

DFA DIALOGUE

2020-21 Annual Report

2020-21 Annual General Meeting

Thursday, May 13, 2021

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Held via Zoom

During the AGM, refer to this report, along with the documents emailed to you by Kristin.Hoyt@dal.ca on April 26, 2021. On May 13, Zoom details & an invitation enabling you to vote on a motion during the AGM will be emailed to those who RSVP'd for the meeting.

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Territorial Acknowledgement

The DFA is located in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

DFA wants to hear from you!

Contact DFA anytime to ask questions, provide feedback, or get involved. During COVID-19 physical distancing requirements, please contact us via email at dfa@dal.ca

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President's Report

Dave Westwood, President, 2020-21

When I agreed to stand for the DFA President-Elect Role in 2019, it was with the full knowledge that I would be President during the 2020-21 round of collective bargaining. I was prepared for that particular challenge, but, like everyone else, I was caught unprepared for almost everything else that happened. It has been a year like no other, and while the DFA bent under the extreme pressure we did not break. In many respects, we have emerged from the past year as a stronger and more effective collective.

Rather than spend time reflecting on everything we experienced during the past year, I want to use this platform to share gratitude with the people whose efforts were instrumental in ensuring that the DFA was able to not only operate during the past year, but indeed to effectively represent and advance the interests of our Members. I will close with some thoughts about priorities and plans for the coming year or two.

It Takes a Team

Everything that we do as a Faculty Association is made possible because of our hard-working, dedicated, capable, and loyal office staff: **Kristin Hoyt, Lynn Purves, Catherine Wall and Barbara MacLennan**. Our staff showed incredible flexibility and willingness to adapt to a hybrid working environment with a mixture of primarily remote operations and some in-person work when necessary. There was a huge learning curve for all of us at the start of the pandemic to develop and acquire the tools and skills to operate remotely, meeting our needs in

the key areas of finance, communication, virtual meetings, and information

exchange. It is absolutely remarkable that our operations continued almost without interruption during the period of transition to remote work, and this is due to the extraordinary efforts of Kristin, Lynn, Catherine, and Barb. Of course, our staff are instrumental in all the key DFA activities over and above these technical issues and challenges, and this year posed many extra demands due to the complexities of collective bargaining, an extraordinary number of grievances, and an increased volume of work at the Association-Board Committee (ABC). Please join me in personally thanking Kristin, Lynn, Catherine, and Barb.

As you know, there are many volunteers that take on leadership roles for the DFA. I want to recognize four people in particular.

Tim Jukes (Psychology/Neuroscience) has been absolutely instrumental in three of the most important areas of DFA activity: he is co-Chair of the ABC, he sits on the Grievance Committee and takes cases as a Grievance Officer, and he was also a member of the Bargaining Team. As you can see in the reports that follow, every one of these activities was busier than usual this year due to COVID-19 issues. I cannot thank Tim enough for his tireless efforts on behalf of the DFA, and for his wisdom, wit, and endless patience. He is a true DFA hero!



Tara Perrot (Psychology/Neuroscience) was DFA President-Elect this year, coming in with essentially no experience with DFA leadership activities. Tara attended virtually every key meeting this year, offering valuable insight and perspective, and achieving an unprecedented rate of learning ‘on the job’ as every key DFA function was active and confronted with novel and challenging issues. Tara stepped up in a huge way by agreeing to coordinate the Job Actions Committee as the threat of a strike loomed large during collective bargaining – much of this work involved imagining and planning new ways to strike and picket during a global pandemic, with no existing playbook for reference. I could not have coped in my role as President without Tara’s constant willingness to step up and take on new and important tasks even with no history or experience to rely upon. Tara will be an excellent President this coming year, and I hope you will take a moment to thank her for her extraordinary service and willingness to shoulder such massive responsibility.

As Treasurer, **Dominic Silvio** worked closely and carefully with DFA staff and other members of the Finance Committee to oversee and manage our finances, navigating not only a wholesale transition to on-line systems and processes but also a broad range of expenses arising from the collective bargaining process and the extraordinary volume of grievances and associated legal fees.

Past-President **Julia Wright** offered invaluable insight and wisdom throughout our many challenges this year, ensuring an important element of continuity and coherence to our activities and an invaluable connection to a broad range of academic and intellectual

activities taking place beyond our own institution. Thank you for your outstanding service, Julia, and I hope you will return to DFA leadership again in the future.

Huge thanks to all of the other DFA volunteers who took on essential roles during this challenging year. To all the **members of the Bargaining Team** (including Chief Negotiator **Ray Larkin**, Pension Consultant **Paul Chang**, and Conciliation Board Nominee **Faye Woodman**): this was a complex and exhausting round in which we faced extreme pressure on issues of salary, pensions, and general working conditions, and it took every ounce of experience and resolve to achieve the positive outcome that we did. Thank you for your long hours, and relentless pursuit of fairness.

To all the **members of the Executive Committee**: your insight and wisdom was vital to our ability to confront an endless stream of new and complex issues, and I appreciate all your flexibility around meeting times and timelines.

To all the **members of the ABC**: I have already mentioned you in other places, but I wanted to thank you for dealing with so many of the complex COVID-19 challenges that affect DFA Members’ working conditions.

To the **members of the Grievance Committee**: this was indeed an unprecedented year in terms of the number of cases, but also the range and complexity of the issues that were at stake. Thank you for your time, energy, and critical analysis in dealing with these sensitive and important issues.

To the **Chairs and members of other key DFA committees** (Equity Committee,

Communications Co-ordination Committee, Aboriginal Caucus, Job Actions Committee, Nominating Committee) and **our representatives on other important institutional committees** (Health and Safety Committee, Pension Advisory Committee, Pension and Retiree’s Trust Fund, Employee Benefits Advisory Committee, CAUT Defence Fund, President’s Advisory Committee on Sexualized Violence, Council on Employment Equity, Transportation and Security Committee): thank you for your time, effort, and dedication on behalf of our Members. I know how many other responsibilities and challenges you had to bear this year, and it means so much that you made time for DFA activities.

I would also like to thank all **DFA Members** for your support and commitment over the past year. Your willingness to stand up and be counted during critical strike votes – and to contemplate job action during a global pandemic – was crucial to our ability to fight the Board’s unreasonable demands for wage concessions and reduced pension benefits at a time when your extraordinary and selfless efforts were keeping the entire institution viable. I appreciate you taking time to complete our many surveys, and to attend the numerous general meetings virtually. Although we have never been further apart, physically, I genuinely believe we have never been closer to each other because of the ways we have been able to engage through electronic platforms.

A Focus on the Future

Turning now to the future, I see a number of key issues and challenges that we need to consider and address as a collective. The issues are diverse, complex, and in some cases

potentially divisive. Some can be addressed through collective bargaining as we plan to return to the table in early 2022, and others can be handled through the ABC and grievance/arbitration processes. Regardless of the approach taken, it is crucial that the voices of DFA Members are heard so that the Association continues to represent your interests, values, and priorities. We will continue to engage with members through surveys, townhall-style consultations, and other caucuses and groups around the institution. I encourage you to participate when you are able.

Collegial governance and decision-making processes broke down over the past year, giving way to increasingly smaller circles dominated by administrators and managers with decreasing opportunities for meaningful input from academic staff. This cannot be allowed to persist, and the power to stop it lies with DFA Members. As we emerge from the emergency measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that academic staff insist on – and actively engage in – a return to pre-pandemic collegial decision-making processes including an open and transparent Senate, Faculty Councils, and other unit-level committees. As the leaders and experts in our various disciplines, the voices of DFA Members need to be central in decisions about academic matters. We must insist on open and transparent processes to ensure proper accountability, subject to the necessary limits of privacy and confidentiality. Efforts to move important discussions and decisions *in camera* or into other exclusive electronic formats must be challenged at every opportunity. We are a public institution and we must be free to criticize ourselves openly and honestly; we

should have nothing to hide. One need only look at the devastating situation faced by our colleagues at Laurentian University to see what can happen when there is a lack of transparency and accountability in decision-making processes.

We need to think carefully about, and continue to advocate for, **our working conditions** and rights in light of the rapid and dramatic changes that occurred in response to the pandemic and as we move into a new post-pandemic reality. Workloads became unmanageable as academic staff were required to develop new ways of teaching to deal with the challenges of physical distancing without adequate support, time, or resources. Important questions remain about the autonomy of instructors to choose how best to deliver their courses in terms of using technology and methods that are effective for both 'in-person' but also 'remote' contexts. Expectations, and supports, for accommodating both instructor and student concerns remain unclear. Many challenges and obstacles remain for a return to important research activities. Serious concerns about health and safety remain as senior administrators ramp up expectations of a return to 'in-person' activities in the coming months, raising many questions about ventilation, variants, vaccination, quarantines, regular testing, distancing, masking, outbreaks, and contingency plans. We will need to remain connected, and strong, in advocating for your interests in these important areas.

Issues related to equity are as important as ever. While the Board and DFA are both committed to principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, we continue to encounter difficulties working together on key issues such as

advertising and appointments processes; creating permanent, career-stream positions rather than precarious contracts; recognizing and valuing diverse forms of knowledge, experience, and scholarly work; supporting members from designated groups who are asked to take on extraordinary amounts of service; and eliminating the inappropriate use of tools to evaluate teaching effectiveness that have been demonstrated to be discriminatory, biased, and invalid, in contravention of human rights legislation. The Board prefers a management-rights approach to equity issues, whereas the DFA continues to advocate for the interests and concerns that we hear from our Members based on your lived experience and reality.

Closing Remarks

It has been my honour and privilege to serve as DFA President during this remarkable time in our history. It has been stressful, and challenging, and it took a large and dedicated team to achieve everything that we did. This is a good time to remind all DFA Members that we are always looking for people who are willing to take on leadership roles. We rely on volunteers. Our work and lives are challenging and time is scarce, but our Association depends on people stepping up from time to time: if it is not your time this year, please consider volunteering in the future.

Be well.

Sincerely,



David Westwood, DFA President 2020-21 **DFA**

Grievance Committee

David Westwood (Chair), Catrina Brown, Katherine Fierlbeck, Tim Juckes, Barbara MacLennan (DFA Professional Officer), Tara Perrot, Julia Wright

Procedures

Grievance and arbitration procedures are outlined in the Collective Agreement (Article 29). In general, the DFA reviews concerns brought forward by Members, and we attempt to find resolutions or compromises through advocacy, advice, and regular collegial processes. Depending on the nature of the issue, solutions may be sought through discussion at the Association-Board Committee (ABC). If these channels do not lead to an acceptable outcome, an informal grievance may be filed which compels a meeting between an assigned DFA Grievance Officer, the DFA Professional Officer, the aggrieved DFA Member (if appropriate), the appropriate Board Designate (often the Dean), and the Director of Academic Staff Relations. Occasionally a resolution can be achieved, but if not, the reasons are outlined in a written response.

The Grievance Committee meets to decide whether or not to advance the case to the formal grievance stage which requires a more formal statement outlining the alleged breaches of the Collective Agreement. At the formal stage a meeting is required between the DFA President, DFA Grievance Officer, DFA Professional Officer, the President of the University, and the Director of Academic Staff Relations. A resolution could be reached at this stage, but if not, a written response is required with reasons. The decision to proceed to arbitration requires a recommendation of the Grievance Committee, based on external legal advice, and the support of the DFA Executive Committee.

Activity and Case Summaries

The Grievance Committee handled an exceptionally large number of cases over the past year on a broad range of issues. Due to the personal and confidential nature of most cases, limited details can be provided in this report. The cases are organized into themes because several intersect with similar issues.

Theme: Equity Provisions for Appointments Processes

On April 27, 2021 DFA President Dave Westwood wrote to DFA Members to describe the breach of the Collective Agreement regarding the restricted hire cases. An excerpt from the text follows:

“The DFA believes strongly in the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Over our 43-year history as a Bargaining Agent for academic staff at Dalhousie University the DFA has negotiated agreements with the Board on numerous provisions, practices, and programs that seek to increase the representation of historically underrepresented, oppressed, and marginalized groups (“designated groups”; Article 1.09), and to support Members from designated groups in achieving improved working conditions and equitable career advancement.

The Collective Agreement is a contract between the DFA and the Board. Changes to it cannot be made unilaterally – the agreement of both parties is required.

Under Article 4.01(a) (“No Discrimination”) of the DFA/Board Collective Agreement, initiatives to improve equity will not constitute discrimination when agreed by the parties (e.g., Article 4.02; Article 14.01[a]; Letter of Understanding on Academic Renewal, including the Dalhousie Diversity Faculty Awards program). From the perspective of the DFA, the requirement for our agreement ensures that we have the opportunity to shape and define new initiatives based on the ideas and interests of DFA Members.

In recent years, the Board has acted without obtaining DFA agreement during hiring processes for DFA Members.

In one set of cases, Human Resources staff have required appointments committees to apply preference to candidates from designated groups that are less well-represented in the hiring unit than candidates from other designated groups, which is inconsistent with the language of Article 14.01(a). In a second set of cases, the Board has restricted advertising and hiring to candidates from specific designated groups outside the provisions of existing programs under the Collective Agreement (e.g., Dalhousie Diversity Faculty Awards and renewal incentive program). These unilateral actions by HR were brought to the Association-Board Committee (ABC) for discussion by the DFA nominees, but the Board was unwilling to acknowledge that their unilateral actions constituted a change to the Collective Agreement that required the agreement of the DFA. In the matter of restricted hiring, the DFA sent a formal letter to the Board in 2019 outlining the DFA’s position.

The Board’s unwillingness to work with the DFA to seek agreement through ABC or negotiation compelled the DFA Grievance Committee to approve grievance procedures. In the matter of applying preference amongst different designated groups, the DFA Executive Committee has approved arbitration which is now under way.

It is disappointing and unfortunate that an inherently antagonistic process has become necessary to move forward in these matters. The Board and the DFA have a shared interest in equity (Article 4.02), and we believe that the best ideas and approaches will emerge through the process of negotiated agreement. We hope that grievance and arbitration procedures will compel the Board to return to negotiating agreements rather than acting unilaterally.”

(a) Substantially Better Suited Test - In September 2020, the DFA was advised that the Administration was implementing the Dalhousie University Employment Equity Policy in a manner contrary to the provisions of Clauses 4.01 and 14.01 of the Collective Agreement. The DFA filed an informal grievance and subsequently filed a formal grievance. The DFA submitted the case to an arbitrator for adjudication. The case is still before the arbitrator at time of writing.

(b) Restricted Hire (Health) - In November 2020, the Faculty of Health decided to restrict a tenure-stream competition in the school of Social Work to Indigenous applicants only. The

DFA filed a grievance noting that this was a breach of the equity hiring provisions of the Collective Agreement. The DFA withdrew the grievance, *without prejudice*, at the informal stage.

- (c) **Restricted Hire (Computer Science)** – In January 2021, the DFA was advised that the Faculty of Computer Science decided to restrict three tenure-stream competitions in the Faculty to female applicants only. The DFA filed a grievance noting that this was a breach of the equity hiring provisions of the Collective Agreement. The DFA met with the Dean at the informal stage of the grievance process. When the matter was not resolved at the informal stage, the DFA submitted the case to the formal stage. The formal grievance meeting was held with President Saini on May 4, 2021. The DFA is awaiting the President’s response at the time of writing.

Theme: COVID-19 Working Conditions

- (a) **Existing Practice** - On May 20, 2020, President Saini announced that classes would be taught on-line in the fall term of the 2020-21 academic year. Throughout the July/August period, the Board continued to assert various revisions to the campus teaching and research plans. The DFA raised concerns with the Board representatives of the ABC, which is the joint committee of the DFA and the Board that administers the Collective Agreement between bargaining rounds. These actions, taken unilaterally and without the agreement of the DFA, were contrary to Clauses 3, 19.03 and 36.01 of the Collective Agreement.

The DFA filed an informal grievance on August 20, 2020 asserting that the Board’s unilateral change to require classes be taught in an on-line format is a significant change in the general working conditions of Members of the Bargaining Unit, and is unreasonable, and requires the agreement of the parties through the ABC. The grievance was unresolved at the informal and the formal stage of the grievance procedures. The DFA submitted the case to Arbitrator P. Knopf. The DFA and the Board submitted written briefs in lieu of an in-person hearing. The Arbitrator’s decision was rendered on January 25, 2021. The arbitration award supported the DFA's right to consent to changes in general working conditions, but supported the Board's position that face-to-face teaching and access to campus did not satisfy the definition of a general working condition. The DFA has submitted the decision for judicial review to the Nova Scotia Supreme Court. A date for the judicial review had not been set at time of writing.

- (b) **Access to Buildings** – The DFA filed an informal grievance with the Provost (Acting) regarding a December 3, 2020 memo which indicated that Members could have their access to campus buildings withdrawn. The DFA indicated that there had been no consultation or discussion with the DFA prior to the circulation of the memo. At the grievance meeting, the Provost (Acting) indicated the memo had only been circulated to Deans as there had been some difficulties with unauthorized access to buildings. The DFA Grievance Officer explained that the memo caused concern; the Provost (Acting) acknowledged that communication could be improved. The DFA continued to monitor access and withdrew the grievance

without prejudice when no further access problems were brought to their attention.

- (c) **January 29 Memo** – On January 29, 2021, the Provost (Acting) issued a memo that described the Administration’s proposal for fall 2021 instruction. Among other things, the memo indicated that, “**Fall 2021** may require class-size limitations that keep larger lecture classes online, but our hope is that **many tutorials, labs, and small-to-medium-sized classes (less than 100 students) will be able to be offered safely in person.**” The DFA filed an informal grievance and met with the Provost (Acting) on March 9, 2021. At the informal meeting, the DFA noted that the Senate’s delegation of decision-making authority to the Return to Campus Committee expires at the end of **the winter** term. They indicated that Administration’s proposal for a graduated return to normal in-person classes requires a return to normal governance procedures including consultation at Senate, within Faculties and with the DFA through the ABC. The Provost (Acting) responded that the memo was not intended to be a definitive description of classroom teaching but rather was intended to collect data from Faculties regarding their plans. The DFA indicated that there was significant confusion about the fall plans for instruction. The grievance remains at the informal stage at time of writing.
- (d) **The Board’s Plan for Returning to Campus in Fall 2021** – On April 13, 2021 President Saini circulated a Memo describing the return to face-to-face teaching in the fall. The DFA filed a grievance for the Board’s failure to follow proper governance procedures, including discussion at the ABC and to ensure proper health and safety protections for a face-to-face delivery of classes. The informal grievance meeting was held with the Provost (Acting) on May 3, 2021 where the DFA requested, among other things, documents regarding ventilation audits of campus classrooms. This matter remains at the informal stage.

Other Unrelated Cases

- (a) **Research Grant** – When a faculty member agreed to be editor of a journal, they indicated they wanted to open a Dalhousie Research account to administer a research grant that was offered as part of the arrangement. The Board refused their request and the DFA commenced a grievance. At the informal grievance meeting, the Vice-President (Research) showed a willingness to find a solution that supported the Member’s work as editor. In the end, the grievance did not produce a workable solution for the Member and the grievance was not pursued.
- (b) **Administrative Leave/Discipline** - In 2019, a faculty member used offensive language in front of students. Some students expressed concern and asked that the professor apologize. The professor met with the students and apologized. The faculty member considered the matter resolved and no further concerns regarding the matter were brought to their attention. The faculty member continued with their normal teaching, research and administrative duties for the rest of the academic year. In fall 2020, the presiding Dean commenced consideration of disciplinary action under clause 28.09 of the collective agreement. In addition, the Dean wrote to the faculty member indicating the Member was to be placed on administrative leave with pay, and that the Member was removed from

- teaching. The DFA filed an informal grievance and when the matter was not resolved filed a formal grievance. The DFA noted that the matters raised by the presiding Dean constituted double jeopardy and were in breach of the time limits for instituting formal disciplinary action under the collective agreement and the Dean's actions were unfair and unreasonable. The matter was submitted to arbitration but was resolved prior to the hearing.
- (c) **Discipline Time Limits** – The Dean served notice that they were establishing a discipline hearing committee in the “Administrative Leave/Discipline” case described above. The Collective Agreement states that referral of a case to a discipline hearing committee must occur within and not later than three months of notice of the action giving rise to the disciplinary matter. The DFA filed a grievance that the time limits had expired. The case, together with the Administrative Leave/Discipline grievance, was resolved prior to arbitration.
- (d) **Tuition Waiver** – An instructor Member received a limited-term appointment from July 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020. Subsequently, they were reappointed to a further limited-term appointment from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. While holding these positions, the Member was finishing a PhD program of study at Dalhousie. While there are no class requirements at this point, the Member was required to pay a continuing fee (due in the period of time between the two appointments) while completing the thesis in order to maintain student status. The Member paid the \$747 fee and claimed the tuition waiver benefit described in the DFA/Board Collective Agreement. The Board denied the claim for the tuition benefit. The grievance was denied at the informal level but resolved at the formal stage.
- (e) **Communications with Government Regarding Pensions** – The DFA became aware that during a social event, the Nova Scotia Deputy Minister of Finance had indicated to certain DFA Members attending the function that he had been asked by Dalhousie to “fix the pension”. The Collective Agreement requires the Administration to consult with the DFA when it makes a proposal to government, which will affect the university. The DFA had written to the Administration in 2019 to indicate we expected to be notified and consulted on matters relating to the pension. On February 25, 2021, the DFA filed an informal grievance with the Vice-President (acting) for Government and Global Relations. During the informal grievance meeting on March 11, 2021, the DFA expressed concern that the Administration had unilaterally approached government representatives and had mischaracterized the health of the pension plan. The Vice-President advised he would look into the matter and subsequently responded that the Board had not made a legislative proposal to government. The DFA President wrote to invite the Vice-President to provide pension documentation and meet with government officials to correct any misinformation the government had about the health of the Dalhousie Pension Plan. This matter remains unresolved at the time of writing.
- (f) **Improper Application of the Scholarly Misconduct Policy** – When a Member expressed an opinion about matters in their research area, the scholarly integrity officer established a panel to determine whether the opinion was scholarship. The DFA filed a grievance stating

that the Scholarly Misconduct Policy had not been properly followed. The grievance was resolved at the informal stage when the Board acknowledged procedural errors in the application of the Policy.

- (g) **Appointment Process** – Advertising for a number of tenure stream contracts was placed on hold when the university went into closure as a result of the pandemic. A number of faculty members on limited-term appointments received extensions of their contracts during the period of the closure until they could apply for the advertised positions. One Member who was on a leave was not notified of the extension and their limited-term appointment ended. The DFA filed a grievance, which was not resolved at the informal or formal stages. The case was withdrawn prior to arbitration at the Member’s request.
- (h) **Clause 14.18 (90/10 Rule)** – Clause 14.18 of the Collective Agreement requires that 90% of the teaching of the parts of Dalhousie covered by the Collective Agreement must be performed by Members of the DFA bargaining unit. The calculation, which is performed each academic term, indicated that the Board was in breach of Clause 14.18 for the winter term of the 2020-21 academic year. At the informal grievance meeting held on March 17, 2021, the Board acknowledged they were in breach of the Collective Agreement and would work to find a resolution involving the retroactive conversion of part-time academic staff into DFA Members for the winter term. This matter remains at the informal stage.
- (i) **Appointment of Harassment Investigator** – A number of Members filed a complaint under the Personal Harassment Policy of the university. At the formal complaint phase of the process, the relevant administrator appoints an investigator to investigate the complaint. The DFA, which filed a grievance on behalf of the Members when the Board administrator appointed a lawyer who works for the Board, alleges an apprehension of bias. The informal grievance meeting was held with the Provost (Acting) on April 19, 2021 and the grievance remains at the informal stage.
- (j) **Scope of Harassment Investigation** – A DFA Member’s personal harassment complaints were triaged by the administrative head based on the analysis of an independent investigator. The Member requested to correct errors in that report through direct correspondence with the investigator but was denied this opportunity. The informal grievance meeting was held on April 19, 2021 with the Vice-President of Finance and Administration. At the time of writing this matter remains at the informal stage.
- (k) **Existing Practices – Board of Governors Meetings** - The Board of Governors has a long-standing and existing practice of inviting the DFA President to attend the public portion of the Board of Governors meetings as an Observer. The DFA President receives notice of and documents in advance of the meeting. DFA Presidents have attended the Board meetings over many years, and have never been excluded from attending the actual meeting of the Board. On March 22, 2020, the Province of Nova Scotia declared a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While Dalhousie University remained operational, Dalhousie restricted access to the campus and moved to virtual operations. In-person meetings, including those of Senate and the Board of Governors, were conducted in an on-

line format. The first meeting of the Board, conducted in the on-line format was held April 21, 2020; DFA President Dr. Julia Wright, was invited to the meeting as usual and received both notice and documents in advance. She attended the meeting as an Observer consistent with the existing practice of such meetings of the Board. Subsequently, Dr. David Westwood, who assumed the office of DFA President in May 2020 requested documentation for the Board meeting to be held on May 26, 2020. The DFA President was repeatedly denied access to the Board of Governors meeting, and to the subsequent meeting on June 23, 2020. The DFA filed a formal grievance on July 16, 2021. The grievance was resolved when the President agreed to restore the usual observer status to the DFA President.

- (I) **Production of Documents Related to Continuing Education** -The DFA filed an informal grievance on June 24, 2020 regarding documents relating to the operation of the Faculty of Continuing Education. The matter was not pursued beyond the informal stage. *DFA*

Dalhousie Employee Benefits Advisory Committee

Remi Agu & Stephanie Kapusta, DFA Representatives

The committee is made up of 12 voting members from the following employee and employer groups: DFA (two reps), NSGEU Local 77 (two reps), NSGEU Local 99 (one rep), DPMG (one rep), University Senate (one rep) and University (five reps) appointed by the Board of Governors.

The committee meets approximately six times throughout the year. Committee members use their experience to provide ideas, guidance, and feedback to effectively administer the plan. Major objectives of the committee are to:

- develop health strategies (e.g., wellness);
- ensure the plan is attractive and competitive compared to relevant Canadian employers;
- promote employee knowledge of plan selections and cost management; and
- provide consistent benefit coverage across all employee groups, as feasible.

The committee oversees the administration of employee benefits including Group Life Benefits, Survivor Income Benefits (SIB), Long-Term Disability, Major Medical Insurance, Health Travel Coverage, Dental Plan, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Optional Life Insurance, and Voluntary Personal Accidental Insurance.

This year, the committee was chaired by Jenny White, Dalhousie Human Resources. The DFA representatives were Drs. Remi Agu and Stephanie Kapusta.

Some Numbers

- Extended Health Benefits:** The total health expenses for 2019-20 came to \$4.4M (an increase of \$88K or 2.1% relative to 2018-19). The average health expenses paid out per employee for 2019-20 averaged \$1,221. Drug expenses, which account for the substantial portion of extended health benefits, increased by 7.8% compared to 2018-19. The top five therapeutic classes remain the same: 1) disease-modifying antirheumatic agents; 2) antineoplastic agents (cancer treatments); 3) immunosuppressive agents; 4) miscellaneous therapeutic agents; and 5) psychotherapeutic agents (antidepressants).
- Dental Benefits:** \$2.24M was paid out in dental claims (down \$596K compared to 2018-19). The average dental expenses paid out per employee amounted to \$788. Basic services accounted for the large majority of claims, followed by major restorative claims, and orthodontics.
- Long-term Disability (LTD):** \$5.0M was paid out for LTD (an increase of 2%); 26 claims were submitted (down 37% from last year), 18 of which were approved. Mental and nervous disorders accounted for 39% (down from 44%) of submitted claims and 27% (up from 17%) concerned musculoskeletal disorders.
- Basic Life Insurance and Survivor Income Benefit:** Payouts decreased substantially to \$0.13M (compared to \$1.75M in 2018-19). There were, in fact, zero claims for these benefits. The small payout is likely due to delayed claim submissions.
- Travel:** Just over \$1.5M was paid out in travel insurance claims in 2019-20.
- Employee Family Assistance Program:** Utilization of this program decreased in 2019-20 from 12.2% to 11.6% of plan members (the industry average utilization of this service is 13.7%). The top three reasons for accessing this service at Dalhousie were personal relationships, mental health and personal stress.

Renewal Rates

The following group insurance renewal rate changes were implemented with respect to our premiums, effective April 1, 2021:

Health	no change
Dental	3% rate increase
Travel	no change
Basic Life	6.1% rate decrease
Basic Accident	no change

Survivor Income Benefit	no change
Long Term Disability	no change
Optional Life	no change
Optional Dependent Life	no change
Voluntary Accident	no change

Impact of COVID-19 on Plan Expenditures

Although the impact of the pandemic has not yet been felt (despite, perhaps, a decrease of 22% in claims for dental care services), it is estimated that over the coming insurance periods, disability claims may increase due to the effects of ‘long COVID,’ and due to backlogs in surgeries and testing. Mental health care costs will likely also be impacted as a consequence of quarantines, self-isolation and lockdowns. Dental care costs may increase by an estimated 4.5% as dental care facilities attempt to recuperate PPE and retrofit expenses. It is not yet clear whether the latter potential increases would be resisted by insurance companies and plan administrators.

New Benefits Available (effective April 1, 2021): Optional Critical Illness and Assured Access

Effective April 1, 2021, Medavie Blue Cross started offering new optional coverages – critical illness and assured access – as part of our comprehensive group benefits plan.

The critical illness option offers \$50,000 or higher tax-free cash payment covering over 30 different conditions. Assured access guarantees future access to coverage based on current health condition.

The open enrollment period for the optional critical illness and open access plan is from April 1 to May 31 and requires no medical documentation for coverage up to \$50,000. After these dates, or for higher coverage, medical documentation will be required for enrollment.

For information, visit Dalhousie’s [Human Resources Website](#) or contact Dal HR Benefits office. You can also visit Medavie’s websites for details on [optional critical illness coverage](#) and on [assured access](#). *DFA*

Dalhousie Pension Advisory Committee

Jonathan Shapiro & Jodi Lazare, DFA Representatives

The Pension Advisory Committee (PAC) has equal representation from the Dalhousie Board of Governors (BOG), DFA and NSGEU (Locals 99 and 77). PAC also comprises representatives from the Dalhousie Professional and Managerial Group (DPMG) which has voice but no vote (and a veto over amendments to the plan) and the Association of Dalhousie Retired Persons (ADRP) which has voice but no vote.

Jonathan Shapiro and Jodi Lazare, both in the Faculty of Law, are your representatives, although Dr. Lazare will be stepping back from the Committee in the coming year. The current Chair of the Committee is Jasmine Walsh, who is a Board representative. Mr. Shapiro is the Vice-Chair of the Committee.

The Dalhousie Pension Plan

Over the past 12 months due to the ongoing global pandemic and its effect on global markets, the Plan has seen a volatile year. In March 2020, during the peak rapid crisis in the market, the Plan suffered significant, if expected, losses. At March 31, 2020, the Plan was at its nadir in terms of funding, with a 92.4% funded status. However, the Plan made significant and rapid recovery in the latter half of 2020 as the markets recovered and adapted to the new economic reality of the world during the pandemic.

As of the last quarterly figures at the time of writing, the Plan is once again in a very good funding position, having recovered to a position of 105.8% on a going concern best estimate basis at December 31, 2020. Keep in mind that the new funding target for the Plan after the implementation of the new pension regulations, which require a substantial overfunded position as a provision against adverse deviation, require the Plan to be funded at a target rate of 107.7% (see below). This means the Plan is not currently in a fully-funded position, but is very close to full funding (you can think of it as 98.1% funded), and the trend in the growth and recovery of the Plan since the onset of the pandemic is very positive and we anticipate a return to fully-funded status of the Plan in the near future.

The Plan continues have a significant solvency deficit, though that deficit has remained stable compared to one year ago after riding the down and up of the pandemic market. While the solvency measure is a useful tool to assess the health of the Plan, the best analytic measure is on a going-concern basis since the University will continue to operate for the foreseeable future, and the University enjoys full solvency relief from the provincial government. Under the new pension regulations, the solvency measure is even less important because it will no longer require Dalhousie to file annual evaluations.

New Pension Regulations Now in Effect

As discussed in last year's report, on February 24, 2020, the Nova Scotia government passed significant amendments to the *Pension Benefits Regulations*. One of the major effects of these new regulations is that the Dalhousie Pension Plan will now have to meet a legislated overfunding level, called a Provision for Adverse Deviation (PfAD). The PfAD based on the investment structure of the Plan is 7.7%, meaning the Plan must reach a funding level of 107.7% to be considered fully-funded. There is a five-year phased-in implementation period to meet the new legislative requirements, and we are in the first year of that period. The Plan is currently funded (as of December 31, 2020) at 105.8%.

Pension Valuation

The new regulations also permit plans with solvency relief (including the Dalhousie Plan) to file valuations every three years, rather than the current situation requiring annual valuations. As we reported last year, the PAC agreed to date our first valuation of the Plan under the new rules to January 31, 2020 rather than March 31, 2020, in order to more fairly represent the Plan's financial status before the volatility caused by the early 2020 market instability. That [valuation is available to all DFA members online](#). You can see in that report that, at that time, the Plan's funded ratio was 104.2%. Even after the vagaries of the market crash and recovery, the Plan ended the year in a better financial position than when it started, which is a positive sign for the future.

Because the Plan is no longer required to file annual valuations under the new regulations, the next Plan valuation does not need to be completed until January 2023.

Continued Board Pressure to Cease Transfers and Move to One Fund

Dalhousie's pension plan is composed of two trust funds: the Pension Trust Fund (PTF), and the Retirees' Trust Fund (RTF). Pension contributions of active employees are held in the PTF until retirement when an amount equal to the commuted value of the defined pension is transferred to the RTF. This is unusual compared to almost any other pension plan. The amount transferred to the RTF depends to a considerable extent on the post-retirement interest assumption of 4.55% (PRIA). Because actual investment returns have generally, over time, exceeded PRIA, the net effect has been to create different funding levels in the two trust funds, with the PTF usually underfunded and the RTF usually in surplus. Discretionary indexing for retirees depends on the amount of surplus in the RTF.

As you are well aware, during the latest round of collective bargaining the Board proposed a cessation of transfers from the PTF to the RTF, instead paying all future pensioners out of the PTF. This would create a single-fund plan into which active members would contribute and which would then pay out pensions to retirees. This would mimic the structure of most other defined-benefit plans. Current retirees would continue to receive pensions out of the RTF.

The effect of this proposal would be to reduce the likelihood of indexing for retirees under the combined PTF for a lengthy period of time.

The DFA strongly rejected this proposal and it was not adopted. However, the parties agreed to commission an independent study on the indexing of pensions under the Plan, the costs of indexing, and the potential impacts of the cessation of transfers on current and future retirees, as well as any steps that can be taken to mitigate these impacts. There is clearly still interest from the Board in modifying the structure of the Plan, and the DFA needs to remain vigilant to protect the strong pension plan that we have. Indexing is the key to the maintaining value in the pension after retirement, and your DFA

representatives on PAC continue to oppose any proposed change that will negatively and unfairly impact the pension you will receive in retirement.

The Future

DFA members continue to contribute substantial amounts to the Plan. This year, as in the past, members will contribute about 8.06% of pensionable salary, up to a maximum pensionable salary of \$154,611. The Plan remains a very strong pension plan, when good quality defined-benefit plans are increasingly vanishing. The Plan has weathered the storms of the global pandemic well, and it is imperative that we continue to protect it so that future retirees remain secure even in an uncertain world still facing pandemic impacts.

Our pension plan is a primary reason why the futures of retired members are relatively secure and why we continue to be competitive with other universities who have higher salaries. Your PAC representatives continue to actively work to ensure the financial health and security of the Plan, and to protect it from attempts to cut costs and change its structure in ways that will reduce the long-term security of all DFA members, both current and retired.

DFA

Dalhousie Pension Trust Fund/Retirees' Trust Fund

Ronald A. Pink, Q.C., DFA Nominee

I am pleased to submit my annual report to the membership of the Dalhousie Faculty Association.

The two funds, namely the Pension Trust Fund and the Retiree's Trust Fund had an acceptable level of performance over the past year. The markets themselves had many "ups and downs" during the COVID-19 period. The two funds are invested on behalf of the beneficiaries in such a way that the Trustees do not "chase after the rainbow and that pot of gold". Instead, the investment process may best be described like the Aesop's fable of "the tortoise and the hare" - it is more important to "win the race" in the end. In our view, it is important that the beneficiaries have sufficient resources to ensure their pension is secure for their retirement.

As of December 31, 2020, the estimated funding of the Plan on a going concern basis was 105.8%. The estimated going concern ratio for the Retirees' Trust Fund was 111% and the estimated going concern ratio for the Pension Trust Fund was 101.4%.

In light of the improved funded status of the Retirees' Trust Fund, the Trustees recently approved the use of \$5.1545 million (approximately half of the actuarial surplus from the January 31, 2020 valuation) to award catch up indexation to the Retirees. The catch-up indexation will cover the missed indexation from 2012 and part of 2013. The remaining missed indexation is now less than 7%.

The Trustees have adopted the Superintendent of Pensions rates and requirement of a built-in conservatism for funding purposes. The PfAD (Provision for Adverse Deviation) is currently set at 7.7% for the Dalhousie Plan. This means that before any real changes can take place, Trustees must be satisfied that the funding status of the Plan is in excess of 107.7%. Indeed, when the Trustees decided to grant the discretionary indexing for the retirees, the funded status was over the 107.7% level.

The performance of the Pension Trust Fund and the Retirees' Trust Fund for the past year and over the past 15 years is as follows:

Pension Trust Fund Rate of Return

As at Dec. 31, 2020	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	10 years	15 years
	9.01%	11.25%	8.15%	8.35%	8.84%	7.07%
Policy Benchmark	10.27%	12.90%	8.53%	8.88%	8.36%	6.75%
Fund Requirement	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.06%	6.29%

Retirees' Trust Fund Rate of Return

As at Dec. 31, 2020	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	10 years	15 years
	8.38%	11.70%	7.43%	7.77%	7.90%	6.66%
Policy Benchmark	9.96%	12.82%	8.08%	8.53%	7.85%	6.59%
Fund Requirement	5.05%	5.05%	5.05%	5.05%	5.05%	5.05%

The overall market value of the Pension Trust Fund is \$791.5 million and the overall value of the Retirees' Trust Fund is \$775.9 million at December 31, 2020.

Overall, in my observation, the Fund under the Chair of Rob Richardson operates within the acceptable governance policies and guidelines and there is a significant rapport amongst the various members of the Board of Trustees where their universal desire is to ensure the success of the Plans to provide for long term income security of the beneficiaries.

It is an honour and a pleasure to serve as your nominee on the Board of Trustees.

DFA

Association-Board Committee

Tim Jukes (DFA Co-Chair), David Westwood (DFA Nominee), Barbara MacLennan (DFA Nominee, DFA Professional Officer), Lynn Purves (DFA Observer, DFA Administrative Officer)

The Association-Board Committee (ABC) considers matters of interpretation or application of the Collective Agreement. Agendas largely concern the administration of certain clauses of the Collective Agreement, including matters that would otherwise not be in compliance with the Collective Agreement and matters that require the approval of ABC as defined in the Collective Agreement. ABC also deals with issues of broad concern to our membership. ABC operates by concurrent majority.

There has been some changing of the guard on the Board's ABC team: Frank Harvey's stint on ABC was short-lived, as he moved into the Provost role; Kim Brooks (Dean of Management) joined ABC in July 2020. In May 2021, Laura Neals, who has been Co-Chair for a number of years, will begin leave and Marlo Shinyei will become acting Co-Chair. Along with the DFA's three nominees, the Board's current representatives are Marlo Shinyei (Academic Staff Relations Manager), Kim Brooks (Dean of Management), and Silvia Behrens-Kelleher (Academic Staff Relations Manager).

ABC meets monthly to deal with particular and recurring items such as waivers of advertising, extensions of limited-term appointments, spousal appointments, automatic renewals, special salary increases (SSIs), salaries above the maximum, administrative stipends and job descriptions, extensions to timelines (e.g., anomalies fund, tenure limits), and parking fees. All meetings during the pandemic have been held via Zoom.

ABC nominees also receive a copy of a monthly Academic Appointment Activity Report (AAAR) document which lists all academic staff changes (appointments, promotions, tenure, sabbaticals, etc.) and provides supporting documentation. We query missing documentation and, on occasion, note that the Collective Agreement will be violated if a proposed action is taken. Such items are brought to ABC to be resolved.

Members who read this annual report carefully might notice some items in the list below have been discussed in past reports. Some items remain on ABC's action list and minutes for extended periods either because discussion over issues extends over months, it can take frustratingly long for information requested to be provided, or items were put on hold for months because of COVID-19 or the bargaining process.

COVID-19: Much of ABC's work this year had related to the pandemic and Dalhousie's response to it. We scheduled a number of mid-month meetings and began negotiating a COVID Letter of Understanding (LOU), but as the collective bargaining process got underway, the LOU items were removed from ABC's desk. Some of the COVID-related items that arose at ABC included:

- workplace accommodations arising as a result of daycare closure;
- sabbatical deferrals and interruptions (covered in LOU);
- deferral of reappointment, tenure, continuing appointment, and appointment without term consideration for up to two years;
- scheduling of online teaching;
- the Board indicated no blanket allowance would be forthcoming for university support for home office expenses but that "reasonable" costs should be requested within Faculties;
- availability/use of T2200 tax form for home expenses;
- messaging to students suggested members should and would be available as students needed. A memo to Deans has clarified that members are expected to respond to students in a timely fashion but Members have a right to determine when they can do this within their normal work hours. In addition, ABC has requested a note be included in course outlines indicating to

students that a normal response time might be 24-48 hours and that faculty are not expected to respond during evenings and over weekends;

- travel fund carry-forward - until June 30, 2022, DFA travel funds can be used for fees associated with attending virtual conferences (e.g., registration for online conferences);
- vacation carry-forward - Members who are unable to use their vacation entitlement during the academic year should follow the Collective Agreement (Article 30.02) and request unused days be carried over to the following year; and
- parking fees during campus closure.

Return to Campus Committee: The University established a return to campus committee without DFA representation. Through ABC we finally received the membership list of this committee, but have not received any terms of reference nor has the DFA been invited to send a representative to the committee.

Strike/Lockout Preparation: As collective bargaining came to an impasse and a strike became increasingly likely, ABC considered the following:

- Sabbaticals, sick leave, pregnancy, and parental leaves during a strike/lockout: The Board said Members on sick leave or long-term disability would not be considered on strike/lockout, but Members on sabbatical, educational, or special leaves, and Members on pregnancy and/or parental leaves would be considered on strike/lockout. Those on parental leaves would not receive salary top ups.
- Travel: The Board indicated that travel during the time of a strike/lockout would not be reimbursed, and the use of travel cards would be suspended during that period, too.
- Access to campus (including online) and essential services: A subcommittee of ABC reviewed and decided on requests for access to campus and designating DFA Members essential in the event of a strike/lockout.
- Grant processing during a strike: The Board said it would not process grant applications during a strike.
- Personal emails: The Board acknowledged that Members should not be requested to provide alternate, non-Dal email addresses ahead of a strike. The Board said Members' Dal IT services (e.g., email, Brightspace, etc.) would remain active during a strike/lockout.

Educational Leaves: Changes negotiated at the bargaining table allowed Instructor Members with service prior to their career-stream appointment to request educational leave earlier. This meant ABC needed to extend the application deadlines for eligible Instructor Members to be able to request leave for the 2021-22 academic year.

Targeted Hires: The Board has been pursuing searches for positions restricted to candidates from particular equity-seeking groups. While the DFA is fully supportive of increasing campus diversity, ABC is the appropriate forum for the Board to propose and approve such searches. We will continue to raise this issue at ABC.

SRI: The Board and Senate continue to review SRIs and Brad Wuetherick (Executive Director, Centre for Learning and Teaching) made further presentations to Senate and ABC options for broadening how teaching might be evaluated.

Professional Development Allowance (PDA): ABC clarified a number of PDA-related issues this year:

- professional licensing fees: These can be claimed against PDA;
- Faculty committees: Faculties must have a faculty-level committee whose responsibility is to review and approve PDA requests;
- spreading cost over multiple years: There is no PDA carry-forward, but the Board is considering a DFA request that costs in excess of the annual PDA limit be paid out over a reasonable number of years (e.g., to a limit of three years). We have not heard yet whether this will be acceptable and possible; and
- no pre-approval: If Members are unclear about whether an expense will be covered by PDA, they can speak to their Faculty committee liaison, but there is no pre-approval; the committee will decide only once a claim has been submitted.

Copyright, Course Hero, and Chegg: The DFA nominees continue to monitor this issue, particularly Members' copyright material being shared and posted on sites such as Course Hero and Chegg. You might remember from last year's report that the Board felt that monitoring and controlling this was beyond its control or ability. We continue to discuss ways in which our Members' material can be better protected and with the support of our employer. See, for example, 'Search engine targets sharing of course documents on Course Hero' (April 2, 2021, on www.insidehighered.com), which suggests that there might be relatively easy and effective strategies that can be developed in-house.

Spousal Appointments: ABC clarified that requests for consideration of spousal appointments must be made prior to a regular appointments committee considering files in the applicant pool. DFA

Dalhousie Environmental Health & Safety Committee

Mark Obrovac, Emanuel Jannasch and Alex Speed (Halifax); Margaret Hartling and Paul McNeil (Truro)

Role of the Safety Committee

The Environmental Health and Safety Committee (Halifax) meets on the third Thursday of the month from 1:00-2:30 pm to discuss all aspects of health and safety on campus. Committee membership includes University appointees and representatives from employee and student groups. There are positions for two DFA appointees – one Professorial and one Instructor member.

Information about the [Dalhousie Environmental Health and Safety Committee](#) can be found on the Office of Environmental Health and Safety website. The committee's purpose is stated as:

"The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee is established by the President to establish an Environmental Health and Safety Program as set out in the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act. The Committee assists the University in attempting to achieve the highest possible standards of environmental health and safety. In cooperation with staff, faculty, students, and the University Administration, the Committee assists the University in creating and maintaining a safe and healthy environment."

Summary of Events for 2020-21 (Halifax)

Enabling a return to work from the COVID-19 shutdown has been a main focus of the committee during this reporting period. The committee advised, reviewed, and provided feedback on guidelines, procedures, and training for returning to work on campus.

The committee fulfilled its role in advising on appropriate measures to be taken in response to Department of Labour compliance orders resulting from safety incidents on campus. In all cases this resulted in the improvement of safety procedures at Dalhousie to the satisfaction of the Department of Labour.

The Security Office has provided [Guidelines for Emergency Interruptions](#) to clarify procedures in case of weather events, power failures or other emergency interruptions which may impact campus operations.

In March, the committee received Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee training to review the roles and responsibilities of the Safety Committee and its members.

Summary from Environmental Health and Safety Committee (Truro)

- A fire safety audit was completed on campus. Deficiencies were compiled and addressed.
- Eyewash stations in the farm area did not meet safety standards and were deemed unacceptable. Six locations were identified, and new eyewash pods ordered. Due to COVID-19 and the partial receiving of the order, there has been a delay in completion. The outstanding eyewash pods have been re-ordered and will be installed as soon as they are received.
- New first aid kits have been delivered and placed in Haley and Cox buildings.
- Across campus, updated hazard signs have been installed on doors where required.
- A new Automated External Defibrillator was installed in the Athletic Centre.
- Lock-out training was made available online through the Nova Scotia Safety Services due to COVID-19.
- Fire alarms were tested in the new Feed Centre (Farm Complex).
- Plexiglass barriers were installed in designated areas across campus.
- COVID-19 protocol signs, directional signage, and occupancy signage have been installed. Also, extra hand sanitizing has been placed in designated areas.
- Radon testing was completed on the Truro campus. Results were negative.

Dalhousie Transportation & Security Committee

Sherry Huybers, DFA Representative

The Transportation and Security Committee meets monthly from September to June. Membership is composed of voting representatives from all unions and prominent bodies on all campuses, including the DFA, NSGEU (Locals 77 and 99), DPMG, DSU, and Senate. Non-voting members include the Director of Security Services, the Traffic Officer, the Facilities Communications Officer, and the Office of Sustainability. The current co-chairs of the committee are Peter Jones (Sexton Campus) and Theresa Myra (DPMG). Minutes for the monthly meetings are posted [here](#).

Parking Rates: The parking rates for 2020-21 were discussed at the June 2020 Transportation and Security Committee meetings. Based on the situation with COVID-19, there were no grounds for recommending an increase to the parking permit fees. It was recommended that the rates remain the same as last year. These rates were in accordance with the DFA Collective Agreement Clause 32.10 and were approved by this committee and the Association-Board Committee. At the September 2020 meeting, it was reported that the Security Office sent out a notice to all reserved parking permit holders informing them of the option to delay the renewal. Permit holders have the option to purchase a general permit and maintain their ability to renew in 2021-22. The parking rates for 2020-21 will be presented and discussed at the May and June Transportation and Security committee meetings. For further information regarding parking, visit Dalhousie's [website](#).

Parking/Transportation Highlights: The Rosina Lot was configured for pay and display parking (hourly, daily, weekly or monthly), for people who did not wish to purchase the annual permit for 2020-21. Participants who cancelled their E-Pass this year were asked to surrender their bus pass to Sustainability to avoid being charged. When these participants return to campus, they will be reinstated in the program. The 'Hot Spot' parking application for Dalhousie University members is being explored.

NS Accessibility Act: Dalhousie University Transportation is leading a group which is studying ways to connect accessibility to transit, pedestrian, cyclist and motorized bike traffic.

Security Highlights: The Return to Campus Committee periodically updated the Dalhousie University community on COVID-19 protocols. All campuses' activity was down 50 to 75% from September 1, 2020 to February 16, 2021.

DFA

President's Advisory Committee on Sexualized Violence

Jacqueline Gahagan and Brenda Beagan (alternate), DFA Representatives

As noted in the Sexualized Violence Policy, the President's Advisory Committee on Sexualized Violence is responsible for working through, and with, the Human Rights and Equity Services to provide advice on the strategic planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this Policy and the University's Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Strategy. The purpose of the Strategy is: 1. To prevent sexualized violence by indicating the seriousness with which the University views and responds to this issue; 2. To be educational, in that its existence will increase awareness of the impacts of sexualized violence and of options, resources and services available to those who have experienced sexualized violence and members of University community generally; and 3. To provide timely, coordinated, consistent and fair response to disclosures and reports of sexualized violence.

The Committee has continued to meet virtually to discuss reviewing and revising the Sexualized Violence Policy that initially came into effect on September 1, 2018 following approval by Senate. Since that time, several changes have been recommended by the committee and are being incorporated, including clarification on where decisions are made related to an investigation, jurisdictional issues, student issues versus those related to staff and faculty, etc. In addition, the committee is looking at an alternative mechanism to approve its policy mandate rather than that of Senate and the Board of Governors. It is important to note that there is meant to be a review of the Sexualized Violence Policy approximately every two years through a consultation process and a final approval from Senate and the Board of Governors. The current revisions are meant to be completed by June 2021 to help ensure the revised policy is in place for Fall 2021. More information about this and related policies can be found on [Dalhousie's Human Rights and Equity Services website](#). DFA

Dalhousie Council on Employment Equity

Jacqueline Gahagan, DFA Representative

The Employment Equity Council meets four times each year to discuss issues related to strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation in relation to relevant policies and Dalhousie's Employment Equity Plan. In the fall, the employment systems review planning process lead by Mimi Breslow got underway. This is meant to advance Dalhousie University's strategic priority 5.2 by augmenting diversity of Dalhousie faculty, staff and senior administration, as well as to ensure Dalhousie is meeting its Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) targets. The last employment systems review took place in 2016. This current employment systems review is meant to be completed by May 31, 2021 and the corresponding Employment Equity Plan is meant to be completed by August

31, 2021. In keeping with the work of Employment Equity Council, the first annual [Dalhousie Community Equity Data Report](#) was released in 2019 by Dr. Theresa Rajack-Talley, Vice-Provost, Equity and Inclusion. This initial report was meant to offer a snapshot of the ways in which Dalhousie University is tracking and addressing gaps in employment among historically underrepresented populations and will be repeated over time to track additional changes in reaching Dalhousie University's commitments to EDI.

DFA

DFA Equity Committee

Remi Agu (Chair), Heather Andreas, Catrina Brown, Eli Manning, Ifeyinwa Mbakogu, David Westwood (DFA President, ex-officio), Catherine Wall (DFA Communications Officer, ex-officio)

In the 2020-21 academic year, the DFA Equity Committee met a few times due to some members' involvement in collective bargaining-related activities. During the period, the committee identified the need to expand the Equity Committee's membership to include representatives from the various faculty caucuses and other groups or individuals representing different minority groups on campus, including members that are on limited contracts. The committee acknowledged the potential impact of accepting memberships from individual faculty members on decision-making unit or faculty level committees and other members of the association passionate

about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) matters.

The key mandates and activities to be pursued in the 2021-22 academic year include participation in Employment Systems Review (ESR) and the Dalhousie Racialized Violence Policy development. Other anticipated major activities are information gathering on equity-related statistics at Dalhousie and seeking members' input on EDI-related issues and concerns to be potentially addressed in the next round of collective bargaining. Please contact the DFA office if you are interested in joining the committee.

DFA

DFA Communications Co-ordination Committee

Amy Birchall (Chair), Jason Brown, Deborah Tamlyn, David Westwood (DFA President, ex-officio), Catherine Wall (DFA Communications Officer, ex-officio)

This past year was unlike any year any of us have experienced so far. There has been loss (of loved ones, family members, jobs, and businesses), there has been stress and challenges for people in all areas of life.

Despite so much, we are finding a way to persevere, and the Communication Co-Ordination Committee is no exception to that!

We quickly organized ways for us to meet again through Zoom. We started the year reviewing and working on guidelines for the newsletter and deciding on goals/plans for the year. Sadly, COVID-19 regulations saw some of our projects cancelled, the DFA Speaker Series was one of them. These projects will see a return when it is safe for us to do so.

The DFA quickly became further involved in the processes of collective bargaining which kept both the Executive and standing committees very busy. The Communications Co-ordination Committee members remained ready to assist with anything required by the Executive. The established committee quickly became part of a larger Job Action Communication Committee. The willingness of everyone to step up and help was so inspiring. We worked on and contributed to many different ideas and strategies to reach out to members through what was a very challenging time for all faculty. I know for me, my times with the Communications Committee members and the Executive were a large part of what gave me hope through that time.

With the resolution of collective bargaining, the Communications Co-ordination Committee came back together in its original format and moved on to some projects that had to sit on the back burner through bargaining.

Some of the tasks we are continuing with are the newsletter review and social media guidelines. Effective communication is more important than ever now with many new modalities available to us. This requires us to re-evaluate our ways of doing things. We need to be using social media effectively and work toward keeping our members engaged through these platforms.

This “new world” is also bringing up the conversation of the DFA website and how we can refresh it to be as appealing and useful as possible. Many excellent ideas have come forward, they are being explored, and plans are being made. Stay tuned!

As I mentioned at the start of my report that this has been a challenging year and that may be an understatement. Even in difficult times, amazing things can be seen. I have seen more dedication and commitment in the DFA and faculty as a whole. We have come together for each other and our students.

A committee is made of its people. The Communications Co-ordination Committee members are passionate, engaged and incredibly intelligent. Every time we meet over Zoom, I leave feeling motivated and encouraged. I feel so lucky to work closely with this group! Thank you so much to each of you for your efforts and continued commitment.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and appreciate the work of the DFA staff, especially Catherine Wall (ex-officio). Without her, the initiatives this committee take on would not be as successful as they are! She is always supportive of us and works tirelessly.

Our other ex-officio member of this committee is DFA President, David Westwood. The amount of work he has put in this year, not only for our committee but for the entire membership, is nothing short of incredible. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for everything.

I know we have tough times ahead as we continue to adapt to our new way of life but moving forward, I feel we are galvanized and ready to excel!

DFA

DFA Aboriginal Caucus Committee

Patti Doyle-Bedwell (Chair), Samantha Adema, Gail Blaikie, Amy Bombay, Lisa Binkley, Jonathan Ferrier, Nancy MacDonald, Julie Marcoux, Debbie Martin, Naomi Metallic, Eric Oliver, Sherry Pictou, Margaret Robinson, David Westwood (DFA President, ex-officio), Catherine Wall (DFA Communications Officer, ex-officio)

At our regular meeting, we discussed the DFA/Board Collective Agreement and also met with the Indigenous Council to discuss the Indigenous Strategy. We are hoping to update the Indigenous Strategy, done in 2017, and mark what has been done and what needs to be done. We are working on the Indigenous minor and hope to advance to a major.

There was a new faculty Mi'kmaq member hired in the Dalhousie Schulich School of Law. We welcomed Samantha Adema, as the Indigenous resource Librarian, and Sherry Pictou cross-appointed to Law and Management in Indigenous governance. We also welcomed Cathy Martin as the Mi'kmaq Director of Community Engagement, and we advocated for this position in the Indigenous Strategy.

As a member of the Bargaining Team, Patti Doyle-Bedwell met with the Indigenous Caucus, both as a group and with individual members to discuss the negotiations.

Indigenous faculty members and those of other equity seeking groups often face an extensive administrative work load. In our new Collective Agreement, we negotiated a better process for overload pay. We also brought up the issues of Indigenous knowledge in assessing y-values at the point of hiring.

We also had a discussion with the Caucus on ways to share information and decision-making on issues of employment equity. We need to begin a process of reconciliation with Indigenous faculty members and the Association.

DFA

Southern African Student Education Project

Theresa Ulicki (Chair), David Black, Gary Kynoch, Matthew Schnurr

Overview

SASEP Purpose: From its inception, the purpose of the then South (now Southern) African Student Education Project (SASEP) has been to contribute to the development of South Africa by offering black South Africans, a historically disadvantaged group, a full scholarship to pursue graduate studies at the Master's or PhD level at Dalhousie University. This is now extended to students in the Southern African region.

History: SASEP has been operating at Dalhousie since 1987. Initially, the South African Education Trust Fund (SAETF) in Ottawa matched all funds which SASEP raised. Once SAETF ceased operating in 1993, Dalhousie assumed full responsibility for the project and SASEP has been completely funded by the Dalhousie community ever since.

Currently, contributions are made on an annual basis by the Dalhousie Student Union, the DFA (\$10,000), and individual faculty and staff members. The DSU contribution is a result of an agreement in the spring of 1990, which annually supports a \$1.00 contribution to SASEP from each full-time student at Dalhousie.

SASEP is further supported by the Administration. First, the Administration has agreed to waive international student differential fees for SASEP students on an ongoing basis. Second, the SASEP Advisory Committee, made up of DFA faculty members who all share an interest in Southern Africa, provides administrative and academic support to the project.

SASEP covers the entire cost of student placements, including tuition, round-trip airfare, a monthly stipend for living expenses, medical coverage and a modest allowance for books and warm clothing. The number of placements available is entirely dependent on successful fund-raising efforts, and the length of academic study of scholarship recipients. As of April 2021, 17 students have been awarded graduate degrees under SASEP. The most recent student is Tinashe Muzondo, MA International Development Studies.

The SASEP committee last undertook recruitment for the 2019-20 year, receiving over 140 applications from interested students from across Southern Africa. Liandrah Gapare from Zimbabwe was selected to complete the MSc program in Chemistry. She began her degree in September 2019 and hopes to begin her PhD at Dalhousie starting this fall.

SASEP would normally have recruited a student for the 2021-22 academic year, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty of students being able to come to Dalhousie from Southern Africa, SASEP decided to delay its recruitment. We will recruit two students, if financially viable, for 2022-23.

Current Activities

Administration: As of 2019-20, SASEP funds started being administered by both Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) and the department in which the student is studying. Previously, FGS handled the finances; however, it did not feel it had the administrative capacity to continue with this model. FGS administers routine finances, such as tuition, while departments handle airfare, visas, rent and any other costs. Recruitment, selection and all academic matters are handled by the SASEP Advisory Committee, currently chaired by Theresa Ulicki.

Recruitment: SASEP is open to eligible candidates from historically disadvantaged groups who are citizens of the Commonwealth countries of Southern Africa (South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe). We will recruit again in fall 2021 for two students to begin in fall 2022 at the Masters level.

We are very grateful for the support provided by the DFA, faculty members and students over the course of many years. It is a tangible manifestation of internationalisation that underscores the strengths and outlook of the Dalhousie community. We hope that this community will continue to support SASEP as it adapts to the changing needs of Southern Africa, and contributes (in however limited a way) to the development of intellectual leaders in a region with exceptional potential but extraordinary challenges.

DFA

WUSC Student Refugee Program

Isaac Saney, Halifax WUSC Student Committee Chair & Joy Galloway-Jones, Truro WUSC Faculty Advisor

Halifax Campus: The Dalhousie WUSC Halifax committee did not sponsor any SRP students this year. Most of our members are graduating and those who are not, are not currently living in Halifax.

Agricultural Campus: Historically, the Agricultural Campus welcomes one WUSC student each year. This past year was our 35th

year of participating in the SRP. Due to COVID-19 and the restrictions/ramifications that followed, many universities chose not to host WUSC students. As we were committed to welcoming the student we identified in the spring, the WUSC organization asked if we could potentially accept a second. We determined that in our current circumstances, it would be better to have two to share experiences, than

just one with limited student interaction. Both students are originally from South Sudan. WUSC provided us with additional funding to assist with welcoming two new students, Tangweth and Yuot, who started in the winter term after completing their required quarantine at the Westin in Halifax. Both are doing well and getting connected as best as they can in residence. They have engaged with

playing soccer, and are getting settled in their new home. *(Note: In 2020-21, DFA contributed a total of \$6494 toward WUSC student accommodations in Truro.)* As we continue to navigate the challenges brought on by the pandemic, the Truro campus and WUSC committee are continuing to step up in order to ensure that this valuable tradition is maintained. **DFA**

2021-22 DFA Executive Committee

Congratulations to the 2021-22 DFA Executive Committee. The following DFA Members assume their positions immediately following the AGM on May 13, 2021.

President	Tara Perrot (Psychology and Neuroscience)
President-Elect	Dave Westwood (Health and Human Performance)
Second Vice-President	Catrina Brown (Social Work)
Secretary	Amy Birchall (Animal Science and Aquaculture)
Treasurer	Mark Lewis (Law Library)
Past-President	Dave Westwood (Health and Human Performance)
Members-at-Large	<i>(term ending April 2022)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Katherine Fierlbeck (Political Science)• Shannon Lin (Rowe School of Business)• Matthew Numer (Health and Human Performance)• Marc Whalen (Chemistry)

Note: Mark Lewis held a Member-at-Large position, ending April 2022. His election as Treasurer creates a one-year vacancy, Member-at-Large position. By-election details will be distributed after the AGM.

Members-at-Large	<i>(term ending April 2023)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remi Agu (Pharmacy)• Philip Bennett (Physics and Atmospheric Science)• Patti Doyle-Bedwell (Continuing Education)• Gabriella Mosquera (Computer Science)• Dominic Silvio (Killam Library)
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Non-Bargaining Unit Member position remains vacant.

Thank you to our 2020-21 Executive Committee Members for their dedication to our membership and our Association. Your time, thoughtful contribution and commitment is appreciated. Our outgoing members include: Julia Wright (Past President), Cindy Penney (Secretary), Brenda Beagan (Member-at-Large), and Gabrielle Horne (Non-Bargaining Unit Position).

DFA

Nominating Committee for the 2021-22 DFA Executive Committee

- Tara Perrot (Psychology & Neuroscience), Chair
- Jason Haslam (English)
- Marc Whalen (Chemistry)