

McMaster University Faculty Association

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McMaster University Faculty Association (MUFA) Remuneration Brief

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OPENING STATEMENT

MUFA is a non-unionized faculty association that works with the McMaster University Administration to advance our shared interests of excellence in research, providing a superb learning environment for our students, while engaging the external community in our work. In the specific domain pertaining to faculty 1 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. The negotiation process begins with an exchange of remuneration briefs by December 15 and is expected to be completed by March 15 of the following year. In the event that agreement is not reached through negotiations, both sides prepare a final offer, only one of which will be selected in toto by a mutually agreed upon labour arbitrator. 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 MUFA's remuneration brief. Past experience supports our successful use of this process, as negotiations have rarely proceeded to Final Offer Selection in the last 27 years.

In addition to the negotiation framework of the JC TOR, we are fortunate to have a set of 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 three sections; Salary, Benefits and Research Support. However, many of the principles for negotiation transcend all three categories and will appear more than once.

^{*}The term 'faculty' is used throughout this brief to refer to faculty members who participate in the Career Progress/Merit Scheme and MUFA Librarians.

FACULTY RENEWAL

Faculty renewal continues to be one of the highest priorities of MUFA members over the last several years. Renewing faculty is critical to the academic mission of the university and contributes to enhancing the working conditions of MUFA members. The absence of planned faculty renewal in the last decade, and at the same time a steady increase in students, as well new programs in almost all Faculties, has led to several serious consequences: (1) Large class sizes and possibly a negative impact on teaching/learning effectiveness and the student experience; (2) Increase in precarious academic work to meet the increase in number of students and new courses; and (3) Increase in faculty workload resulting in low morale and possibly turnover in some departments.

To understand the impact of a lack of a faculty renewal strategy we look at the changes in different employee groups during the last decade (see Table I). We find that tenure-track faculty has *decreased* by 38.5% over the last ten years! The other category that decreased is CLAs which can be explained by the addition of teaching-stream faculty. Indeed, the total CLA and teaching-stream faculty has increased by 5.4% compared to the number of CLAs in 2007. We also find that the total faculty number went from 876 in 2007 to 834 in 2017, a *decrease* of 4.8% at a time when all other employee categories have increased from 6.9% to 66.7%. During the same period, the number of students jumped from 26,172 to 31,843 or an increase of 21.7%. This places McMaster in 14th place out of 15 in Maclean's 2019 University Rankings for Student/Faculty ratio in the Medical/Doctoral category. PN8 specifically addresses the issues of Student/Faculty ratio and lack of faculty renewal 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".

Table I: Employee/Students Headcount Comparison					
Employee Type	2007	2017	% change		
CAW/Unifor	2,180	2,331	6.9		
Tenure	586	599	2.2		
TMG	528	643	21.8		
CLA	147	74	-49.7		
Tenure-Track	130	80	-38.5		
Teaching-Track	13	26	100.0		
Senior Administration	9	15	66.7		
Permanence	0	55	NA		
All faculty	876	834	-4.8		
Students	26,172	31,843	21.7%		
Faculty/Students Ratio	29.87	38.18	21.8%		
Source: IRA Fact Book, Graduate Studies Calendar, MUFA database and Statistics Canada					

The second strongest message we have heard from our members over the last several years is that they are feeling overwhelmed. While maintaining their commitment to excellence, faculty are taking on ever greater job responsibilities due in part to the increase in workload from increased student numbers and the gradual loss of their peers. In our recent survey, faculty report spending 57 hours per week to fulfill

their commitments to Teaching, Research, and Service. Several faculty members have also indicated the expectation that they are required to serve at different campuses (Main, MIP, and RJC) as well as attend evening and weekend marketing and fundraising events. This stark imbalance in work-life balance is unsustainable and in the long run is likely to lead to lower productivity, high levels of stress, and burnout.

It is both necessary to the academic health of the University and possible due to the financial health of the University to remedy this situation through a strong commitment by the University to faculty renewal. While we are encouraged by the recently announced renewal plan, we believe it is not sufficient to redress the imbalance explained above and fear that financial uncertainty may be used as an excuse to not execute it.

We also believe that it is essential to address the precarious academic work situation on campus by a data-driven and transparent discussion of the issue and ways to move forward. In this regard, we are encouraged by the agreement in principle that was achieved in the Joint Committee in regards to teaching faculty complement. This will partially address the precarious work issue by allowing Faculties to streamline hiring teaching professors in lieu of CLAs.

FACULTY COMPENSATION

Our internal process for developing a proposal for salary and benefits has been based on two complementary approaches. In the fall of 2018, we surveyed our members in what has become traditionally 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).

In the area of **Salary**, MUFA reaffirms its commitment to the reward of academic excellence and supports the CP/M Scheme (PN3). To keep pace with settlements at our comparator universities and inflation, we propose a modest salary increase. Our benchmarking clearly indicates by objective measures that our current level of compensation is not commensurate with our high level of performance.

In the area of **Benefits**, we have identified areas of our health benefits that require attention: Mental health is an important health issue that can disrupt a faculty's career if not treated properly (PN4). A recent study by the University and College Union in the UK¹ has found growing stress levels among academics due to heavy workloads, a long-hours culture and conflicting management demands. It also found that academics experience higher stress than those in the wider population. Furthermore, with the increase in students seeking help with mental health issues², faculty are increasingly on the front lines, identifying and supporting students, leading to "caregiver burnout" stress and compassion fatigue. Thus, we propose to add mental health care benefits and pool our paramedical plan to better serve our members. The quality of our health benefits affects all of our members and is a key factor in workplace productivity.

In mid-career, the attention of many of our members turns to putting their children through university. Adoption of a tuition bursary tenable outside of McMaster would be an attractive inducement for recruitment, and arguably a necessity to compete for the best new faculty. We also heard loudly and clearly from a broad spectrum of our membership the need to preserve a strong pension plan. This is a recruitment issue as much as it is an obligation to provide for our retirees. We found that due to the structure of our pension plan, the payments are simply not keeping up with inflation, significantly diminishing the value of this benefit. Finally, we think it is time to update our basic life insurance that has been unchanged since 1985 with a fixed cap that does not reflect today's financial realities (PN2).

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 by supporting the research leave policy and Professional Development Allowance (PDA). The PDA is in need of maintenance with respect to inflation, and in particular due to the deterioration in the exchange rate with the US dollar over the last 4 years. We have also proposed an enhanced PDA allocation for faculty on Research Leave. An essential benefit and recruitment tool for today's workplace is employer support of families through robust pregnancy/parental leaves and child care support. We believe that it is crucial to support our faculty members in the early stages of their careers, where family obligations often compete with the demands of tenure and promotion.

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, competitive and attractive work environment.

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

Keinman, G. and Wray, S. (2013). <u>Higher stress: a survey of stress and well-being among staff in higher education</u>.

² A 2016 survey found that 20% of Canadian postsecondary students have mental health issues and 13% indicated seriously contemplating suicide. Pang W. (2017). <u>Peace of mind: universities see spike in students seeking mental-health help</u>, Globe and Mail, October 18, 2017.

PROPOSALS FOR July 1, 2019

1. Length of Contract

MUFA proposes a two-year contract from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2021.

2. Career Progress and Merit

MUFA reaffirms its commitment to the reward of academic excellence. We propose an increase in the number of par merit units from 120 to 130 per 100 faculty with 120 par merit units to be allocated at the Department level.

3. Across-the-Board Increase

MUFA proposes a 3.2% Across-the-Board increase in salary floors, breakpoints, and salaries in each year of the contract. This is derived from +2.2%/year (see Table II) to compensate for the expected increase of cost of living and +1%/year to partially redress the inequity in salary to performance ratio when compared within the group of six (G6) comparator universities (see Table III). This group constitutes of McMaster University, Queen's University, University of Ottawa, University of Toronto, University of Waterloo, and Western University. They are Ontario's leading research universities that are in the 15 leading research-intensive universities in Canada, known as U15.

Table II: Ontario Economic Forecasts					
[Annual average % change, unless otherwise noted]					
	2018	2019	2020		
Consumer Price Index	2.4	2.2	2.1		
Existing Home Prices	-1.7	6.0	3.4		
Source: Statistics Canada, CMHC, CREA, forecast by <u>TD Economics</u>					

In Table III we report average faculty salaries in the G6 universities as well as their rankings. McMaster ranks first in Canada in research intensity (\$/faculty) and is second in Ontario in the Shanghai and Times rankings. This strong performance, where research intensity is more than double that of some of our comparators, is unfortunately not matched by McMaster's standing with respect to average weighted salaries. The offset between rankings and salary is seen most strongly for the rank of assistant professors. As we can see in Table IV, McMaster ranks fifth and is short of the second place by at least 7.4%. To better align our salaries with our rankings, we propose an increase of 1%/year on top of the 2.2%/year increase for cost of living adjustment.

Table III: G6 Average Salaries and Rankings							
University	# of faculty members 2017-18	Average salary 2017-18	% deviation from weighted average	Collective Agreement Period	ARWU Ranking 2018	THE World University Ranking 2019	Research Ranking (\$/faculty) 2018
University of Toronto	2,031	173,012	7.33	2018-20	23	21	2 (428,200)
McMaster University	675	162,208	0.63	2017-19	86	77	1 (434,700)
Queen's University	684	158,604	-1.61	2015-19	201-300	251-300	3 (266,100)
University of Waterloo	1,032	158,469	-1.69	2018-20	151-200	201-250	6 (163,100)
University of Ottawa	933	152,832	-5.19	2016-18	151-200	176	4 (246,800)
Western University	1,092	149,930	-6.99	2014-18	201-300	190	5 (166,100)
Weighted average		161,194					

Source: Count of faculty, including senior administrative duties, excluding medical and dental from StatCan University and College Academic Staff Salary (UCASS) Survey; Academic Ranking of World University (ARWU) 2018; Times Higher Education (THE) Ranking 2019; Research Infosource Top 50 Research Universities 2018; G6 collective agreements.

Table IV: G6 Average Salaries for Assistant Professors						
University	# of faculty members 2017-18	Average salary 2017-18	% deviation from weighted average	Total Faculty (all ranks)	% Assistant of Total	
Queen's University	213	134,150	8.92	2,031	0.22	
University of Toronto	486	123,900	1.38	684	0.24	
Western University	204	121,800	-0.32	1,092	0.19	
University of Ottawa	105	117,775	-3.74	933	0.11	
McMaster University	150	114,750	-6.48	675	0.22	
University of Waterloo	198	113,475	-7.68	1,032	0.19	
Weighted average		122,185				

Source: Count of faculty, including senior administrative duties, excluding medical and dental from StatCan University and College Academic Staff Salary (UCASS) Survey; Academic Ranking of World University (ARWU) 2018; Times Higher Education (THE) Ranking 2019; Research Infosource To 50 Research Universities 2018; G6 collective agreements.

Our benchmarking against the University of Toronto, as our main competitor, is not only based on research rankings but also on the fact that the difference in cost of living in cities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) is increasing becoming even. This is largely due to the additional costs of commuting. Many MUFA members live in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) where the cost of living is higher than in Hamilton. In fact, a recent study by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. (CMHC) has found that the monthly cost of commuting within the GTA can reach more than a \$1000 with an average of \$540. Furthermore, the cost of living in the vicinity of McMaster University continues to rise rapidly, significantly affecting the ability of our newer members and potential recruits to find affordable housing. In fact, resale house prices in Hamilton are expected to increase by 2.61%, the second largest increase among our comparator universities (see Table V).

Table V: Housing Market Average Sales Price Forecast in G6 Locations					
University	2018	2019	% Change		
University of Toronto	785,000	800,000	1.88%		
Queen's University	325,000	330,000	1.52%		
McMaster University	560,000	575,000	2.61%		
University of Waterloo	452,000	460,000	1.74%		
Western University	331,000	338,500	2.22%		
University of Ottawa	406,500	418,000	2.75%		

Source: Housing market outlook. Ontario region highlights Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Fall 2017 Housing Market Outlook, mean MLS data for the Resale Market.

4. Health Insurance

Employee health benefits are a critical part of an employee wellness program, increasing productivity and preventing unnecessary absences and illnesses. We believe that this is an important investment in the University's employees, which pays for itself and creates a healthy working environment. Notably, unlike many of our comparator universities, we do not currently have a mental health benefit plan despite the increasing concerns about mental illness on campuses. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Canada's largest mental health teaching hospital, reported that the cost of a disability leave for a mental illness is about double the cost of a leave due to a physical illness³. Furthermore, there is growing evidence that prevention and early intervention initiatives have a positive return on investment⁴. This also speaks to the importance of early detection and treatment of mental illness for a member's dependents.

³ Dewa, Chau, and Dermer (2010). Examining the comparative incidence and costs of physical and mental health-related disabilities in an employed population. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 52: 758-62. Number of disability cases calculated using Statistics Canada employment data, retrieved from http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/labor21a-eng.htm

⁴ Mental Health Commission of Canada (2014). Why investing in mental health will contribute to Canada's economic prosperity and to the sustainability of our health care system. Retrieved from http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/node/742

MUFA has also identified several other benefits in need of maintenance or improvement, as detailed below.

MUFA proposes:

- a) **Mental Health**: Combined maximum coverage of \$5,000 per person/plan year, including dependents, for registered psychologists, social workers and psychotherapists.
- b) **Paramedical**: Remove registered psychologists, social workers and psychotherapists and have a maximum coverage of \$1,500 per person per year, including dependents, for all other paramedical services to be used for any practitioner. Having pooled benefits will help address common medically significant situations where a single practitioner is required for several sessions.
- c) **Vision Care:** An increase the Vision care benefit from \$400 to \$500 per person, including dependents, per 24 months.
- d) **Medical devices**: As per PN4, faculty should be protected against catastrophic expenses for illnesses. One such expense results from the purchase of chronic illness technology such as that for diabetes. Similar to our comparator universities, such as the University of Toronto, MUFA proposes the introduction of a formal process covering medical devices such as Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) for Type 1 Diabetes, subject to the recommendations of a specialist.
- e) **Dental Orthodontic Procedures**: Our current coverage of 50% up to \$2,500 was set in 2006. MUFA proposes increasing the coverage to 75% up to a maximum amount of \$4,000 to account for inflation (PN2).
- f) Hearing aid: Our current coverage, set in 2013, covers 80% of the costs up to \$1000 per ear over a period of three years. To adjust for the increase in prices and the availability of better, but more expensive technology, MUFA proposes coverage of 80% of costs up to \$1,500 per ear over a period of three years.

5. Dependent Tuition Bursary

Currently, the University offers tuition bursaries to dependents of its employees who attend McMaster. Consistent with similar plans at some of our comparator universities, MUFA proposes that a new bursary, with an equal dollar amount and eligibility criteria, be introduced for dependents of faculty and librarians that is tenable at other accredited universities and colleges.

6. Pension Inflation Protection

In MUFA's 2012 brief we noted that payments to retirees under the current pension plan were poorly indexed to CPI and thus the value of pensions had *declined* by 9.1% relative to CPI over the previous 13.5 years, while during the same period pension fund returns had *increased* by 71% relative to CPI. The Remuneration Agreement of 2013 included the establishment of a sub- committee under the auspices of the Joint Committee to examine this issue; however, no resolution to improved indexation was found.

The present indexation scheme imposes significant volatility on the adjustments to pensions. The poor indexation of payments under the plan is simply not consistent with the principles that "Faculty salaries and benefits should be protected from inflation" (PN2) and that "Faculty should look forward to a good pension upon completion of their academic careers" (PN6). This is especially so in light of the significant increases in faculty pension payments over the last 6 years, the reduced benefits by moving from the Rule of 80 to the Rule of 90, and the staggering returns from the pension investments.

For these reasons, MUFA proposes that McMaster faculty pensions for future retirees be *fully indexed to the CPI*, with no linkage to the rate of return of the plan.

7. Basic life insurance

Our current life benefit is an amount equal to the annual basic earning, rounded to the next higher \$1000 (if not already a multiple of a \$1,000) subject to the maximum insurable basic earnings of \$100,000 multiplied by 175% subject to the maximum benefit of \$175,000.

The last time this benefit was updated was in 1993, when mean salaries were a fraction of the maximum benefit.

To update this benefit now and avoid the need for frequent future updates, we propose to link the benefit to the average salary, similar to the current practice at some of our comparator universities.

MUFA proposes the life benefit to be equal to the annual basic earning multiplied by 250%, rounded to the next higher \$1000 (if not already a multiple of a \$1,000) subject to a maximum equal to the average salary multiplied by 250%.

8. Child Care Support

Access to high quality and affordable child care is a positive factor in the recruitment of new faculty members, as well as providing support in the early stage of their careers. Studies indicate higher employee productivity and retention rates when employer-supported child care programs are in place.

Our current plan has a maximum pooled amount of \$500,000 that is to be spent equally among eligible dependents subject to a cap of \$2,500. This year's actual amount, that each beneficiary member obtained, was around \$2,142 (before tax). After applying bonus taxes, this amount is a small fraction of the fees for even a single toddler or preschooler (the McMaster Children's Centre current monthly fees are \$1,355 for toddlers and \$1,127 for Preschoolers).

Similar to plans at our comparator universities, MUFA proposes to have a fixed reimbursement of \$3,000 per child/year for each eligible child under the age of 7. We believe this will also simplify the processing of this benefit and reduce related human resources costs.

9. Professional Development Allowance (PDA)

- (a) MUFA proposes a \$100 increase in each year of the contract in the PDA for faculty and librarians. As we have repeatedly heard from our members, the PDA is increasingly important in an era of scarce research support and tri-council restrictions on spending eligibility for indirect costs of research. This moderate increase will partially help our members cover some of the increases in teaching and research expenses that are necessary for their professional development.
- (b) To support the additional travel and Professional development expenses during a research leave, MUFA proposes to double the PDA amount for faculty while on a 12 month (or longer) leave and to increase the PDA amount by 50% for faculty while on a research leave for less than a year.



Appendix I Principles for Negotiation of Faculty Remuneration

Introduction

In recognition that the negotiation of faculty remuneration at McMaster should be conducted within a collegial rather than confrontational framework, the Joint Committee agrees that it is desirable to establish commonly held principles within which such negotiations would take place. We hope that by doing so we can reach an agreement of mutual benefit by applying these principles rather than by hammering away at opposing positions until there is either enough Agiving in@ to reach an agreement or a stalemate forcing use of the final offer selection process. The following principles are presented for this purpose.

General Statement

Both the Faculty Association and the Administration recognize that McMaster University has a complement of highly qualified faculty members who are committed to the mission and objectives of the University and who work diligently to further those objectives. As a consequence, it is the desire of both parties that remuneration be at a level which adequately compensates faculty members for their contributions to the University. It is also the desire of both parties that the working conditions of McMaster faculty members be adequate, including both those matters which have a direct impact (e.g. class sizes) and an indirect impact (e.g. services and environment provided through the University infrastructure). In order to achieve these goals, it is important that other expenditures (e.g. for personnel services, fundraising) be made judiciously. In the Joint Committee we are attempting to find an appropriate balance between these considerations in reaching an agreement on remuneration.

Principles Concerning Individual Compensation

I. Faculty salary and benefits should compare favourable to those in comparable jurisdictions, including specifically other excellent universities.

Maintaining a competitive salary position with other universities is important both for the morale of faculty members and for McMaster-s competitive position, i.e. being able to recruit and retain highly qualified faculty members.

- 2. Faculty salaries and benefits should be protected from inflation.
 - Erosion of salaries relative to inflation, which has occurred in a number of years due to underfunding of the universities, is bad for morale and makes the prospects of an academic career less attractive to graduate students and young PhDs.
- 3. Differing degrees of contribution to the University depending upon experience and individual talents should be recognized through application of the CP/M Scheme, with sufficient par units to enable the rewarding of the many excellent faculty members without penalizing other competent faculty members.
- 4. Faculty should be protected from catastrophic expenses, such as those arising from ill health.
- 5. Consideration should be given to the tax effects of the form of remuneration.
- 6. Faculty should look forward to a good pension upon completion of their academic careers.

Principles Concerning Working Conditions

7. Faculty members should be able to teach in an instructional environment which is conducive to the educational process.

A conducive instructional environment includes: students of high quality, class sizes which are not too large and access to instructional assistance, e.g. teaching assistants.

8. 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.

Working conditions will be seriously undermined if the University is unable to replace retiring professors, since the remaining faculty complement will need to provide additional instruction to compensate for their loss. Similarly, additional faculty members are needed to handle the increased number of students which have enrolled at McMaster in recent years. In allocating these appointments, consideration should be given to shifting teaching and research needs across the University.

9. The University should seek to redress the erosion of working conditions which has occurred during the past few years.

The increased number of students, without a compensating increase in faculty appointments has resulted in a significant increase in student/faculty ratio during the past ten years. This has been accompanied by increased pressure on space (lecture rooms, offices and lounge space) and by fewer dollars available for instructional supplies and expenses.

10. Faculty should be provided with resources to do their jobs effectively.

Such resources include: office and laboratory supplies, access to support staff (e.g. for typing correspondence or assisting in the development of laboratory experiments), library, computing facilities and instructional assistance.

II. The University should assist faculty members to enhance their research and scholarship effectiveness.

Such assistance includes: research grants (through the Research Boards), funds for travel to conferences, funds for purchase of books and journals, and research leaves.

Approved by the Joint Committee, January 30, 1990 Reviewed and Approved in Principle by the Joint Committee, November 14, 2001