



Executive Bulletin 2006-02-20

Unanimous Decision on Salary Policy

The MUNASA membership unanimously approved the motion presented at the 15th Annual General Meeting on January 27 that future salary increases should equal or exceed increases to salary scales. The motion was prompted by the December 2005 scale increase which raised the salary scales by 2% but increased salaries by only 1.75%. The 2005 increase was the first time that McGill has ever distributed a scale, or cost of living, increase to employees that was less than the increase applied to the salary scales. The Administration's rationale behind the differential increase was to keep McGill's salary scales attractive for hiring from outside the University while applying salary increases on a more subjective basis within the University.

The motion also calls for all future salary increases to be implemented only after providing MUNASA with ample opportunity to consult with its members and discuss the proposal with the University. The Administration had approached MUNASA the day before the Thanksgiving holiday to announce its intended salary distribution. MUNASA accepted the unprecedented distribution scheme as there was no possibility of consulting the members without substantially delaying the salary increase.

MUNASA will be reviewing the processes of both the 2005 Salary Increase and Merit distribution with Human Resources at the next Employee Relations Committee meeting. Comments from MUNASA members are an important part of this review. Please send your comments to info@munasa.com, call the MUNASA office or contact any member of the MUNASA Executive Committee.

Update on MUNASA Finances

Included with this bulletin to members is the audited financial statement for MUNASA for the year ending December 31, 2005. MUNASA generated a small surplus of \$9,095 in 2005 and finished the year with net assets of \$149,661. The surplus occurred largely because legal expenses, traditionally a major expenditure, were significantly lower than in previous years. This was an unusual occurrence that is unlikely to be repeated.

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Automatic External Defibrillators

Last fall, a MUNASA member enquired about the University's policy on the use of automatic external defibrillators (AEDs). Karen Sciortino, Non-Faculty Area Councillor and MUNASA representative to the Joint Advisory Health and Safety Committee (JAHSC) raised the issue at the November JAHSC meeting. Karen and the member conducted independent research on the use and effectiveness of AEDs and Karen presented their findings to the JAHSC for review and for further discussion in December.

The collapse and cardiac arrest of Detroit Red Wing, Jiri Fischer at a game later in November provided a very public example of AEDs as an invaluable link in the "chain of survival". Cardiac arrest is a major Canadian killer and the only way a victim can be saved is through defibrillation which **must** be done within minutes of collapse. While we are in the heart of downtown and placed within blocks of several hospitals, help cannot arrive as fast as needed in all cases. Help often arrives too late when the venue is crowded; buildings are very high and traffic slow.

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Harassment Policy

The Policy on Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited by Law was approved by the Board of Governors at its December 2005 meeting but will not go into effect until assessors have been appointed by Senate. Appointments should be completed in the early spring of 2006. Until the assessors are installed under the new policy, the provisions of the Interim Policy on Harassment and the Regulations concerning Complaints of Sexual Harassment remain in effect.

It has been a long process since MUNASA first introduced the notion of a Harassment Policy in 2004. A committee chaired by former Dean Martha Crago considered policy text during 2004 and 2005 but were unable to reach a conclusion. The Board of Governors adopted the Interim Policy in the spring of 2004 in response to a demand by the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail.

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... AEDs

A representative from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada made a presentation to the JAHSC at its January meeting. Clearly, persons using AEDs should have standard CPR training but if necessary, even an untrained person can use an AED. Urgences Santé will talk a person through the procedure and even CPR if need be. While the JAHSC does not have the responsibility to implement or administer an AED plan, it does have a mandate to develop and recommend internal standards and policies related to health and safety. Still to be considered are legal responsibilities and liability, adequate training, and ideal location for units.

Is this an important issue? Université de Montréal currently has six fixed units and three on security vehicles and plan to obtain more. Concordia University is purchasing eleven units for their campuses. Next time you walk through an arena, airport, or your local Nautilus Plus look for the AEDs. You could save a life.

... Harassment Policy

With the departure of Prof. Crago in June 2005 Prof. Bill Foster, then Interim Secretary-General and now Associate Provost (Policies and Procedures), took over the consultation on policy development and invited all unions, student and staff associations to work on an agreement on the text of a policy. Agreement was confirmed in late September and the policy was adopted unanimously in Senate and then by the Board.

The new Policy doubles the number of assessors that were available under the Regulations Concerning Sexual Harassment and requires that all assessors be provided with appropriate training. Most important, the policy provides several avenues towards resolving concerns about harassment or discrimination informally. This is particularly important for middle-manager and professionals for whom formal complaints can have adverse affects on career and working relations. The new Policy includes a review by the staff and student associations and unions during the second year following its implementation.

Personnel Policies Amended in 2005

The 2005 round of discussions on Personnel Policies concluded successfully. Five policies were amended as part of the revision, initiated by MUNASA in 2004, with respect to amendments to the Quebec Act Respecting Labour Standards. Disability, Holidays with Pay, Social Leaves, and Temporary Lay-off policies have all been amended to render them consistent with provisions in the Act. The Employment Security Policy was also amended to explicitly confirm that staff acquiring Employment Security while working in a unionized position will not lose Employment Security when promoted into an M position.

The work on improvements to Personnel Policies continues in 2006. MUNASA will table its proposals for the 2006 round of Policy Discussions at the end of this month as per the Dispute Resolution Policy section 1.5. Certainly on the list will be the completion of Labour Standards harmonization; at this point all that remains is amendments to the various leaves policies although these amendments are the most technically complex. MUNASA will also be pursuing amendments relating to the new Compensation System. These amendments were postponed pending the implementation of the Competencies Model first proposed by MUNASA in 2003. If you have suggestions please contact an Executive Officer, the MUNASA Office, or email info@munasa.com.

Recruiting New Members

Over the last five years the number of M positions at McGill has increased from 700 to 900, an increase of approximately 28%. During the same period, the MUNASA membership grew by only 21%. The combination of a growing number of retirements by long-term members and the difficulty in recruiting newly hired M staff has presented one of several challenges to maintaining a healthy membership. Often, people promoted from unionized to M positions assume membership in MUNASA will be automatic as it was in the union. Further, people hired from external to McGill are not aware that MUNASA exists for their benefit.

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... Recruiting New Members

MUNASA's ability to reach these people was cut off in 1995 after the formation of the MUNACA union. The Administration at that time decided to cease informing MUNASA of new hiring and to cease circulating MUNASA's brochure. Through MUNASA's efforts in Pay Equity, the development of the new Compensation System, the introduction of a Competencies Model, and the Symposium on Leadership, the Administration has come to accept that MUNASA has a positive role to play within the University. It was only a few years ago that the Administration accepted to make the brochure available at benefits enrolment. In the last few months the Administration has begun providing MUNASA with contact information on new hires.

The MUNASA Executive Committee has been updating our brochure and developing a recruitment strategy to coincide with this welcome opportunity. We are considering a number of recruiting activities in the coming months. We are very encouraged by members who have attended our Thursday lunchtime Executive Committee meeting to volunteer as recruiters. We are interested in your ideas and assistance. Please contact MUNASA at 398-6540 or info@munasa.com.

... Update on MUNASA Finances

The operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year, ending December 31, 2006, was approved by the membership at the Annual General Meeting of January 27, 2006. The budget anticipates an operating deficit for 2006 of approximately \$24,000. If realized, such a deficit would reduce MUNASA's net assets to slightly more than \$125,000.

Our auditors have informed the Executive that a non-profit staff association such as MUNASA should maintain financial reserves in excess of \$300,000 to provide a healthy cushion to deal with any contingency that may occur. In the face of this dynamic, the MUNASA Executive Committee is considering putting an end to the temporary dues reduction introduced in November 1999 and returning membership dues to \$24 per month. (A dues policy of \$24 per month was approved by the membership at a Special General Meeting held June 3, 1997. On November 25, 1999, the Executive Committee voted to temporarily reduce monthly dues to \$20 per month.) At that time MUNASA

was generating a significant annual surplus; however, that is no longer the case.

a) MUNASA cannot support annual deficits indefinitely. Higher dues will help us avoid deficits. MUNASA dues are tax deductible; the net cost per pay is less than a single bus ticket.

b) In order for MUNASA to provide sustained and improved services to members and build the membership base, we need to bring more financial and human resources to bear. (In contrast, to MUNASA's one staff person, our sister staff associations at Université de Montréal and Université Laval have three or more full time staffers each.)

c) In comparison, both MAUT and MUNACA require members to contribute almost 1.0% of gross salary as membership dues. For a person with a \$48,000 annual salary, that is about \$480. per year or twice the current amount of MUNASA's dues. In this context, MUNASA's dues are extremely low and impede our ability to be more effective.

Before making any decision, the Executive Committee would like feedback from members on this subject.

Comments may be made to the MUNASA Office, 398-6540, directly to any Executive Officer, or info@munasa.com.

Trevor Garland, President, 00622
trevor.garland@mcgill.ca

Robert Stanley, Vice-President, 3168
robert.stanley@mcgill.ca

Ron Critchley, Vice-President Liaison, 8582
ronald.critchley@mcgill.ca

Patrick O'Neill, Vice-President Membership, 0473
patrick.oneill@mcgill.ca

Gopal Menon, Treasurer, 4581
gopal.menon@mcgill.ca

Gordon Burr, Executive Secretary, 2960
gordon.burr@mcgill.ca

Anne Kosowski, Councillor (Faculty Dept.), 3490
anne@eps.mcgill.ca

Karen Sciortino, Councillor (non-Faculty Dept.), 8127
karen.sciortino@mcgill.ca