



MCMaster UNIVERSITY RETIREES ASSOCIATION

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Nora Gaskin, Secretary

Minutes for COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 1:30 PM in MUSC-224

1. Welcome & Regrets

Present: Cliff Andrews, Helen Barton (chair), Brian Beckberger,
Phyllis DeRosa-Koetting, Nora Gaskin, Mary Gauld, Mahendra Joshi,
Betty Ann Levy, Debbie Weisensee

Regrets: Alison Forler, Heather Grigg, John Horsman, Hank Jacek, Mary Law, Kathy Overholt

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 Council Meeting January 8, 2020 (for approval)

Moved by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Mahendra Joshi

“that the minutes of January 8, 2020 be approved”

Carried.

3. Business Arising

4. Human Resources Report (Alison Forler) – no report

5. President’s Report (Helen Barton)

MURA reps met with Wanda McKenna and Gayleen Gray (head of UTS) on January 20.

Definition of a Retiree and Retiree Supplemental Benefits

- Some information was given on upcoming retirements from 2020 – 2015 in the various employee groups (hourly info missing), but no historical information on how many employees in the DB plans retire at their “special retirement date” with unreduced benefits, as compared to age 65. Luckily our survey results are filling in this gap.
- No information was given on numbers in the RRSP groups (TMG, MUALA, hourly and Senior Exec levels), and no stats given on tuition assistance/bursary use by retirees.

- Policy will be approved by the PVP group (president and vice-presidents), not by the Board of Governors. No action will be taken until the VP Admin is back – earliest would be March. Wanda will be discussing with VP Admin and will report back to MURA group.
- We were told that all the RRSP groups have been consulted and that none have an issue with the definition (i.e. that those retiring with the group RRSP will only be considered retirees of the university if they have a minimum 10 years service and have attained age 65). We are checking with TMG and MUALA groups to ensure that they are aware of the implications for their groups.

Technology

- Faculty and staff (including retirees) email will move from “MacMail” to Office 365 mail (Microsoft cloud) by the summer (<https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/worthmentioning/changes-to-email-and-calendaring-for-staff-and-faculty/>)
- UTS will work with MURA on documentation, communication and training sessions for retirees; they will also include some from the MURA team in the “early adapter group” so we can participate in the work needed.
- Office 365 licensing is for current employees only. Retirees will be able to use Office 365 email via the web interface (like current OWA), by purchasing their own Office 365 and/or Outlook software if they don’t have it already, or by using other email clients (more info to come).
- UTS is to provide MURA more information about licensing levels (A1, A3 etc.); does licensing include faculty retirees? Also to provide information on discounts available (possibly from MS) for retiree purchases of Office 365.
- There are also some changes coming to on-campus Wi-Fi access, and to VPN, that will have to be communicated to retirees.

Purging Dormant Retiree Email Accounts – this will happen sometime later. It is on the UTS “radar”. This is a communication concern for MURA (sending emails that are never received, so we may be missing many retirees with our communications). It is a security concern for the University.

LinkedIn Learning / Lynda.com – issue raised by a retiree; LinkedIn Learning is an online learning platform available to employees but not to retirees.

- Information received after meeting is that Lynda.com (mostly the same content with a different name) is available on both the Hamilton and Burlington public library websites. Users only need a library card to use it. It may be available more broadly through libraries.

Library e-Resources – issue is that staff retirees have less access to library e-resources than either faculty or alumni.

- Information received after meeting: This is a licensing issue; only retired academics are included as library consortia expect that only this group continue research beyond retirement. Alumni contracted for a special deal for alumni. In the few cases where a retired staff member wants access, the Library sets the

individual up with special access for a designated amount of time to do their specific research project. There have been minimal requests for such access.

- **Action:** Helen and Nora will follow up with library to set up process. We can then promote.

Survey and Strategic Planning

- Survey: a total of 2094 surveys were sent out, 1505 via email and 589 via post
- 439 responses have been received so far, 369 online and 70 mailed
- Council's help will be needed to enter the paper responses into Survey Monkey; Mahendra, Mary and Brian, Helen and Nora volunteered
- Planning for a strategic planning exercise (keeping MURA relevant for retirees) will be done as soon as possible. We are planning to present survey results at the AGM in late May.

Three-Year Funding

Funding renewal requests to Unifor, MUFA and the President's Office were sent on February 4. A positive response was received from the President's Office. No other responses to date.

6. Treasurer's Report (Debbie Weisensee)

- We got our reimbursements from the President's Office and HR for the Christmas Lunch.
- Debbie is trying to bring the statements up to date. Question: how are the funding payments made, every year, or three years all at once? **Action:** Debbie and Helen will look into January 2020 funding.

7. Reports on Special Projects

7.1 Academic Awards Endowment (Helen Barton)

Current Fund

Fund Status – \$88,499.64 as of January 8, 2020. No update as of time of report. Has the scholarship kept pace with inflation?

- This question was asked at the January Council meeting.
- The answer is yes.
- Comparing 1992/93 to 2019:
 - Scholarship increased from \$300 to \$2500 (733%)
 - Mac's "Arts" tuition/supp. fees increased from \$2,210 to \$7,515 (240%)

New fundraising project

Approved at January 2020 Council meeting:

MURA Academic Scholarship

Established in 20XX by the McMaster University Retirees Association (MURA). To be awarded by the School of Graduate Studies to a graduate student researching technological advances related to seniors, and who demonstrates academic excellence.

Fundraising Target / Award Value / MURA Funding

- \$25,000 fundraising target, which will support an annual award of \$1,000
- Council agreed that the fund will be seeded from MURA's surplus funds.

For discussion/ decision:

- MURA's unrestricted surplus is approximately \$21,800
- Suggestion is that approximately 25% (\$5,000) of this surplus be used to seed the new scholarship fund.

Moved by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Cliff Andrews

“that MURA seed the new scholarship fund with \$5000 from our unrestricted surplus funds“

Carried

7.2 Archives (Mary Johnston) – no report

7.3 Fundraising – MURA Cards – no report

8. Information Reports from Committees

8.1 AGM (Mary Gauld)

- Date: Thursday, May 28
- Speaker vs. survey: in President's report include 2 or 3 slides that show the most interesting survey outcomes and how the survey results affect strategic planning.
- Will need time for constitutional amendment
- Council speaker choices, in ranked order:
 - Gerry Wright, Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences: superbugs
 - Tina Moffat, Anthropology: food
 - John Valliant, head, Centre for Probe Development and Commercialization (commercializing science)
 - Will need new signs because of new venue; Cliff's wife has volunteered to make them; expense approved

8.2 Christmas Lunch (Mary Gauld)

- The 2019 lunch had a shortfall of \$168.56, mostly due to fewer ticket sales.
- 2020 lunch: Mary will try for Tuesday December 8 [Note: December 8 was unavailable, so have booked Wednesday December 9]

8.3 Communications (Helen Barton for John Horsman)

- Received a Call for Project Proposals from Academics without Borders, and a call for volunteers for a specific AWB project. Council decided these two were so specific as to be of interest to a vanishingly small percentage of our membership, if any, so we will not pass them along on the listserv.

8.3.1 Condolence cards (Heather Grigg) – no report

8.3.2 Web site (Nora Gaskin)

- Suggested sending an email to the listserv re: Christmas lunch photos on Flickr

8.4 Constitution and By-Laws (Brian Beckberger)

- Brian invites further comments on the proposed amendment; if it gets passed through Council next month we can revoke it in the April meeting or pass it on to the AGM for ratification

8.5 Membership (Kathy Overholt) – written report

8.6 *MURAnews* (Phyllis DeRosa-Koetting) – no report

8.7 Nominating (Heather Grigg) – no report, but Debbie has ideas for an auditor that she will approach.

8.8 Pensions and Benefits (Brian Beckberger & Mary Law)

- **Email project:** end target end of June, current hardware and software is at end of life; new system is a cloud email system
 - Council volunteers to be early adopters: Nora, Helen, Brian, Debbie
- **Lynda.com: Action:** investigate if it is at all Ontario public libraries and put an article in *MURAnews* about it being available at the public libraries
- **Campus Wi-Fi changes:** Mac-WiFi will be expanded, MacSecure will be discontinued, eduroam is worldwide, and will also be continued. **Action:** Nora will write a piece for *MURAnews* about eduroam.
- **Library e-resources: Action:** Helen and Nora will talk to Vivian Lewis or somebody at the library to establish a process for case-by-case basis non-academic use.
- Requests for help received from members:
 - Request to allow parking downtown at the David Braley Health Sciences Centre on Saturdays so people could shop at the market. Request was passed along to Parking and they just cited the current rules, so no inclination to change. Our response to the retiree included a suggestion to use the free one-hour validated parking in the York Blvd. Parkade that is provided by market vendors.
 - Request for the University to provide parking starting at 12:15 pm instead of 12:30, in view of the number of events that start at 12:30: **Action:** Helen will draft an email to Parking Services and will also ask for new statistics on retiree parking. Contacting the Age Friendly University committee about this was also suggested.
 - Query about a professor emeritus is paid for teaching a 3 unit course; forwarded to MUFA
 - Request to be on a list to receive email about open lecture events at McMaster; added to MURA listserv and suggestions made about getting on the mailing list for the McMaster Update and checking the Daily News and Alumni events listings
 - Request for information about group rates for car and home insurance; referred to the relevant page on our web site

- Two questions about T4 and T4A slips; referred to MURAnews article
- Question about getting Office 365 at a reduced rate; UTS suggested the retiree inquire

8.9 Trips & Special Events (Mary Gauld) – no report

8.10 Volunteering (Betty Ann Levy) – no report

9. Information Reports from Liaisons

9.1 University Board of Governors (Betty Ann Levy) – no report

9.2 Community Engagement Committee (Betty Ann Levy) – no report

9.3 CURAC (Helen Barton)

- CURAC/ARUCC Annual Awards Program announcement was forwarded to Council
- CURAC conference May 13-15, 2020 in Vancouver, BC at UBC; Helen will not be going, so if you're interested in going, please let Helen know

9.4 MUFA (Hank Jacek) – no report

9.5 Unifor (Mahendra Joshi) – no report

9.6 Hourly Staff Liaison (Cliff Andrews)

- Cliff represented MURA at a pre-retirement workshop. **Action:** Ask Alison for an electronic copy of the Homewood Health handouts that are included in the pre-retirement workshops.

9.7 Hourly Pension Committee (Cliff Andrews) – no report

9.8 Salaried Pension Committee (Brian Beckberger)

- The January meeting was a continuation of the Investment Subcommittee.
- Next meeting will be March 10 for reports of the plan's performance for the first half of its fiscal year.

9.9 Age-Friendly University Committee (Mary Gauld) – no report

10. Other Business

Moved by Brian Beckberger at 3:27 pm

“that the meeting be adjourned”

Carried.