On May 15, 2012, Memorial University's Vice-Presidents' Council approved signing a letter of intent to accept the model licence negotiated between the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and Access Copyright (AC), an organization representing publishers and writers.

Dr. David Wardlaw, provost and vice-president (academic) and chair of Memorial's copyright action committee, submitted this letter to AC on the same day.

Signing this non-binding letter of intent positions Memorial to take advantage of certain retroactive discounts offered on the new licence by Access Copyright in the event that Memorial were to decide to sign an actual agreement by June 30, 2012. The discounts date from the end of December 2010, when the previous licence expired.

The content of that previous licence was mutually agreed to by AUCC and AC and the majority of Canadian universities signed individual licences, all of which expired on Dec. 31, 2010. From Jan. 1, 2011, until Aug. 31, 2011, Memorial operated under an interim tariff granted by the Copyright Board of Canada to Access Copyright. On Sept. 1, 2011, Memorial opted out of the interim tariff and has had no copyright agreement with Access Copyright since that date.

"Signing this letter of intent allows us to undertake further consultations, to seek clarification of details of some of the terms in the model licence and to compare thoroughly the benefits and costs of signing versus not signing the new licence," said Dr. Wardlaw.

"We share the concerns of other universities around issues such as cost, timing, privacy, academic freedom and implementation and will ensure the best decision is made for the future of Memorial University, its students, faculty and staff. I wish to emphasize that no decision has been made at this point as to whether to sign onto the new licence."

The proposed agreement is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2011, and would be in place until Dec. 31, 2015.

The model licence agreement and other information on copyright can be found at www.mun.ca/copyright.

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