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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.

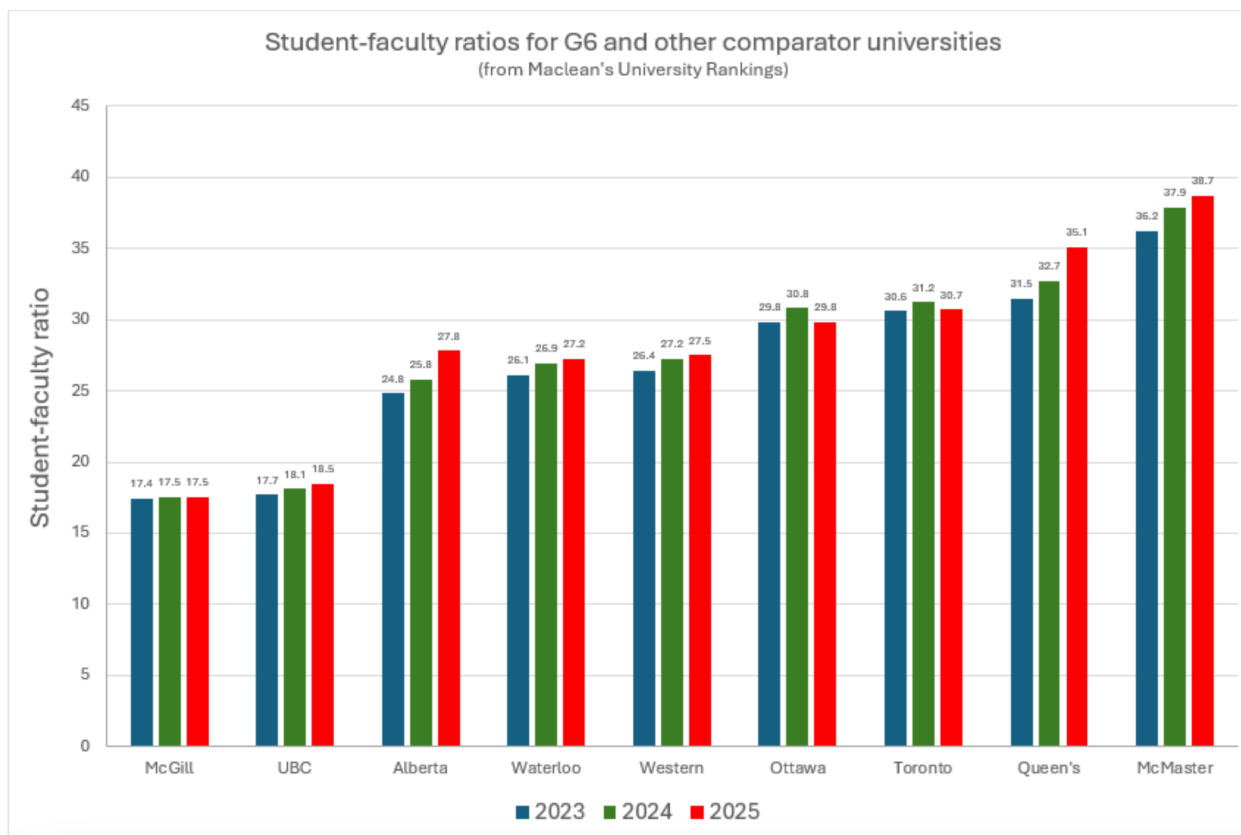
CONTEXT FOR NEGOTIATION

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]

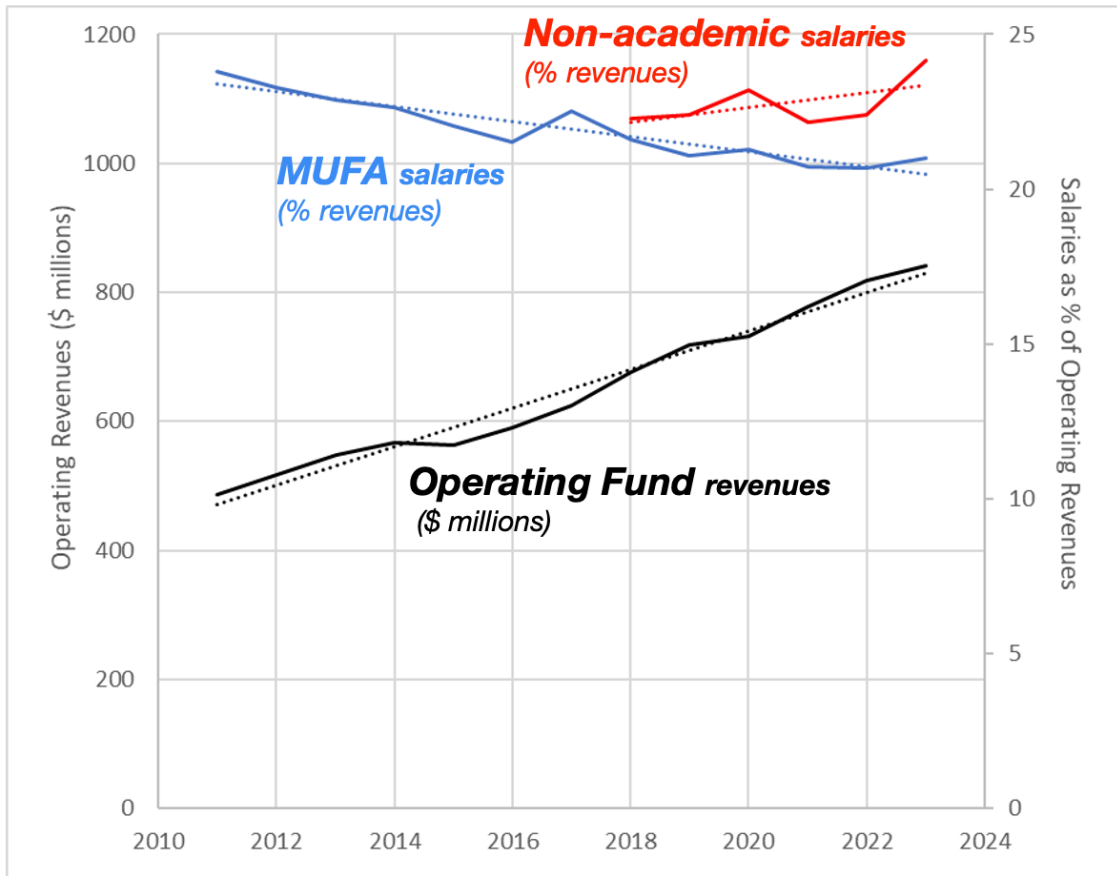
We observe that our rankings in the highly cited world university rankings have consistently slipped in the last 5 years; we include the Times Higher Education rankings for the last 5 years as an example in the table below. While we certainly do not claim a direct causal relationship, MUFA asks whether 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.



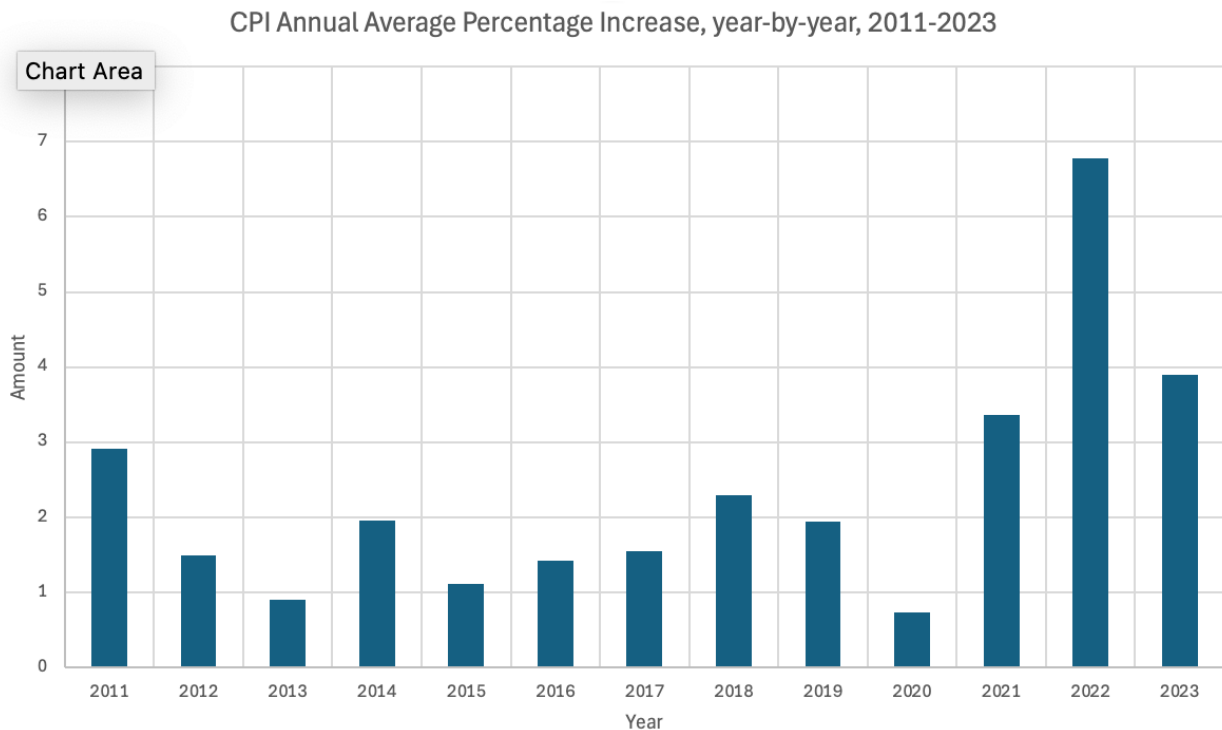
To preserve the essential mission of the University, it is imperative to initiate a sustained and strong commitment to increasing faculty complement. This is possible due to the robust financial health of the University. MUFA trusts the University Administration agrees that, even in challenging times, 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>