

Bargaining Bulletin

Issue #2: June 23, 2025

DFA Opens Strike Vote

While in many ways, we are in the early stages of bargaining, the Board's actions have forced us to ask you for a **strong strike mandate** to ensure that we have leverage as we move into conciliation.

You will have seen our invitation to cast a strike vote. It is important that you have heard our presentation about the context for **voting 'YES' to a strike** so you make an informed decision. For members who missed today's Bargaining Unit meeting, we are holding a second meeting of the Bargaining Unit on Wednesday, June 25 at 7:00 p.m.
Please make every effort to attend.

Negotiations Move to Conciliation

On June 2, after only a few days of bargaining, the Dalhousie Board filed for conciliation. The DFA contested the filing, saying it was too early in the process and full discussions on many proposals had not yet taken place. The Minister of Labour agreed to wait until the DFA Bargaining Team and the Board's team met one last time on Friday, June 20, 2025, which was the last scheduled day to be at the table. Today, the Labour Board appointed Mr. Rick Rose as the conciliation officer.

Outstanding Proposal Highlights

Income Maintenance Change (IMC): The Board is proposing three options, all tied to the 90-10 rule:

1. No changes to 90-10 rule – a 1.5% increase in each year of the three-year agreement.
2. Remove LTA instructors from 90-10 calculation – a 1.75% increase in each year of the three-year agreement.

DFA 2025 Bargaining Team

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3. Significant changes to ratio and/or calculation of 90-10 – a 2.0% increase in each year of the three-year agreement, plus an additional 1% for other salary-related items.

**** The DFA proposed an IMC of 9%, 6% and 6% for the three years of the collective agreement. Regular expectations for inflation are 2% per year which means that even the Board's most "generous" offer would see DFA Members merely keeping pace with inflation over the life of a new agreement, but at the huge cost of losing our strong 90-10 protection for good quality academic jobs and working conditions for future generations.***

The 90-10 Rule: The Board proposed significant changes to the 90-10 rule (Article 14.18). The Board is proposing a combination of reducing the 90-10 fraction (to perhaps as low as 80-20) or adjusting the counting rules, to permit them to count more kinds of precarious or non-unionized workers toward their obligations under the rule. This would allow the Board to pay people lower wages for the same academic labour. The Board's proposed changes could see a reduction in the number of DFA Members by up to 200, or 20% of our current Bargaining Unit, if 90-10 became 80-20. Even the Board's seemingly 'benign' proposal to include LTA Instructors into the 90-10 count (they are currently excluded from the count altogether) would allow the Board to eliminate up to 76 DFA Members.

Librarian Appointments and Workload: The Board proposes to fundamentally change the nature of appointments from being specific to a library to an appointment to the library system. The Board also proposes to delete provisions for librarian workload including overtime.

Merit-Based CDI: Under the Board proposal, Members holding the same rank for more than ten years at Dalhousie University are not automatically eligible for CDI increases. For these members, CDI increases may be recommended by the Dean, after consultation with the appropriate Chairperson or Department Head, on the basis that their performance is substantially above the norm for their rank thereby guaranteeing that about 50% of Members in this situation would not receive a CDI each year. We have already seen the ways in which the awarding of CDIs can be weaponized by Deans under the protection of vague concepts such as 'failing to perform above expected norms'.

Limit Sabbatical Leave: The Board proposes a career maximum of five years of sabbatical leave. It is not yet clear if the Board envisions a cap in terms of total years, or total number of sabbaticals (i.e., Members can take more frequent 6-month sabbaticals under current provisions). While this might seem to affect relatively few individuals, it is nevertheless a concession and an unnecessary one at that.

Other: There are proposals from several DFA priority areas that have not been resolved, including:

- Workload proposals
- Conversion of long-standing LTA positions to permanent
- Improvements for Members with children or care-giving responsibilities
- Health benefit improvements
- Indigenous ceremonial leave

Next Steps

The DFA opened a strike vote today. Members can vote until Monday, June 30 at 12 noon. A meeting of the Bargaining Unit was held on Monday, June 23. A second meeting will be held Wednesday, June 25 at 7:00 p.m. for Members who could not attend the first meeting, or for those who have additional questions before voting. You can find the meeting link in the email message that accompanied this Bulletin.

Please email dfa@dal.ca with questions or comment.



Dave Westwood
DFA President, 2025-2026