

For Immediate Release

Conciliation Talks End Between Dalhousie Faculty Association and Board of Governors

(Monday, October 19, 2020 – Halifax, NS) Conciliation between the Dalhousie Faculty Association and the Board of Governors has failed.

“While today was the first of two days scheduled for conciliation, we reached an impasse this morning,” says DFA President David Westwood. “The Board presented their best offer, and they have not moved on a few critical issues related to our pension that are unacceptable to our members. At a time when the university needs everyone working together, the Board is choosing to push our members to the brink.”

“The Board rejected our initial approach, which was to delay bargaining for a year and allow time for some of the uncertainty related to COVID-19 to settle down,” notes Westwood. “Instead, they chose to push ahead and attack existing pension benefits of our members, demanding changes that will disadvantage both future and current retirees.”

The Board’s offer will be presented to the DFA membership later this week and they will be asked to vote on whether or not to accept the offer. Earlier this month, the DFA membership delivered a strong strike mandate – almost 91% of the voting membership said “yes” to strike action in support of DFA’s position at the table. Nearly 87% of DFA members cast a vote.

“They know the results of our strike vote, so they understand that by demanding these changes they are triggering a labour disruption which will further increase the stress and pressure on students as they try to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic,” continues Westwood. “If the Board genuinely wants stability, as they claim in their messaging, the easiest way is to back off their demands for unnecessary and unacceptable reductions to existing pension benefits.”

The current collective agreement expired June 30, 2020. Since mid-July, the two sides met seven times and were unable to reach an agreement. The DFA filed for conciliation on September 22. Now that conciliation has failed, Peter Lloyd, conciliation officer, will file his report with the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. Once that report has been filed, there is a 14-day waiting period before either side can engage in legal job action.

The DFA is the certified bargaining agent for more than 950 professors, instructors, librarians and professional counsellors at Dalhousie University. As a volunteer-based organization, we advocate for the rights of our members and work to protect and advance the academic integrity of the University.

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