



MCMaster UNIVERSITY RETIREES ASSOCIATION

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Nora Gaskin, Secretary

Minutes for Informal COUNCIL MEETING of McMaster University Retirees Association Wednesday, May 13, 2020, 1:30-3 PM on Zoom

1. Welcome & Regrets

Present: Helen Barton (chair), Brian Beckberger, Phyllis DeRosa-Koetting, Nora Gaskin, John Horsman, Mahendra Joshi, Betty Ann Levy,

Regrets: Cliff Andrews, Alison Forler, Mary Gauld, Heather Grigg, Hank Jacek, Mary Law, Kathy Overholt, Debbie Weisensee

1. Annual General Meeting

Consensus was that there should be a virtual AGM held before the end of November if we can't meet in person before then, even if we can only notify those for whom we have an email address. If possible we will notify our 600+ retirees for whom we have only a postal address. Idea: ensure all attending past 2 AGMs and 2019 Christmas lunch are emailed or phoned. We will need to make a final decision on this in September.

2. Nominating

Action still pending on finding an Auditor. Helen will contact Barb Carpio (nominated for 3 year term on Council) to discuss the delay. Hank (nominated for President) and John (nominated for second 3 year term on Council) will be aware from these notes.

3. Pre-retirement Seminars

HR conducted pre-retirement Seminars via Zoom on May 11 for TMG, Faculty and Unifor. Helen and Nora introduced MURA to the participants in the am and pm sessions, respectively.

4. MURA Funding

- **Current year** – Payments were received in February from MUFA, Unifor and the university. Payment not yet received from SEIU – Helen to follow up.
- **3-year Funding request** – Received positive responses in February from MUFA and the University. Unifor executive responded with a request for answers to a series of questions. The responses were sent in early March, but as of May 11 the Unifor exec had not met again (COVID related delay.) No response has been

received from SEIU to the request sent to them on Feb. 20. **Action:** Helen to follow up.

5. Definition of a Retiree for Supplemental Benefits –

- No information from Wanda McKenna since January 20 meeting on when the new policy goes (or went) to PVP for approval. The earliest was to be March; Wanda assured the group who met with her that she would let us know when this was on the agenda).
- The TMG group earlier reported that they had been consulted and they support the policy as drafted by HR.
- A member of the MUALA exec reported that they don't remember being consulted, and that do not agree. A written response was to follow, but not yet received.
Action: Nora will follow up.
- Unifor's president responded that she does not recall having any conversations with the University about this. She says "I have not followed up with the University about this and do see this as a concern but am not sure what, if anything, can be done about the University changing a definition to determine they can provide free of charge benefits to [fewer] people. It seems that they are deliberately changing the definition in order to save money." **Action:** Helen will follow up.
- SEIU – No response to our inquiry. **Action:** Helen will follow up.

6. Pension & Benefits

- Questions from members over past month or so: Very quiet: we have had 2 or 3 standard questions about tax slips since February. Nora and Helen responded.

7. Salaried Pension Trust Committee

- Brian thanked us for our confidence in re-appointing him as MURA's rep for the coming year.
- Pension fund value: in January was 2.266B; Apr was 1.996B; lost 270M dollars in 2 weeks in March; since March, the TSX index increased by 10%
- May 29 (now changed to July 16) working group meeting to consider possible new investment managers.
- Working group in the fall will be doing a review of management costs funded by the pension fund; last year the fund covered \$298,000 of university pension-related costs – HR likely looking for an increase in this. These costs are a very small percentage of the fund value, so only marginally impact pension increases; the costs affect active employees more.

8. Academic Awards

Beth Csordas, who has continued on in this portfolio even after leaving as MURA's treasurer, would now like to step down. Helen is looking for a replacement to work with her on this portfolio. Any volunteers? Will be having a Zoom meeting with Karen McQuigge of Alumni & Development about the campaign for our new graduate award as soon as possible.

9. New Email System (move from "MacMail" to Office 365 mail (Microsoft cloud))

- New target for the move is August 2020

- At the end of March UTS indicated that MURA’s “early adopters” (Helen, Nora, Brian and Debbie) would be migrated to the new system in late April/early May. No information has been received since then. Helen will follow up.

10. Member Survey

- Some results were published in the Spring 2020 *MURAnews*
- Survey Monkey extended our subscription for free to the end of June. We asked for an extension to finish our analysis as we were getting behind because of trying to adjust our lives to the pandemic. We asked for 3 weeks, and were given 3 months.
- Nora and Helen are on the final stages of analysis, codifying some of the narrative responses, and extracting final reports and data from the system. We will lose these capabilities at the end of June.
- Hank has all of the current information and is working on drafting a report.