



# NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1999, VOLUME 26.1, Pat Chow-Fraser, EDITOR

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT THE YEAR AHEAD

Colleagues, welcome to a new term, and a very special welcome to our 60 new members. Yes, faculty renewal has finally begun, although much remains to be done in this respect, especially if we are to adequately deal with expected increases in enrollment within the next few years. The purpose of this report is to inform you of several actions taken by MUFA on your behalf this past spring and summer, and to briefly comment on a number of issues in which we are currently or likely to become involved in the near future.

### **MUFA Librarians**

Several years ago University librarians became part of MUFA. The primary goals of this realignment were to achieve recognition of the academic nature of their positions and to provide for more effective negotiation of their remuneration. To these ends, the Library Negotiations Committee was established. This Committee has now negotiated librarians' remuneration twice and has clearly established the precedent that such remuneration is to be modelled on faculty rather than staff settlements. The other major task assigned to this Committee was to review all University policies and negotiate changes appropriate to the academic status of librarians. In some cases this simply involved adding librarians to an existing policy, while in others it was necessary to modify a policy or develop an entirely new one to adequately deal with this new status for librarians. This has been a long process extending over the past three years. Throughout that time librarians were ably represented by Liz Bayley, Carl Spadoni, Les Robb and Bernadette Lynn. I replaced Les Robb as co-chair of the Committee during the past year.

I am very happy to report to you that this policy review by the Library Negotiations Committee was finally completed early this past summer. Over the summer the new and revised policies have been collated and categorized on the basis of the actions required to put them into effect. The administration's co-chair on this Committee, Graham Hill, and I will be meeting with the Provost shortly to attempt to expedite the formal adoption of these changes.

### **OHIP Coverage during Research Leaves**

Another matter that was resolved last spring and reported in the MUFA *Newsletter* [March-April 1999, Vol. 25.4] is of sufficient importance to repeat here in case you overlooked it. Changes to OHIP regulations which were designed to clip the wings of snowbirds had the effect of threatening the OHIP

coverage of faculty and librarians on extended or repeated Research Leaves outside the province. The resulting loss of coverage applied both while the individual was on leave and for a period of time after returning. Furthermore, our major medical coverage is conditional on continuing OHIP coverage. Although a relatively small number of individuals were likely to be affected by this ruling, the consequences for them could have been catastrophic if they did not obtain private insurance. Last year's Remuneration Chair, David Hitchcock, expended considerable effort in search of a resolution to this problem only to be frustrated at every turn. In the end, our provincial affiliate, OCUFA, persuaded the relevant minister to rule that Research Leaves are exempt from this ruling. Your OHIP coverage is now secure while on Research Leave. If you have any questions on this issue, I refer you to the March-April *Newsletter* or to the MUFA office.

## **Long-Term Disability Insurance**

Yet another action concerns our long-term disability (LTD) insurance. As you probably know, although our LTD insurance is self funded, it has been administered by Sun Life. Some surplus has developed in this fund, but earns an extremely low rate of interest at Sun Life. The various employee groups involved and the University administration just completed negotiation of an arrangement by which these funds will be moved from Sun Life and invested along with other University trust funds at a much higher rate of interest. The additional income on these funds will be available for future improvements in benefits or to defer future increases in the cost of coverage. The MUFA Executive has approved this agreement and it will go into effect subsequent to approval by the other employee groups and the Board of Governors.

## **Reappointments & Reelections**

One final note on developments of the past spring and summer concerns the reappointment of Peter George as President and Vice-Chancellor of McMaster and the reelection of Mike Harris's government in Ontario. I do not mean in any way to associate those two events and assure you that I take considerably greater satisfaction from the former than the latter. In any case I wish to congratulate Peter on his reappointment and assure him of MUFA's continued support as he works to maintain and improve the tradition of academic excellence and research preeminence at McMaster. Reelection of the Harris government is somewhat discouraging with respect to hopes that the severe underfunding of Ontario universities may be quickly remedied. In this context, President George's proven ability to generate some alternative revenues is most welcomed. In the meantime, rumours abound as to what a reelected Harris government might have in store for Ontario's universities, but it is not my purpose here to spread rumours. We stand ready, as does OCUFA, to do our best to address whatever comes in this regard.

## **Pension Plan**

Turning to issues that are currently being addressed by MUFA, perhaps the most exciting news concerns developments with respect to the McMaster Pension Plan. Last fall Les King reported to you that the University was undertaking a major review of its "provisions for retirement" and had invited each major employee group and retirees to name a representative to the committee undertaking this review. Les Robb represents MUFA on this committee and deserves a very large vote of thanks from all of us for the many long hours spent and frustrations experienced while serving the Association on this Committee. The work of this Committee now appears to be on the verge of an agreement between all parties involved with respect to utilization of the very large surplus in the Pension Fund, based on actuarial estimates of future commitments. I hope that by the time you read this, final agreement will have been reached. The agreement is complex, technical and lengthy, so I shall not attempt to provide you details at this time. I would, however, like to give you a very general idea of what is involved in the hope of whetting your appetite for more information as matters develop.

The broad outline of the agreement provides for a number of major improvements in pension benefits. Some of these changes benefit one employee group more than another so that one of the tasks of the

Committee was to achieve an acceptable balance between the gains to these various groups. Two key benefit improvements are the introduction of a supplementary retirement plan to cover income above the Revenue Canada Maximum and an improvement in the pension per year of service for income below the Canada pension plan ceiling (currently 1.4% per year of service, increasing in the latest version of the proposed agreement to 1.6%). In any case, the total actuarial valuation of these improved benefits is approximately \$105 million.

The other major provision of the agreement is withdrawal of an equal value from the Pension Plan for the University, the other major contributor to the Pension Fund. Part of these funds would be used to fund retiree benefits. The remainder of the funds would be placed in an endowment fund and the resulting interest used to improve McMaster's position as a major research university in competition with larger and better endowed institutions.

A balance would be left in the Pension Fund equivalent to at least 125% of its actuarially estimated commitments. This remaining 25% surplus provides for pension holidays that have been negotiated in the past and maintains the financial soundness of the fund. This surplus may in the future allow for pension holidays and part of the agreement will specify how pension holidays will be shared among the employees and the employer in the future.

My enthusiasm for this agreement is based on the fact that it is a totally win-win situation. Employees win a very significantly improved set of pension benefits, while the University wins increased endowment funds. Furthermore, the endowment funds provided to the University cannot help but be of at least indirect benefit to employees, and improved pension benefits will contribute significantly to the University's competitive position with respect to attracting and keeping excellent employees. If you share any of my enthusiasm for these possibilities, you may wonder when they will become a reality. Although completion of the negotiation process is imminent, a number of subsequent steps are required before such a proposal can come into effect. Once negotiations are complete, the details of the proposal must be communicated in an understandable manner to all employees and retirees. The employee groups and retirees must then conduct a ballot on the proposal. All groups must approve it, preferably by an overwhelming majority. The Pension Trust Committee must approve the proposal with a view to maintaining the financial soundness of the Pension Fund. It will then be referred to the Board of Governors (through its Finance Committee) for approval on behalf of the University. Finally, both a Provincial regulatory body and Revenue Canada must approve the proposal before it can go into effect. I am told that these additional steps could be completed within a few months. It is also obvious that the process could be derailed at any of these stages, but if we achieve approval, the agreement will be effective from July 1, 1999. We shall keep you informed.

## **University Access Review**

Turning to other matters currently in progress, you are probably aware that a consultation process is underway concerning a proposal for a new Main Street entrance to the University; a four-lane access road between McMaster University Medical Centre and the Psychology Building; considerably increased traffic through campus on University Avenue and Sterling Street; and a bus terminal adjacent to the new University Centre. No formal role has been assigned to MUFA in this process, but we are concerned to see that the membership is aware of these proposals and has ample opportunity for their views to be expressed and taken into account. This proposal would produce a significant change in the essentially pedestrian nature of the campus core. To be weighted against this are the very real problems which the University seeks to address with these changes and the issue of whether a reasonable alternative can be identified. Four public fora for information and discussion will have been held by the time you read this. If you missed all of these opportunities, information about the proposal can be found on the web at

**[www.mcmaster.ca/ua/opr/newentrance](http://www.mcmaster.ca/ua/opr/newentrance)**

The MUFA office also has a copy of the complete engineering report which you may examine. If you have views on this proposal, they should be sent to the Board of Governors at [frankwb@mcmaster.ca](mailto:frankwb@mcmaster.ca) or

c/o McMaster Board of Governors Office, University Hall 115. I would also suggest that you copy your submission to MUFA at

**[mufa@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mufa@mcmaster.ca)**

or MUFA Office, Hamilton Hall 103A. This will allow us to be aware of your views and to assess whether they are being adequately represented in the decision-making process.

## **Double Cohort**

Another issue with which MUFA is involved concerns McMaster's planning for increased enrolments resulting from the so-called "double cohort" and the subsequent demographic increases in the number of students seeking university educations. Last fall Provost Harvey Weingarten formed an *ad hoc* committee chaired by Betty Ann Levy to begin identifying relevant issues and possible solutions. Stefania Miller represented MUFA on this committee whose report is now a discussion document within the University. This year Stefania will continue to deal with this issue and others as chair of MUFA's Academic Affairs Committee. We shall keep you informed as matters develop.

## **Remuneration Negotiations**

A current internal issue at MUFA concerns the somewhat contentious situation surrounding approval of last year's Joint Committee agreement with respect to faculty remuneration. At last year's Annual General Meeting, a motion was passed to strike a committee to review processes and structures within MUFA with respect to negotiating and approving faculty remuneration. The current MUFA Executive has struck such a committee with Vice-President Bernadette Lynn as chair. We wish them well in their work and look forward to the results of their deliberations. If you have views on this issue, I suggest you forward them to Bernadette at

**[lynnbe@mcmaster.ca](mailto:lynnbe@mcmaster.ca)**

## **Joint Committee**

Although MUFA is not negotiating remuneration this year, the Joint Committee will be dealing with a number of other issues. MUFA's representatives to the Joint Committee this year will be myself, Vice-President Bernadette Lynn and Remuneration and Academic Affairs Chair Stefania Miller. The current CP/M model has been in place for a number of years and a review of its continued effectiveness is due. The administration has expressed a desire to mount such a review within the Joint Committee, or by a subcommittee reporting to the Joint Committee, now that we have a two-year period free of remuneration negotiations. The MUFA Executive has authorized us to proceed with such a review. Another matter with which the Joint Committee continues to wrestle is development of an adequate policy to deal with privacy and confidentiality of electronic communication. The administration and MUFA representatives were unable to find sufficient common ground on this issue last year, but we shall make every effort to deal with it this year. Another item which I intend to raise in the Joint Committee is the increasing gap between a fixed tuition bursary for dependents of MUFA members and ever-rising tuition fees. I am well aware that this is a remuneration issue and that MUFA concluded a three-year remuneration agreement with the administration last year. However, it is clear to me that this issue was simply overlooked in those negotiations and that in the interest of collegiality and continued willingness on MUFA's part to enter into multi-year remuneration agreements, it will occasionally be necessary to discuss a benefit issue that was overlooked or developed in the interim.

If you are still reading, I thank you for your patience and persistence. More could be said, but I think we have probably reached a processing limit for the moment. Just let me add in closing that I am desirous of knowing your views on the issues I have addressed or other issues. You can most easily get your views to

me by e-mail at

[platt@mcmaster.ca](mailto:platt@mcmaster.ca)

I also remind you that MUFA maintains a list server for discussion of any issues members desire at

[g-mufagab@mcmaster.ca](mailto:g-mufagab@mcmaster.ca)

I also monitor this list server and thus will see any views you wish to share with a wider selection of your colleagues. If you are not currently on this list server and would like to be, please notify the MUFA office. Best wishes in all your endeavours during the year ahead.

*John Platt  
MUFA President*



## [1999/2000 MUFA Executive](#)

## [Committee Structure - 1999/2000](#)

## [Faculty Association Council](#)

### **Observers Needed**

**Required: faculty who are members of the Faculty Association -- yes, RETIREES also qualify -- to serve as observers for appeal and grievance hearings. The role of the Observer is to report on the adequacy of the procedures, with a view to making recommendations to improve relevant policies, not to comment on the conduct or the judgement of the tribunal. Hearings usually take place over one or two days. For more information, send us an e-mail ([mufa@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mufa@mcmaster.ca)), give us a call (24682), or drop us a line (HH 103A).**



**The Dean hired a new Assistant Professor. At the conclusion of the interview the Dean said, "Please don't tell anyone what we're paying you."**

**"Don't worry Sir." the faculty member replied, "I'm as ashamed of my salary as you are."**



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## **Are You Considering Early Retirement?**

**In the past, some faculty members have signed individual agreements with the University concerning the conditions of their retirement. These agreements have covered special (non-**

standard) access to office space, laboratory facilities and other matters. At present, there is no established procedure, other than the civil courts, for resolving subsequent disputes concerning the interpretation of such agreements. The Faculty General Grievance Procedure applies only to those who "hold the academic rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor or lecturer". Professors emeriti are not covered even in the case of disputes concerning an agreement signed prior to retirement. Hence, it is especially important that clear, specific wording be used in such agreements. It is strongly recommended that our colleagues seek the advice of MUFA and of their own lawyers before signing any such agreements.



## If You Are Being Considered for Tenure and/or Promotion, Read On

If you are a faculty member who is being considered for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor or for promotion to Professor, you may find it helpful to have a faculty colleague act as an advisor during this process. This colleague can assist in the preparation of your research résumé, teaching dossier and other material. An advisor can also accompany you to interviews at various stages of the process should this prove necessary.

This practice has been informally sanctioned in the past. Proposed revisions to the Tenure and Promotion Policy explicitly state that a faculty member may be accompanied by a faculty colleague acting as an advisor when appearing before a Departmental, Faculty or Senate committee.

Please feel free to contact the Chair of the MUFA Committee on Special Enquiries and Grievances should you desire further information concerning this policy or assistance in seeking out an appropriate advisor.

*Martin Dooley, Chair  
Special Enquiries and Grievances Committee*

## Welcome New Members

(since September 1998)

J. S. Andrew	Geography & Geology	Philip Kremer	Philosophy
David Andrews	Kinesiology	Mark Lawford	Computing & Software
Donna Baines	Labour Std/Social Work	Marilyn Lee	Nursing
Paul Berti	Chemistry	Marc-Andre Letendre	Economics
Joe Boyce	Geography & Geology	Carolyn Levis	Surgery
L. Bramson	Pathology & Mol. Medicine	Barbara Ley	Computing & Software
John Brennan	Chemistry	Xun Li	Elec&Computer Eng.
Martin Bunch	Geography & Geology	Michael Mazurek	Medicine
Narat Charupatt	Finance	Mark McDermott	Pathology & Mol. Medicine
Aaron Childs	Math & Statistics	Ken McLeod	Art, Drama & Music
Rita Cossa	Marketing	Don Metzger	Mechanical Engineering
Hugh Couchman	Physics & Astronomy	Ned Nedialkov	Computing & Software

M. Jamal Deen	Elec&Computer Eng.	Marek Niewczas	Material Sci & Engineering
Timothy DeGroot	Hum Res & Mgmt	Timothy Nye	Mechanical Engineering
Sylvia Esterby	Math & Statistics	Robert O'Brien	Political Science
Sheri Findlay	Pediatrics	William Orovan	Surgery
Alex Gershman	Elec&Computer Eng	Kevin Orr	Art, Drama & Music
Mita Giacomini	CE&B	Mehdi Parvini	Civil Engineering
Martin Gibala	Kinesiology	Ed Reinhardt	Geography & Geology
Catherine GrisGrisé	English	A-C Shi	Physics & Astronomy
Paul Grootendorst	CE&B	Joseph Sokalski	Art, Drama & Music
Natalia Gueorguieva	Elec&Computer Eng	Imre Szeman	English
Neil Hanlon	Geography & Geology	Hélène Trepanier	French
Janice Hladki	Women's Studies	Ray Truant	Biochemistry
Dereck Hunt	Medicine	John Valliant	Chemistry
Elizabeth Juniper	CE&B	Lesley Warren	Geography & Geology
Christopher Justice	Gerontological Studies	Robert Wilton	Geography & Geology
Janusz Kaczorowski	Family Medicine	Max Wong	Elec&Computer Eng
Ridah Khedri	Computing & Software	Daniel Woolf	History
Nicholas Kevlahan	Math & Statistics	D. J. Wright	Psychiatry
Stavros Kolliopoulos	Computing & Software		

## Best Wishes to Retiring MUFA Members

**We wish to extend best wishes to those faculty and librarians who have recently retired. We look forward to seeing them at the annual luncheon in their honour (this year on November 3) hosted jointly by the Presidents of the University and the Faculty Association. Invitations will be in the mail soon.**

Catherine Beattie	Philosophy	Henry Schwarcz	Geography & Geology
John Cameron	Physics & Astronomy	Evan Simpson	Philosophy
Ruby Chan	Mills Library	John Simmons	Engineering Physics
James Forrest	Anaesthesia	Dharam Singal	Pathology & Mol Medicine
Bob Johnston	History	David Streiner	CE&B
Les King	Geography & Geology	Gerhart Teuscher	Modern Languages
Peter Lauer	Computing & Software	George Thomas	Modern Language
Robert Love	Mgmt Science & Info Sys	Guillermo Viviani	Surgery
Ewan Macintyre	Social Work	Jacqueline Wakefield	Family Medicine
Gerald Rosenblum	Sociology		

## The Greatest Academic Scandal of Our Era





## Modem Pool Funding

The Joint Committee has set the 1999/2000 modem pool funding allocation, effective July 1, 1999, at \$75. The level of spending will be reviewed at the January meeting of the Joint Committee.

Only faculty on the Career/Progress Merit Scheme and librarians who are MUFA members are eligible for this benefit. To set up an account or if you have questions about your account, please contact the CIS Main Office at ext. 24357 or e-mail: [carmela@mcmaster.ca](mailto:carmela@mcmaster.ca).

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## Ballot Results

I have counted the ballots which were distributed to all librarians who are full members of the Faculty Association on May 10, 1999 requesting a YES or NO response to the following question:

*I hereby approve the Agreement regarding remuneration for the period June 16, 1999 to June 15, 2002, reached in the Library Negotiations Committee on May 6, 1999.*

YES	17	NO	0	SPOILED	0
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**TOTAL BALLOTS CAST 17**

*Grant Smith  
Returning Officer*

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## Retirees Fees



## Ivor Wynne Centre

In recent months, a proposal to charge retired staff and faculty a membership fee to use Ivor Wynne Centre facilities has come under fire. Following discussions in the Joint Committee, it was agreed that anyone who retired *prior* to 1999 will continue to receive free membership at the Ivor Wynne Centre; those retiring in 1999 have been offered membership at one-half price. Future retirees will be eligible for membership in the Ivor Wynne Centre at a rate that will be prescribed annually and approved by the Board of Governors.

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*This Newsletter is published monthly between September and May by the Faculty Association at McMaster University. Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Association or of its Executive unless so specified. Anyone wishing to contribute to the MUFA Newsletter is invited to send submissions to the Faculty Association Office (HH 103A, e-mail: [mufa@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mufa@mcmaster.ca), ext. 24682). Deadlines are the 15th of each month. All submissions will be published at the discretion of the Editor.*