaches. In the fall of 2024, we surveyed our members in what has become known as the MUFA Remuneration Survey. With a strong response rate, we received a very good sense of the needs and priorities of our members. The survey results help to ensure that our efforts are guided by the needs of our constituents. In parallel, we benchmarked McMaster faculty salaries and benefits with respect to other comparable universities. This process considered existing remuneration packages and examined remuneration trends over time. Additionally, we considered benefits that have been adopted by other universities that we believe would be beneficial at McMaster as well. In this regard, two central principles have been that “Faculty salary and benefits should compare favourably to those in comparable jurisdictions, including specifically other excellent universities” (PN1) and “Faculty salaries and benefits should be protected from inflation” (PN2). We consider McMaster University’s most appropriate comparable jurisdiction to be the Ontario universities (G6) in the 15 leading research-intensive universities in Canada (U15), namely University of Ottawa, University of Toronto, University of Waterloo, Queen’s University, and Western University, in addition to McMaster University.

Our survey has highlighted issues of common interest as well as key issues that vary with demographics – particularly stage of life. We have strived to incorporate aspects of both types of issues in our proposals, to meet the needs of our members at each of these stages, and also to help ensure that the University is well positioned to recruit excellent faculty at the beginning of their academic careers, support them in their professional development (PN11), retain them as they advance through their careers and ensure that “Faculty should look forward to a good pension upon completion of their academic careers” (PN6).

As concerns salary issues, MUFA reaffirms its commitment to the reward of academic excellence and supports the CP/M Scheme (PN3). Moreover, as we saw in the above discussion, our benchmarking clearly indicates by objective measurements that our current level of compensation is not commensurate to our high level of performance, nor has it kept up with inflation.

In the area of Benefits, we have identified several areas of improvement, and a potential area for a new benefit. There is movement in the overall landscape of benefits/insurance in Canada (and Ontario in particular) for inclusive benefits that are sufficiently flexible to serve the needs

of equity-seeking groups. McMaster also takes pride in making equity and inclusion an institutional priority. In light of this, we have proposed a new Family Building Benefit, and a Gender Affirmation Benefit, both already offered as packages by SunLife. We also note that University of Toronto, as dictated by Arbitrator Gedalof in his arbitration decision in 2023, has increased mental health and paramedical benefits to \$7,000/year and \$5,000/year respectively, in recognition of the high levels of stress and mental health needs among faculty. In keeping with McMaster's publicly stated commitment to the health and well-being of its community, we propose to follow U of T's example.

In the area of Professional Support, we reaffirm the principle that "The University should assist faculty members to enhance their research and scholarship effectiveness" (PN11), which it traditionally has done through the Professional Development Allowance (PDA). In this Brief we propose a substantive change in our PDA policy: namely, to shift instead to a Faculty Professional Expense Allowance. This change would substantively clarify and simplify processes involving the PDA, and MUFA believes this is a "win-win" for both the Administration and MUFA members.

Our specific proposals are structured to maintain the integrity of existing benefits and/or to provide a benefit in line with our comparator universities. They are based on and in keeping with the aforementioned Principles of Negotiation and we believe them to be moderate and attainable. Together, they would help maintain McMaster University's strong position with respect to its peers as a leading Canadian research-intensive university, by providing a progressive, inclusive, competitive, and attractive work environment.

MUFA looks forward to collegially discussing our proposals with the University Administration to advance our common goals.

MUFA Proposals for July 1, 2025 :

LENGTH OF CONTRACT

1. **Length of Contract:** MUFA proposes a 2-year contract, from July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027.

ACADEMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE

2. **Action Plan for Addressing Student/Faculty Ratio and Faculty Workload.** In light of our deep concerns about the two related issues of unsustainable levels of faculty workload and increasing student-faculty ratio, MUFA proposes that the Administration develop and share a clear action plan with the MUFA membership and the broader campus community, which outlines specific, measurable steps to be taken over the next 5 years, together with concrete annual targets, to substantively reduce student/faculty ratio and to make faculty workload more sustainable. Such an action plan is essential to preserve and enhance the integrity and global reputation of McMaster as a student-centered, research-intensive institution. MUFA requests that such an action plan be developed by December 2025, and that the plan be publicized and presented to both the broader campus community, including MUFA, and also to the governing bodies of McMaster, including the Senate, University Planning Committee, and the Board of Governors.

MUFA takes this opportunity to remind the Administration that we, the faculty, are not only the University's most essential asset; we *are*, in fact, the University, because we are the leaders carrying out the research and teaching mission of McMaster. We are the key to inclusive excellence both in teaching and research, which is central to our ability to recruit students, many of whom cite both our world rankings and our world-class research as important factors in their choice to attend McMaster. We share with the Administration a passion for, and commitment to, true excellence at McMaster – to be a place where students find inspiration, meaning, and heartfelt mentorship from committed teachers, and researchers can thrive in their genuine pursuit of both curiosity-based fundamental research and research that addresses urgent societal problems. Further, we share the Administration's concern about the reputational costs that occur as faculty workload and student/faculty ratio erodes instructional and research quality. MUFA looks forward to working together with the Administration, as collegial partners and as colleagues, to tackle the many challenges we face.

SALARY

- 3. Across-the-Board increase for Comparator University Correction:** MUFA is strongly committed to PN1, “Faculty salary and benefits should compare favourably to those in comparable jurisdictions, including specifically other excellent universities.” As indicated above, McMaster salaries have fallen considerably behind our comparator universities. MUFA proposes the following ATB salary increase as a Comparator University Correction, spread over the 2 years of the contract as follows:

Effective July 1, 2025: ATB 4.0% for Comparator University Correction

Effective July 1, 2026: ATB 4.0% for Comparator University Correction

- 4. Across-the-Board increase to adjust for inflation:** MUFA is strongly committed to PN2, that “salaries should be protected from inflation”. MUFA is also guided by the recent decision by Arbitrator Burkett (acting as Final Offer Selector in the matter of Salary Settlement between Univ of Waterloo vs. the Faculty Association of the Univ of Waterloo, March 2024) in which he states that “...The methodology for application of the CPI is to bring forward the CPI increase for the preceding year as the starting point for discussion of the appropriate scale adjustment for the current year.” Following this methodology, we note that Statistics Canada reports for 2023 an annual increase in CPI of 3.9%. The current Bank of Canada projection for the annual increase in CPI for 2024 is 2.4%. Therefore, MUFA proposes an additional ATB salary increase as follows:

Effective July 1, 2025: ATB 3.9% for CPI / inflation

Effective July 1, 2026: ATB 2.4% for CPI / inflation

- 5. Career Progress and Merit:** MUFA remains strongly committed to the CP/M scheme which rewards faculty excellence, as stated in PN3. We trust that the administration wishes to recognize the labour and excellence of McMaster faculty members who have not only kept the University functioning, but have done so to a very high standard, despite facing overwhelming headwinds in terms of workload. We therefore propose that the CP/M pool be increased to 130 par units per 100 faculty members, with 120 units to be awarded at the Department level, for the duration of the contract.²

EXTENDED HEALTH BENEFITS

- 6. Improving Current Benefits.**

Within our current SunLife Extended Benefits we propose to improve existing benefits as

² The MUFA Librarian merit pool will be calculated according to the process described in the Librarian Salary and Benefits Negotiations policy.

follows:

- (a) Vision Care: \$750 for every 24 months for prescription eyewear, and \$100 every 12 months for an eye exam.
- (b) Mental Health and Paramedical Benefits: University of Toronto has recently increased its mental health benefits to \$7000/year and paramedical benefits to \$5000/year. We propose to follow suit.
- (c) Dental – The last update to our Dental benefits was in 1996. We seek improvement on these benefits as follows:
 - (i) Basic Procedures: 0% co-pay.
 - (ii) Major Restorative: 20% co-pay up to a yearly max of \$5000.
- (d) Orthodontics - The last update to our Orthodontal benefits was in 2006. MUFA proposes increasing the coverage to 75%, up to a maximum amount of \$5,000.
- (e) Hospitalization costs. Our current coverage of \$110/day for a semi-private room and \$10/day for a private room was last updated in 1996. We propose to change the limit to “Reasonable & Customary limits in area received” for both semi-private accommodation and private accommodation.
- (f) Basic Life Insurance. MUFA proposes an increase in our Basic Life Insurance from 175% to 200% of annual base salary, in line with our comparators. MUFA also proposes an increase of the maximum cap on the Basic Life Insurance from the current \$262,500 to \$500,000.
- (g) Improve coverage of vaccinations by including vaccines obtained without a prescription, if allowed by law, and, if they are approved by Health Canada.

7. Introducing New Benefits

Within our SunLife Extended Benefit Plan, we propose to add new benefits which enhance McMaster’s goals of achieving EDI excellence as an employer.

- (a) Family Building Plan. SunLife has an available package, see <https://www.sunlife.ca/workplace/en/group-benefits/employer/benefits-plan-solutions/family-benefit-program/> with 3 components:
 - (i) Fertility and Surrogacy,
 - (ii) Supplemental Surrogacy, and
 - (iii) Adoption.We propose to add each of these policies to our benefit plan up to a lifetime maximum of \$20,000 total for this category.
- (b) Gender Affirmative Care. Sunlife has an available package, see <https://www.sunlife.ca/workplace/en/group-benefits/employer/benefits-plan-solutions/family-benefit-program/gender-affirmation-coverage/> with both a Core and Enhanced Plan. We propose to add the Core+Enhanced Plan to our benefit plan up to a lifetime maximum of \$20,000 for this category.

PROFESSIONAL AND OTHER SUPPORT

8. Professional Development Allowance to be replaced by Faculty Professional Expense Allowance.

The Professional Development Allowance (PDA) was initially conceived as a fund to be used for *professional development* expenses, with the Faculty Professional Development Allowance Plan (PDA) Policy and Procedures aligned with that purpose. One original motivation for this fund was the fact that professional development is specifically excluded from tri-council spending eligibility. However, the PDA has since come under increasing pressure to be used for other expenses that are also not eligible under tri-council rules, such as indirect costs of research, including office computers and software.

We note that the Technology Fund for the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences, which supported computer purchases for administrative processes in those Faculties, was cancelled unilaterally by the Administration in 2022. Teaching supplies and resources are also not eligible expenses under tri-council rules or under the PDA Policy.

It has come to MUFA's attention that there is significant variation across the University regarding the interpretation of eligibility for PDA expenses. Moreover, as briefly mentioned above, some expenses which are arguably valid business/professional expenses for our teaching-stream faculty, namely those that enrich their teaching activities and pedagogical mission, are currently not deemed eligible.

In the interest of equity, transparency, and simplicity, MUFA proposes that the PDA be replaced by a Faculty Professional Expense Allowance (FPEA), in line with practices at other comparable universities, e.g. University of Waterloo [4]. The new FPEA would be eligible for spending on any professional expense consistent with the CRA interpretation of professional expenses and subject to the McMaster Policy on Reimbursements to Individuals for University Business and its companion, the Guidelines for Reimbursements to Individuals for University Business. In particular, the FPEA could be used for professional development expenses, direct costs of research, indirect costs of research, teaching supplies, and so forth, that also meet the above eligibility requirements.

Our intention in this proposal is that the FPEA would be *strictly an enhancement* of the current PDA policy in terms of eligibility of expenses, so that *all expenses currently considered eligible remain so*. Moreover, the FPEA would retain other features of the current PDA in all other regards, including carry-forward and borrowing provisions, as well as the research-leave supplement.

MUFA proposes the fund begin with \$4,000 as of July 1, 2025, and increase by \$200 in each subsequent year of the contract. In addition, we ask that the carry-forward period be increased to 3 years from the current 2 years, and, that MUFA members be permitted to

borrow against future FPEA funds for up to 3 years.

MUFA further proposes that MUFA Librarians be provided with the FPEA at the same funding level, replacing their current LPDA.

9. Research Leave support: MUFA takes the view that a research leave is not a vacation; our members who take a research leave are spending 100% of their time on research. MUFA therefore asks for 100% salary for all research leaves.³

10. External Tuition Bursary.

MUFA members currently enjoy reimbursement of post-secondary tuition at eligible institutions from an annual fixed pool. MUFA proposes that the 3-year waiting period for eligibility for reimbursement from this pool be shortened to 1 year. We also propose to increase the current \$250,000 total cap to \$500,000.

11. Vacation time: Our current policy is that MUFA members are entitled to 1 month of vacation. As already noted, our members are overwhelmed and overworked. MUFA proposes an increase of vacation entitlement to 6 weeks.⁴

PENSION AND RETIREMENT

12. Improvement to Pensions: full indexation to CPI.

At present, the MUFA pension plan provides partial indexing to inflation, whereby the five-year average fund return in excess of 4.5% is used to increase payments up to 100% of the consumer price index (CPI). If the excess is larger than the current CPI, that amount is used to supplement the previous three years to achieve full indexing. In 2020, JC's Working Group on Pension found that over the period from 1997 to 2019, the compounded pensioner and supplemental increases were 28%, falling far short of the compounded CPI increase of 51% over the same period. In short, the current formula has allowed pensioners' real income to decline substantially in the years after retirement, which is not consistent with PN6, "faculty should look forward to a good pension upon completion of their academic careers". Given that 2021-23 experienced unusually high inflation, the partially indexed plan is insufficient for retired members' needs. The current excellent financial health of the pension fund makes full indexing a prudent and feasible option to ensure that pensions are protected from high inflation.

13. Align Future Retiree Benefits with Active Member Benefits

³ MUFA Librarians have a separate Research Leave Policy and are therefore excluded from this request.

⁴ MUFA Librarians have a separate Vacation Policy and are therefore excluded from this request.

The present state of benefits for MUFA employees who have retired is undesirably complex. MUFA proposes to reduce this complexity and support operational excellence by giving retirees (and future retirees) the same benefits as currently active faculty.

References:

- [1] <https://macfaculty.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2020/07/ReflectionsAcademy.pdf>
- [2] <https://macfaculty.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2023/01/20230126-ad-hoc-Committee-on-Working-Conditions-Report.pdf>
- [3] <https://brighterworld.mcmaster.ca/>
- [4] <https://uwaterloo.ca/faculty-association/faculty-guide/faculty-professional-expense-reimbursement-plan>

Joint Committee Discussions

**University Administration
Opening Statement and Proposal
December 16, 2024**

University Administration Representatives

Dr. Susan Tighe, Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Dr. Matheus Grasselli, Deputy Provost
Dr. Martin Horn, Acting Deputy Vice-President, Research

Introduction

Since the formation of the McMaster University Faculty Association (MUFA) in 1951, faculty members and those serving as part of the administration have benefited from a collaborative and constructive relationship.

Much of the work happens in the regular, ongoing meetings of the Joint Administration/Faculty Association Committee, also referred to as Joint Committee, which is a key instrument of collegial governance at McMaster. Over the years, Joint Committee members have been successful in advancing mutual priorities and responding to emerging challenges by working together.

At the heart of these discussions is a shared understanding of the importance of being financially prudent. Responsible financial stewardship is essential to ensuring McMaster's long-term ability to provide exceptional education, foster groundbreaking research, and maintain our standing as a leading university. By making thoughtful and balanced decisions, we can continue to meet the needs of our academic community today while securing opportunities for future generations.

As we enter the current remuneration negotiations, the focus continues to be on supporting faculty members and their scholarly activities while ensuring the institution remains financially sustainable at a turbulent time for our province's universities.

Background

Over the course of the administration's most recent agreement with MUFA, McMaster and universities across Ontario and Canada have encountered unprecedented funding challenges.

- **Provincial Funding**

There are three main challenges associated with the current funding model for Ontario universities.

1. Constrained Funding Per Student (WGUs)

Funding per eligible student has remained limited under the funding model introduced in 2016. This model, based on Weighted Grant Units (WGUs) paid per eligible student, assigns a specific value to each program of study to reflect its relative cost of delivery. Since 2016, the dollar value of WGUs has been kept constant, and consequently the real value of this funding has significantly eroded due to inflationary pressures.

2. Capped Student Eligibility (Corridor)

Despite an increase of more than 11% in domestic demand for university spaces since 2020, the number of students eligible for funding remains capped under the corridor model introduced in 2016.

3. Tuition Freeze

Tuition fees for students eligible for funding need to follow the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) Tuition Framework, which mandated a 10% tuition reduction in 2019 and subsequent freeze in 2020 that is still in place and will continue for at least the next three years. This freeze has significantly constrained revenue amid rising operational costs and inflation.

This revenue shortfall has become increasingly unsustainable for Ontario's universities, intensifying pressures to find alternative funding and cost-saving measures. Initial responses to the continuing tuition freeze were to find efficiencies in operations and to increasingly rely on revenue from international tuition, which is now limited by a new federal cap on study permits.

The combination of these factors — a low base funding level for WGUs per eligible student, the cap on eligible students, and the freeze on tuition fees paid by eligible students — has created financial challenges for universities. These constraints have limited universities' ability to meet rising domestic student demand and prevented expansion to align with growing needs.

As of Fall 2024, universities are negotiating the Strategic Mandate Agreement 4 (SMA4) with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU). However, the MCU has announced that there will be no revisions to the corridor for at least the first two years of SMA4. After that, there will be discussions and potential revisions, but no promises have been made.

Calls for institutional aid adjustments resulted in the Ontario government appointing a Blue-Ribbon Panel of experts to explore ways to ensure postsecondary education in the province is financially sustainable and continues to offer the best possible student experience.

- **Response to Blue-Ribbon Panel Report**

The [Blue-Ribbon Panel's report](#) was made public in February 2024. It presented various recommendations to support Ontario's post-secondary sector, including three key recommendations designed to improve the financial stability of institutions.

The three recommendations were: (1) to end the tuition freeze for domestic students, (2) to increase funding per student (i.e., the WGU value mentioned above) and (3) to increase the number of students eligible for funding (i.e., the cap in the corridor model mentioned above).

The government's response addressed only one of these key recommendations and even then, it fell short of the panel's proposal.

A one-time funding allocation of \$903 million over three years was announced for Ontario's 47 universities and colleges. This included \$700 million in operational support, far below the panel's recommendation of \$2.5 billion to stabilize the sector.

Of that amount, McMaster will receive funding increases over three years corresponding to 3%, 2% and 2% increases in WGU value, representing the following dollar amounts:

- \$7.3M increase in 2024/25
- \$5.0M increase in 2025/26
- \$5.1M increase in 2026/27

As such, Ontario universities continue to face substantial funding pressures, with many institutions projecting significant operating deficits. The current response leaves universities reliant on further advocacy for sustained, multi-year base funding to close the growing financial gap.

- **Cap on Study Permits**

The federal government's cap on study permits announced in January 2024 is already having a negative financial impact and will continue to affect international enrolment for years to come.

The projected financial losses do not factor in the potential impacts of the additional changes announced in September, which now include Master's and PhD students within the international student cap.

McMaster's Approach to Financial Resources

McMaster remains committed to the system of shared governance we have at our university that is the hallmark of academic decision-making. It depends heavily on the participation of our colleagues, including members of McMaster's Budget Committee.

Our collaborative and transparent approach to the allocation of financial resources is meant to ensure our investments enable the academic mission of advancing knowledge and supporting student success.

Strategic Investments for Academic and Institutional Excellence

The coordinated decentralization at McMaster empowers leaders to make decisions based on the needs of their Faculty or university area.

Strategic investments are crucial for creating a robust ecosystem that enhances the core academic mission. They support the immediate educational and research needs

and build a sustainable framework for long-term success, ensuring that McMaster remains at the forefront of academic and societal advancements.

Examples of investments made to advance McMaster's institutional priorities are listed below.

Teaching and Learning: The university has invested in staffing and training to explore the opportunities and risks of generative Artificial Intelligence, to improve cybersecurity and other emerging issues.

Research and Scholarship: Investments have been made to grow McMaster's nuclear enterprise, research security and work to support innovation, commercialization and entrepreneurship.

Engaging Local, National, Indigenous and Global Communities: Increased efforts were directed to support reputation management, fundraising and alumni engagement as the university prepares for a major fundraising campaign.

Operational Excellence: The university has focused on effective responses to increased regulatory reporting requirements, investments in in-house staff to reduce external costs and new revenue generation strategies, such as the creation of the Real Estate, Ancillaries and Partnership portfolio.

Inclusive Excellence: Staff were hired to support this strategic priority both centrally and embedded within a Faculty. In addition, the university implemented the following two initiatives.

1. Gender Equity in MUFA Faculty Salaries

In April 2015, Joint Committee released a statement announcing the decision to apply an adjustment of \$3,515 to the base salary of each female faculty member on the CP/M scheme as of July 1, 2015. The decision was based on a study carried out by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis with the input of the executive members of the McMaster University Faculty Association (MUFA) that revealed a gender pay gap in salaries of McMaster faculty.

According to the latest study reflecting the sample of full-time MUFA faculty as of October 1, 2023, a gender pay gap no longer exists. The [full study](#) can be found on the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis website.

While a comparison of the median and average salary of the 1,015 full-time MUFA faculty showed lower salary for females relative to male colleagues, the study shows that several independent factors account for the salary difference and not gender. The independent variables considered were Gender, Rank, Years in Rank, Years in Rank Squared, Faculty, Appointment Stream, and Highest Degree earned.

2. Inclusive Hiring

The Strategic Excellence and Equity in Recruitment and Retention (STEER/R) Program was launched in November 2020 to advance the pursuit of inclusive excellence at McMaster.

Two key initiatives supported by STEER/R were the hiring of exceptional Black and Indigenous scholars. Over the course of the current agreement with MUFA, the university hired 12 Black and 7 Indigenous scholars between 2021-24.

These initiatives reflect a commitment to fostering a diverse academic community. It is an approach that enriches academic and research quality, and positions McMaster as a leader in equity and inclusion in higher education.

McMaster's Fiscal Reality

The university is positioned to deliver another break-even, or structurally balanced, budget as we start the planning process for the 2025-26 fiscal year. This is due to efforts made by McMaster's faculty and staff to manage costs at a time when funding is stagnant.

It is important to note that achieving a structurally balanced budget cannot rely on investment returns, which are not guaranteed and can be volatile. A fixed amount of investment income is allocated to the budget each year to stabilize operations for periods when investment returns are weak, with the remainder used to support long-term capital projects and strategic initiatives.

Given these complex challenges, McMaster enters negotiations with a commitment to maintaining a balanced approach. The focus remains on supporting faculty's academic mission and scholarly aspirations while navigating the financial pressures affecting Ontario's universities.

We also recognize that workload is a significant challenge, and we are committed to working together with MUFA to find sustainable solutions to ensure faculty members are well supported.

University Administration's Remunerations Proposal

Not all universities responded the same way when the Ontario government introduced Bill 124 in 2019. This law, officially called the Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, capped wage increases for public sector employees, including university faculty, at 1% per year for three years.

At McMaster, faculty members received additional contingent increases on top of the 1% allowed by Bill 124, setting the university apart from many others in Ontario where faculty did not see increases beyond the mandated cap.

This was a result of the university and MUFA coming together during negotiations for the last remuneration agreement and developing a solution that would provide more certainty to faculty members as Bill 124 loomed.

The university and MUFA agreed on contingent salary increases that would apply if legally permitted. In the event of the contingent increases being deemed illegal, the university and MUFA agreed on an enhancement to the Career Progression/Merit (CP/M) Structure.

McMaster faculty members received the enhancement to CP/M in Years 1, 2, and 3, and also received the contingent salary increases in Years 2 and 3 of the agreement. A summary of this compensation is below.

- **Recent Compensation**

Year 1 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023): 1.0% Across-The-Board (ATB) + 130 par units for CP/M (increase over the normal 120)

Year 2 (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024): 1.0% ATB + \$1,050 fixed amount ATB + 125 par units for CP/M. Flat dollar was equal to 0.58%

Year 3 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025): 1.0% ATB + \$1,330 fixed amount ATB + 125 par units for CP/M. Flat dollar was equal to 0.66%

The par units for the CP/M structure returned to 120 par units per 100 faculty members for the CP/M Year 2024

Proposed Compensation

Of note, the remunerations discussions will also include terms for McMaster's librarians who are members of MUFA.

- **Term**

The university proposes a 3-year term, effective July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2028.

- **Salary**

Across the Board (ATB) Salary Increases: The university proposes the following ATB increases for all MUFA members:

Year 1: 2.5%, effective the first day of the first pay period following July 1, 2025

Year 2: 2.5%, effective the first day of the first pay period following July 1, 2026

Year 3: 2.5%, effective the first day of the first pay period following July 1, 2027

- **Salary Floors**

The university proposes that salary floors and breakpoints in the CP/M scheme be adjusted to reflect the equivalent Across the Board increase on July 1 of each year of the contract, while maintaining the total pool of CP/M units at 120 par units per 100 faculty members.

Extended Health Benefits

Providing a competitive and sustainable compensation package, including robust health benefits, is essential for attracting and retaining talented faculty members who are critical to our university's research and academic mission.

At McMaster, the employer directly funds the health benefits provided to employees. With the university shouldering the full financial responsibility of rising health benefit costs, it is crucial to have a benefits plan that balances the needs and interests of faculty with long-term affordability.

The health benefits proposed in this agreement aim to ensure the continued provision of high-quality support for faculty while addressing the financial sustainability required to maintain these offerings over time. This approach reflects our shared commitment to supporting faculty well-being and ensuring McMaster remains a destination of choice for top academic talent.

- **NEW Gender Affirmation Benefit**

The university recognizes the profound impact that gender affirmation processes can have on the lives of our faculty members and their families. Understanding the unique challenges and the importance of support during this journey, the university proposes a new benefit aimed at providing meaningful assistance.

The university proposes a new \$10,000 lifetime maximum benefit per person for gender affirmation, available to each faculty member and each of their eligible dependents, effective July 1, 2025.

This benefit is designed to alleviate some of the financial burdens associated with gender transition, ensuring that our faculty members and their eligible dependents can access the necessary resources and care with greater ease. This new benefit will supplement the existing mental health, extended health, paramedical and prescription drug benefits

to enable comprehensive support. By offering this support, we continue to foster an inclusive and supportive environment where all members of our community can thrive.

- **NEW Health Care Spending Account**

The university proposes a new Health Care Spending Account (HSA) benefit of \$500 per benefit year for each faculty member, effective July 1, 2025.

The HSA may be used to cover a wide range of health and dental expenses for each faculty member and can be used for their eligible dependents, allowing for personal customization of this benefit.

Faculty members will have the flexibility to use their HSA dollars to either “top up” traditional benefits by covering any out-of-pocket expenses (such as co-pays, deductibles, or amounts in excess of annual maximums) or to cover benefits not eligible under the benefit plan. For example, a member could use their HSA dollars to top up their coverage for a major dental procedure, or for the services of an acupuncturist that is not covered under paramedical services.

- **NEW Prior-Authorization of Prescription Drugs**

To ensure the long-term sustainability of McMaster’s benefits plan, the university proposes introducing a Prior Authorization process for certain prescription drugs, effective July 1, 2025. Administered by Sun Life, this approach will promote responsible benefits management while maintaining high-quality health care outcomes for faculty members.

Prior Authorization ensures that medications meet Health Canada approval and specific medical eligibility criteria before they are covered. This step safeguards the integrity of the benefits plan by confirming that the most effective, evidence-based treatments are being utilized. It also helps to manage the increasing costs of claims, supporting the sustainability of the plan for all members.

Key Features of the Proposal

- **No Impact on Current Users:** Faculty members and dependents already using medications that will fall under Prior Authorization as of 120 days before the effective date will be grandfathered and automatically pre-approved.
- **Maintained Drug Formulary:** The current list of covered prescription drugs will remain unchanged, ensuring continuity in access.
- **Enhanced Access to Care:** Faculty members can benefit from Sun Life’s Preferred Pharmacy Network, which provides additional support and convenience.

By introducing Prior Authorization, McMaster is taking a proactive step to balance the needs of faculty members with the university’s responsibility to sustain the benefits plan

for the future. This change allows us to continue offering a competitive and comprehensive health package while ensuring the plan remains viable in the years ahead.