



# Newsletter

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## Town Hall Meetings on Contractually Limited Appointments

On Friday 6 February and Tuesday 10 February, MUFA sponsored two town hall meetings to discuss issues related to contractually limited appointments. At this busy time of year, I want to thank some 60 members who attended one of the two meetings, as well as others who sent email messages concerning the issue to me or the MUFA office.

I was particularly impressed that at the meetings we had representation from all Faculties, and from both contractually limited appointments and other faculty members, including current or past chairs and directors. I think the messages and perspectives we heard were enormously helpful, particularly to the MUFA members on the special committee on contractually limited appointments.

For those of you who were unable to attend but are interested in University policies towards contractually limited appointments, I offer this personal reflection on the messages we heard.

### **Contractually Limited Appointments of Less than One Year**

This issue seems to have been the least controversial for those in attendance; there seems to be a general consensus that whatever the original motivation, these contracts have become a problem, and should not be continued, save in exceptional circumstances.

Apart from the salary reduction, inconsistent application of professional development allowance and other benefits, and inconsistent expectations of teaching and administrative work, it was pointed out that less than twelve-month contractual appointments often must work on their own time to make up for not being given sufficient time to do preparatory or follow-up work associated with their courses. Departments and students both may suffer.

It was reported that a number of chairs have been informed that contractually limited appointments in

2004/05 must be for at least one year, a very positive development that MUFA has encouraged.

### **Renewals and Reappointments**

I was impressed by the number of members holding contracts who attended the meetings, in spite of the sense of vulnerability they expressed. Quite a number expressed real uncertainty about the renewal and reappointment process — how long do you have to be at the University before you feel that your position is relatively secure?

While it was pointed out that the University wants to be able to adjust to changes in teaching demands, it is clear that a number of appointments have been here for many years, and still worry that they will not be renewed, perhaps for entirely different reasons. Because renewals ultimately are in the hands of Faculty deans, there is considerable uncertainty over how decisions are made. Some members indicated that this vulnerability made them unwilling to express their views on a number of issues of concern to the University. Others pointed out that the uncertainty meant that, no matter how long they had been here, they were unsure whether they could or should serve on a number of Faculty and University committees. A few also indicated that this uncertainty could make it difficult to secure the funding necessary to continue as an active researcher. It seems to me, therefore, that whether intentional or not, the seemingly arbitrary nature of renewals undermines the objectives of the University in a number of ways.

We heard that the six-year limit on contractually limited appointments only furthers the uncertainty. While it appears to provide a clear upper limit, extensions beyond the six year rule are quite frequent in various parts of the University. Faculty members simply did not know on what grounds decisions were made to invoke or exceed the six-year limit.

At one of the meetings, we also heard concerns about the letter that the University sends to all contractually limited appointments to inform them of the termination of their contract. It was pointed out that whatever legal obligations are being served, it does not help efforts to build community to be sending out a relatively terse termination letter just before Christmas and often with little explanation as to its purpose. There was some discussion about the timing of decisions about renewals, that might eliminate the need for the letter, or about finding a way to soften its impact.

### **Conversion**

A number of members also pointed to problems that arose around the conversion of contractually limited appointments into tenure stream positions. First, there was a sense that some positions do not ever seem to be converted, particularly once the position has been held by a CLA for some time. Second, there were concerns that, although there is a policy on converting appointments from a CLA to a tenure stream, the circumstances under which that would happen are not well defined. While I did hear from some faculty members who felt those currently holding a contractually limited appointment had an advantage in an open competition for a tenure stream position, I also heard otherwise. This may amount to a difference among Faculties, and over the amount of teaching and research that contractually limited appointments are able to do.

### **Long-Term Teaching Appointments**

At both town hall meetings, members spent quite a bit of time discussing the advantages and disadvantages of creating some type of more secure, long-term, teaching-oriented appointment. In general, those who support such appointments emphasized that such appointments already exist at this University, except with little security. Instead of acknowledging their existence, the University prefers to hire people on a series of short term contracts over many years, creating all the problems I discussed around renewals. Some members have no objection to serving in such positions, but would like a little more acknowledgement and security from the University community. Some also pointed out that if the University were serious about teaching-oriented positions, it might provide such scholars with support and time to carry out teaching-

related research and professional development. Those who spoke against such positions believe we should resist any expansion of teaching-oriented appointments. They argue that the connection between research and teaching must be maintained, particularly in an institution that prides itself on being research-intensive. There is also real concern about the creation of a two-tier professoriate, and what that would mean for collegiality and community at the University. I have a sense that part of this division is between Faculties and even departments, and that teaching-only appointments may make a little more sense in some disciplines than in others.

### **Maintaining the Regular Tenure Faculty Complement**

Whether we continue with some variation of the current system, or whether we move to create some long-term teaching appointments, a number of members emphasized the importance of maintaining regular tenure faculty, engaged in teaching, research and service, as the core of the University. It was suggested that we consider establishing rules about the proportion of units that must be taught by regular, tenured faculty, and that the proportion be kept quite high. The proportion might not be the same University-wide, although I would think the case would have to be made for the appropriateness of a lower proportion being set in a particular department or Faculty. Overall, I sensed agreement that the the University should be committed to limiting the the amount of teaching conducted by non-tenured faculty, whether contractually limited appointments or sessional instructors.

As I hope this limited reflection on the proceedings makes clear, I found the discussion at the town hall meetings very engaging and informative. I think a number of issues were aired, and I hope that others came away from the meetings with a better sense of the issues facing MUFA and the University administration. I know I did.

*Ken Cruikshank,  
MUFA President*



## **MUFA Dues Waived for Months of February & March**



MUFA Members will see a slightly larger paycheque in the months of February and March. At its regular meeting on January 30, 2004, the Executive of the McMaster University Faculty Association voted unanimously to reduce the mill rate from 5.0 to 0 for the months of February and March. A surplus of income over expenditures for this fiscal year is projected in the Nine-Month Budget Review 2003/04. In addition, MUFA reserves continue to be in a healthy state.

*Don't Forget, when you are preparing your tax returns that MUFA dues are tax deductible*



## **New Members**

<b>Antoine Deza</b>	<b>Computing &amp; Software</b>
<b>Paul Faure</b>	<b>Psychology</b>
<b>Nancy Heddle</b>	<b>Pathology/Medicine</b>
<b>Sourav Ray</b>	<b>Marketing</b>

## Committee Assignments

On December 10, 2003 Senate established two joint Senate/Faculty Association committees. **Christine Wilson** (Physics & Astronomy) and **Lorraine York** (English) will represent MUFA on the committee to address spousal hiring issues. **David Hitchcock** (Philosophy) and **Eva Werstiuk** (Medicine) will work on behalf of MUFA to investigate issues regarding the development of a University Hearings Committee for Faculty and Librarians.

The Administration has created the McMaster University Committee on Disability Access on which **Penny Salvatori** (Rehabilitation Science) will represent MUFA.



## McMaster's Pension Plan

### A Performance Review

MUFA published information about the Pension Plan on a regular basis prior to the surplus distribution. During the negotiations about surplus distribution and the distribution itself, the nature of the information available did not allow us to continue publishing the same tables and we took a break from the pattern. We are now picking up where we left off with a one year gap in the data. The following four tables report: a) on the financial position, b) on the funding requirements, c) on the membership in the McMaster pension program, and d) on the last 20 years of reported returns to our Pension Plan assets.

McMaster now has two plans for salaried employees and the tables here consolidate the information from the two plans. The plan was split in two at the time of surplus distribution with existing members who were to receive surplus being put in one plan and other members in the second. This second plan has also become home to all new members that have joined a plan since July 2002. The McMaster Board of Governors has received and approved information on the two plans separately but we believe it is more informative for the non-specialist to see the consolidated information as the data can then be compared to the earlier period data (1999, 2000). Note that the \$150 million for the surplus distribution (plus costs) were removed between July 1, 2002 and July 1, 2003 and account for the drop in assets between the two years.

**Tables are based on the  
Actuarial Valuation of the Pension Plan  
as at July 1, 2003**

**Taken from a Report to the Pension Trust Committee**

## Prepared by Mercer Human Resource Consulting

**Table A: The Financial Position — Going-Concern Basis (\$000)**

	<b>July 1, 2003</b>	<b>July 1, 2002</b>	<b>July 1, 2000</b>	<b>July 1, 1999</b>
Actuarial value of assets (adjusted for in-transit items)	\$845,173	\$994,124	\$967,325	\$915,416
Actuarial Liability				
Present value of accrued benefits for:				
Active Members	\$434,130	\$393,126	\$348,165	\$338,016
Pensioners & Survivors	331,611	312,940	277,087	256,302
Deferred Pensioners	2,280	2,611	1,959	1,803
Additional Voluntary Contributions	76	103	107	105
Inactive - status undecided	19,812	17,054	15,733	13,411
Total Liability	\$787,909	\$725,834	\$643,051	\$609,637
<b>FUNDING EXCESS (unfunded liability)</b>	<b>\$57,264</b>	<b>\$268,290</b>	<b>\$324,274</b>	<b>\$305,779</b>

**Table B: Employer's Current Service Cost (\$000)**

	<b>July 1, 2003</b>	<b>July 1, 2002</b>	<b>July 1, 2000</b>	<b>July 1, 1999</b>
Total Current Service Cost	\$29,853	\$26,407	\$22,928	\$21,881
Estimated members' required contributions	7,319	6,737*	5,936*	5,721*
Estimated employer's current service cost	\$22,534	\$19,670	\$16,992	\$16,160
Employer's current service cost expressed as a percentage of members' contributions	308%	292%	286%	282%

\*Members contributed 50% of this amount during these Plan years. The remainder was funded through surplus assets in the Plan.

**Table C: Plan Membership**

	<b>July 1, 2003</b>	<b>July 1, 2002</b>	<b>July 1, 2000</b>	<b>July 1, 1999</b>
Active Members	3,265	3,098	2,889	2,791
Pensioners and Beneficiaries	1,197	1,138	1,081	1,026
Deferred Pensioners	75	75	60	59
Inactive-Status Undecided	407	385	307	302
<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>4,944</b>	<b>4,696</b>	<b>4,337</b>	<b>4,178</b>

**Table D: History of Fund Yields**

**Yield Based on Market Value\*    Yield Based on Market Value\***

<b>Year</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>%</b>
1983/84	(1.96)	1993/94	2.75
1984/85	31.41	1994/95	16.09
1985/86	24.70	1995/96	13.67
1986/87	10.45	1996/97	21.53
1987/88	1.28	1997/98	15.38
1988/89	19.31	1998/99	4.91
1989/90	0.23	1999/00	9.32
1990/91	8.22	2000/01	2.37
1991/92	10.51	2001/02	(1.25)
1992/93	13.57	2002/03	(2.84)

\*including Investment Income and Realized and Unrealized Gains or Losses

*[ED. The data for the year 2002/03 precede the recent stock market increases and we all hope for a return to the large gains that followed the last period of negative returns in 1983/84.]*



**Brian McCann**  
**Professor Emeritus,**  
**Geography & Geology**  
**1935-2004**

For 30 years Brian McCann and I served together as the geomorphologists in McMaster's Department of Geography. Geomorphology is the science of natural landforms, their origins and development. Brian specialized in beaches and coasts. At Cambridge for the PhD he was supervised by the awesome J. A. Steers, the Professor himself, one and only and in sole command in those days. Steers was just completing his magnum opus, "The Coastline of England and Wales", so Brian was sent up to the west of Scotland to open a new frontier. There he studied raised beaches and wave-cut platforms, which are degraded remnants of the coastline that are older, some much older, than the last glaciers to bury the land. Forty years later he returned to participate in a field symposium on these problems, and was much pleased to find the youngsters citing his work repeatedly, the foundation for their new approaches.

In 1967 Brian came to McMaster Geography for a one-year mutual trial, and I collected him at the airport. My earliest mental snapshot is of a warm grin topped by a dashing tweed hat; he was always a natty dresser. We became good friends and remained so as we served on each other's many MSc and PhD supervisory committees. We did not always agree but there was never a harsh word between us.

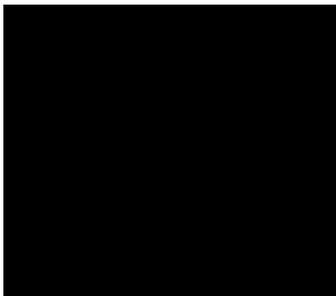
As the new man Brian accepted an invitation to participate in an ambitious multidisciplinary research programme in the high Arctic that was headed by the late Professor Frank Hannell. His early work in Canada thus focused on the cold coasts of the Queen Elizabeth Islands; as they are icebound for much of the year, he expanded his interests inland, directing pioneer studies in the hydrology with a

group of very good students. Later he was to investigate deltas on the fiord coast of British Columbia, and so could claim acquaintance with the Pacific Ocean as well. But it was in Atlantic Canada that Brian won his reputation as one of the leading coastal geomorphologists of North America. During the 70s and 80s he and his students undertook major field projects in all three Maritime Provinces, in Newfoundland and Quebec. They were usually the pioneer investigators of a given problem or of a particular locale. The work that remains outstanding in the view of most of us, I believe, was a series of studies of the physical history and modern processes at play on arrays of great sand beaches, barrier dunes and the lagoons impounded behind them along the coasts of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and on the dunes of Sable Island. The historical studies were inspirational, helping to create national parks such as Kouchibouguac in NB, and natural reserves in the other provinces. The process studies included many novel methods that are now emulated elsewhere. They led to important new findings, especially on the stability of lagoon outlet channels, which was one among many contributions with practical applications.

In 1985 the Department needed a new Chair and Brian was asked to head the selection committee. A few days later there was a tap at my door, he came in shyly and told me in some wonderment that the other committee members were suggesting that he would be a good candidate — what did I think? Bingo! He proved exceptionally good at the job, well informed, scrupulous with details, and very caring with our students. His devotion to those duties, his wife and their young family, led to reductions in his personal field research but he continued to be a fine teacher and supervisor. And when conditions were right, we skied the trails together from my home at the top of the Dundas valley to his at the bottom; he was an excellent and passionate skier, downhill and cross-country.

For more than 100 years the world's geomorphologists were split between Geography departments (British Commonwealth, much of Europe) and Geology departments (USA, Latin America, many Asian nations), thus attending separate international congresses of geographers or geologists. The two groups came together for exploratory meetings in Manchester in 1985, then in Frankfurt in 1989 where an international association was formed. Where to meet in 1993? Obviously, somewhere outside of Europe — discreet feelers were put out, Brian and I looked each other in the eye, gulped deeply, and agreed to co-host the first formal congress. It was our last big collaboration and a fine success, bringing more than 800 delegates from 60 nations to enjoy an August heat wave at McMaster that year.

We shared our retirement party in 1997. Brian knew then that he had cancer but revealed it only to his family and closest friend. In October 2003 one of our first PhD students returned as a Hooker visiting speaker and we all went out together for an evening of beer and cheer in a



Dundas pub. Brian was as great company as ever; we others never guessed.

He was very much liked and respected; at no other time have I seen the Great Hall of the University Club so full as it was for his memorial service.

*Derek Ford,  
Emeritus Professor*

Friends and colleagues of Bernie O'Brien were devastated to learn of his sudden death on Friday February 13th. Bernie was an internationally recognized health economist whose accomplishments belied his young age. Bernie and I had been colleagues in one form or another for almost 25 years. We both went through the graduate programme in health economics at the University of York in England in the early 1980s. Bernie moved on to Brunel University as a researcher where his work on the economic evaluation of heart transplant programmes and his application of a game-theoretic approach to the allocation of donor organs first brought him international attention. As a result of the impact of a decade of Margaret Thatcher's monetarist policies on opportunities for young academics in the university sector, I left the UK and took up a position in the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at McMaster in 1988. Two years later, after completing his PhD, Bernie made the same move. Some of our colleagues who remained in the UK referred to us both as economic refugees of the Iron Lady. However, during the tight fiscal times of the 1990s we often shared the joke that Thatcher's policies appeared to have followed us to Ontario.

Bernie's career flourished once at McMaster, first as part of Mike Gent's Clinical Trials group followed by a move to the Centre for the Evaluation of Medicines under the Father Sean O'Sullivan Centre at St. Joseph's Hospital. His work on the economic evaluation of health care programmes continued and included important contributions on the valuation of health outcomes in the context of randomized control trials of pharmaceuticals. He co-authored the second edition of the standard text on the economic evaluation of health care programmes and by the mid 1990s he was at the leading edge of incorporating the principles of statistical inference into methods for economic evaluation. This involved the development of stochastic approaches for dealing with the uncertain nature of the consequences of health care interventions. During this period, indeed throughout our parallel careers, I always enjoyed the intellectual arguments we engaged in over the occasional beer at conferences or following academic seminars. Although I came away feeling that I never entirely won any of these arguments, I always felt a little more enlightened as a result of them.

Around this time I spent a wonderful year's research leave at the Centre for Health Economics Research and Evaluation in Sydney, Australia. On my return Bernie

**Bernard**



**O'Brien**  
**Professor, CE&B**  
**1959-2004**

often spoke to me about my experience. Before long he was making arrangements for a six months research leave of his own at the same location. I remember some challenging discussions in which I encouraged him to take a full year in Australia and predicted he would regret not doing so. On his return to McMaster, following a similar positive experience, he acknowledged that on this occasion I had finally won an argument with him. Bernie and his family fell in love with Australia and were eager to return in the future.

The quality of Bernie's research has been recognised by various prizes and awards. He recently received major funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health for a programme of research in health technology assessment. Bernie had a wonderful laid-back style of presenting his work and engaging his audiences. He could explain even Fieller's theorem in ways that seemed to make sense! Together with colleagues, he presented a regular workshop on the economic evaluation of health care programmes, which was developed into an international programme with introductory and advanced modules. He was a terrific colleague, mentor and friend, loved by all who worked or studied with him. His leadership skills were only just beginning to be fully recognized and utilized. He will be missed by everyone who knew him.

*Stephen Birch,  
Professor, CE&B*

## From Granting Council to Knowledge Council SSHRC transformation begins with consultation

Researchers, graduate students and other key stakeholders at McMaster and in Hamilton are being invited to help the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council transform itself from a granting council to a knowledge council.

The federal body, which funds research in the humanities and social sciences at universities across the country, is engaging key stakeholders in discussions across Canada to develop a new blueprint for the organization and to increase and improve dialogue between the Council and its stakeholders.

A new vision, mandate and structure for the Council will emerge from the process, which is designed to rejuvenate the organization and strengthen understanding of the importance of public investment in the human sciences. SSHRC is embarking on this transformation process, which will involve 12 months of focused public consultation, to re-invent itself as not just an organization that delivers grants but also as a body that imparts knowledge to the nation. After 25 years and considerable change within the environment and Canadian communities, the granting council is reassessing what it currently does and what it wants to accomplish in the future. To do this it is engaging the research community, research users and Canadians — its key stakeholders — in public dialogue and consultation. The findings and recommendations which emerge from this process will be key to the development of an enhanced council, a stronger and more vibrant research environment, and a better understanding nationally of the human sciences.

The Transformation Process will involve a reassessment of SSHRC's basic goals

and values, the creation of new adaptive structures, improvements to current programs, and an examination of ways to expand linkages to partners outside the university and to increase the flow of knowledge outside the university. The consultations will focus on such themes as the interactions between researchers and the effect of research results.

Some of the questions to be discussed in consultations include:

1. How does the vision for SSHRC, presented in the transformation consultation framework, fit with your view of what needs to be done to strengthen human sciences research and training in Canada?
2. What advantages and disadvantages do you see in the new structures that have been proposed for SSHRC? Which ones do you think will work? Which ones will not? Why?
3. How can SSHRC modify its current programs to meet the transformation objectives?
4. Do you conduct research with partners from outside the University? How often? What kinds of support would help foster these relationships?
5. If SSHRC does change, what structures should be created first? What should be the sequence of priorities thereafter?

One of the goals of the process is to determine how changes in the environment, for example, globalization and technology, have affected how researchers conduct their work and the kind of research that is undertaken. The organization is not looking to completely re-invent itself and stop doing open (basic) research. Rather, it seeks to enhance the research that is currently conducted.

Mamdouh Shoukri, McMaster's Vice-President of Research and International Affairs, has appointed Geoffrey Rockwell, associate professor in the School of the Arts to lead McMaster's consultation process. Kelly Curwin, formerly of the Office of Public Relations, will assist as project manager. During March and April, key groups and individuals both on and off campus will be asked for their advice and suggestions on how to rebuild SSHRC. Consultation will take the form of faculty drop-in sessions and open meetings, individual and specialty group meetings, and requests for written submissions from individuals, departments or areas. The campus/community consultations will be used to prepare a report to be submitted to SSHRC by May 1. The document will highlight the key recommendations and direction endorsed by the McMaster/Hamilton communities.

McMaster's report to SSHRC will be combined with other university and society reports. The funding council will form a task force to analyze the information and prepare a report which will be circulated to universities in October and submitted to the federal government.

Anyone with questions or seeking information about the process can e-mail [sshrc@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sshrc@mcmaster.ca). Information is also available at the Web site of the Office of the Vice-President Research and International Affairs ([www.mcmaster.ca/research/sshrc.htm](http://www.mcmaster.ca/research/sshrc.htm)) and from SSHRC ([www.sshrc.ca](http://www.sshrc.ca)).

*Geoffrey Rockwell and Kelly Curwin*



## **For Rent Fully Furnished Luxury One-Bedroom Condo** in prestigious downtown

Hamilton heritage building, complete with 5 appliances, Jacuzzi tub, central air, private parking, and locker. Building amenities include video monitored secured entrances, exercise facility, lap pool/hot tub combination, entertainment room access, tuck shop. Centrally located close to shopping malls, banking facilities and all 4 hospitals. Suits professionals on short/medium term contracts. 10-minute drive to McMaster. \$1200 per month or per diem rate for daily/weekly rental; includes hydro, but not cable or telephone. First and last month's rent required. Short-term leases available. For viewing, call 905-527-4599 and leave message, or e-mail [jpgpptymgmt@hotmail.com](mailto:jpgpptymgmt@hotmail.com)

*These are from a book called Disorder in the Court. The following were actually said in court, word for word, taken down and now published by court reporters.*

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: July fifteenth.

Q: What year?

A: Every year.



Q: What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?

A: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

Q: How old is your son, the one living with you?

A: Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.

Q: How long has he lived with you?

A: Forty-five years.

Q: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

Q: The youngest son, the twenty-year old, how old is he?

Q: Were you present when your picture was taken?

Q: She had three children, right?

A: Yes.

Q: How many were boys?

A: None.

Q: Were there any girls?

Q: Can you describe the individual?

A: He was about medium height and had a bear.

Q: Was this a male or a female?

Q: Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people?

A: All my autopsies are performed on dead people.

Q: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for blood pressure?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for breathing?

A: No.

Q: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

A: No.

Q: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

A: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

Q: But could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

A: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law somewhere.



**MUFA Annual General Meeting**  
**Wednesday, May 5, 2004, 3:00 pm**  
**Great Hall of the University Club**

**to be followed by a reception**  
**in honour of**  
**MUFA's Service Award Winners**

March 17, 2004

pdk