

**McMaster Association of Part-Time Students  
Board of Directors Meeting – Minutes  
Wednesday, November 28, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.  
Room 211, University Hall, McMaster University**

- PRESENT** Anna Marinelli (chair), Carole Armstrong, Lynn Beyer, Min-Ju Evans (by proxy after 7:00 p.m.), Vicki Hartley (by proxy), Rabia Khan, Joseph McGuire, David Moore, Eric Siu (by proxy), Michael Westcott, Allan Wong
- ABSENT** Alex Alvarez, Simon DeAbreu, Darlene Hayward, Kyra Machèn, Rose O'Connor, Sean Spratt
- STAFF** Sam Minniti (executive director)

**CONSTITUTION OF THE MEETING**

A quorum of directors being present, the chair called the meeting to order.

**ATTACHMENTS TO THE OFFICIAL COPY OF THE MINUTES**

- Minutes of September 25, 2007
- President's Report, November 21, 2007
- Finance Committee Report
- Research Proposal
- MUSC and SRA Update, November 26, 2007
- Executive Director's Report, November 28, 2007
- Executive Director's draft 2007-2008 Goals

**1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion:** Moved by Moore, seconded by Armstrong that the agenda be adopted with the addition of "University Bookstore Board Nominee" under Other Business.  
**Carried.**

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Amendments:

- Page 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> line: the date should be Tuesday, not Monday
- Page 1, attendance: Moore and Westcott should be noted under Present by proxy, not Absent. Marinelli should be noted under Regrets, not Absent
- Page 1, committee membership: should be clarified that these are ratifications in addition to previous appointments to the Awards Committee.
- Page 2, executive director goals: "Minniti indicated that...July 27" changed to: "This is the third time executive director goals have been discussed by the board (in addition to June 23 and July 27)".
- Page 3, executive director goals. Document title to be changed to "Executive Director Goals for the year ended November 28, 2007" – since they maps to the hiring anniversary date, not the term of office of the board of directors. The three dates in the title heading were replaced with "September 25, 2007"

**Motion:** Moved by Westcott, seconded by Wong that that the minutes of September 25, 2007 be adopted as amended. **Carried.**

### **3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Marinelli presented her written report (copy annexed to the master copy of the minutes).

### **4. TREASURER'S REPORT**

#### Finance Committee Report

The Board went through the Finance Committee report section by section, during which Westcott responded to questions and amendments were made to the recommendations.

- Third Quarter Report – received for information.
- Code of Accounts – accepted with the addition of breaking Web Site out into its own general ledger account code.
  - Armstrong asked if the office administrator or auditor had been consulted. Westcott replied that the auditor had not been consulted; however, the refinements are to remove long-outdated GL codes. Minniti noted that he and the Office Administrator had reviewed the proposals and saw no difficulty with them.
  - Armstrong asked about elimination of the Class Representative line. Moore noted that Class Representatives had not existed for several years. Minniti added that there is no plan within his goals to revive this approach.
  - Armstrong asked about including expenditure guidelines proposed by last year's treasurer. Moore noted that the board gave direction on those measures at its meeting on February 12, 2007.
- Investment Portfolio – received for information.
- Office Technology – revised to read "...plan for a complete refresh assessment every four years." Recommendation #1 revised to read: "That MAPS conduct a refresh assessment of its computers on a four year cycle." This does not preclude upgrades at other times as deemed appropriate by the board.
- Audited Financial Statements for 2007 – at Armstrong's request, "senior officers" replaced with "President and Treasurer." She further asked if requiring material to be sent to the auditor by January 31 was unduly prescriptive. Minniti advised that the date is consistent with existing practice.
- Internal Audit of Membership Fee – Armstrong asked how this would be done. It was explained that the enrolment reported by the Office of the Registrar, multiplied by the fee, would be compared against the transfers from the University. Minniti added that this will be done using information already provided by the University, together with Registrar data already being requested for another purpose.
- Unrepresented Students – MAPS will continue to seek assignment of all undergraduates to one of MAPS or the MSU, consistent with the MAPS-MSU membership framework. Minniti will press for this at the University Student Fees Committee and report back to the Board.
- Fee Transfers and Reporting Cycle – Minnti to send the appropriate reminders to the Business office to prompt timely transfer of fees from the University to MAPS.

**Motion:** Moved by Moore, seconded by McGuire to adopt recommendations #1-5 as amended. **Carried 10-0-0.**

## Membership Fee

Westcott said he believed reducing the fee from \$5 to \$4.50, to better align fee revenue with operational needs, was in keeping with the Board's fiduciary obligation to the membership. He noted that MAPS has generated significant surpluses in each of the last six years and is on track to post another surplus this year:

2001 - \$50,136	2005 - \$85,073
2002 - \$91,973	2006 - \$104,753
2003 - \$102,060	2007 - \$83,564 [projected]
2004 - \$73,482	

Armstrong asked what these numbers represent. Westcott explained that they are the operating surpluses [revenue less expenses] and that the data was drawn from MAPS' audited statements. He felt that running large surpluses year after year was evidence that MAPS' membership fee is too high and should be lowered to be better aligned with current and projected needs.

The Finance Committee further recommended that the 2007 operating surplus be placed in a special projects reserve that would be used for expansion of existing programming or innovative new activities that benefit part-time students. Westcott explained that the Committee further recommended a deadline [August 1] be set by which there would either be a concrete plan to spend the money or it would be refunded to students enrolled in the 2007-2008 academic year (on a pro-rata basis). Khan added that the Finance Committee felt a deadline would provide the Board with an incentive to act.

Armstrong said she was "dead set against a refund," in part because she believed the administrative cost of a rebate would consume half of the refunds. Westcott advised that there is precedent for having student organization refunds handled by the University through student accounts and that the charge for that would likely be comparable to the existing collection fee.

Armstrong said the University doesn't promote part-time studies as it does full-time degree studies, and to a lesser degree for continuing education courses. She felt this was because the University does not get any government funding in respect of part-time students. Armstrong asked who paid for the booklet containing evening course offerings that was produced until a couple of years ago. Moore noted this was produced by the Office of the Registrar. Armstrong suggested that MAPS could invest in public advertising of part-time study opportunities at McMaster University.

Armstrong said that when the current executive director was hired, the search committee made a conscious decision to seek an individual who would shift MAPS' focus from an administration to a more political/advocacy oriented focus. She felt that MAPS could and should strive to be a leader in this respect, not just at McMaster but also taking an active leadership role with part-time student organizations at universities across Canada to show them what is possible. She felt that there should be financial resources to support this type of growth and for that reason opposed revenue reductions or refunds.

Armstrong agreed that MAPS must not accrue large surpluses indefinitely. She noted that MAPS made several large gifts to the University to establish student financial aid endowments that benefit MAPS members. Minniti added that the University has signalled that it will seek another major gift in support of the proposed Liberal Arts building. Westcott noted that ancillary fees in support of academic buildings are not permitted by the provincial government.

Armstrong questioned the budget being prepared by the treasurer and Finance Committee, rather than being prepared by the executive director who is responsible for its execution. She posited that drastic cuts could be made leaving the executive director without resources to do his job.

Moore suggested such a scenario was far fetched, noting that no executive director would sit silently and allow it to happen. He reminded members that full board approves the budget. Minniti agreed, noting that he participated in the budget discussions at the Finance Committee, Executive Committee, and Board meeting. He added that he was fine with the process, noting that he had been consulted and involved in the discussion at the Finance Committee. He added that treasurers have always had a role in budget formulation.

Westcott noted that the allocations in the proposed budget would easily support program growth, including the proposed programming to replace the former BBQ and AYRFU seminar. He also noted that MAPS has retained earnings of over \$250,000, not counting a surplus of more than \$80,000 that is projected for 2007.

Members noted potential options for the special project reserve fund:

- Addressing the sharp decline in bursary funding available for CCE students.
- Commissioning research on MAPS demographics, course availability and/or services.
- Web casting course(s) not offered by the University due to insufficient enrolment.

Minniti spoke about ambitious plans for greater programming, including several expanded open houses to replace the former summer BBQ and “University 101” several times a year in place of “Are You Ready for University” that was offered in August only. He also noted that the Handbook would be mailed to students in August.

Westcott said he supported innovation and expansion that is of benefit to MAPS’ members, but stressed that MAPS has generated large surpluses for the last six years. It is clear that the Association is taking in far more than it needs for existing or significantly expanded activity.

Minniti asked about the process for expending funds from a Special Projects Reserve; would board consent be required or would it be entirely at his discretion? Moore noted that the executive director has authority and responsibility to execute the budget approved by the board. A framework for projects, including budget and outcomes, would have to be approved by the board for expenditures from the Reserve; it would not be an \$80,000 slush fund.

**Motion:** Moved by Moore, seconded by McGuire to adopt recommendations #6 (the proposed budget for 2008).

**Amendment:** Moved by Marinelli, seconded by Armstrong to amend the proposed budget to maintain the MAPS membership fee at \$5 per unit, resulting in Fee Revenue being adjusted to \$300,000 and the Admin Fee Expense being adjusted to \$3,000. **Carried 6-4-0 (Moore and Westcott noted opposed).**

**Main motion to adopt the proposed budget, as amended, Carried 9-1-0 (Westcott opposed).**

**Motion:** Moved by Westcott, seconded by Moore to adopt recommendations #7, amended to read: “That the 2007 Operating Surplus be placed in a separate “Special Projects Reserve.” **Carried 10-0-0.**

## Research Proposal

Westcott presented the proposal (copy annexed to the master copy of the minutes).

Armstrong said she found references to staff generically or by title to be pretentious. Westcott noted that in private sector corporate governance, he is accustomed to generic or staff title references that are used to protect the privacy of staff, particularly in public documents. Armstrong felt corporate governance wasn't relevant to MAPS.

Armstrong asked by what criteria the firm Researchology was selected. Westcott advised that the firm is well regarded and very experienced in this sort of work. It has also conducted focus groups at McMaster in the past. He added that he would be pleased to oversee a full Request for Proposals process if that was desired. Armstrong said an RFP was not necessary, but asked that additional context be added to the proposal so it would not be construed as collusion.

There was consensus that a research initiative of this type would be a valuable tool and it was also noted that the proposal aligned with the goals Minniti has proposed for 2007-2008.

## **5. MUSC AND SRA UPDATE**

Moore presented his written report (copy annexed to the master copy of the minutes).

## **6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Minniti presented his written report (copy annexed to the file copy of the minutes). He added that the Electronic Distribution List (EDL) is now ready. Email messages to the membership will be sent in each December and January.

### Awards Dinner

Beyer suggested that when recipients of University Awards are called forward, their programme and level be announced to provide additional recognition/context. Minniti will see to this at future dinners.

Marinelli noted that recipients of University awards at the CCE Graduation who were invited to the MAPS Awards Dinner (e.g. those other than scholarship and prize winners) were not invited to come forward and be recognized. Some of these individuals were disappointed that they did not receive comparable recognition as others invited to the dinner. Minniti noted that this was the first time these award recipients had been invited to the MAPS Awards Dinner.

## **7. MAPS CENTENNIAL AWARD**

The board decided, at its meeting of November 1, 2006, to have the Centennial Award (Degree Studies) removed from the Undergraduate Calendar and forego transcript notation for recipients if that was necessary to maintain the option to present the award to candidates with a GPA of less than 8.0 and the maintain the full traditional award criteria. The Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships (SFAS) had insisted on the grade requirement, truncated the eligibility criteria in the description published in the Undergraduate Calendar, and added a gold medal to the award.

SFAS was advised of the board's decision in late 2006, but did not act on it. Minniti sought and received confirmation of the board's continuing position in this matter. He will, once again, put MAPS' position in writing to SFAS.

## **8. RUDY HEINZL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE SELECTION COMMITTEE**

The Rudy Heinzl Award of Excellence is a senior MSU award presented to a member of the McMaster community in recognition of an outstanding contribution that benefits students. The selection committee includes the MSU Speaker and nominees from MAPS, the GSA, MUFA, and CAW Local 555 (formerly MUSA). The committee typically meets once in early/mid-March and the award is presented at Student Recognition Night in late March.

Moore, who was the recipient of the award in 2006, was confirmed as the MAPS appointee to the committee for 2007.

## **9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 2007-2008 GOALS**

Minniti presented draft goals for the reviewing year ended November 28, 2008.

The executive committee will discuss the document at its meeting on December 12; however, the performance review for the previous year is required to complete the conversation concerning goals for the ensuing year. The importance of coming to a decision on both at the January meeting of the board of directors was noted.

Open Session minutes are public record and posted on the MAPS web site. Moore noted that discussions involving either strategy or human resources-related matters should always be undertaken in Closed Session.

## **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

### University Bookstore Board Nominee

**Motion:** Moved by Moore, seconded by Armstrong to ratify Vicki Hartley as MAPS' nominee to the part-time student seat on the University Bookstore Board.  
**Carried.**

## **11. TIME OF NEXT MEETING / ADJOURNMENT**

Next Executive Meeting – Wednesday, December 12, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

Next Board Meeting – January 2008 – date to be confirmed

There being no further business, the executive adjourned to the call of the Chair.

8:25 p.m.