

**Email to DFA Members**

**Date: Thursday, July 31, 2025**

**Subject Line: DFA Bargaining Update**

Dear colleague,

As our bargaining situation continues to unfold, I wanted to bring you up-to-date on a few things. *Please note: Shortly after you receive this message, we will send you a second email with details on access to campus, access to email, essential services, sabbatical/vacation/parental leaves/other leaves during work stoppage.*

**Hold the Date! Bargaining Unit Meeting Thursday, August 14 Followed by an Electronic Vote on the Board's Best and Final Offer**

As you know, August 11 is the final "day 14" conciliation meeting between the parties and we anticipate receiving the Board's best and final offer at some point that day. Both parties will be in a legal strike or lockout position at 12:01 a.m. the morning of August 12.

Please hold the date on Thursday, August 14 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon for a virtual meeting of the full DFA Bargaining Unit (all professors, instructors, professional librarians and professional counsellors). We will present and review the Board's "best and final offer" and give you the perspective and recommendation of the DFA Bargaining Team and Executive. If we are locked out at this time, picket lines will be paused for the meeting to allow everyone to join. The zoom invitation will follow closer to the date. A second version of the same meeting will be held Monday, August 18 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

**Work Stoppages: The Difference between a Lockout and a Strike**

Many of our Members have found the distinction between a lockout and a strike confusing, or have been using the terms interchangeably. While both have the same net result of a legal work stoppage and loss of pay, one is triggered by the employer and the other is triggered by the union. That matters.

A **lockout** is a situation where an employer temporarily closes a workplace or suspends work to pressure employees or their union to accept specific employment terms: equally importantly the employer stops paying the workers. It's a form of employer-driven leverage in labour disputes.

**Employees are expected to participate in picket lines during a lockout and receive strike pay from the union.**

**\*\*All signs point to a likely lockout of DFA Members by the Dalhousie Board of Governors on August 12, the first day for a legal strike or lockout. The Board must provide 48 hours notice of the intended start of a lockout. Even with such notice, the Board could decide not to proceed with a lockout.\*\***

A **strike** is a work stoppage where employees collectively refuse to work to exert pressure on their employer during contract negotiations: the employer would stop paying workers during a strike. The purpose of a strike is to disrupt normal business operations and compel the employer to meet their demands. **Employees are on the picket lines during a strike and would receive strike pay from the union.**

**\*\*The DFA has been clear in communications to Members, the Board, and the public, that we have no intention of triggering a strike in August. If there is any work stoppage in August it will be because the Board chose to lock out DFA Members.\*\***

### **Where Things Stand at the Moment**

On July 28, conciliation officer Rick Rose filed his “no board” report signalling that the parties had reached an impasse and could not conclude a collective agreement. With the endorsement of our DFA Bargaining Team, I reached out to Dalhousie President Kim Brooks to request a one-on-one meeting with her to see what we could do to get the Board back to the bargaining table. She replied saying she was unable to meet because of her busy summer schedule.

There is a “last minute” or “day fourteen” conciliation date set for Monday, August 11. Further conciliation dates could be scheduled after that date if both sides agree to continue negotiations beyond this time. The DFA would agree to any and all efforts to continue negotiations, since we want to reach an agreement without labour disruption. However, **all indications point to the Board initiating a lockout at the earliest possible time which is August 12.**

As a reminder, the Board filed for conciliation prematurely on June 2 after just four bargaining sessions; the Board ended negotiations early on the final day of conciliation, July 16; and President Brooks declined to have a conversation with me. All of these signs indicate that the Board was bargaining to a deadline, rather than attempting to negotiate a fair deal that both parties could live with.

You need to be ready to leave your office within 48 hours if we are notified of a lockout. The Board could give that notice at any time: we anticipate that they will provide notice on Friday, August 8. Once notice of a lockout is received, retrieve all belongings that you will need from your office or

other spaces on campus. Since you could be away from campus when notice is given, we encourage you to start removing items from your office or lab before leaving for travel or vacation, so you are not left without access to campus.

**Please pay attention to emails from the DFA over the next few weeks. You DO NOT want to miss the short window of time you will have to prepare for losing access to your office for an undetermined amount of time.** Next week, DFA will send you a “preparation check list” of things to do within the 48-hour window.

Remember that if there is a lockout you will receive email communications from DFA to your alternate email address.

### **Job Action FAQ**

Attached and [linked here](#) is an FAQ document, *On the Line*, answering many of your questions about picket line operations.

### **What can you do to help?**

Please contact your Dean and your contacts in the Senior Administration to convey the disruptions that will be caused if there is a lockout in August. Let them know of all the responsibilities that they will need to assume if you are locked out – we provide further details in the next email about the impacts of a work stoppage. Talk to your students and help them understand the situation and that the Board - not DFA - is pushing for job action in August. ([Student updates can be found here](#). A Student FAQ will be posted tomorrow.)

Follow us on social media and share our posts. Pressure will build on the Board to negotiate with us once students and the public start to realize the seriousness of a labour disruption before the start of the Fall semester. Help us make sure that the message gets out to those who need to know.

bluesky @dalfaculty.bsky.social

Facebook @ “Keep Dal Strong”

X and Instagram @dalfacultyassoc

Sincerely,

Dave Westwood

DFA President 2025-2026

***Working together to #KeepDalStrong.***