



# Newsletter

DECEMBER 2000/JANUARY 2001, VOLUME 27.3  
Miroslav Lovric, EDITOR

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## President's Report

### Delivered at the General Meeting on November 28, 2000

This interim President's Report will be a short one this year. Most of the items in which the Executive and the Joint Committee have been involved over the Fall have already been discussed:

- (1) the Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty during Work Stoppages;
- (2) the revisions to the CP/M Plan;
- (3) the progress of the pension surplus distribution.

Other than to ask you to ensure that you make your voice heard by voting on the CP/M and Rights and Responsibilities documents, there is not much more to be said in these areas. As for the pension surplus distributions, the only comment I wish to make is a pragmatic one — realize that you will be given a choice between receiving money and not receiving money. I, for one, will opt for the money! [see [Pension Surplus Update](#)]

Because we do not have to spend our time preparing for negotiations this year, the Executive has had time to discuss a number of issues which impinge on MUFA members' "quality of life" at McMaster.

### 1. Commercialization of the University

More and more the University is faced with the dilemma of whether to accept donations or to accept research funding when there are "strings" attached to them. The Mactron is a case in point, albeit a trivial one. The Mactron is a great addition to our sports programme, but was an eyesore in the way it was used under the original agreement. In a related vein, but more important, research agreements such as those with pharmaceutical companies (viz Nancy Olivieri) or funded chairs, tied to certain companies or industries, can potentially limit our historical right to academic freedom by requiring us to suppress research outcomes which are adverse to the sponsor. Indeed, the future of universities which rely more and more on such tied funding will be determined more by their sponsors than by their pursuit of

knowledge through groundbreaking innovative research. This will profoundly change the nature of universities and we at McMaster need to monitor what quid pro quo is required when we accept donations of any type.

## **2. Participation in Academic Life and Governance**

One of the things that has impressed me over the years is the number of dedicated individuals who have been willing to dedicate their time to MUFA as well as to the various bodies such as Senate and other committees which participate in the governance of the University. It has become more and more evident in recent years, however, that it is the same people who repeatedly take on these burdens. As well, election to Senate or appointment to committees seems to have become an honorific rather than a true participation in making decisions in the institution. Committee reports, such as those that related to Canada Research Chairs, pass through Senate without any discussion or only token questioning. In fact, in the Senate it seems that only the student members are ready to debate issues relating to them.

Apathy in University affairs has become a way of life. Of course, we are rewarded primarily for doing our teaching and research and very much less so for becoming actively involved in administration (unless we hold an administrative position like Dean) and this partially explains why active participation seems to be declining. There is a problem with this however. Major changes are taking place and need to take place at McMaster to cope with the large influx of students starting in 2002/2003 related to the double cohort. It is important that we become involved in guiding and helping to design these changes and not simply to have changes imposed upon us. For example, two questions relating to this issue that have been raised several times are:

- How does our first year curriculum have to change to accommodate students without an OAC background?
- How can we recruit sufficient, talented faculty in time to teach the additional courses needed to service all of these additional students?

These issues we hope are under discussion at the Faculty level, but faculty members need to become more involved in trying to develop workable solutions to these and other problems faced by McMaster.

One of the reasons I became involved in MUFA (I have been on the Executive ten years out of the twenty I have been a faculty member) is that I believe that if I want to have an effect on the terms and conditions of my employment, MUFA participation is the way to accomplish it. In fact, I have learned that MUFA is indeed an important player in University governance. By participating in MUFA, the quality of life of faculty and librarians is affected greatly.

I believe that faculty members and librarians need to consider their participation, whether it be with MUFA or with the University, and try to make a more effective contribution to University governance.

## **3. Faculty Complement**

As mentioned before, the state of McMaster's faculty is in flux. One of the problems that we cope with continuously is trying to determine how many active faculty we currently have and how many will be needed, given increased student numbers and retirements over the next five to ten years. It is troubling that different numbers are quoted in different contexts making any MUFA assessment of the state of the faculty very difficult. All of us need to be aware (as most probably are) that McMaster has a faculty shortfall that must be addressed if we are to maintain our position as a research intensive institution.

## **4. The President's House**

Because Peter George has purchased a house in Ancaster, he is no longer going to make use of the

President's House as his primary residence. Many will remember that during the ten years of Alvin Lee's presidency the President's House was used as a Bed and Breakfast for visitors to the McMaster campus as well as for receptions, dinners, etc. A number of MUFA members have suggested to me that the President's House should be returned to such a use. I have mentioned this to a number of administrators who agreed that this is a good idea since the previous ten-year use of the House for temporary accommodation created tremendous good will for the University. MUFA will pursue this further and may be calling on individual librarians and faculty members to try to gain support for this use of the President's House.

Stranger than Fiction

## 5. MUFA's 50th Anniversary

In the 2001/2002 academic year MUFA celebrates its Golden Anniversary. To this end, we have begun to discuss various special activities that MUFA will undertake during that year. One activity which we have begun is to solicit past MUFA presidents to prepare essays on their presidential year to be compiled into a celebratory volume for our 50th Anniversary. A number of individuals have already responded and we hope the volume (which we hope to publish) will serve as an informal first pass at a history of MUFA. Our hope is that a formal history can be written in the near future.

A few things we learned about our organization in assembling materials are that McMaster was a founding member of both (indeed the founder) of CAUT and OCUFA. We can indeed be proud of our 50 years as an Association.

*Bernadette Lynn  
MUFA President*



Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 2001 because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances.

Department of Social Services



## Pension Surplus Update

As you are all aware, we are approaching a crucial period regarding the proposed Pension Surplus distribution. Things are moving forward on many fronts and you will all see the results of our labours soon. In this update, I just want to outline what is happening over the next little while.

First, barring any last minute glitches, you should receive a package in early February with a report outlining the agreement, a statement giving you an estimate of your surplus share, and an invitation to a meeting of Plan members where you can have the agreement explained to

you and ask details of our (the Plan members) lawyer and actuary. I will also attend all meetings for faculty and librarians to answer your questions. Finally, you will also receive in the packet an authorization for your signature which will authorize our lawyers to act on your behalf in agreeing to the surplus distribution plan.

The meetings will be held in study break week and in the two subsequent weeks. Separate meetings are planned for staff, faculty, clinical faculty and retirees based on the expectation that members of the different groups will have different interests and questions. You will be invited to a particular meeting, but if you cannot make that one because of scheduled commitments, you can attend another. For those who are not able to attend any meeting, there will be a toll free phone number and an e-mail address established where you can ask questions of our lawyers and actuaries.

Voting (or more accurately, authorization of the law firm to act on your behalf) will take place up until the end of April. Failure to vote is a NO vote in this context according to Ontario Pension law and will mean you will not share in the surplus. It is, therefore, very important that you sign and send in the authorization. If you have not received the package and you know that others have, make sure you follow up and find out what has happened to your package. The MUFA Office will be able to help in this regard.

As I have mentioned on other occasions, once the voting is complete, there are still many other steps to complete before a distribution is possible. This includes authorization from the Ontario Courts, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, and Revenue Canada. If we get the voting done by the end of April as outlined above, I am hopeful that we are still on target for an end of the year or early 2002 distribution.

I look forward to seeing you at the meetings.

*Les Robb  
Professor of Economics*

## Announcements

### Welcome New Members

|                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Fred Aswani     | Economics              |
| Barry Bartlett  | Kinesiology            |
| Hans U. Boden   | Math & Statistics      |
| Alan Flint      | School of the Arts     |
| Steven E. Hanna | Rehabilitation Science |
| Rashid Khan     | Economics              |
| Helene M. Larin | Nursing                |

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Andrew Martindale | Anthropology       |
| Paul Z. Rivers    | School of the Arts |
| Bernardo Trigatti | Biochemistry       |
| Andre Turcotte    | Political Science  |

### **Ballots Ratified**

I have counted the ballots which were distributed to all MUFA members on the Career Progress/Merit Plan on November 20, 2000 requesting a YES or NO response to the following question:

*I hereby approve the revisions to the Faculty Career Progress/Merit Plan as agreed to by the Joint Committee on November 1, 2000.*

**Responses**  
**YES 158 NO 2 SPOILED 3**  
**Total Ballots Cast 163**

I have counted the ballots which were distributed to all MUFA faculty members on November 20, 2000 requesting a YES or NO response to the following question:

*I hereby approve the Statement on Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty during Work Stoppages by Other Groups at McMaster University as agreed to by the Joint Committee on October 30, 2000.*

**Responses**  
**YES 168 NO 3 SPOILED 3**  
**Total Ballots Cast 174**

*E. R. Mead, Returning Officer  
December 4, 2000*



## **Retirement Tip**

You have to apply 6 MONTHS IN ADVANCE to obtain Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS) benefits. Call 1-800-277-9914 for an application or drop into their office in the Standard Life Building.

### **Board of Governors Approves MUFF Proposals**

At its meeting on December 14, 2000, the Board of Governors approved the proposals put forward by the MUFF Committee. (The McMaster University Futures Fund is funded by the interest earned on the cash that could not be remitted to the Pension Plan as a result of limitations imposed by Revenue Canada.) Two of the provisions will be of special interest to faculty and librarians.

**Continuation of Conference Support.** A faculty or staff member may receive one allocation of \$650 in

the period July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001. To qualify for funding, a faculty member must be the author of a paper presented to a conference and a staff member must make a formal presentation at a provincial, national or international conference of an organization that is appropriate to the employee's employment activity at McMaster. [Application forms](#) are available on the MUFA web site.

**Scholarships.** MUFF has set aside \$100,000 for scholarships for the children of members of the salaried pension plan. This is a continuation of last year's allocation.

### **Know Your Benefits: Out of Province Medical Coverage**

Teaching staff and librarians are covered under the Blue Cross Deluxe Option "Health Plan While Outside Canada" for emergency medical expenses up to a lifetime maximum of \$1,000,000 for any one trip up to 120 days. In the event of a medical emergency, the plan member should contact the Medical Alarm Centre indicated on the Blue Cross Card. Claims in excess of \$200 will be coordinated with OHIP through Blue Cross. The employee may be required to pay for expenses less than \$200 and submit to Blue Cross for reimbursement. A procedure to assist you with such claims can be obtained through Human Resources.

For any trip which is for periods beyond 120 days, an application must be sent to HR for extended coverage. This coverage is provided only in those situations where the employee is travelling on University business. A \$50 processing fee is charged; the University will pay the premiums. Continued coverage under these programmes while travelling is dependent on having OHIP or equivalent coverage.

### **OCUFA Teaching & Academic Librarianship Awards**

**NOMINATIONS** are invited from individuals, informal groups of faculty or students, or both, and such organizations as local faculty associations, faculty or college councils, university committees concerned with teaching and learning, librarians, local student councils, departments, alumni, etc.

**GUIDELINES** to assist in organizing a nomination should be consulted by prospective nominators and are available on request from your Faculty Association Office or the Provincial Office of OCUFA.

**NOMINATIONS** must include a covering nomination form, a nominator's brief, and sufficient evidence, from as many sources as possible, to make it clear that outstanding work deserving of recognition has been done.

**DEADLINE** for receipt of nominations: February 23, 2001.

**The original and six copies of the submission** should be sent to:

OCUFA Teaching & Academic  
Librarianship Awards Committee

27 Carlton Street, Suite 400  
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1L2

**INQUIRIES TO:** 416-979-2117 or your Faculty Association Office (ext. 24682; mufa@mcmaster.ca)

### **MP Comments on SSHRC Funding**

Reform/Alliance MP Ted White (member for Lynn Valley) recently wrote this in response to a letter from a UBC professor:

Although I do not question that some of the research funded by the SSHRC has been quite constructive and forward-looking, I also know that much of it is not. For example, I cannot conceive of any way in which research in the fields of fine arts, classical studies, philosophy, anthropology, modern languages and literature, or medieval studies, which together accounted for over \$5.3 million in grants from SSHRC in the last fiscal year, contributes to any 'understanding of Canadian society of the challenges we face as we enter the 21st century.' Research into such fields, as far as my constituents are concerned, constitutes a personal past-time, and has no benefit to Canadian taxpayers. As their representative, I cannot justify funding such activities with their tax dollars.

### **2001/2002 Executive**



If you are interested in serving on the Faculty Association Executive or know of someone who would make an excellent candidate, please contact us: Hamilton Hall 103A; Ext. 24682; mufa@mcmaster.ca).  
**DEADLINE — FEBRUARY 28, 2001.**

### **Volunteers Needed!**

A voluntary organization such as the McMaster University Faculty Association can succeed in serving the interests of its membership only to the extent that the members participate in formulating and executing policy. At any given time, approximately two dozen individuals carry the burden for all of the members and after a few years most of them are exhausted by the tasks which they have voluntarily borne. Their valuable experience and wisdom is then lost to us. The best way to lessen this attrition of talent is for more of the membership to give some time and effort to the Association. If you are not interested in putting your name forward for the Executive Committee, please use the form below to let us know if you would like to participate in MUFA's efforts by serving on one of the following committees.

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Yes, I am interested in working more closely with the Faculty Association. My interests are:

|                      |                      |                                |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| MUFA Council ___     | Pension ___          | Ad Hoc Committees ___          |
| Academic Affairs ___ | Public Relations ___ | Special Assignment ___         |
| Human Rights ___     | Remunerations ___    | 50th Anniversary Committee ___ |
| Library ___          | Grievances ___       |                                |
| Membership ___       | Tenure ___           |                                |

Are there other areas where the Faculty Association might be useful to its members?

\_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ EXTENSION \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Return form to McMaster University Faculty Association, HH 103A

January 23, 2001  
pdk