

**McMASTER UNIVERSITY
FACULTY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**

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**SPECIAL REPORT:
Teaching Stream Report
Implications and Next Steps**



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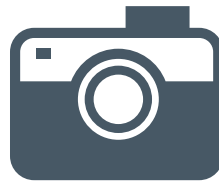
Eugenia Zuroski
Academic Affairs
English and Cultural Studies

We want you!

We're always looking for volunteers to contribute to our shared mission of representing and protecting the interests of all faculty members.

Our association is better able to serve our diverse membership when our executive, ad-hoc committees, MUFA Council, and MUFA representatives on university committees are similarly diverse. You have the skills, expertise, and lived experience to contribute to this important work—[join us!](#)

To learn more about volunteering email us at mufa@mcmaster.ca.



MUFA is always looking for pictures that represent McMaster and faculty to use on our website and in our newsletters. If you have any pictures you would like to share, please email them to mufa@mcmaster.ca.

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Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Association or of its Executive.

Cover: McMaster Campus Photo by Christian Braun

Planning for Retirement

If you are considering retiring in the next few years, be sure to check out the [Human Resources' Planning for Retirement website](#).

McMaster offers a number of programs and policies to support transition into retirement, which are specific to each employee group.

Your [HR Advisor](#) can support you through what is available to you, based on your various personal factors.

What Are Faculty Perceptions of Student Accommodations?

Let us know by filling out this 5-10-minute [questionnaire](#).

Note: This survey is anonymous. Participation in this survey is voluntary.

This survey is part of a student thesis project.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Abraham (abrahj19@mcmaster.ca) or Dr. Mayu Nishimura (nishimm@mcmaster.ca)

This study has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance by the McMaster Research Ethics Board (#7493).

Welcome New Members

Louise Lafortune
Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact

Angela Zavaleta Bernuy
Computing and Software

Save the Date

MUFA Community Discussion (see page 9 for information): March 26, 2:30PM

MUFA Faculty Council: April 30, 10:30AM

MUFA Annual General Meeting: May 1, 1:30PM

Passages

Kao-Lee Liaw
Geography
January 22, 2025

Paul Younger
Religion
January 5, 2025

Special Report:

On the Teaching Stream Faculty Working Group Recommendations and Next Steps: Important implications for all faculty

Background and Context

As part of the 2021-22 remuneration negotiations, the Joint Administration-MUFA Committee ('Joint Committee') agreed to form a Working Group to review current policies related to teaching-stream faculty. Convened in 2023, this Working Group was tasked with examining university, faculty, and departmental policies that affect teaching-stream faculty, with specific attention paid to: job security, workload, promotion criteria, committee participation, and career progression. After consulting with teaching-stream faculty and reviewing relevant policy documents and practices affecting teaching-stream faculty, the Working Group prepared its [Report on Teaching-Stream Faculty Policies and Procedures](#)¹ (henceforth called "the Report"). The Report presents an important set of recommendations aimed at revising the policies related to teaching-stream faculty at McMaster University.

MUFA's mandate is to represent and protect the interests of all faculty members and senior academic librarians of McMaster University. It is not a union, but a professional association responsible for collective bargaining with the Administration. MUFA strongly supports enhancing the job security, working conditions and pathways to promotion for teaching-stream members. MUFA also seeks to protect the interests of our tenure-stream and special/CAWAR-stream members.

In this context, it is important to note that while members of the Working Group did include tenure-stream faculty, the Working Group's consultation process primarily involved teaching-stream faculty, without soliciting input from other streams (the Report, pp. 6-7). Nonetheless, some of the recommendations outlined in the Report have important implications for all MUFA members in all streams.

In particular, several of the Report's proposals involve potential changes to the [Faculty Tenure and Promotion policy](#) (the "Yellow Document"). The Yellow Document is a critically important policy that governs tenure, promotion, and other key aspects of faculty roles at McMaster. The Yellow Document governs all full-time instructional staff, including teaching-stream, special-stream, and tenure-stream faculty members¹. Any proposed modifications to the Yellow Document therefore require broad consultation and careful assessment of their impact on faculty across all streams.

¹ As in the Yellow Document, references below to tenure-stream are assumed to include special-stream.

Some of the recommendations outlined in the Report have important implications for all MUFA members in all streams

In this newsletter, we focus exclusively on the Recommendation #1 in the Report because the University Administration has only agreed to consider implementation of Recommendation #1 at this time. The next step will be a joint drafting committee to consider changes to the Yellow Document based on Recommendation #1. We emphasize that MUFA's current focus on Recommendation #1 is not intended to minimize Recommendations #2 and #3, which address many other concerns, such as workload. MUFA affirms the importance of these issues, and will facilitate a robust discussion of them among members and the Administration in the future.

As part of our member consultation process regarding Recommendation #1, we are circulating a survey and are hosting a Community Discussion event; please see details at the end of this newsletter.

The Report's Recommendation for Changes to the Yellow Document:

Below is the full text of Recommendation #1 from the Report:

Recommendation 1: That Joint Committee strike a drafting committee to review and amend the current Tenure and Promotion policy with a focus on the following items:

(a) To eliminate the category of permanence, and instead have all faculty members be tenured with two streams. This would mean that both our research-stream and teaching-stream faculty would be a candidate for re-appointment, tenure and/or promotion on the same "clock". This would also mean that, just like for research-stream faculty, for our teaching-stream faculty "with tenure comes promotion".

(b) To update the Tenure and Promotion (Yellow Document) criteria for our Teaching-stream faculty members in a manner that simplifies and clarifies the language. We should expect the same level of teaching quality from our Research-stream and our Teaching-stream faculty members, using the same abstract language.

(c) To update the Tenure and Promotion (Yellow Document) criteria for our Teaching-stream faculty members such that the criteria for Tenure are related to quality teaching and scholarly activities that include the scholarship of teaching and learning and relevant scholarly activities. There is a need for significant discussion of the requirement of pedagogical research for tenure and promotion for teaching-stream faculty. Some current requirements for promotion to Associate Professor should be eliminated given their infeasibility.

Context for Recommendations 1(a),(b), and (c)

Recommendation 1(a) seeks to address concerns about job security and academic freedom for teaching-stream faculty. Currently, teaching-stream faculty members

These changes would go far to address the Report's call for improved job security and academic freedom for teaching-stream faculty.

Aligning teaching expectations across streams would affect MUFA members of all streams, not just those in the teaching-stream.

can be dismissed without cause if curricular changes make their positions redundant. In addition, permanence does not ensure the academic freedom protections associated with tenure. Recommendation 1(a) points to three specific changes in the Yellow Document. The first recommends that language of permanence be replaced with that of tenure, which would provide both job security and academic freedom². Second, aligning the "clocks" of the two streams would require some revisions³. Finally, linking promotion to tenure would require substantive revisions to the criteria for promotion for teaching stream faculty (further discussed below)⁴. The Report does not address the impact of these proposed changes on current permanent Assistant Teaching Professors, including whether they should automatically be promoted or go through a review process under revised guidelines. Together, these changes would go far to address the Report's call for improved job security and academic freedom for teaching-stream faculty⁵.

Recommendation 1(b) seeks to address concerns about how teaching is evaluated for all full-time faculty streams and has two parts: (1) simplifying and clarifying the criteria for evaluating the teaching of teaching-stream faculty members and (2) adopting the "same level of teaching quality" for both tenure and teaching-stream faculty members. The Report highlights current references to "effective" teaching for tenure-stream faculty and "excellent" teaching for teaching-stream faculty, and suggests these references could be revised to provide greater clarity⁶. [Supplemental Policy Statement \(SPS\) B1](#) provides additional context in its description of the types of procedures for the review of teaching, including the role of student and peer feedback⁷.

The Report, however, does not explain the second part of 1(b), which recommends that "We should expect the same level of teaching quality from our Research-stream and our Teaching-stream faculty members...". Aligning teaching expectations across streams would affect MUFA members of all streams, not just those in the teaching-stream. Yet the Report does not explain which standard should be adopted and why. For these reasons, it is important that MUFA widely consults its membership so that MUFA and the University administration understand members' preferences on this recommendation⁸.

² Replacing references to permanence with tenure would be required throughout Sections II and III. Also, Section VII would need to be removed.

³ Revisions would include edits to Section II, 6-9 to include the teaching-stream and deletions to some other paragraphs in that section.

⁴ Currently, Section III, 25-26 discusses the timing of permanence and promotion, which would need to be amended as well as the cross-references in a handful of other paragraphs in that Section.

⁵ According to MUFA's review of review of other Canadian collective agreements (CAs) with teaching-stream appointments, 15 CAs provide teaching-stream faculty members with tenure and 22 with permanence.

⁶ See Section III, 5-6.

⁷ SPS B1 also references a range of contributions to teaching that could be referenced in any future revisions for clarity to Section III, 5-6.

⁸ At least 3 other university CAs (Trent, Carleton, and University of Toronto) have similar standards for the evaluation of teaching by tenure-stream and teaching-stream; however, committee compositions and/or processes vary.

Recommendation 1(c), which is related to the promotion criteria for teaching stream faculty members, has three parts. First, the Report recommends an update to the criteria for tenure to “include the scholarship of teaching and learning and relevant scholarly activities” (emphasis added)⁹. Second, the Report recommends discussion of the requirement that “scholarship in teaching or pedagogy is required for promotion” (emphasis added)¹⁰. Third, the Report also recommends that “Some current requirements for promotion to Associate Professor should be eliminated given their infeasibility” (emphasis added).

If we implement Recommendation 1(a) (i.e., replace permanence with tenure and link promotion and tenure for the teaching-stream), then the first and third recommendations in 1(c) appear potentially contradictory¹¹. However, a closer read of the criteria for promotion for teaching-stream faculty (Section III, pp. 26-27) may suggest a way forward. These paragraphs list several criteria related to promotion (the Report, pp. 10-12). Both paragraphs also state that promotion requires “recognition in two or more areas, but not necessarily all” (emphasis added). The list of possible activities is broad, including “excellence in teaching practice,” “research in pedagogical and related areas,” and four or five other activities related to the University’s educational mission. If Section III, paragraph 11 of the Yellow Document is amended by removing the specific requirement for scholarship in teaching or pedagogy to be consistent with Section III, 26-27 and changes for Recommendation 1(a) are implemented elsewhere (Section III, 24-25), then only revisions or additions to the list of activities that can be considered toward promotion and tenure would be needed to ensure multiple pathways and flexibility for teaching-stream colleagues to achieve promotion and tenure, accommodating the diversity of roles and contributions across teaching-stream faculty members¹². Nonetheless, MUFA needs better information about which teaching-related activities should be added to these lists.

Concluding Comments and Immediate Next Steps

MUFA recognizes and affirms that these issues are of great interest and importance to teaching-stream faculty members. At the same time, the Report includes ambiguities, particularly around Recommendation 1(c). Further, the Report recommends, particularly in 1(b), changes to the Yellow Document that would affect all faculty streams, though not all streams were consulted.

⁹ The current criteria for permanence are in Section III, 24-25.

¹⁰ This requirement is only mentioned once in the Yellow Document, in one sentence in Section III, 11. This sentence contradicts Section III, 26 and 27, which detail the criteria for promotion in the teaching-stream. The latter sections were revised in June 2019.

¹¹ In Recommendation 1(c), the first sentence asks for a criterion to be added for tenure, while the third sentence asks that some criteria for promotion be removed.

¹² That is, the concerns raised in the Report’s Recommendation 1(c) could potentially be addressed with revisions to Section III, 11 and 25-27. Other CAs vary in their expectation for teaching-stream faculty members to engage in pedagogical research. Ottawa, for example, references a range of activities, similar to those currently listed in Section III, 26-27.

MUFA’s mandate is to protect the interests of all of its members. To ensure that all faculty perspectives are considered in any revision of the Yellow Document, MUFA has prepared a survey to gather input from members across all streams regarding aspects of Recommendation #1 that, if implemented, would involve potential changes to the Yellow Document. The anonymous survey, which will be sent to MUFA members via email shortly, includes questions about the specific recommendations discussed above as well as open-ended responses for additional feedback.

In addition, we are organizing a MUFA Community Discussion event on Wednesday March 26, 2025, 2:30PM–4:30PM in Gilmour Hall, Rm 111 (Council Chambers), to provide faculty members with a space to discuss the recommendations, to voice concerns, pose questions, and to collaboratively explore potential solutions.

These initiatives will help MUFA and the Administration understand our members’ priorities and concerns related to implementing the Report’s recommendations, and to advance and protect the interests of all members in an informed, collaborative manner. We appreciate your engagement and look forward to your participation.

From the 2024-2025 MUFA Executive

Faculty Workshop Series

Hosted by the Office of the Provost

These workshops expose faculty to McMaster's various management and support structures and involve guest speakers from across campus to present critical topics for career success.

Thursday, March 20

Local & Global Collaborations

Explore how internationalization efforts intersect with collaborative initiatives, emphasizing interdisciplinary approaches for positive global impact. Learn how to embrace collaboration across disciplines and borders, leveraging internationalization efforts.

Register at: [Collaborations](#)

Thursday, April 24

Societal Impact & Community Engagement

Join us for an insightful and comprehensive session that combines the expertise of university leaders and community engagement professionals, as we explore how to create meaningful and sustainable community collaborations and academic partnerships to drive impactful change.

Register at: [Societal Impact & Community Engagement](#)

Please also complete our [pre-session survey](#). This will help us tailor the session to meet your needs

Check out the [Faculty Leadership and Development Resource Hub](#) for other workshops and events offered through the Provost's office and across campus.