



Newsletter

DECEMBER 1999/JANUARY 2000, VOLUME 26.3,
Pat Chow-Fraser, EDITOR

President's Report

[Delivered at General Meeting on December 14, 1999]

Colleagues, we have reached the midpoint of another academic year and I am happy to report to you that although MUFA continues to be faced with a number of important issues and challenges, both collegiality and the academy are intact and functioning, not only to change tomorrow today, but also to prevent yesterday's mistakes from becoming today's policies. There is a need for all of us to remain as flexible and innovative as possible as we move into the year 2000 and attempt to deal with problems ranging from the current strike by teaching assistants to the complex issues presented by the double cohort and governmental and commercial pressures that are already changing the University in very substantial ways. I would like to take this opportunity to update you on some of the issues discussed in my last report, as well as to tell you about some newer developments.

PENSION PLAN

In my last report I gave an enthusiastic account of a plan for utilizing the very large surplus that has accumulated in the McMaster Pension Plan. I characterized the sharing arrangement being worked out in the President's Committee on Retirement Provisions for Salaried Employees as being on the verge of agreement between the parties involved. As you have just heard from Les Robb, that agreement was obtained, only to find out from expert external consultants that the plan, as structured, was unlikely to obtain the necessary approvals. I shall not repeat here the details already presented by Les, except to emphasize that these consultants do advise that a properly restructured plan is likely to succeed and that MUFA remains committed to seeing that a suitably revised plan is presented for your consideration at the earliest possible date compatible with a substantial probability of success. The disappointment provided by this temporary setback is particularly acute for Les and the other representatives to the President's Committee who have toiled tirelessly in the development of the original plan, only to have to step back and return to their labours. I encourage everyone to express your appreciation and encouragement to Les and his colleagues.

UNIVERSITY ACCESS REVIEW

Another matter I called to your attention in my last report was the consultation process then underway concerning plans for a new Main Street entrance to McMaster and related issues of traffic flow on campus. Although MUFA was not assigned a formal role in this process, some of us were concerned as to whether the consultation process would be a genuine search for

inputs which would be used to inform the process, or primarily a public relations exercise designed to sell a decision which had already been made. Stefania Miller and I attended the various public fora, both on and off campus, to obtain an independent assessment of concerns being expressed, and have closely followed the subsequent fate of the original proposals. I am pleased to report to you that the consultation appears to have been a meaningful process. An extremely wide range of differing viewpoints were expressed in those public meetings. Subsequent discussions in the University Planning Committee and the resulting recommendations which have now received approval by the Board of Governors clearly reflect those concerns. The wording of those recommendations is available in the report of the University Planning Committee, but I shall attempt to summarize them for you. A new Main Street entrance has been approved so that the University can enter into discussions with the city and coordinate plans for a new entrance with the city's review of traffic flow on Main Street and the possible development of a four-way intersection at Emerson and Main. The details of a new entrance will necessarily depend to some extent on decisions made by the city as a result of its own class environmental impact study. In the meantime, decisions about changes to existing traffic flow on campus will be delayed until the details of a new entrance are known, the results of a consultant's report on campus parking and traffic flow have been received, and examination has been made of possible ways to reduce vehicular trips to campus. I believe that the administration is to be congratulated on the provision of a genuine process of consultation and on adopting a carefully considered approach reflecting the concerns of all share holders. Issues of maintaining the primarily pedestrian nature of the campus core and of abating traffic in residential areas surrounding the University have not gone away. They will be revisited in the very near future, but with more relevant data in hand and, hopefully, a continuing refusal to accept the proposition that there is only one possible solution to our access, traffic and parking problems.

DOUBLE COHORT

Yet another issue I mentioned to you in my last report concerns planning for enrollment increases. Such planning is the province of the University's established planning mechanisms. However, it is obvious that MUFA holds a stake in the outcome of this planning since its members will have to fulfill their instructional roles under the resulting conditions. Our Academic Affairs Committee and our representatives to the Joint Committee have thus sought to keep abreast of planning in this area and to make enquiries or offer comments when they seem to be in order. As you may have heard elsewhere, plans now call for a full-time undergraduate enrollment of 14,500 to 14,900 by the year 2003. It is emphasized that this figure is conditional on obtaining additional operating funds for currently unfunded enrollment, as well as for the projected enrollment increase. We also now know much about plans for physical facilities needed to deal with the projected enrollment. These plans are contained in the University's application to the province's SuperBuild fund and primarily consist of extensive renovation and improvement of existing space for better utilization. The only new building proposed is a major addition to the Life Sciences Building.

The main remaining unknown, one that is particularly close to our interests, concerns planning for additional faculty and staff to deal with the projected enrollment increase. We are told that such planning has begun, but is only in its earliest stages. We have indicated in the Joint Committee that we would like to have a closer vantage point on this process and a way to indicate any concerns which develop. The administration contingent in the Joint Committee is currently considering how this might be accomplished. We shall continue to monitor the situation closely, provide inputs when appropriate and keep you informed as to developments.

JOINT COMMITTEE

While on the topic of the Joint Committee, I shall attempt to update you on developments there. As indicated in my last report, the Joint Committee has commissioned a review of the CP/M model and related issues. The subcommittee charged with that review has been struck and consists of Alan Harrison, Bernadette Lynn, Harvey Weingarten and myself. One meeting of the subcommittee has been held which was primarily devoted to identifying issues and considering procedures. This work will continue in the new year.

Another continuing issue in the Joint Committee concerns protection of privacy with respect to electronic communication. This issue has been before the Joint Committee for a few years now and has proven very difficult to resolve. In the meantime, related issues have arisen with respect to other technologies such as video surveillance and logging security systems. In all these matters the issue is not whether such activities should occur, but how to provide reasonable safeguards against their being used to invade personal privacy rather than for their intended purpose of providing adequate security and safety. Current thinking in the Joint Committee is that all these issues might reasonably be treated within the framework of revisions to the existing University policy on privacy and freedom of information which is itself rather dated. A major rewriting of this policy goes well beyond the mandate of the Joint Committee since it is a University policy applying to all members of the campus community. The Joint Committee is currently considering how to get such a process started.

Yet another issue I raised in my last report concerns the increasing gap between tuition fees and the tuition bursary for dependents of MUFA members. When MUFA representatives raised this issue in the Joint Committee, the administration contingent refused to consider increasing the previously negotiated cap of \$200,000 per year on this benefit since we are locked into the three-year remuneration agreement negotiated last year. They did agree, however, to provide an accounting of the utilization of these funds in recent years, with an eye to whether the individual entitlement could be increased without increasing the overall cap. Such a review indicated that the available funds were not being totally utilized and it was thus agreed that the individual bursary could be increased. The exact amount of that increase will be substantial, but is still under consideration, as is the issue of whether the increase can be made retroactive to last September. I hope that these details can be resolved before the beginning of second term.

Two new MUFA initiatives in the Joint Committee have been to request a benefits performance analysis and to request negotiation of a policy with respect to faculty rights and obligations during work stoppages by other groups. The current benefit structure has been in place for several years and was designed to bring increasing benefit costs to the University under control, as well as to maximize the usefulness of the benefit package to MUFA members. The time now seems right to evaluate how well those objectives are being met.

The need for a mutually agreed upon policy on faculty rights and obligations during work stoppages by other groups has been made very clear by the threatened strike of part-time instructors last year and the actual strike currently underway on the part of teaching assistants. Some of the tensions that have developed between MUFA and the administration in the current situation are unfortunate and might have been largely avoided if such a policy had been in place. Our collegial relationship with the administration appears to function much better when issues are worked out in a calm contemplative atmosphere than when the pressures of the moment lead to communication by fiat on the part of both parties.

The MUFA Executive has already communicated with you concerning their views as to your

rights with respect to doing the work of striking teaching assistants or crossing their picket lines. I shall not belabour that communication here. However, there have been some suggestions that our position failed to address faculty obligations or failed to support the right of faculty to do the marking of striking teaching assistants if they so desire. It was not our intent to develop a complete policy on faculty rights and obligations in heat of the immediate situation. That task properly belongs to the Joint Committee. Rather, our intent was to clarify our position in the context of repeated statements without further explanation that "faculty will be responsible for marking." This statement was a serious concern for some MUFA members either because of practical limitations to what they felt able to do in this respect or because of issues of conscience. We did not see any statements being made which challenged the right of faculty to do the work of striking teaching assistants if they so desired. If anyone feels they are being unduly pressured in this respect, please let us know and we shall also attempt to address that concern. For now I would simply like to remind members that this is not our labour dispute and that the most constructive contribution we can make to its settlement is to continue urging both parties to return to the bargaining table and find a settlement so that the entire University community can return its undivided attention to fulfilling the functions for which we are here.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Once again I find myself with a remaining list of items I wanted to tell you about and a report which is becoming rather long. I shall very briefly mention a few other items that I think will be of interest to you. The MUFF allocations for this year have been proposed by the MUFF Committee and approved by the Board of Governors. Two of the provisions will be of special interest to faculty and librarians. Last year MUFF provided up to \$300 per person for the purpose of assisting with expenses associated with presenting at professional conferences. That provision has been extended in the current year to \$500 per person. Also, MUFF will provide a fund of \$100,000 for competitive scholarships to McMaster for the children of McMaster employees. That fund should provide further assistance with the sizable gap between tuition and tuition bursaries, although the details of that competition have not yet been announced.

The MUFA committee considering possible revisions to processes and structures within MUFA with respect to negotiating and approving faculty remuneration is currently drafting a report to the MUFA Executive. I shall report to you further when this report has been received and considered.

The large stack of policies negotiated by the Library Negotiations Committee continues to rest on the Provost's desk awaiting appropriate routing for final approval. The Provost has assured me that he will attempt to deal with this by the end of the calendar year. I fully appreciate that urgent issues such as the strike by teaching assistants and the need to plan and obtain funding for dealing with the double cohort have produced delays in dealing with some issues having a less critical time line.

In closing, I would like to wish all of you a productive and prosperous new year. Welcome to the twenty-first century where today has become tomorrow.

John Platt
MUFA President



Universities for Sale:

Resisting Corporate Control over Canadian Higher Education

Book Review

A decade ago, on the occasion of the 900th anniversary of the establishment of the University of Bologna, Giovanni Agnelli, then Chairman of Fiat, addressed the subject of the role of the university in the modern, rapidly changing world. After noting that it was "encouraging to see that the universities are doing much more to seek out and establish links with industry and economic circles," Agnelli went on to stress how "university circles insist on a number of demands we regard as perfectly reasonable." The first of these he saw as "autonomy, which is essential if a university is to fulfil the purposes for which it exists. Autonomy means complete responsibility for the use of resources, for formulating programmes of study and research, and for choosing methods, teachers and scientific equipment." A second was "greater personal mobility," not only within the university between disciplines, but also by way of "two-way traffic over the bridge between the school and life, unimpeded by anything except respect for each other's independence." Finally, he observed that "the teaching profession must be given greater content and stronger motivation"; that more "recognition of merit and ability" in the university system would "raise to their peak abilities now cramped by regulations too narrow for the steadily broadening horizons of knowledge and training."

The optimistic and up-beat tone of Agnelli's address contrasts sharply with that of Neil Tudiver's piece which is almost a dirge for the Canadian university. Tudiver's message is that Canadian universities are in the process of selling not only their souls, but their bodies too, to business corporations. They are, he insists, "already well down a path towards privatization, in the sense that more revenue comes from private sources, services are geared to corporate supporters, and decision-making follows classic business patterns based on profit centres instead of service units" (p. 7).

The evidence marshalled in support of the thesis is fragmentary and at times anecdotal. More than half of the book's two hundred and forty or so pages are given over to an historical account of the development of public and private funding arrangements for the country's universities and of faculty unionization and attendant disputes within them. The relevance of much of this material is not always obvious and prompts the suspicion that it was prepared originally with a different project in mind. Nevertheless, the argument contained within these pages that the funding arrangements that emerged, with all of their inherent jurisdictional conflicts between the Federal and Provincial governments, proved to be disastrously fragile when regimes of budget-cuts and bottom-line accountability arrived, is well-supported by the record and by many other informed accounts. Where the universities might have turned for relief when their revenues began to fall, other than to the students and the private sector, is not an historical issue that Tudiver is willing to tackle. It is only later in his book, in his speculations on the 21st century that he shows his hand — "Government must set higher priorities for social spending, and renew a commitment to public-financing of post-secondary education, without requirements for commercialization" (p. 192).

As an historian, Tudiver prefers to view the past in terms of a struggle between faculty unions as the upholders of traditional values and quality, and cost-cutting administrators and boards bent on commercializing the university. "Unionization began," he insists, "because faculty

were at risk of losing perquisites and salary improvements acquired in the 1960's. Their persistence has prevented university boards and administrators from weakening academic freedom and the autonomy of universities" (p. 136). Many critics, myself included, would counter with the argument that faculty unions impose a rigidity upon the university that virtually precludes any sensible and well-planned adjustment of programmes and complements in the face of budget reductions. But that would be heresy in the judgement of CAUT that co-published this book.

It is towards the end of his polemic, in his discussion of "Capitalist Research" and the "Corporate University" that Tudiver zooms in on his subject. And as in all such accounts there is much that rings true and much that is ignored. His contention that "Government now acts as matchmaker to marry business and university interests in seamless research enterprises" (p. 139), is fair comment on such programmes as those of BILD and the "centres of excellence" which are cited. But to conclude that, "Research is being run like a business, with projects designed to take advantage of commercial opportunities" (p. 152), biasses the account and ignores the fact that a lot of excellent basic research is going on in Canadian universities and is supported.

The "corporate university" is seen as "trafficking in intellectual property," charging increasingly higher prices to "the student as customer," exploiting the teaching function by use of more technology and part-time instructors in order to "bring in more income at lower cost," and mounting larger and larger fund-raising drives. Yes, these are all too familiar features even on the home front. But do they adequately portray a modern Canadian university such as our own? I think not. We continue to offer programmes and conduct research in a wide range of disciplines, very many of which yield nothing in the form of marketable intellectual property. Our curriculum is shaped and controlled by faculty members at all levels and not by donors or board members. We choose our colleagues and we judge their performances; we even have a majority voice in the selection of our main administrators. Faculty members control the Senate, chair the budget committee and administer policies covering a wide range of issues. But these reassurances notwithstanding, there is in Tudiver's rhetoric an important reminder — vigilance and participation are essential if we are to ensure that these powers are not eroded. A benign and docile Senate, for example, should be a matter of far greater concern than corporate-sponsored billboards and pop machines on campus.

Les King
Professor Emeritus, Geography & Geology

Neil Tudiver, Universities for Sale: Resisting Corporate Control over Canadian Higher Education, A CAUT Series Title, Toronto: James Lorimer and Company Ltd., 1999, pp. 248. ISBN 1-55028-690-0 (pbk).

Libraries 2000

CAUT Librarians Conference Banff, Alberta October 21-23, 1999

Rapid changes in technology and workplace organization have had a dramatic impact on academic libraries over the last decade and will continue to be dominant forces for the foreseeable future. Academic librarians from across the country gathered in late October to examine these changes and discuss their implications for the profession. Three main themes were discussed in the sessions, from differing perspectives: re-organization, workload and commercialization.

Libraries and universities have undergone major re-structuring in response to funding cuts, and, to a lesser degree, technological change. Re-organization within universities has often affected the reporting relationship for libraries, sometimes in a positive way but just as often in a negative way. Different organizational models have developed within libraries. It was apparent after the presentations that no one model is the ideal and many factors can influence librarians' satisfaction with an organization.

In many cases, re-organization in a library has meant down-sizing. As a result, there are fewer professional librarians, fewer support staff and even more work to be done as the library adds electronic holdings to its collection. The stresses of an increasing workload are felt by many academic librarians and some coping mechanisms were discussed. Concerns were also raised about the 'next generation' of academic librarians and who will be prepared to take on the leadership roles, i.e. chief librarian, in the next ten to twenty years.

The effects of commercialization are being felt in many ways in the library, just as they are in universities. The largest commercial entities that libraries deal with are the publishers of print and electronic information and they are having an enormous impact on our collection development policies and on our service policies. Bundling of products affects what we buy and licensing agreements dictate who can use it. The emphasis on STM (science, technology and medicine) products has raised concerns for fine arts and humanities librarians who are seeing their disciplines neglected.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity to meet with colleagues from across the country to discuss issues of common concern to libraries and librarians. It is interesting to note that these issues: re-organization, workload, and commercialization, are also of concern to all members of the academic community. The CAUT Librarians Committee is to be congratulated for putting together a thought-provoking program and a slate of dynamic speakers.

Kathy Ball
Science & Engineering Librarian

Announcements

Board of Governors Approves MUFF Proposals

As John Platt reported in his President's Report above, the Board of Governors has 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 \$500 in the period July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000. 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.

Scholarships. MUFF has set aside \$100,000 to match donations made through the Changing Tomorrow Today campaign for scholarships for the children of members of the salaried pension plan. In this way the number of scholarships available at McMaster can be increased and it will support achievement of the campaign objectives.

Sun Shines on Missing Raincoat

In the last MUFA Newsletter, we asked all those who had attended the Retirees' luncheon on November 3 to check that they had returned home with their own raincoat. We are happy to report that our request did not go unheeded and that the coats in question have been returned to their rightful owners.

Joint Committee Agrees to Raise Tuition Bursary for 1999/2000

At its meeting on December 20, 1999, the Joint Committee agreed to raise the Tuition Bursary Benefit for 1999/2000, retroactive to September 1, 1999, to \$100 per credit up to a limit of \$3,000 per academic year for full- or part-time study at McMaster for eligible spouses and dependents.

\$200,000/year is set aside each year for the Tuition Bursary benefit. Since the full amount had not been used in previous years, surplus funds are now available for distribution this year. The Joint Committee will review the performance of the tuition benefit at its last meeting of the academic year (June 19) and, in accordance with its findings, set the amount of the bursary for September 2000.

Committee Assignments

- Donald Wells (Political Science/Labour Studies) has agreed to represent MUFA on the McMaster Day Care Board.
- Andy Muller (Economics) joins MUFA's Retirement Issues Committee chaired by Herb Jenkins.
- In a recent ballot, MUFA Librarians decided that the librarian representative on the MUFA Executive should be one of the librarians on the Library Negotiations Committee. As a result of this vote, Kathy Ball becomes a member of the Library Negotiations Committee.

Welcome New MUFA Members

Vishwanath Baba	Dean, Faculty of Business
Robert Baber	Computing & Software
Sigal Balshine	Psychology
Samir E. Chidiac	Civil Engineering
Dongya Yang	Anthropology

For Rent

- Dundas House, ravine lot, near busline. Groundfloor, also furnished basement. 2 bedrooms/bathrooms and a study. 1 April to 31 July 2000. Rent negotiable. For more information: 905 - 627 - 9468 or robrtsnj@mcmaster.ca.
- Looking to rent house to visiting scholar while away on research leave — approximately July 2000-July 2001. 3 bedrooms. 20-25 minute walk from the University in Westdale. Please e-mail with further inquiries to richards@fhs.mcmaster.ca.

CAUT Credit Card Programme with Bank One International

As you may have noticed in the September issue of the CAUT Bulletin, CAUT has launched a new credit card programme with Bank One International. Why Bank One? Bank One International is a Canadian Bank. Bank One offers a Visa affinity card, the most recognized credit card in the world, with no annual fee, a low introductory interest rate on balance transfers, substantial credit lines, a portfolio of travel services, and customer service available toll free 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Cash can be accessed through an international network of ATMs and financial institutions. Account payments can be made by mail, electronic banking or in person at any Canadian Visa financial institution.

The MUFA Office has a limited supply of application forms for interested members (mufa@mcmaster.ca or ext. 24682).

CAUT Announces New Car Rental Programme

CAUT is pleased to announce a new car rental programme with Hertz Canada. The Hertz programme offers a 10% discount for CAUT members on Hertz standard daily, weekly, weekend and monthly rates (all car classes) for rentals in Canada and the U.S. A 5% discount is available on Hertz Leisure daily, weekly and monthly rates. Various discounts are also available in Europe and other international destinations.

The MUFA Office has a small supply of ID cards with upgrade coupons available to members who may use the service. Members can also avail themselves of the plan without a card by providing the booking agent with the CAUT programme number — 1158791.

MUFA Holds Forum on Faculty Rights & Obligations during Work Stoppages by Other Groups

The recent strike by teaching assistants, as well as the threatened strike by part-time

instructors last year raised many questions concerning faculty members' rights and obligations during work stoppages by other groups. In the absence of a Joint Committee policy on these matters, MUFA adopted the relevant CAUT policy as a guideline for answering as many of these questions as possible. However, that policy is far from adequate and speaks more to faculty rights than to faculty obligations.

It has been agreed in the Joint Committee to negotiate a policy on this matter for similar situations which might arise in the future. As a first step in this process, MUFA organized a panel discussion and open forum on the topic of Faculty Rights and Obligations during Work Stoppages by Other Groups. A distinguished panel was convened consisting of Timothy DeGroot of the Human Resources and Management Area in the School of Business; Wayne Lewchuk, Director of the Labour Studies Programme; and James Turk, Executive Director of CAUT.

I have summarized below some of my impressions of what was covered in the forum. One of the first problems addressed was whether or not we should make one policy to fit all when there is such a diversity of course presentations, teaching approaches, and class sizes. In addition, a variety of opinions were expressed by panelists and members of the audience concerning the rights of professors to:

1. refrain from crossing the picket line (physically and symbolically)
2. refuse to do the work of those who are on strike, and
3. decline to do regular teaching during the work stoppage.

Although all agreed that no one should be forced to do the work of others, it is not always clear where to draw the line between our duties and those of the teaching assistants. Are professors ultimately responsible for the delivery of their courses — even without the assistance of teaching assistants? If we do the work of those on strike, are we undermining their position in the bargaining process? The different positions taken by individuals on these issues not only reflect their political ideologies, but also the complex role of professors as educators (with obligations to the students) and as fellow employees (with obligations to those exercising their right to strike). Rather than appearing to pick sides, we must do our best to put pressure on both the union and the administration to resume bargaining. Regardless of how small the work stoppage, all strikes impose a cost on all those who work at the University and all students who attend it. This is a necessary consequence of the bargaining process, and we should not forget this.

*Pat Chow-Fraser, Editor
Department of Biology*