



The DFA Solidarity March was held on Friday, Sept. 12, 2025. University Ave was electric as a massive crowd of faculty and DFA supporters marched from the Killam Memorial Library to the Henry Hicks Building. The Dalhousie Board of Governors made their final offer shortly after, and the 4-week lockout came to an end. DFA Members returned to work with a new Collective Agreement Sept. 18.

# DFA DIALOGUE

Annual Report 2025-2026/Vol. XXXIX

**DFA**  
Dalhousie Faculty Association

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## President's Message

Submitted by David Westwood (Health and Human Performance)

DFA President 2025-2026



This report marks the end of my fifth DFA Presidency, and it was a year that I will not soon forget. This could have been a very long report, or a very short one: I have tried to be as brief as possible, but there is a lot of ground to cover.

### Thinking globally while acting locally

By mandate, the DFA operates locally, as we focus on the terms and conditions of our employment at an institution with clear geographical boundaries. We have many of our own issues but we all exist in a global context with a large and growing number of existential threats to humanity: war and other forms of violence, economic uncertainty, climate change, authoritarianism, artificial intelligence, and inequality, to name a few. I admit that it is difficult at times to remain focused on our comparatively narrow mandate in the face of these broader issues and challenges. However, ensuring that DFA Members have good working conditions allows us to do our best academic work which can contribute to addressing many of these global issues.

### The lockout

Needless to say, the lockout shaped most DFA activities for the past year. The Board locked us out while we were voting on one of their “final” offers, triggering the first DFA job action since 2002 – the first lockout of academic staff at a U15 institution in Canadian history. Lasting almost exactly a month, we all learned first-hand what it is like to be on the picket lines with all the associated stressors and challenges. We also learned how it feels to come out the other side with a new Collective Agreement that is, without exaggeration, far better than seemed possible at the outset of negotiations given the economic rhetoric that had been building for almost a year beforehand.

We learned many important lessons during the negotiations, and during the lockout itself, and I believe we built a far stronger sense of DFA identity than has existed for the two decades since our last job action. DFA Members came together to forge new relationships and bonds on picket lines, and in some of the other groups that spontaneously formed and organized in relation to the lockout. One of these groups, the Coalition for Collegial Governance (CoCoGov) has blossomed into an active grassroots body raising awareness about issues related to collegial governance, and has begun organizing concrete actions and activities around this theme. The DFA Executive recently adopted terms of reference for a new Collegial Governance Committee with a mandate to explore issues of collegial governance, with a focus on the provisions of the Collective Agreement and to help develop skills and expertise within the Membership in these areas. We have considerable power within collegial bodies, and we are starting to see how even a little bit of organizing can help harness that power to make positive changes.

At the AGM we will discuss the implications of the lockout on DFA finances: spoiler alert – we remain in an incredibly strong financial position and will not need to increase our dues. We will be ready, and in fact in a better financial position by the time we next enter collective bargaining.

### Our new Collective Agreement

We made some important gains in the 2025-2028 Collective Agreement (e.g., conversions of limited-term appointments to permanent positions; enhanced economic gains for early-career academics; requirements to have workload policies in each Faculty), but I would characterize two of the hardest fought issues as relatively defensive in nature: fair cost-of-living adjustments (i.e., the Income Maintenance Change, or IMC) and the 90/10 rule that protects DFA bargaining unit positions within the overall academic staff complement.

Given the recent levels of inflation, and the kinds of settlements reached by other comparable unions, it is troubling to me that it took a lockout lasting almost a month to “win” IMC values of slightly more than 3% per year of the contract – such modest economic adjustments simply allow us to afford to live where we work, and ought to be seen by our employer as a non-negotiable cost of doing business: pay your workers fair wages. We still have an unresolved cost-of-living deficit from the past ten years of negotiations that needs to be clawed back in subsequent rounds of bargaining while we continue the struggle to keep pace with current and future inflationary pressure.

I am very proud that DFA Members stood strong on protecting the 90/10 rule, which is a high-water mark in Canada for ensuring that good quality academic jobs remain a core feature of Dalhousie University for future generations of academic staff and our students. Twenty years from now, I hope DFA Members look back at the 2025 lockout as a pivotal moment where union power and collective strength enshrined the 90/10 rule alongside the Dalhousie Pension Plan as core issues to be defended at all costs.

Like all rounds of bargaining, we did not achieve all of our goals. We were unable to persuade the Board to agree to a pathway to permanence for all limited-term appointments that have continued for a certain number of years, and we were unable to achieve any real progress toward improved childcare despite the obvious equity and retention issues at stake. If we intend to make gains on these issues in the next round of negotiations we will need to build strength and determination, and perhaps seek out partnerships and alliances that will multiply our own power to ensure that the Board cannot continue to refuse our demands on these important issues.

I am mindful that we need to maintain our momentum and positive collective energy as we look ahead to the next round of bargaining. Fresh terms of reference for a newly-invigorated Council of Representatives were recently approved by the DFA Executive, and I look forward to seeing this group grow into a valuable conduit for information and ideas between DFA leadership and the Membership. I know the leaders of this initiative are keen to organize more frequent gatherings to bring Members together to ensure we retain our strong sense of union identity which flourished during the lockout.

### Workload policies

Our collective bargaining team was particularly excited about the new language agreed on Faculty Workload Policies, as workloads are a regular source of conflict, uncertainty, and frustration. There are few written rules or procedures that guide Members and Deans in determining what is fair and reasonable when it comes to workload assignment, and there is little to no transparency to facilitate resolution of workload disputes.

It became clear shortly after the conclusion of the lockout that it was not going to be a straightforward exercise to reach the goals of the new policy. We learned that each Faculty seemed to be approaching the task in very different ways, with ideas and perhaps motives that were outside the boundaries of what is contemplated elsewhere in the Collective Agreement in relation to workload. For this reason, we agreed at the Association-Board Committee (ABC) that the DFA and Board would encourage everyone to “press pause” on developing workload policies while we tried to reach agreement on some general advice and guidance to all Faculties. Our goal was to avoid creating more problems than the policies were intended to solve in the first place.

Despite discussing this issue at ABC on several occasions and exchanging proposals on what our “joint advice” might look like, agreement has remained elusive. We intend to continue discussions for another month or so to see if we can find agreement, but if not then we will issue our own “DFA” advice to Members on how we believe you ought to proceed within your own Faculties as we know that many of you are (rightly) keen to have policies in place before the December deadline.

### Ongoing sector-wide challenges

The entire post-secondary education sector continues to suffer from neglect at the hands of our provincial and federal governments. Despite strong public support for higher education, core funding continues to be cut in real terms thanks to sub-inflation increases in the new bilateral funding agreement with the province coupled with a freeze in domestic tuition for most academic programs. While we certainly welcome efforts to make higher education more affordable and accessible for students, the realities of the escalating true costs for universities need to be recognized and offset by substantial increases to core funding.

The current provincial government has begun to chip away at institutional autonomy, a core founding principle of the public university, by making considerable amounts of funding contingent on satisfying its own short-term priorities. The Schedule H program reviews demanded by the Province of Nova Scotia under the terms of the bilateral funding agreement threaten the integrity of existing quality assurance processes by imposing government’s preferred view of academic programs as “cost centres”, “revenue streams”, and employment pipelines to industry, encouraging all Nova Scotia universities to look for “opportunities” to close academic programs that do not tick enough boxes. Dalhousie’s senior administrators seem content to allow this to happen with little if any observable resistance. In fairness, there is a shocking amount of silence from all of Nova Scotia’s university presidents and senior leaders at this moment, as though resistance is futile and one should rightfully be worried about standing up to the

current government by calling a spade a spade. In my opinion, there is a big difference between managing and leading – of course all senior leaders must manage within the constraints imposed from the outside, but exceptional leaders find a way to change hearts and minds.

### Other DFA actions and highlights

DFA staff and volunteers remained as busy as ever with the regular business that continued unabated despite all the attention and energy that was rightfully focused on the lockout. You can get a small taste of some of this activity by reading the reports from the Grievance Committee and Association-Board Committee, which deal with a great many diverse and often complex cases that arise from disputes about the interpretation of the Collective Agreement. You can also read about the current state of our important Dalhousie Pension Plan, which did not figure into collective bargaining for the first time in many rounds of negotiations – spoiler alert: it is a good news story.

I have been working with DFA leaders on developing a proposal to make some long-needed changes to our organizational structure. Some of the changes we have in mind will require amendments to our Constitution, which is why you will see that we have put forward a motion to update the Constitution to eliminate the need to conduct paper ballots in the future when proposals for change come forward. Other organizational improvements include assigning new course releases to important volunteer positions that carry a high workload and responsibility.

As mentioned earlier in my report, the DFA Executive approved terms of reference for two new committees that both reflect themes that rose to prominence during the lockout. The Collegial Governance Committee will help ensure that DFA Members have the necessary tools and resources to work effectively and confidently within the many collegial bodies around our campuses, and will provide advice to the Executive Committee on emerging issues arising within this context. The Council of Representatives existed for many years but became dormant for more than a decade due to lack of interest. It is now revitalized with a fresh terms of reference and renewed sense of purpose and importance. We all saw during the lockout how important it is to have a strong sense of collective identity, and that Members have lots of opportunities to come together to share information about workplace issues that can be addressed using the existing Collective Agreement, or by bringing changes to future rounds of contract negotiations.

### Closing remarks

The DFA is a large and complex union with some very visible activities but, like an iceberg, there is a lot more going on beneath the surface. Everything that we have been able to achieve this year is because of the hard work, passion, and endless energy of two groups of people.

First of all, our staff deserve our deepest thanks and gratitude. Jack Brown, Kristin Hearn, Travis Perry, Lynn Purves, and Catherine Wall are the most professional and dedicated group of employees that anyone could ever hope for. They were the secret to our success during the lockout and collective bargaining, making sure that all the important details were looked after while keeping spirits and energy high despite very long hours and extraordinarily high amounts of pressure. It is important to make sure that all DFA

members know that our staff bring this level of effort and skill to all the routine tasks and activities that happen throughout every DFA year, even though much of this work is done “behind the curtain”, so to speak. Thank you all.

Second, we are fortunate to have great volunteers who stepped up and committed to take on a variety of roles and tasks that are often piled on top of already full plates of “regular” academic responsibilities. It would take another report just to name and thank everyone who took on an important volunteer role with the union this year, but I want you to know that your time and effort did not go unnoticed. Like many of you, my energy reserves were severely challenged during the lockout, but I always drew strength when I saw you wearing your DFA hats, bandanas, and t-shirts, and when I saw people taking on leadership roles that they probably never expected to be doing as an academic worker. It was endlessly inspiring to see the passion and dedication that you showed for each other, and it made all the difference. Thank you.



Dave Westwood  
DFA President 2025-2026

## DFA Grievance Committee Report

Submitted by Dominic Silvio (Killam Memorial Library), Committee Chair

Grievance Officers: Patricia Cove (Business and Social Sciences), Patti Doyle-Bedwell (Open Learning and Career Development), David Evans (English), Katherine Fierlbeck (Political Science), Iona Green (Business and Social Sciences), Kate Grosweiner (Physiotherapy), Tim Juckes (Psychology and Neuroscience), Derek Kimmerly (Health and Human Performance), Michel Ladouceur (Health and Human Performance), Kassandra Luciuk (History), Erin MacPherson (MacRae Library), Matthew Numer (Health and Human Performance), David Westwood (Health and Human Performance), Marc Whalen (Chemistry), Scott White (Plant, Food and Environmental Science), Julia Wright (English), Jack Brown (DFA Professional Officer, Ex-Officio), and Travis Perry (DFA Membership Services Officer, Ex-Officio).

This year, I had the privilege and honour of serving as the chair of the Grievance Committee for a second time. One of the most important tools we have to enforce our Collective Agreement provisions is the grievance/arbitration process. Over the last year, the Grievance Committee has been very active, dealing with all types of grievances. As in 2024-2025, this year our grievances have increased and addressed a wide range of issues.

As noted in our report last year, grievances often come to our attention through several channels, primarily from individual Members coming forward with concerns, but also frequently from matters identified at meetings of the Association-Board Committee (ABC). Last year, we decided not to provide thumbnail descriptions of ongoing grievance cases for the *DFA Dialogue* report (see last year's report), and we maintain that practice in this report. However, we are going to report on cases that have reached the final/arbitration stage of the grievance process. All these cases are policy grievances.

### Financial Constraint

In our 2024-2025 report, we mentioned a financial constraint policy grievance that was filed when the Board unilaterally declared a hiring freeze and created a novel exceptions process for academic appointments overseen by senior administrators. The stated reason for these actions was an unexpected budget gap arising from a significant decrease in international student enrolment, coupled with a freeze in the operating grant from the province. The grievance was denied at the formal stage, and we commissioned a legal opinion on whether DFA would be successful in arbitration. The legal opinion was very supportive of the DFA's position. Hence, the DFA Grievance Committee and Executive recommended that we file for arbitration. Arbitration has been filed, and we are waiting for the hearing and adjudication.

### Sabbatical Leave During Lockout

Another case of significance arose from the August 2025 lockout by the President and Board of Dalhousie University. During the lockout, the Board maintained that they were not obliged to pay DFA Members on sabbatical leave because, according to them, those on sabbatical were deemed to

be at work during their sabbatical leave. Furthermore, sabbatical leave is a workload arrangement that allows faculty members to devote 100% of their work time to research and other scholarly pursuits. Hence, the Board does not view sabbatical leave as a Collective Agreement entitlement. DFA filed an informal grievance because the DFA maintains that once a DFA Member is granted sabbatical leave in accordance with the process set out in Articles 30.15-30.23, they become entitled to that leave. Nevertheless, the grievance was denied at the informal stage. The Grievance Committee and the Executive commissioned a legal opinion. The legal opinion justified our position, and a recommendation to file for arbitration was approved by the Executive.

### Library Complement

The grievance addressing library complement is also heading for arbitration. In spring 2022, the Dean of Libraries sought to make a spousal appointment to the Dalhousie Libraries. Per Article 14.27(a) of the Collective Agreement, the spousal appointment required the home unit's consent. An agreement was struck between the DFA's Members and then-Dean of Libraries whereby the Libraries would approve the spousal appointment on the condition that this appointment would be in addition to the two career-stream hires that were planned to replace two retiring members. This would result in a net increase of one within the librarians' total complement. However, a new Dean of Libraries reneged on their predecessor's promise. The DFA states that it is unreasonable and unfair for the Dean of Libraries to refuse to uphold their end of the agreement. Unfortunately, the grievance was denied at the formal stage. DFA commissioned a legal opinion, which asserts that the DFA has a reasonable chance of success in establishing a breach of Article 36.01 at arbitration. We are looking forward to filing for arbitration.

### Academic Renewal

Finally, there is a grievance concerning Appendix XIII – Letter of Understanding on Academic Renewal, specifically paragraph 2. The Board had committed to replacing all tenure positions; however, after reviewing our employment data and noticing that there had been a few retirements and resignations from our ranks, we realized that the overall complement had been reduced. Additionally, the university declared a hiring freeze to make matters worse. DFA filed the grievance and requested all data showing the creation of tenure-stream appointments after retirement or resignation. Furthermore, we wanted to know the Board's understanding of paragraph 2, because it appears to differ from the DFA's understanding. The grievance was denied at the informal stage because the Board maintains that the commitment in paragraph 2 extends only to the lifetime of the 2017-2020 Collective Agreement. We commissioned a legal opinion, which says that paragraph 2 of Appendix III is likely to still be in effect. However, it was recommended that the grievance be held in abeyance pending the decision in the financial constraint grievance (see above). The DFA Grievance Committee accepted the recommendation - the grievance is currently held in abeyance.

Apart from these four cases at the final stage of the grievance process, we also have a significant number at various stages. For instance:

- DFA filed a policy grievance regarding an upsurge in student accommodation issues and how the granting of these accommodations has affected our Members;
- DFA had concerns regarding the handling of Schedule H Program Reviews and the importance of collegial governance. The Board was very secretive about it, causing many of our Members to question their motives. DFA moved swiftly to file a grievance; and
- Finally, we have been requesting equity data from the Board for many years to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Code and pay equity. However, despite the Board's promise to give us the data, they have not provided it. DFA has filed a grievance.

After the lockout, we filed many grievances resulting from the lockout itself. These grievances include a case which deals with costs that some Members incurred because they had to euthanize and discard aging experimental animals in their labs (i.e., Experimental Lab Costs). We also filed a grievance on behalf of Members who were charged parking fees while on lockout.

All of our grievances are at various stages of the process. We know that the time it takes for cases to move through the grievance process remains a major concern; however, we hope that these grievances will be resolved in the coming year.

I would like to thank the Grievance Committee for their efforts and dedication to defending our Collective Agreement and Members' rights. Presenting and defending grievances is not always easy, but your enthusiasm and belief in social justice have made it much easier and fun. We are always looking for new volunteers to act as grievance officers and members of the DFA Grievance Committee, so please reach out to [dfa@dal.ca](mailto:dfa@dal.ca) if you would like to learn more.

## Reports from DFA Ad Hoc Committees

### Communications Co-ordination Committee

Submitted by Amy Birchall (Animal Science and Aquaculture), Committee Chair

Committee Members: Jason Brown (Mathematics and Statistics), Erin MacPherson (MacRae Library), David Westwood (DFA President, Health and Human Performance, Ex-Officio), and Catherine Wall (DFA Communications Officer, Ex-Officio)

This committee has had another productive year with some changes from years previous. With notification of the lockout, this committee developed a communications strategy that guided communications throughout job action. Without this work and the associated effort from all committee members, communications throughout job action would not have gone as well as they did. I am very grateful for all their efforts!

Once the job action concluded this committee went back to its usual work and we had lots to do! We had several virtual events which were all very engaging and well-attended. Some of the highlights included:

**Mi'kmaq History Month Presentation** (October 29, 2025): In recognition of Mi'kmaq History Month, DFA hosted a virtual discussion with Curtis Michael, Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies at Dalhousie. An engaging story teller, Curtis led participants through an interactive and lively discussion about language and traditions of the Mi'kmaq people.

**African Heritage Month Presentation** (February 24, 2026): Dominic Silvio, DFA President-Elect, Public Services Librarian and the Acting Head of Science, Management, and Arts & Social Sciences at Dalhousie presented on his research in a virtual talk titled *Endangered Species: The Experiences of Black Male Librarians: A Scoping Review*. Dominic's research and commentary about black male librarians stimulated conversation and gave a welcome perspective on an under-studied issue.

**Other events promoted:** DFA helped to promote the February 23, 2026 townhall organized by the Coalition for Collegial Governance, *Protecting Post-Secondary Education in Nova Scotia: A conversation about provincially mandated program reviews and Bill 12*. In March, we also helped promote *Who Governs the University? Public Good, and the Politics of Higher Education* a two-part panel coordinated by Dalhousie's School of Social Work Diversity and Equity Committee.

We also worked on the redesign of the DFA website, with the new site launched at the end of March 2026. Our site had not been updated since 2021, so we are very excited about this initiative. Members provided feedback through a survey and we are thrilled to bring a refreshed site to everyone. The site features easily accessible information on items that matter to our Members such as bargaining updates, pay/appointment issues, workload concerns, benefits and the Health Spending Account, professional development and education sessions, grievances, and accommodations. We hope the site will be a valuable source of information for our members and will easily keep you all informed on important matters. Feedback is

always welcome, so please send your comments to DFA Communications Officer [Catherine.Wall@dal.ca](mailto:Catherine.Wall@dal.ca) at any time.

I cannot end a report without expressing my sincere thanks to all the members of the ad hoc Communications Co-ordination Committee and the added members involved in job action communications. Their effort and dedication is recognized and appreciated. My sincere thank you to all of them. Also, an extra special thanks to Catherine Wall, DFA Communications Officer. Her energy throughout this year has been uplifting and encouraging. Without her tireless work, none of this would be possible.

#### Equity Committee

No report submitted.

#### Indigenous Caucus Committee

No report submitted.

## Reports from Committees Under the Collective Agreement

### Association-Board Committee

Submitted by Tim Jukes (Psychology and Neuroscience), DFA Co-Chair

DFA Nominees: David Westwood (School of Health and Human Performance), Jack Brown (DFA Professional Officer), and Lynn Purves (Observer, DFA Administrative Officer)

### Our work

ABC meets monthly to deal with issues, such as practices in Faculties and mistakes, misinformation, or requests for exceptions relating to provisions of the Collective Agreement. Often these issues come to our attention thanks to communication from our Members. We also deal with recurring items such as waivers of advertising, extensions of limited-term appointments, spousal appointments, ad-hoc appointments committees, automatic renewals, special salary increases (SSIs), salaries above the maximum, administrative stipends and job descriptions, extensions to timelines (e.g., anomalies fund, tenure and promotion limits), administrative stipends, compliance with the Academic Staffing Letter of Understanding, and parking fees. Our meetings have been in-person this past year.

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.) along with supporting documentation. We query missing documentation, request clarification, identify errors, and, on occasion, note that the Collective Agreement will be violated if a proposed action is taken. The list of AAAR-related items is long and takes months to fully resolve.

**The Board's Nominees:** This year the Board's nominees were Laura Neals (Assistant Vice-President, Labour and Employee Relations) until the end of 2025 and Sundari Pashupathi (Director, Labour and Employee Relations) in 2026, Brenda Merritt (Dean of Health), and Dipti Periwal (Manager, Labour and Employee Relations). Jenn Dooks (Academic Data Coordinator) attends as an observer (Board).

**Impact of the Lockout (or in Board-speak, the labour disruption):** In June, in accordance with Article 34, Clauses 34.03 and 34.04, ABC formed a subgroup responsible for inviting, evaluating, and approving (or not) requests from Members to have access to campus to 'prevent irreparable damage' (e.g., to humans, plants, or animals) or designating Members as essential (e.g., those holding Biosafety Permits or Nuclear Substance Permits). This group met, interviewed Members, and provided their decisions well ahead of the lockout. After the lockout ended and we all returned to work, we anticipated we would put into practice

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, which means that motions require the approval of both the DFA and Board.

what had been agreed at the bargaining table and, more importantly, work cooperatively to minimize residual feelings that inevitably follow a strike or lockout. We were surprised, therefore, to be told almost six months later that the Board had a lack of trust in its ABC counterparts.

**Post-Lockout Special Meeting:** During the negotiations, we made a number of changes to the Collective Agreement, which meant ABC would be involved in their implementation. At a special meeting in October, we discussed the changes and the back-to-work protocol. We discussed and sought clarification around:

- when non-monetary changes would become effective;
- when payments of the overload and early career adjustment would be made;
- the order of applying salary adjustments;
- how to determine the 16 limited-term conversions;
- potential teaching required for some Members during the November break;
- matters arising from the lockout (e.g., cost for reserved underground parking that was inaccessible to Members, distribution of pay stubs);
- extensions for tenure and promotion deadlines;
- parental leave top-ups; and
- the new workload policy language.

Since the October meeting, additional trickle-down effects of the lockout have been addressed, including: 1) extending the Anomalies Fund deadline to October 31, 2026. Approved anomalies will be retroactive to July 1, 2026; and 2) costs incurred during lockout for animal facilities (e.g., maintain animals that were too old to use in research when research was resumed).

### Other 2025-2026 issues

**Please let job candidates know about the DFA:** The DFA approached the Board with what we thought was a simple ask: Please can you add a sentence with a link to the DFA website in offer letters to successful candidates being hired. We explained that soon-to-be Members might wish to discuss issues with the DFA (e.g., spousal appointment, y-values, salary) and that such discussion will help those unfamiliar with Dalhousie better understand how it works, which will help with retention. The Board had no interest and refused, so let's help ourselves: **If you are a search committee member or otherwise in contact with candidates, please tell them about the DFA; it might help new colleagues (and your unit) in numerous ways.**

**Special Salary Increases (SSIs):** The Board has made clear that it supports SSIs to reward and/or retain faculty it deems valuable, those identified as on or above the regression line (in Appendix XI under 4(b)), but it has trouble identifying suitable candidates who fall below the regression line (a). Perhaps Members whose salaries fall below the line, and for whom the balancing of the (a) and (b) categories required in the SSI appendix is particularly designed, should be doing some self-promotion to help the Board find these deserving candidates.

**Extension of Tenure and Promotion Time Limits (not arising from the lockout):** Our reports in 2024 and 2025 noted more motions than usual requesting ABC approve extensions of time limits for decisions from Deans and/or the President. This matter has become worse over the past year; a quick tally suggests we received about 20 motions since the fall to approve extending the time limits for Deans in five Faculties (with two Faculties accounting for about 65% of requests). Perhaps more frustrating is when these requests reach ABC without any justification for the extension and/or after the deadline has passed or even after the proposed new deadline has passed.

**Data and Privacy:** Two ostensibly distinct issues relate to the DFA's access to data.

- On the picket line, you might have heard discussion about the consulting group Nous and/or UniForum. At ABC we have repeatedly sought data reports that Dalhousie has gathered through UniForum. We have been stonewalled; reasons include 'staff turnover', 'too many reports', and 'not clear exactly what the DFA wants'.
- Personal and Equity Data: Collective agreement Clauses 7.07 and 7.08 require the Board to share a range of information with the DFA, often to be treated confidentially. This practice is well-established and includes sharing personal Member data (e.g., date of birth) and equity data, both of which the DFA requires to serve its Members and ensure the university is meeting equity targets. Recently the Board communicated to the DFA that privacy concerns require they redact personal information from files shared with the DFA and not provide equity data as applicants/Members had not been explicitly informed the information would be shared with the DFA. We maintain that the DFA is not an outside body but an interested party within Dalhousie and sharing information with the DFA, as required in the Collective Agreement, is akin to sharing data with certain units within the administration.

**Information Technology Services:** The DFA has raised a number of concerns at ABC about Microsoft Copilot ("companion to inform, entertain and inspire") and Intune ("a cloud-based unified endpoint management (UEM) solution that empowers IT to manage, assess, and protect apps and devices").

- Concerns about Copilot were largely about how to disable it. The Board seemed surprised that people would want to disable such a support, but did say it was easy to disable. It turns out, though, that although it might be easy, it isn't a permanent solution and you might need to disable it each time you use your device.
- The Intune issue is a bit different. This is being rolled out across campus, so most Members are not yet involved. It appears that it is part of an ongoing process to safeguard the university from digital risk. At present, all Dalhousie-owned computers are being covered but in time the Board expects this will extend to all devices accessing the Dalhousie system. The DFA drew the Board's attention to a recent arbitration arising from a Queen's University Faculty Association grievance around such moves (Queen's University v Queen's University Faculty Association, 2025 CanLII 114185 (ON LA)). The Board is considering this ruling as it considers a reply to the DFA.

**Access and Essential Services Report:** The DFA requested a report from the Board logging use of the approved access and essential services requests. Recently the Board told us this was not information that

Security recorded and they would not be providing a report. Given the time ABC spends assessing these requests and the understanding that access would be restricted and recorded, this is something the parties will need to revisit ahead of future lockouts or strikes.

**LTA Conversions:** The 16 conversions agreed to in the last bargaining round are beginning to flow through ABC. The agreement allows the Board to process conversions without ABC approval if the position to be converted has been in place for six or more years unless approved by the ABC. For positions of fewer than six years, the DFA cannot unreasonably deny the request but it does give us an opportunity to make inquiries about the rationale for the conversion. A first group of six conversions included four that required ABC approval (i.e., less than six years); these have been approved at ABC. A second group of four conversions is currently with ABC. The Board and DFA disagree on how many of these require ABC approval.

**Workload Policy Guidelines:** The DFA asked the Board to agree on guidelines to aid the process of developing workload policies and this was communicated to Deans. The Board presented some broad guidelines at ABC, which the DFA challenged. The DFA counter-proposed documenting current practices as a basis from which to develop policies. Currently, the Board is working on a proposal that we hope will provide general guidance to help units move this process forward.

**Contracting Out of DFA Work:** DFA Membership kicks in at 50% of full-time. Typically those with less than a 50% appointment might have 40% or less, but this past year we saw some fancy math that made a number of hires 49% FTE. We challenged this as unreasonable and unworkable.

**Travel to the USA:** Given the increasing concerns about crossing the border and travelling within the U.S., we asked the Board whether the university had any concerns and/or advisories for Members. ABC met with Karin McLay (Director, Strategy and Risk, Office of Strategic Engagement) to discuss this further, but the Board had no special advice beyond the usual advice about travelling to other countries.

**Travel Fund Policies:** The DFA requested and now has a comparison table for the policies applied by Faculties when disbursing travel funds.

**Conflict of Interest:** A couple of files we reviewed suggested a possible conflict of interest with a Member listed as both a member of the hiring committee and a referee for the successful candidate. The Board did not see this as problematic but left the door open for consideration of particular cases as they arise.

**DDFA Eligibility:** The Dalhousie Diversity Faculty Awards are intended to recruit and retain faculty meeting diversity goals, but a group of DFA Members noticed that the call for awards appeared restricted to the professoriate. The DFA raised this at ABC and was told the awards are open to all faculty; however, in our most recent ABC meeting the Board is reconsidering their response, which might mean further ABC discussion before the Board makes its next call.

**Nova Scotia Government Review Requirements:** We have sought information on both the process and substance but remain largely in the dark. We have been told that lots of work is being done, but when we have asked for the templates and/or reports, we have been told they are not available.

**Suspension of Programs:** The Board suspended enrolment in a Master's program that had recently received a favourable external review. The DFA raised the issue, suggesting that suspending enrolment circumvents (or pre-empts) the processes envisioned in the Collective Agreement (Articles 25, 26, and 27) and virtually guarantees the program will wither without drawing new students. The Board maintained its right to suspend enrolment in this case.

**Grievance Mediation Process:** To reduce the growing backlog of grievances, the DFA proposed to the Board that the parties consider, on a trial basis, using a grievance mediation process - this process has been used at some other universities to successfully reduce grievance backlogs. After four months of thinking about it, the Board recently firmly rejected this proposal.

**Forrest Building Move:** The DFA made inquiries at ABC on behalf of Members affected by this summer's move out of the Forrest Building while renovations proceed. The Dean of Health, who is intimately involved with this, is a member of ABC and she provided much detail and an openness to work with Members as much as possible to make this unavoidable situation as bearable as possible. The DFA has corresponded in more detail with affected Members.

**The Anomalies Fund:** We discussed how the anomalies fund operates, particularly when faced with applications from Members in small units (e.g., Sustainability) for which little to no suitable comparator data is available (see 31A.06). Without the appropriate comparator data, and to not violate the Collective Agreement, the Anomalies Fund Committee needs to consult and get ABC approval for how to assess these rare applications.

**Cape Breton University Medical School:** Last year we reported that only one faculty position at the CBU medical school would fall within the DFA. We did have a meeting with both the Dalhousie Dean of Medicine and CBU's Senior Associate Dean of Medicine. We continue to monitor this matter, as the extent of Dalhousie's role in the new medical school remains unclear.

**Tirupati Tri-institutional Global Innovation Campus (India):** Dalhousie has announced a collaboration with this university in India, but the details remain unclear. We have asked for clarification at ABC about issues relating to faculty, such as whether our Members would be travelling to India and whether Tirupati faculty will be coming to Dalhousie, and how this might affect Collective Agreement provisions.

## Teamwork

The DFA team on ABC is a strong and supportive group that always impresses me with its diligence, purpose, patience, and concern for both the proper running of the university and protection of our Members. It is difficult when the Board shows no willingness to find a solution, treats us as an inconvenience, or refuses to acknowledge our genuine interest in making Dalhousie succeed, but somehow our team keeps working, believing, and hoping for better. Thanks to you all.

## Dalhousie University Pension Advisory Committee

Submitted by Jonathan Shapiro (Law) and David Westwood (Health and Human Performance), DFA Representatives

### The Dalhousie Pension Plan

The Dalhousie Pension Plan (the Plan) consists of two separate but related trust funds: the Pension Trust Fund, which holds contributions arising from active plan members and the Board, and the Retiree Trust Fund, which holds assets used to pay pensions to retired members. References to the Dalhousie Pension Plan in this report refer to the consolidated plan, inclusive of both the PTF and RTF, unless otherwise noted.

Despite a lot of volatility in global markets because of ongoing conflicts across the globe and American tariff-based trade policy, markets continued to grow strongly. While 2025 got off to a slow start, the last two months of spring, summer, and into the fall saw strong growth and value returns. The technology sector continued to lead the way, driving major market indexes upwards. The Bank of Canada also cut interest rates repeatedly at the beginning of the year: a full 1% reduction from January – October, where they have remained since. That strong economic performance was met by good growth in the Plan.

At the last reported figures at the time of writing (December 31, 2025), the Plan was very close to fully funded: 106.7% on a going-concern (i.e., “business as usual”) basis. Under the pension regulations, the Plan must be in a substantial overfunded position as a Provision for Adverse Deviation (PfAD). That overfunding requirement, based on the current asset mix held by the two pension funds, is set at 106.8%. This means the Plan, at December 31, 2025, was 99.9% funded. While last year the Plan was more than fully funded, this year’s funding status includes updates from a new actuarial valuation of the Plan which added significant costs (see below). This means that, even after adding costs for higher salaries earned in collective bargaining and new mortality improvement rates, the Plan is essentially still in a fully-funded position, which is a remarkable achievement.

The growth of the Plan over most of the past year despite conflicts, tariff threats, and continued volatile action from the White House shows how resilient our diversified plan is. The Plan and its structure are working to provide the retirement promise we are all working towards.

The Plan continued to be in a fully-funded position on a solvency basis (i.e., if the Plan were to be wound up; a highly unlikely event). In fact, at December 31, 2025 it was funded at 112.2%. This is primarily due to the fact that annuity rates in 2025 remained high, despite cuts to the prime lending rate from the Bank of Canada. In fact, currently annuity rates have not dropped along with the central bank’s rates. While the solvency measure can be a useful tool to assess the health of some pension plans, the best analytic measure

The Pension Advisory Committee (PAC) has equal representation from the Dalhousie Board of Governors (the Board), 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 (or veto over amendments to the plan) and the Association of Dalhousie Retired Persons (ADRP) which has voice but no vote.

Ken MacDermid, a Board Representative, was supposed to chair the Committee. However, Mr. MacDermid left Dalhousie in June 2025 and Mr. Shapiro began acting as Chair in his place, consistent with his duties as Vice-Chair. On a motion from the Board, Mr. Shapiro agreed to serve as the Chair for the remainder of Mr. MacDermid’s term. Mr. Shapiro will take up his role as Chair as planned on July 1, 2026.

for our Plan is on a going-concern basis since Dalhousie will continue to operate for the foreseeable future, and the university enjoys full relief from the solvency funding requirements. However, because of our positive solvency position, we do not have “solvency concerns” by the government’s measures, which means the Plan is funded at over 85% on a solvency basis. Because we were at this position during our new valuation (see below), we will not be required to file any further annual cost certificates and therefore we have three years of cost certainty.

However, February 2026 saw further military conflict in the Middle East with the American and Israeli conflict with Iran. This conflict will undoubtedly have major impacts on the global economy, especially the energy sector and a high probability of increased inflation. There are also major trade deals between the United States, Canada, and Mexico which are up for renewal. We do not yet have figures available indicating what the impacts will be on the funding status of the Plan, but it would be reasonable to expect moderate to significant decreases in value. We are fortunate that growth continued last year despite trade uncertainty, and we should be happy that our Plan was in a healthy position at the beginning of the year. The diverse way in which the Plan is invested cannot protect us from global economic downturns, but it can help us weather large swings in the markets, such as repeated spikes in the price of oil.

### June 2025 Plan Valuation

Under the terms of the Plan and in accordance with the Pension Benefits Act, the Plan must undergo a full actuarial valuation at least once every three years. A valuation occurred on January 31, 2023, meaning another one would have been required on or before January 1, 2026. However, as discussed in our report last year, the Plan administrator elected to conduct a valuation dated June 30, 2025 (six months early), to align the valuation with the end of the Plan’s financial reporting year and reduce administrative costs.

The new valuation was completed in November, and dated June 30, 2025. There were additional costs for the Plan arising from this new valuation. First, the Plan had to account for higher than anticipated salary gains we earned in the most recent round of collective bargaining. Higher wages mean higher total eventual pension payments to pension recipients. Additionally, the Canadian Institute of Actuaries released new and updated mortality improvement estimates (i.e., expected gains in lifespan over time arising from medical advances), updating older tables from 2014. These new tables also increase costs because, as we live longer on average, the Plan must provide pensions for longer. We note that the last time that the actual tables were adjusted in 2014, it reduced the Plan’s funding status by close to 7%. It is worth noting that updated mortality tables (i.e., the actual rates of mortality at each age) were expected in time for the current valuation but were not available; presumably these will impact the next valuation of the Plan.

Despite these additional costs, the Plan remained almost fully funded under the valuation – 105.6% on a going concern basis or 98.9% relative to the required provision for adverse deviation.

Because the Plan was in a very small overall deficit position after the above actuarial assumption changes, the Board will be required to make special payments of \$3.2 million (or approximately .89% of payroll) per year, beginning in July 2026. However, we understand that funds set aside in the Pension Stabilization Fund from prior years will be used to cover these payments until the next actuarial valuation, meaning pension payments should not impact the operating budget of the university during these challenging fiscal times.

### Automatic and “Catch Up” Indexing

Inflation over the past year was stable and in line with more traditional expectations, at about 1.85%. However, we know that members still feel the impact of the previous period of very high inflation, and we know that even with good gains earned last year in collective bargaining, wages and wage growth still have not kept pace with inflation. Whereas active Plan members have the benefit of negotiated increases to wages (e.g., the Income Maintenance Change), pensioners must rely on provisions for indexation in the Plan in order to combat the eroding influence of inflation on purchasing power.

Because of the strong returns last year, the Plan was able to provide the full automatic indexing of about 1.85%, matching inflation. But, in order to keep purchasing power for pensioners, it is important that the Plan continue to issue missed, or catch-up indexing, where possible, for previous years in which automatic indexing did not fully offset inflation.

Under the terms of the Plan, the RTF Trustees can use their discretionary power to give catch-up indexing when the RTF is in a surplus position after a valuation of the Plan; it is worth noting that the RTF can be in surplus even if the consolidated plan is in a net deficit position. They have discretion to use up to half of the surplus in the RTF to pay such indexing. The Trustees used up all the eligible surplus from the 2023 valuation last year, so no further catch-up indexing was issued this year.

However, the RTF is in a \$39 million surplus position at the newest June 2025 valuation, so the Trustees will have some scope to exercise their discretion over the next three years to issue further catch-up indexation to make up for shortfalls in indexation in 2023 and 2025.

It is worth noting that our Pension Plan’s two mechanisms for indexation (automatic, and discretionary catch-up) have combined to do a reasonable – although not perfect – job of protecting retirees’ pensions against the rising cost of living. It is important that both forms of indexation be protected in future rounds of collective bargaining.

### Integration of Enhanced Portion of CPP

An issue has been raised at PAC which relates to the integration of the enhanced portion of CPP with the Plan. As you may know from previous reports, starting on January 1, 2024 our Plan integrates the now higher contribution required from you for the Government of Canada’s enhanced CPP, by lowering slightly the contribution required of you (and the Board) for the Dalhousie Plan.

However, because Members on long-term disability may not accrue the same enhanced CPP benefits as their peers, it has recently come to PAC’s attention that there may be an unintended and unanticipated negative effect of the agreed integration formula for some Members on long-term disability. The issue has been raised with the Board at PAC and we are actively exploring solutions to ensure that our Members are treated fairly by the decision to integrate our Plan with the enhanced CPP.

### The Future

DFA Members continue to contribute substantial amounts to the Plan. In 2025, as in the past, Members contributed about 7.45% of pensionable salary, up to a maximum pensionable salary of \$195,594.

The Plan remains very strong, and we should be happy that our defined benefit plan is one of the strongest in the province and amongst many of our academic peers nationally. The Plan is in a healthy position, with almost fully-funded status at the end of the year, despite a new valuation that absorbs higher wages and longer life expectancies, both of which have a negative influence on funding status. We know that the world's economic situation will continue to be very unpredictable and could deteriorate dramatically and quickly, but as with many economic troubles before, our Plan's structure and management have led to essentially complete recovery over time.

It is as important as ever, perhaps more so in a time when the university faces financial challenges, that we continue to protect the Plan so that future retirees remain secure. It is our pension which helps us attract talent, and weather the challenges of an uncertain and climate-changing world as we age. Our pension plan is a primary reason why the economic futures of current and retired Members are relatively secure and the Plan is very attractive to prospective employees. Your PAC representatives continue to work to support the financial health and security of the Plan, and to protect it from changes that could jeopardize the long-term financial security of all DFA Members, both current and retired.

### Dalhousie University Pension Trust Fund/Retirees' Trust Fund

Submitted by Jonathan Shapiro (Law), DFA Nominee and Trustee

*This report covers the fund performance for January 1 – December 31, 2025. This report does not reflect the tumultuous world that we find ourselves in since February 2026 and the conflict in Iran that has created consistent upheaval in world markets, particularly energy markets.*

#### Fund Performance in 2025-2026

The 2025 year was another strong year for both Plan funds. Despite volatility in the first quarter of the year, global markets sustained very strong growth through the late spring, summer, and into the fall. The Bank of Canada also continued to cut its policy rate at the start of the year, cutting an additional 1% from the rate between January and October before holding rates steady since. As with the previous year, despite conflicts in many places in the world and volatile White House which inconsistently threatened, applied, and removed tariffs, markets continued to rise. Once again technology sectors drove large market gains.

This strong market meant that the Plan and its returns continued to be good: as of December 31, both funds were once again over the minimal funding requirements set for the Plan to remain stable, and in fact grow. Both funds exceeded their funding requirements for the year by more than a full percentage point.

The overall investment strategy of both funds is to remain highly diversified, with investments in equity markets both domestic and foreign, bond markets, and fixed assets like real estate and infrastructure. In this way, the goal is to ensure steady growth and investment returns in

Jonathan Shapiro is the DFA Nominee and Trustee on the Board of Trustees for both pension funds which make up the Dalhousie Pension Plan - the Pension Trust Fund (PTF) and the Retirees' Trust Fund (RTF).

The Dalhousie Pension Plan is composed of these two funds. Active Members pay into the PTF, and upon retirement funds are transferred to the RTF and retirees' benefits are paid out of the RTF. Each fund has a Board of Trustees responsible for the oversight of the management of that fund, although there is significant overlap between the trustees on the two boards.

the long term, and to have the ability to ride out market volatility to ensure that the funds remain secure to provide for the pension promise made to retirees. So far, the Plan has demonstrated the ability to remain very resilient in turbulent world markets.

This report only covers the year to December 31, 2025. Last year, I hoped that the Plan's diversification would see it through the ups and downs of American tariff policy, and, for the most part, it did. However, we do not yet have data about the effect of the American war in Iran and the impact on the world economic outlook. As with tariffs, we can only hope that our diversified investments will help us weather the inevitable market shocks that are coming.

The overall returns for the Plan over the period from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 were positive: the PTF saw a one-year return of 6.77% and the RTF saw a one-year return of 6.84%. Both funds have exceeded the funding requirement for almost all the near- and long-term periods, including 10-year and 15-year projections, which is very good for the long-term health of the Plan.

Because of the strong returns in the Plan investments over the year, it was able to remain almost completely fully funded despite significant additional costs to the Plan as a result of the most recent valuation (see below). As of December 31, 2025, the Plan was funded at 106.7% on a going-concern basis or 99.9% relative to the 106.8% funding requirement taking account of the legislatively mandated provision for adverse deviation.

Looking ahead, 2026 is likely to be a challenging year for the Plan. We do not yet know how long the conflicts in the Middle East will last, how they will develop, or what their effect will be on the global economy. It is possible they will trigger a global recession. Major trade deals between Canada and the United States being reviewed could have impacts on the economy, as could American trade and tariff policy. As I am sure you can appreciate, the world is currently highly unpredictable.

### Valuation of the Plan

Under the terms of the Plan and in accordance with the Pension Benefits Act, the Plan must undergo a full actuarial valuation at least once every three years. A valuation occurred on January 31, 2023, meaning another one would be required on or before January 1, 2026. However, the Plan administrator elected to conduct a valuation dated June 30, 2025 (six months early), to align the valuation with the end of the Plan's financial reporting year and reduce administrative costs.

The new valuation was completed in November, and dated June 30, 2025. There were additional costs for the Plan in this new valuation. First, the Plan had to account for higher than anticipated salary gains in the most recent round of collective bargaining. Higher wages mean higher total eventual pension payments to pension recipients. Additionally, the Canadian Institute of Actuaries released new and updated mortality adjustments, updating older tables from 2014. These new tables also increase costs because, as we live longer on average, the Plan must provide pensions for longer. While this is wonderful news, it does have an economic impact on the Plan. The good news is that, despite these costs, the Plan remained almost fully funded – 105.6% on a going concern basis or 98.9% relative to the required provision for adverse deviation. This shows the ongoing strength of the Plan and its health.

### Guaranteed and Catch-up Indexing Status

Under the terms of the Plan, the RTF Trustees can use their discretionary power to give catch-up indexing when the RTF is in a surplus position after a valuation of the Plan. Trustees have discretion to use up to half of the surplus in the RTF to pay such indexing.

You may recall that over the past two years, the Trustees elected to use half of the surpluses from the 2023 valuation to pay catch-up indexing. This meant that all available surplus had been used, pending the outcome of another valuation. As a result, no further catch-up indexing was available for 2025.

Under the latest valuation from June 30, 2025, the RTF shows a surplus of \$39 million. This means that the Trustees will have the opportunity over the next three years to consider using some of that surplus for catch-up indexing. I hope to report on this when I deliver my report next year.

Because of the strong year the Plan had, it was able to pay the full amount of guaranteed indexing, the full CPI of 1.8587% on January 1, 2026. This means no further catch-up indexing was added to the “queue” and the catch-up indexation picture remains as it did last year: the total missed indexation (the amount eligible for catch-up) stands at 10.36% which comes from missed indexation in 2023 (approximately 7.72%), and 2025 (2.40%). While much of the historical backlog is now gone, I am aware that retiree purchasing power from recent inflation remains affected and I hope that some of that can be recouped through the surplus in the current valuation.

### Overall Value of the Plan Fund

The overall market value of the Pension Trust Fund is \$978.9 million at December 31, 2025, up from \$960.7 million value a year ago. The market value of the Retirees’ Trust Fund is \$1,115.7 million, up from \$1,050.6 million a year ago. The overall value of the Plan sits at just over \$2.094 billion.

The Plan did well in 2025, riding strong markets and economic growth, and hedging volatility through diversification. Prudent investment has driven both pension funds into fully-funded territory and also allowed the Plan to absorb new costs related to increased salary and life expectancy. We should be pleased with our strong and healthy Plan. However, with the world economy now subject to lengthy conflict in the Middle East and the impact of decisions made by the current U.S. administration, I expect we will see some pain for the Plan in the coming year. Hopefully the Plan will continue to prove resilient in the face of these ongoing challenges.

I continue to gratefully serve as your nominee and trustee on both funds on an ongoing basis.

## Dalhousie University Employee Benefits Advisory Committee

Submitted by Marc Whalen (Chemistry), DFA Representative

The committee meets three times a year (October, December, March). Highlights of the committee's activities are summarized below.

1) **Committee restructuring:** Jen Davis and Marcie Nixon replaced Board members Jenny White and Ken MacDermid, with Marcie becoming the committee chair. As part of the new Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Collective Agreement, a representative of the grant-paid employee group will join the committee. A Board representative has been added, the committee now has 14 members.

2) **Unionization of grant paid employees:** Grant paid employees in Nova Scotia and in non-management positions have unionized under the PSAC. Benefits provisions in their Collective Agreement include:

**EBAC representative:** Grant paid employees have always had access to the benefits plan if their contract was at least eight months and at least 50% FTE. This continues and they now have an EBAC representative.

**Tuition waiver:** Employees with a contract of at least one year are now eligible for 12 credit-hours a year under. Non-credit courses are not covered, there is no dependant tuition waiver provided.

**Wellness allowance:** Employees now receive a \$500 wellness allowance.

**Employees with multiple positions under 50% FTE:** Benefits will be provided to grant paid employees holding two or more positions that are less than 50% FTE each, but add up to 50% or more, and overlap for a minimum of eight months.

3) **Weight loss drugs:** The quote for weight loss drug coverage was brought forward in spring 2025. While there are no funds available to move forward with this additional coverage, a few things are happening in the industry:

Novo Nordisk (manufacturer of Ozempic and Wegovy) did not renew Canadian patents, opening the market for generic versions in January 2026. The market could see cost reductions of up to 40%. EBAC will monitor this in 2026-2027, as the cost for weight loss coverage should decrease.

There are drug cards available that may help employees with the cost. Novo Nordisk offers up to \$30/month off the cost of the drug. There is also a drug card program called innoviCares, which is a free prescription savings card available to all Canadian residents and is funded by participating pharmaceutical manufacturers. Participants may present their innoviCares card to the pharmacy and request the brand name medication; the card will cover a portion of the cost of the original brand. Limited drugs are covered under this card, but Ozempic and Wegovy are both listed.

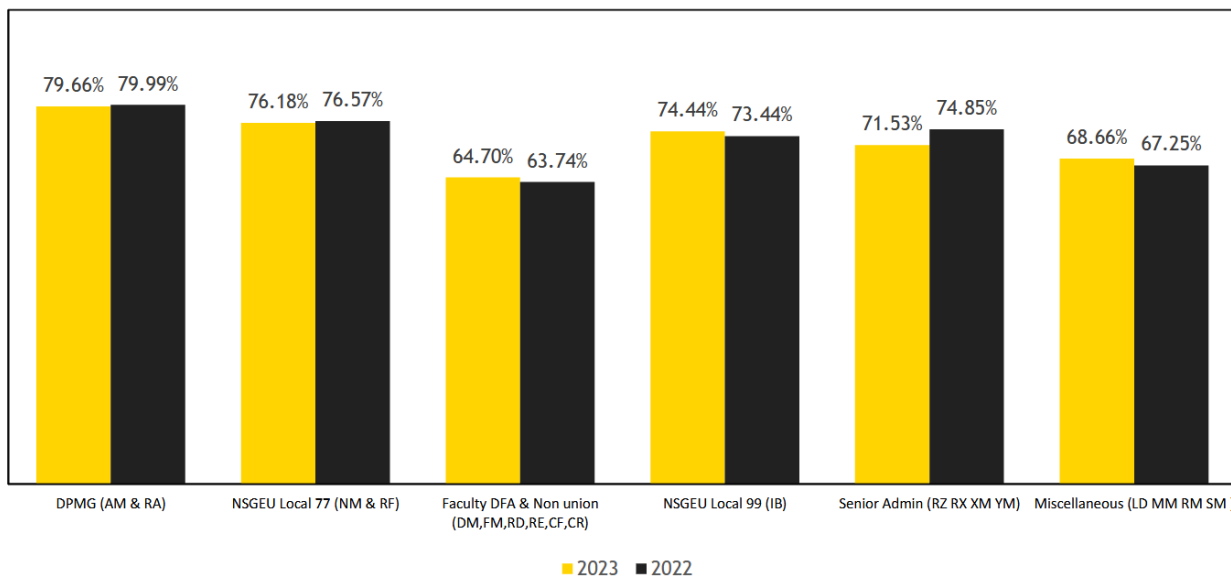
These drugs are eligible expenses under the Health Spending Account (HSA), which renews annually on July 1.

4) **New EFAP provider:** In July 2025, Dalhousie switched Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) providers from TELUS Health to Greenshield. Greenshield’s online pharmacy provides free home delivery and a lower dispensing fee. While our plan is not capped, the online platform shows a limit of five sessions for individual/couple/financial counselling. Greenshield will not remove the limit from displaying, but has reassured Dalhousie that members will be topped up as-needed. When registering for the online pharmacy, members must input gender, which must align with insurance information. This is counter to our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility commitment. Greenshield is holding firm on this requirement. Dalhousie no longer provides information on gender to Manulife or Blue Cross. Greenshield has a branch of services devoted to Indigenous employees and provided by Indigenous practitioners. Another improvement is their counselling program. When members connect with counselling services, they can view counsellor profiles and make a choice based on gender, ethnicity, background, area of specialty, etc. Questions can be directed to Jen Davis, Manager, Wellness and Accessibility, Dalhousie.

5) **Benefits during gradual return-to-work from long-term disability:** The DFA raised concerns about premium costs for employees on LTD, particularly during gradual return-to-work (RTW) plans. Employees on LTD pay 100% of health, travel, and dental premiums. Questions arose around employees on gradual RTW plans paying full premiums despite working over 50% FTE. In keeping with accessibility legislation and Dalhousie’s commitment to EDIA, as well as our goal of reducing barriers for vulnerable employee groups, a policy change was deemed appropriate. Going forward, once an employee is approved for LTD, the employer cost-share will be reinstated. This cost-share will continue until the employee either returns to work or the claim progresses to permanent disability at the two-year change of definition mark.

6) **HSA usage by employee group:** A chart outlining annual HSA usage by employee groups for the 2022 and 2023 is shown below. On average, DFA members leave \$350 unused annually. For making claims

Percentage of Health Spending Account Funds Used, by Employee Group  
 (2023 funds were forfeited on Sept 30, 2025; 2022 funds on Sept 30, 2024)



under HSA, contact [benefits@dal.ca](mailto:benefits@dal.ca) or 902-494-1122. A Medavie Blue Cross document [“How do I know what’s covered under my HSA?”](#) can be found [here](#).

**7) Travel provider update:** In April 2026, Dalhousie’s travel insurance moved from SSQ/Beneva to Medavie Blue Cross (MBC). MBC was chosen based on improved service, enhanced member supports, and a 32% reduction in rates guaranteed for three years, without any loss of coverage. They offered several enhancements, including dedicated member support and pre-travel consultations, enhanced emergency assistance through Can Assistance, higher or unlimited maxima for several benefits, access to the BlueCard program in the U.S., and new flight delay benefits for pre-registered flights. Travel coverage will be added to your existing coverage, with the same policy number and member ID. A new travel coverage tile will appear in the app and online member portal. MBC issued new benefit cards to all members enrolled in travel coverage and virtual cards are available on the member portal and mobile app.

**8) Family Building Benefit inquiry:** A representative of the DFA introduced an inquiry from a member regarding the Family Building Benefit. The conversation centred on whether to introduce a Family Building Benefit (covering fertility, surrogacy, and adoption) to the employee benefits plan. There is no existing coverage for fertility, surrogacy, or adoption. While plans exist through Blue Cross (Essential, Enhanced, Premier), they can only be implemented at the group level, not individually. The current HSA offers limited help for these high-cost services. Despite the cost of these treatments, no changes were made to coverage at this time. Few inquiries are received about the Family Building Benefit. Due to high costs and low demand, the group agreed to table the benefit discussion for now.

Existing Dalhousie supports include: parental leave top-up to 95% salary for up to one year; coverage for contraceptives; continued benefits during leave and survivor income protection. Available external financial supports include: Nova Scotia Fertility and Surrogacy Tax Credit (40% of eligible costs, up to \$8,000/year per couple). Information on [federal support can be found here](#).

**9) Benefits 101 presentation:** In December 2025, Marcie Nixon presented an overview and underwriting of our plans and data from our last few renewals. [The presentation slides can be seen here](#).

**10) Benefits renewal:** HUB International presented an overview of Dalhousie’s current financials, claims experience, and recommendations on premium adjustments:

**Cancer drugs:** Spend decreased \$24,553 from last year; projected to increase on an on-going basis.

**Diabetes claims:** There were 58 new diabetes claimants this year. New diabetes drug and supplies spend was \$68,932. This is low compared to escalation in past few years.

**Ozempic:** Usage has stabilized with industry-wide prior authorization programs.

**Mental health:** Mental health drug spend is down 7.0%, in part because ADHD medication became generic this year. New mental health services spend was \$102,954 (this equates to 458 more hours of therapy than last year). Mental health practitioners continue to show high growth, amplified by an increase on mental health LTD claims. This stabilized some over this year.

**Drugs:** Modest increases in the costs of some high-priced medications; this did not result in significant changes to the plan.

**Strong LTD surplus:** Decrease of -8.2% in the LTD rate; surplus of \$1.4M; rates decreased by 25% last year with the intention of keeping a stable rate over the next few years.

**Life claims:** Significant increase in life rates of 28.8%; claims were lower this year than the prior two years, but this is still above Dalhousie's 10-year average.

**Health:** Health rates are impacted by mental health and specialty drugs. The introduction of Wegovy (weight loss drug), put some pressure on drug plans.

**Dental:** Dental fee rates (set by the province) and inflation rates are stabilizing. The dental trend is below the dental fee guide, with only a slight increase in dental cost per capita from last year.

**Emergency travel:** Despite reduced travel to the U.S., the renewal processes remain challenging.

## Rate Discussion

**Life:** We had seven basic life claims paid out this year compared to nine in the previous year. Claims in the five-year analysis period increased from \$5.8M to \$7.1M. We had one life insurance conversion this year with a charge of \$1,630, however this does not factor into our life insurance financials.

Across the country, high life and LTD claims activity in the past 10 years is driving higher deficits and rate increases. Rate calculations incorporate demographic analysis, as this influences the risk of life insurance charge. This year, there was a slight change in the male-to-female distribution; however, there was no change in the average age. Demographic factors contributed to a minimal increase in demographic risk of 1.3%. This benefit is employer-paid so there is no impact to member premiums.

**Survivor Income Benefit (SIB):** We had five SIB claims this year resulting in \$434,485 in claims. SIB has been on a premium holiday for the past three years. It is recommended to gradually resume premium payments, starting with lower rates over the next few years. Life and SIB ran in a deficit position this year, totalling \$214,610. This deficit was paid off in April 2026 through the reserve account.

**Optional life:** From 2024-2025 there were four claims totalling \$530K for Dal. There is no change to optional life rates.

**LTD:** High numbers of mental health LTD claims and longer durations impacted LTD renewals. In the current period, 10 claims were admitted, all 10 remain active.

There are 46 active claimants, up from 40 last year. This can change based on the number of members on LTD, prognosis, etc. When evaluating the cost of funding LTD, it is important to consider not only the benefits paid out but also the reserves retained. A portion of the funds must be set aside to cover potential claims in the event that a member remains on LTD until age 65 (maximum), to ensure sufficient reserves are available to meet future obligations.

In-year surplus of \$1,370,400 this year, and the Claims Fluctuation Reserve is 100% funded (\$1,030,183).

Durational pooling charge will remain at 42.5%. \$1,412,492 transferred to the reserve funds. This year, the calculated rate decrease is 8.2%. Last year, there was a 21.2% reduction, with the intention of maintaining rates at this level for as long as feasible. The current recommendation is to hold the rates. While premiums are calculated at a decrease, the past two years saw low claims which has contributed to the current rate decrease, but this could change rapidly. 38% of LTD claims this year were related to mental health, aligning with industry-wide trends. Demographic risk factors have been considered, recognizing that risk profiles vary by age and gender compared to life insurance. There has been a 2.2% decrease in demographic risk compared to last year. The current remitted rate is lower than it has been over the past decade. Rates were decreased last year; however, further reductions could lead to an increase in the future. Last year's discussion focused on reducing rates temporarily and maintaining them for several years. Contribution rates unchanged this year to promote stability over the coming years.

### Health and Dental

Our health and dental plan is fully funded by Dalhousie (we pay Blue Cross for administrative services only). This year, our administration charge will be decreasing from 3.1% to 2.9% of net claims.

**Health:** Last year, health required a 6.2% increase, and we implemented a 6.0% increase. Although drug claims and mental health practitioner claims continue to increase, there was only a 2% increase in overall claims cost per employee this year. MBC has calculated a 4.8% decrease to health rates, and HUB has calculated a 1.5% decrease. A 94% loss ratio indicates a near break-even performance on claims. We are holding rates this year.

This year there were increases in drug and paramedical expenses, as well as small decreases in vision and medical supplies/services. We continue to observe increases in mental health practitioner claims. However, these increases are slowing compared to the previous years.

**Individual Large Amount Pooling (ILAP):** Dalhousie has a pooling arrangement with Blue Cross for individual large amount health claims; this arrangement mitigates risk in case we have any members with exceptionally high cost claims. If there is a member with health claims over ILAP threshold \$100,000 per policy year, any claims over this amount are paid by Blue Cross. The charge to Dalhousie for this protection will increase from 0.90% to 1.02% of net claims. This charge has not increased over the past three years. The risk continues to grow due to the emergence of higher-cost medications and the potential impact that results from a pooled experience. The committee will discuss whether we should consider increasing our ILAP threshold from \$100,000.

**Dental:** Last year, dental rates increased by 10% and there will be no change this year. Dental claims costs have decreased slightly this year.

**Accidental Death & Dismemberment:** no change to basic or voluntary rates.

**Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP):** EFAP is a valuable resource for members needing advice on career transitions, financial assistance, nutrition counseling, and other matters. In 2025-2026, 46% of EFAP utilization was for counselling (down from 69% last year); 54% utilization was for health and life services (up from 31% last year). Current utilization rate is 1.7%. Utilization could be improved.

## Environmental Health and Safety Committee

As required by the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act, and as outlined in Dalhousie's Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Policy, the university must have a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee. In cooperation with staff, faculty, students, and the university administration, the EHS Committee assists Dalhousie in creating and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment. Committee members may be asked to investigate accidents and incidents that occur at the university. [Information about the Dalhousie EHS Committee can be found here](#) (my.dal login required). This contains links to safety policy, programs and tools, including Dalhousie's EHS Policy, Accident/Incident Reporting, and the EHS Assistant. These are all relevant to DFA Members with both laboratory and non-laboratory supervisory roles (for example, info on ergonomics for computer use is available). [Training modules are available here](#).

"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."

### Halifax

Submitted by DFA Professor Representatives Alex Speed (Chemistry), Marc Obrovac (Chemistry, Alternate), and DFA Instructor Representatives, Emanuel Jannasch (Architecture), Shawn Xiong (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Alternate)

The Committee is composed of 18 members in total, nine members appointed by the Administration, and nine members selected by employee groups. There are positions for two DFA appointees – one Professor and one Instructor. Alternates attend the meetings when the primary appointees are unavailable.

The Committee meets virtually on the fourth Thursday of the month. Sometimes the meeting is held on the first Thursday of the next month, depending on Committee members' availability.

There were no unusual safety incidents impacting DFA members in the past year. Researchers and instructional members in charge of laboratories receive self-inspection invitations twice a year, with the next one in May 2026. The completion rate for self-inspections across Dalhousie in fall 2025 was 73%, and DFA members who may be responsible for completing self-inspections are encouraged to do so, so that the completion rate can increase. These self-inspections serve as a reminder for researcher responsibilities (such as maintaining up-to-date chemical inventories, and tidy workspaces), and also allow infrastructure deficiencies to be documented (though the self-inspection does not directly generate maintenance requests).

Members are also encouraged to make reports promptly using the Accident and Incident reporting feature on the website, when appropriate. It is useful to the committee to observe trends, including near-misses. Past incidents have resulted in the recognition for new standard operating procedures for example.

One common trend noted in 2025-2026 is that sharps and glass waste are frequently found in the regular waste stream, and have the potential to injure custodial staff. There are dedicated waste containers for sharps and separately broken glass. It would be beneficial for DFA members with research operations that generate these waste streams to remind their trainees of the appropriate rules for disposal of such materials. A *Guideline for the Use of Laboratory Sharps* was published in April 2025 on the Sharepoint.

The EH&S office introduced a quarterly e-newsletter, designed to keep everyone at Dalhousie up-to-date on safety information. You can find a sign-up button for the newsletter on the EH&S Sharepoint.

### Truro

Submitted by Margaret Hartling (Animal Science and Aquaculture) and Paul MacNeil (Plant Food and Environmental Science), DFA Representatives

- Issues with cellular service across campus were discussed and dead zones were identified. Bell Aliant is addressing the current tower coverage. IT services have installed boosters to aid in increasing WiFi coverage. WiFi calling when possible is encouraged.
- Weekly testing of emergency showers and eyewash stations is required. PI's are responsible for the testing in their lab sections.
- Fire safety audits with the Fire Marshal were completed in some of the buildings on the Truro campus. Audits continue in spring 2026.
- Routine lab inspections were completed in all labs across the Truro campus.
- Disappearing signs on campus – replacement signs were erected within buried tubes. This will prevent the hampering and protection of the persons tampering with the signs.

### Transportation and Security Committee

Submitted by Sherry Huybers (Health and Human Performance), DFA Representative

The Transportation and Security Committee typically meets five times from September to June. Membership is composed of voting representatives from all unions and prominent bodies on all campuses, including the DFA, NSGEU (Local 77 and Local 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. Peter Jones (Sexton Campus) chaired the committee meetings this past year.

This past year, membership has waned with several groups not sending representation. As a result of the lack of meeting quorum, official meetings only took place in May and June 2025. [More information about this committee can be found here.](#)

### Parking Rates

This Committee has not been involved in any discussions regarding rates since Ancillary Service has taken over parking. In past years, any rate increase proposed to the Committee has not exceeded the DFA allowable amount from the Collective Agreement (2.50% for reserved and general parking permit fees). As well, the Dalhousie University VP of Finance and the AVP Office has typically proceeded with their proposed rate regardless of the recommendations given to them by the Transportation and Security Committee. New permit rates were posted on the website for 2025/2026. [More information regarding parking is available here.](#)

### Parking/Transportation Highlights

**Ticketing enforcement moved to hotspot.** With the new ticketing system, payments are made remotely as opposed to requiring in-person payments made at the office. On the back of the ticket, there is a QR code to scan, which allows payment through Google or Apple Pay.

**HRM launched a new E-Mobility program.** Parking designations for e-bikes and e-scooters are virtual/geotagged. They are assigned at specific areas on campus, so they can't just be left anywhere that would affect traffic or walkways. No-go zones are also programmed that will stop the e-scooter and e-bikes when taken into the buildings or quads. The speed is also set across the campus, which is programmed as a slow zone as well.

### Security Highlights

No relevant highlights reported by security.

## Reports Regarding ...

### Dalhousie President's Advisory Committee on Sexualized Violence

Submitted by Catrina Brown (Social Work), DFA Representative and Sheila Wildeman (Law), DFA Alternate

No meetings were held during the 2025-2026 academic year. The chair position was vacant and no urgent matters arose. The new AVP Equity and Inclusion, who starts in spring 2026, will chair the committee and schedule meetings for 2026-2027.

### Dalhousie University Employment Equity Council

Submitted by Gabriella Mosquera (Computer Science), DFA Representative

The Employment Equity Council met twice during the 2025–2026 academic year. Notably, the DFA was without representation during the September 3 meeting, as it was held during the 2025 lockout. The second meeting, held on December 3 and chaired by Dr. Barb Hamilton-Hinch (Assistant Vice-Provost Equity and Inclusion), focused largely on new professional development frameworks, specifically the Dalhousie Leadership Academy. This Academy offers three programs (Launch, Navigate, and Beacon) which are rooted in the UN Inner Development Goals and designed to support faculty at various leadership stages. Additionally, the Council discussed the newly-approved Certificate in Inclusive Leadership offered through Dalhousie's Faculty of Open Learning and Career Development.

While these leadership initiatives provide professional value, a more pressing concern raised by the DFA involves the potential impact of ongoing budget cuts on our members. Specifically, I highlighted the risk of increased workloads for DFA members, particularly women, Indigenous and Mi'kmaw peoples, racialized persons, Black and African Nova Scotians, persons with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. Although concrete data was unavailable at the time to quantify these impacts, the Council agreed to revisit the matter during the winter 2026 term. Unfortunately, the scheduled winter meeting was cancelled, and the DFA continues to seek clarity and data regarding how fiscal constraints are affecting equity-deserving groups within our membership.

### Southern African Student Education Project

Submitted by David Black (Political Science), Chair, SASEP Advisory Committee

Project Members: Gary Kynoch (History), Theresa Ulicki (International Development Studies), and Matthew Schnurr (International Development Studies)

The Southern African Student Education Project (SASEP) contributes to the development of Southern Africa by offering black Southern Africans – a historically disadvantaged group – a full scholarship to pursue graduate studies at the Master's or PhD level at Dalhousie University. SASEP has operated at Dalhousie since 1987. Initially, the South African Education Trust Fund (SAETF) in Ottawa matched all funds which SASEP raised. SAETF ceased operating in 1993, and Dalhousie assumed full responsibility for the project. SASEP has been completely funded by the Dalhousie community ever since.

The DFA contributes \$10,000 to SASEP each year. The Dalhousie Student Union contributes annually \$1 for each full-time student at Dalhousie. Individual faculty and staff members also make contributions.

SASEP is supported by the Dalhousie Administration in two ways: 1) international student differential fees for SASEP students are waived; and 2) the SASEP Advisory Committee, made up of DFA faculty members who share an interest in Southern Africa, provides administrative and academic support to the project.

SASEP covers the cost of student placements, including tuition, round-trip airfare, a monthly stipend for living expenses, medical coverage and an allowance for a laptop, books and warm clothing. The number of placements available depends entirely on fundraising efforts, and the length of academic study of scholarship recipients.

With the rising costs of living expenses and tuition, we are no longer able to offer the award every year, but had two SASEP students complete Master's degrees in 2024. SASEP will also be supporting a new student who came to Dalhousie in September 2025.

As of May 2026, a total of 20 students have been awarded graduate degrees under SASEP. The two most recent graduates are Zimbabweans Muzomkhulu Ncube and Laura Jele. Laura completed her MEng in Civil Engineering in April 2024, and Muzi complete his MASc in Civil Engineering in August 2024.

### Current Student

Following a recruitment process which attracted nearly 60 applicants from six Southern African countries, we welcomed our current SASEP student, Naomi Boswell from South Africa, to the MA program in English beginning in September 2025. Ms. Boswell came to us as an outstanding graduate of the Honours English program at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. She has thrived at Dalhousie, both in terms of her academic results and her wider professional development. In addition to completing her courses in excellent academic standing through the past academic year, Naomi worked as a TA and at the Writing Centre, enhancing her pedagogical skills in the process. She is presenting at conferences within and beyond Dalhousie, and will be working full-time on her MA thesis under the supervision of Dr. Asha Jeffers (English) through her second year of study. The SASEP committee is very grateful to the Department of English for their warm welcome and ongoing support of Naomi through the course of her program to date.

### Administration and Recruitment

SASEP funds are administered by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) and the Department in which the student is studying. 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. The chair of the committee rotates among its members. The current chair is David Black, with a new chair expected to take over prior to the next recruitment cycle. Because of the rising cost of living in Halifax, the monthly stipend was increased in 2023-2024. This was a necessary adjustment but has had some impact on the frequency with which we will be able to recruit going forward, with recruitment projected to take place in the year following the completion of the program by the current SASEP incumbent.

SASEP is open to eligible candidates who are citizens of the Commonwealth countries of Southern Africa (South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe). We are very grateful for the many years of support provided by the DFA, DSU, and individual faculty and students. It is a tangible and enduring manifestation of 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 this pivotal region.

### WUSC Student Refugee Sponsorship Program

Agricultural Campus

Submitted by Joy Galloway-Jones (Assistant Dean, Student Experience)

After a slight delay, the Truro campus welcomed Kuel, our 34th student in the WUSC program. He is happily enrolled in the Truro Start program, studying Computer Science and is probably one of the most social students we have had the honour to support. Our 2023-2024 student, Sophi, has finally given herself permission to follow her dreams and was accepted into the nursing program beginning in May. Other WUSC students continue to thrive and follow their educational aspirations, including Tangweth who will be graduating in Pharmacy, as well as Yuot who has been successful in the Engineering Co-op program, doing a term in Nunavut and embracing winter in its fullest splendour. As budgets get tight, we are ever-grateful for the support DFA offers to these well-deserving young people.

Halifax Campus

Submitted by Tori Whittemore, Co-Chair, WUSC Halifax (Student, Economics and International Development Studies)

Last Fall, we welcomed two WUSC scholars – Ayen and Raneem – to Dalhousie through the Halifax Local Committee. Ayen is originally from South Sudan and Raneem is from Syria. Ayen will begin her studies in the fall 2027 semester as she was enrolled in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program with the Faculty of Open Learning for the 2025-2026 academic year with hopes of going into the Nursing program at Dalhousie. Raneem is in her first year of nursing, driven by a desire to help others. Both students are involved in their communities and have welcomed the Canadian culture with open arms, even seeing their first ever hockey game with the committee for an event this past winter.

Ayen and Raneem have been a wonderful addition to the local committee and are eager to contribute. We are honoured to support the students in their journey to Dalhousie. Your continuous generosity and collaboration are instrumental in our work, and we truly appreciate your support. We will soon receive confirmation of the two students arriving this summer and look forward to welcoming them to our community! On behalf of the whole committee and the WUSC scholars – thank you so much for everything you do for us.

## DFA 2026-2027 Executive Committee

President	Dominic Silvio, Killam Memorial Library
President-Elect	David Westwood, Health and Human Performance
Second Vice-President	Catrina Brown, Social Work
Treasurer	Matthew Numer, Health and Human Performance
Secretary	Amy Birchall, Animal Science and Aquaculture
Past-President	David Westwood, Health and Human Performance
Members-at-Large	<p><b>Term Ending after AGM 2027</b></p> <p>Oluwatoyin Adeleke, Pharmacy</p> <p>Patti Doyle-Bedwell, Open Learning and Career Development</p> <p>Jason Haslam, English</p> <p>Sean MacKinnon, Psychology and Neuroscience</p> <p>Gabriella Mosquera, Computer Science</p> <p><b>Term Ending after AGM 2028</b></p> <p>Marriam Abou-El-Haj, Student Health and Wellness</p> <p>Raluca Bejan, Social Work</p> <p>Hannah Harrison, Marine Affairs</p> <p>Michel Ladouceur, Health and Human Performance</p> <p>Kassandra Luciuk, History</p>

We would like to extend our gratitude to Executive Committee members Kiran Banerjee (Political Science) and Iona Green (Business and Social Sciences) who finished their terms in 2026. Their commitment to the Association and our members during an extremely busy and challenging year is appreciated!

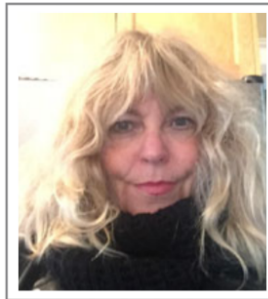
## CAUT Dedicated Service Award Recipients

DFA is pleased to announce the following CAUT Dedicated Service Award recipients, recognizing their exceptional service to the DFA and our membership.



(Left to right) Jason Haslam, English; Kiran Banerjee, Political Science; Kassandra Luciuk, History  
Photo taken at the DFA Solidarity Party, 2025

*These DFA Members have given generously of their time for many years. For more detail on their contributions, please see the following page.*



Catrina Brown  
Social Work



Patti Doyle-Bedwell  
Open Learning & Career Dev.



Matthew Numer  
Health & Human Performance



Jonathon Shapiro  
Law



Dominic Silvio  
Killam Memorial Library

## CAUT Dedicated Service Award Recipients

### Kiran Banerjee (Political Science)

Kiran served as one of the DFA Job Action Committee Co-Leads during the 2025 lockout. He has also participated on the Executive as a Member-at-Large since 2024, and was part of the Job Action Committee communications team in 2022. Kiran is now involved in enhancing DFA's member engagement program.

### Catrina Brown (Social Work)

Catrina has been an active volunteer with the DFA since 2005. She has been on the Executive as President, President-Elect, Past-President, Second Vice-President, and Member-at-Large. She has chaired and served on the DFA Communications Co-ordination Committee, Grievance Committee, and Equity Committee.

### Patti Doyle-Bedwell (Open Learning and Career Development)

Patti has served the DFA membership as a Member-at-Large on the Executive since 2019. She has also been a Grievance Officer for the past several years, served on the 2025 Collective Bargaining Advisory Committee, and has participated on the DFA Bargaining Team in the three rounds of bargaining held since 2020.

### Jason Haslam (English)

Jason served as one of the DFA Job Action Committee Co-Leads during the 2025 lockout. He has been an active member of the DFA for many years, currently serving as a Member-at-Large on the Executive. Jason has also served as Second Vice-President, and member of the Communications Co-ordination Committee.

### Kassandra Luciuk (History)

Kassandra was one of the DFA Job Action Committee Co-Leads during the 2025 lockout. She also served on the Collective Bargaining Advisory Committee, and is currently on the Grievance Committee. She is involved in member engagement activities and is getting involved at the national level through CAUT.

### Matthew Numer (Health and Human Performance)

Matt has served as DFA Member-at-Large, has been Treasurer since 2023 and was Finance Chair for the Job Action Committee during the 2025 lockout. He is a member of the Grievance Committee, the Principal of Fair Consideration Committee and is a former DFA nominee to the Association-Board Committee.

### Jonathon Shapiro (Law)

Jon has represented DFA on the Pension Advisory Committee (as a long-standing member and regular Co-Chair) for more than a decade. He has also been a Trustee for the Pension Trust Fund and Retirees' Trust Fund since 2021. These are extremely complex roles and of utmost importance to our members. Jon was also an active picket captain during the 2025 lockout.

### Dominic Silvio (Killam Memorial Library)

Dominic has served the DFA since 2019 when he joined the Executive as Treasurer. He is a two-time DFA President, chairs the Grievance Committee, sits as the DFA Office Manager, and has been a Member-at-Large. Dominic is a CAUT Defence Fund Director and a regular flying picketer supporting faculty associations across Canada.



One of our Halifax picket lines.



Truro picketers not "chicken" to speak their minds.



As long as you say it with a smile!

# 2025 LOCKOUT

AUGUST 20 - SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

DFA and Dalhousie Board of Governors had 23 years without labour disruption. In summer 2025, the Board put an end to that history by locking out faculty members - in the middle of a ratification vote! The 4 weeks that followed were tumultuous, but in the end, DFA members got a new Collective Agreement with some significant gains, and the union is stronger as a result of our time on the picket lines.



Hanging the LTA petition on Henry Hicks

Agricultural campus picketers with support from the Canadian Labour Congress.



Some of our virtual picketing team, writing blogs, creating social media content, scanning media, and more.





CAUT Defence Fund showed our national strength.



The Chalk and Talk initiative was a huge success!



DFA's smallest four-legged picketer.



DFA's largest four-legged picketer.



Student support was a game-changer.



A few of DFA's administrative office team.



The 5km morning run crew kept spirits high!



One of the energetic Friday rallies outside the Killam.