

CUPA/ARUC
Concordia University Pensioners' Association
Association des Retraité(s) de l'Université Concordia

MINUTES OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING

Thursday, April 30, 2015 – 10:00 A.M.
Room HB-130 – Hingston Hall, Loyola Campus

1. Call to Order and President's Remarks

President Bill Knitter called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Bill welcomed all attendees and announced that Joan Foster would be the guest speaker at 11:00 a.m. Joan Foster is a community nurse specializing in home care and a member of the McGill Council on Palliative Care. Her talk will deal with the challenges one faces in caring for yourself and loved ones at home.

Bill recognized and read the names of Concordia retirees who had passed away since the Fall, 2014 General Meeting. Bill welcomed new CUPARUC members and announced the names of all new members who had joined since the Fall, 2014 Meeting.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of October 30, 2014

The minutes of the October 30, 2014 meeting were distributed. The minutes were adopted unanimously.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no particular business arising from the Minutes other than that which appears under Reports or elsewhere in the Agenda.

5. Reports

5.1. Financial Report and Membership Statistics

The Interim Financial Statement for the period June 1, 2014 – April 15, 2015 was made available to all attendees. Garry Milton (Secretary/Treasurer) presented the financial report. He informed members that the balance on April 15th was \$16,084. The total revenue since June 1, 2014 is \$8,646, which is made up from membership fees, net receipts from the annual dinner as well as a \$500 contribution from Concordia. Total expenses to-date are \$8,689. The major expenses relate to the general meetings and

events (\$5,343), printing of the newsletter and meeting documents (\$841) and postage costs for the mailing of the newsletters (\$720). The association also spent \$993 in legal fees for opinions related to the anticipated new pension legislation.

To-date, there are 317 active paid members for the 2014-15 year. An additional 104 members have paid dues at some point over the past four years but have yet to renew for the current year. Garry Milton noted that all mailings go out to all paid members as well as to anyone that has paid membership fees over the past four years.

5.2. Pension and Benefits Committees

Bill Knitter introduced Howard Fink (Chair, Pension and Benefits Committee) and George Tsoublekas (CUPARUC Alternate Pension and Benefits Representative) and thanked them for their work on the Benefits and Pension Committees on behalf of CUPARUC.

5.2.1. Benefits Committee

Howard Fink commented on the recent meeting, resulting from the September 29th, 2014 University Pension Information Meeting, held to elect the pensioners/inactive seat on the University Pension/Benefits Committee. He reviewed what happened at the meeting and noted that both he and George Tsoublekas had retained their respective seats.

Howard then presented the written report he had prepared, which was made available to all attendees and is appended to the minutes.

A question was raised regarding what actions the University might suggest to help reduce the pension plan deficit. Howard replied that the University has suggested, among other things, cancelling indexation and reducing the RAMQ subsidy. He noted that we are strongly resisting the cancellation of future indexation and explained the way our indexation formula works and why it is a very responsible application of indexation that protects the Concordia pension Plan. With respect to decreases in health benefits as a method of reducing pension costs, he noted that the government will not allow such things.

In response to a question about “pension holidays”, Howard commented that the last time this had occurred was in 1999.

5.2.2. Pension Fund

George Tsoublekas presented the written report he had prepared on the performance and state of the pension fund, which was made available to all attendees and is appended to the minutes. George noted that his report is based on preliminary unaudited data.

5.3. Social Activities Committee

Wendy Hedrich (Chair, Social Activities Committee) reported that, for various reasons, the CUPARUC social events schedule had not been as active as last year but that a number of recent events had been well attended and enjoyed by all participants. Wendy noted that there were two upcoming events on the calendar but if people wished to attend, they must contact her very soon. She commented that a minimum number of individuals were required if events are to be confirmed and that activities had to be cancelled this year due to low response.

Wendy announced that the annual Christmas luncheon was held on December 12th in the Refectory on the Loyola Campus. It was very successful and well enjoyed by the fifty-five people who attended the event. A new caterer was used this year and there was a marked increase in the quality of the food and service.

Wendy requested that if anyone has ideas for social events to please let her know.

5.4. Scholarship Committee

A written report was made available to all attendees. Mary Baldwin (Chair, Scholarship Committee) reported that as a result of the Concordia University Foundation's overall investment policy review, 2014-15 was the first year of a transition period. The annual payout going forward has been reduced from 5% to 3.5%, and the university agreed to cover the 1.5% payout adjustment for three years. It is hoped that as the changes in the investment policy become more operational the fund will perform better such that the same level of support to student can be maintained going forward.

Mary noted that the annual payout from the fund is divided equally between graduate and undergraduate awards. Awards are not renewable, but recipients may be eligible and reapply in successive years.

For 2014-15 we have been able to support four awards of \$5,000. The recipients are: Daniel Barklon (M.A.Sc in Quality Systems Engineering); Andrew Forster (PhD in Humanities - Faculty of Fine Arts); Gilberto Rengifo (M.A. in Media Studies); and Mikaelian Shoghig (PhD in Political Science). At the undergraduate level, four bursaries and four scholarships have been given, one of each in each of the four Faculties.

Mary noted that last year the box on the Concordia Community Campaign and annual Giving cards where gifts could be designated did not indicate the Retired faculty and Staff Scholarships and Awards. However, our contact in the University Advancement Office indicated that they would try to include our fund in future material sent to Concordia pensioners, and the box has reappeared in some solicitations.

Mary remarked that the students who receive our awards are always most appreciative. She encouraged all present to be generous in order that our fund can grow.

5.5. Technical Committee

Roger Kenner (Chair, Technical Committee) noted that the website is up to date, including the latest newsletter. He encouraged people to check the website on a regular basis as the “Latest News” section on the home page is kept current with the most recent information about upcoming meetings, events and news.

Roger noted that, for the first time, a personal message from a member had been put on the website. This was an exceptional circumstance, which had been approved by the Executive. The need for a policy will be reviewed at a future Executive Committee meeting.

Roger noted that there is still an issue with members responding to the general emails. He encouraged everyone to not respond to the mail list but rather respond directly to the individual sending the message or to Roger, who will then forward the correspondence to the appropriate individual.

5.6. Newsletter / Issue with Retiree’s Email Addresses

John Woodrow (Chair, Newsletter Committee) noted that the Spring newsletter had been mailed to members and posted on the website thanked everyone.

John noted that an issue had occurred for recent retirees, especially those who had taken the recent Voluntary Departure Program, whereby they had not been permitted to retain their Concordia email addresses. The CUPARUC Executive took up this matter and John met several times with Roger Coté, Vice-President, Services, and Human Resources to discuss the matter and ensure that the decision be reversed. Based on these discussions, Roger Coté acknowledged the error and committed to restore the emails addresses. In addition, he agreed that future retirees could retain their Concordia email addresses but they would have to sign a form agreeing to respect Concordia’s policies regarding email. On behalf of CUPARUC, Bill thanked John for his work in resolving this issue.

5.7. Membership Recruitment

Doreen Hutton (Chair, Membership/Recruitment) presented the written report she had prepared, which was made available to all attendees and is appended to the minutes.

5.8. Relations with Other Associations

Howard Fink noted that the CURAC Annual Meeting would be held in May and that anyone interested in the meeting or CURAC in-general, can find information on their website. A link can be found on the CUPARUC website home page.

6. Nominating Committee Report.

The Nominating Committee Report, prepared by the Nominating Committee Chair and Past

President, Graham Martin was presented. The report was unanimously approved as presented. A copy of the report was made available to all attendees and is appended to the minutes.

7. Other Business

There was no additional business to be discussed at this time.

8. Next Meeting

The Fall General Meeting is tentatively scheduled for 10:00 a.m., the last week of October, 2015, on the Sir George Williams Campus.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m. following a unanimous motion. The formal meeting will be followed by a talk from our guest speaker, Joan Foster, on the topic Challenges of Caring for Yourselves and Loved Ones at Home.

Minutes submitted by
Garry Milton
November 1, 2015

CUPARUC General Meeting of April 30, 2015

Report on the Business of the Concordia Benefits Committee

October, 2014 – April, 2015.

Howard Fink, April 28, 2015

Last October, Quebec's Law 3 concerning pensions to municipalities, a law created to reduce past municipal pension deficits and to reduce future pension costs, was in the process of being passed by the National Assembly (with a new name). The major clauses included the insistence that actives pay a full 50 % of future annual premiums, and that past deficits be divided 50 % between administrations and the other stakeholders—actives and retirees--who would in turn each pay about half of their joint 50 %. In addition, indexation was to be cancelled for employees, while a choice to cancel retiree's future indexation was given to individual municipalities.

The government stated specifically its intention to create a parallel law for universities last autumn (2014), making use of the major clauses of what had been called Bill 3. The government has not put forward this law since then, and in succeeding meetings with university administrators and unions, it has suggested a number of changes to accommodate the sometimes very different pension agreements and practices in individual educational institutions. Meanwhile the Concordia University Administration has been holding special working meetings with an appointed internal committee called the Benefits Committee Working Group--composed of the employee and retiree members of the Benefits Committee, together with some administrators. In a series of meetings of this Working Group over the last six months, the Administration has attempted to work out in anticipation the probable changes in our Concordia pension plan to reflect the probable changes required by the government's university pension bill.

However, in succeeding government meetings (as I have said) during this time with university representatives, the proposed university bill has been modified several times. For this reason, and since therefore we retiree stakeholders feel that we cannot really anticipate what the final clauses relating to retiree pensions—most specifically, indexation—will be. For this reason (and others) your Reps on this Working Group have resisted the Admin's attempts to get our agreement to canceling future retiree indexation, and to increasing our health premiums by about 400 %!. We have indeed obtained a legal opinion on these two proposals, which confirmed the applicability of the Supreme Court's 1993 decision to guarantee retirees' benefits. While several court cases have challenged this decision, it is not at all certain that these cases have trumped the Supreme Court's decision.

In the last Pension Committee meeting it was reported that the Government, in its most recent meeting with university representatives, favours exempting (“immunizing”) retirees from past deficits (which would be shared by the University and active members), and making future

retiree indexation cancellations optional for each institution. Your Reps continue to argue in the Working Group and the Benefits Committee for retaining retiree indexation.

The Government's latest schedule is to table the University Pension bill by June, and to bring it into law by the autumn. (We have heard such before.) The Government has also moved forward implementation of the regulations from 2014 to January 2018. This means that Concordia has several years more of pension performance to reduce the pension deficit, thus to reduce the amount of pension-premium increases and indexation reductions, in a word softening the pension crisis.

CUPARUC General Meeting of April 30, 2015

Report on the Pension Fund – Preliminary Unaudited Data

George Tsoublekas, April 28, 2015

The pension fund ended the year 2014 with a total of over \$850 million in net assets.

The return achieved in 2014 was slightly above 10%. This is higher than the objective of 6%, which also represents the rate at which the Plan's liabilities are discounted.

- Our rate of return is situated at the mid-point of the returns of the funds' universe.
- The return rate has been positively affected by the recent rally of the US dollar, given that a considerable amount of our fund is invested in the US, as well as from the general upward movements in both equities and bond markets.

The Plan is still underfunded. However, the funding ratio is estimated to have improved to 90.3% from 87.7% a year ago.

The new investment policy that has been adopted since 2013 is expected to:

- reduce volatility in terms of annual investment returns, while offering high liquidity level;
- stabilize funding status and funding costs; and
- minimize capital losses in case of a significant market fluctuation.

As of March 31, 96.4% of the portfolio has been transitioned to the new investment managers. Therefore, the good performance of the Plan confirms the choices that have been made for the new structure of the portfolio.

The focus of the new asset allocation is capital preservation. Thus, the Plan is expected to slightly underperform in good times but to perform well above average in bad times; while the returns that the Plan now achieves are at a lower risk.

From the point of view of strategies, the portfolio is allocated as follows:

- 68% capital preservation;
- 24% growth
- 8% diversification.

Viewed from the point of the type of investment instruments, the portfolio is allocated as follows:

- 42% in equity strategies;
- 48% in fixed income/credit strategies;
- 4% in real asset strategies;

- 5% in other strategies; and
- 1% in cash.

It should be noted that these strategies are constantly changing and consequently the percentages may be modified but the basic philosophy remains.

Finally, improved governance structures have been put in place to ensure monthly monitoring of the performance of the portfolio and the risks involved, including interviews with our account managers.

Preliminary figures for the first quarter of 2015 indicate that we have already achieved the annual objective of 6% return.

Concordia University Pensioners Association – CUPARUC

Annual General Meeting - April 30, 2015

Report on Membership Initiatives

This report replicates the report submitted at the General Meeting held on October 30, 2014. There are no new changes to the initiatives, which have been implemented on a gradual basis over the past year and half.

CUPARUC's primary goal at this time is to increase membership in the Association. We have achieved some success through the joint efforts in place, although there remain a large number of retirees who are not members.

The challenge is to reach out to retirees who are not members, from our end, rather than wait, hope, and expect that they will reach out to us. Since we do not have direct access to contact information for these non-members we rely very much on the Human Resources Department, which has provided substantial assistance as a liaison between the retiring employee and CUPARUC.

The current practice is that the following documents are provided to newly retiring employees; either at the time of sign-off with the Human Resources Department; as enclosures with mass mailings originating from the Human Resources Department; as hand-outs at seminars or workshops hosted by the University; i.e.: Retirement Planning; Voluntary Departure Programme.

This documentation has been designed specifically to provide information on the benefits of becoming a member of the Pensioners Association (CUPARUC).

- Membership Form - which includes a list of upcoming social events organized by CUPARUC
- Brochure - (printed in French/English) which includes a brief history of CUPARUC
- Current Priorities, Communications, Events, Scholarships & Objectives
- Copy of a recent CUPARUC Newsletter
- Creation of a "Pensioners Corner" (HR initiative) on the Concordia web page accessed via the Human Resources Department page. The Pensioners Corner links to the CUPARUC web page.

Nominating Committee Report - AGM 2015

The following members of the Executive Committee are up for re-appointment and are eligible and have agreed to stand: Bill Knitter and Garry Milton.

In addition, the following are in the middle of two year terms: Wendy Hedrich; Mary Baldwin; Roger Kenner; John Woodrow; Shirley Robinson; Barbara Harding ; Doreen Hutton ; and Geoff Selig

Howard Fink and George Tsoublekas are ex-officio as they serve on the Pension and Benefits Committee.

Graham Martin is ex officio as Past President.

The responsibilities of the executive are recommended to be:

President - Bill Knitter

Vice president and Pension and Benefits committees Representative – Howard Fink

Secretary/Treasurer – Garry Milton

Member at Large and Social Committee chair – Wendy Hedrich

Member at Large and Scholarship Committee Chair – Mary Baldwin (Mary would like to have someone else to join the Scholarship Committee)

Member at Large and Web and Electronic Media Chair – Roger Kenner

Member at Large and Newsletter – John Woodrow (is looking for a new newsletter editor)

Member at Large and Membership/Recruitment Chair – Doreen Hutton

Members at large:

Shirley Robinson

Barbara Harding

Geoff Selig

Alternate Pension and Benefits representative – George Tsoublekas (ex-officio)

Past President – Graham Martin (ex-officio)

Respectfully Submitted, Graham Martin.