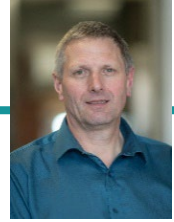


BIANNUAL REPORT TO THE MSA MEMBERSHIP From MSA Executive Director – Harry Oosterhoff

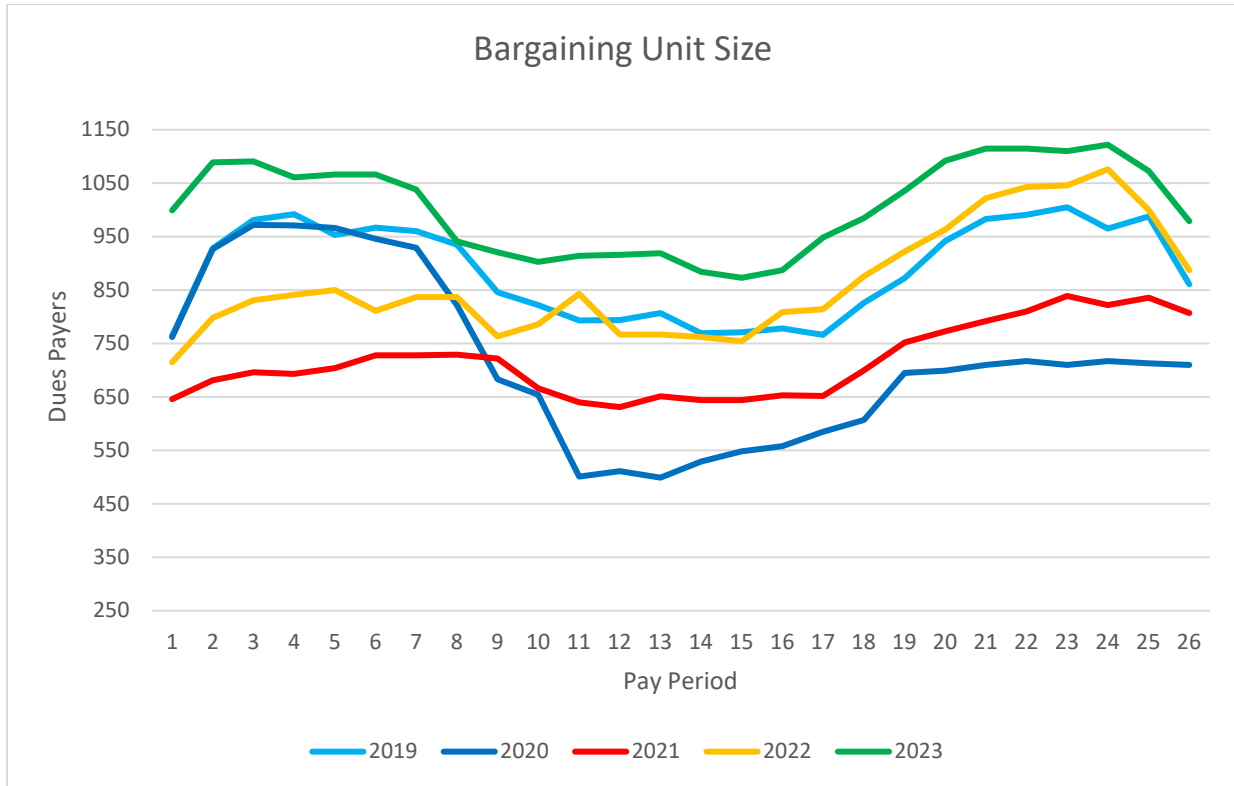


The MSA's stated mission is to "advocate for the collective workplace interests and well-being of non-academic staff," and this is at the heart of everything we do. A lot has transpired since the Fall 2023 Semi-annual General Membership Meeting, so it is good to review, reflect and highlight some of the developments and achievements of the past 6 months as well as look forward to some of the things being worked on for the upcoming year.

In the role of Executive Director for the MSA, I am responsible for ensuring that the quality of member services is maintained, managing all aspects of representation and labour relations advocacy, and maintaining the overall health and sustainability of MSA's operations. I'm pleased to report that your union is functioning effectively, and the MSA's financial foundation is solid. I want to specifically express my sincere gratitude to each of you for your trust in the office staff, and especially to your committed MSA Board Members and volunteers on committees who collaborate with staff to advance the goals and priorities of our membership.

As reported by Tim McNeil, MSA's vice-president, your negotiating committee has recently begun actively meeting with the University for a renewal of your collective agreement. Thank you to all who participated by providing feedback on the bargaining priority and interest survey. We have compiled the results and formulated bargaining proposals based on the results and look forward to sharing updates soon.

As the exclusive bargaining agent for all non-academic staff, MSA has been required to remain vigilant that our bargaining rights under the law are not eroded and that MSA's representation applies to **all** non-academic staff. For this reason, MSA challenged the University's designation of "other" employees into the out-of-scope group. In late 2020, MSA escalated this long-standing concern to the Alberta Labour Relations Board, and we have been working through the issue with the assistance of legal counsel since that time. I am pleased to report that this matter was finally resolved in late 2023 with the agreement documented between the University and MSA and resulting in a net gain of positions being designated into the MSA bargaining unit. We anticipate welcoming additional members into MSA as the University transitions non-credit instructors into our bargaining unit, adding to our size, scope, and sphere of influence (see graph below).



MSA recently received confirmation from the Alberta Labour Relations Board that the file has been officially adjourned.

MSA is an equal voting member of the MacEwan Joint Benefits Committee (JBC) with the mandate to design, develop and communicate an optimized and up-to-date benefits plan that flexes to meet employees’ changing needs and contributes to MacEwan University’s reputation and objectives to attract and retain a qualified and diverse workforce. Effective January 1, 2024, the following list of enhancements were made to the plan:

- Transition to new service providers
 - GreenShield – Health, Dental, Health/Wellness Spending Accounts
 - Desjardins – Life & Disability Insurance
- Increased annual Health Spending Account allocation to \$1,000
- More flexibility to allocate credits to Wellness Account
- Increases to co-insurance levels for Paramedical and Prescription Drug Coverage
- Increase to Basic Life Insurance and Short-Term Disability coverage
- Increases in annual maximums for specialized needs such as fertility drugs and hearing aids
- Psychology benefits now include coverage for Canadian Certified Counsellors and Registered Clinical Counsellors

Also in January, MSA welcomed Chelsea Nzigamasabo to our office staff in a 12-month term position, providing much needed additional administrative support. It is our hope that we will be able to offer Chelsea a continuing role, conditional on member approval of the 2024-2025 proposed operating budget. In conjunction with the addition of Chelsea to the team, we have begun the transition of some day-to-day labour relations matters to Nicole Moeller in an LR Generalist capacity, while retaining responsibility for MSA's financial and communications administration.

A significant source of stress and anxiety for our members that requires mentioning was the return to campus and more location-based services following the pandemic lockdowns in the past year. This seems to be a catalyst for the request and need of additional member support services, resulting in an increased workload for the MSA office staff. There has been an observable increase in both physical and mental health concerns in our membership which has impacted benefit plan utilization. Our staff were also not immune to periodic family illness which impacted attendance.

An additional stressor for staff was the University's decision to relocate the MSA to a new location just north of the Student Residence building on the south side of 105th Avenue between 110 and 111 Street in the Safeway Holdings building after 30 years on the main floor in Building 7. Although the move was not initiated by the MSA, we are pleased with the increased size of the new space and are pleased with the way things have come together. In an effort to stay connected to our members, we hosted a very successful open house on April 26, 2024 with +/- 250 people in attendance to enjoy the food trucks, prizes and tour our new space. We encourage each of you to stop by from time-to-time for a coffee and chat!



To coincide with the relocation of the MSA office space, MSA also made the decision to review and update our brand image, and one of our members who has graphic design expertise volunteered to assist. Originally MSA was named the “Non-Academic Staff Association” (NASA) at Grant MacEwan Community College with the logo displayed below.



Coinciding with the change in name to MacEwan Staff Association, the logo was updated to a new look and the colour changed to match the blue used by Grant MacEwan Community College at the time.



The third edition of the MSA logo occurred in 2014 and featured updated fonts and the colours were changed to Pantone® 202 (RGB: 139/35/50) to match the MacEwan University official colour.



The 4th logo of the MacEwan Staff Association was recently approved by the MSA Board on January 10, 2024. The intent of the new logo is to capture the MSA Vision of “Significant, Respected, Thriving” and depict that the MSA represents people working for MacEwan University. The multiple faces illustrates inclusivity and that we are a collective, while the posture of the faces is looking up and forward with mouths slightly open to signify that the union is the progressive voice for the non-academic staff. The towers are a graphical interpretation of MacEwan University, but intentionally forming an arrow up, and the teal hue is a symbolic nod to MSA’s history reminiscent of the colour of the first logo when we were named the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA).





As always, your MSA office staff are here to support you, and we also encourage each or our members to utilize the assistance that is available to help you through the challenges of life and work. Please don't hesitate to reach out for help if you need it, whether it be to your personal support network, the benefits plan, Employee and Family Assistance or the MSA.

As discussed at previous General Membership Meetings, MSA's legal counsel has strongly encouraged us to transition from a registered non-profit under the Societies Act to an unincorporated union, only certified by the Alberta Labour Relations Board. A number of special resolutions have been distributed for MSA member consideration and approval regarding this initiative.

Let me conclude by inviting each member to explore ways to become more engaged with the MSA. Your unique viewpoint is essential for us to effectively represent and advocate for you in the workplace. You can participate as a Board member, join a committee, or share your perspective informally. Remember, the MSA belongs to you, and we are better together. Everyone benefits from the diversity of perspectives and skills within the MSA bargaining unit, including yours!

On behalf of Britany, Nicole, Chelsea, and myself, we hope you can make some time to unwind and enjoy the natural beauty of our province this summer. Please stay healthy and safe!

In solidarity,
Harry