

## President's Message: Winter Weariness

*Julia Wright, DFA President, 2019-20*

rest I would,  
Forget the tangled life, the bad and good,  
And everything that has been,—drinking deep  
The freshness of regenerating sleep.

--William Allingham, "Sleepy" (1882)

We have a shorter newsletter this month because we know all of you are busy juggling a lot right now. Everyone seems a bit more tired—wearied, even—this year. Part of it may be the political climate, as populism and austerity erode the public institutions that improve quality of life and reduce inequality, from education to libraries to healthcare to basic social services. A big part of it is the effect of those erosions on our own lives and our workplace.

Many of us have seen how much our university has changed over the last decade. I miss getting to know most of my first-year students well enough to recognize them when I see them. I miss my colleagues and I having the time to chat in the hallways about what we tried in the classroom, how well it worked, and how it might work better. I miss hearing about what they found in the library or learned at a conference. Instead I hear the same point over and over again: it's hard to excel at our work when we're under-resourced and under-valued.

The under-resourcing is real. If you look at the DFA's last [Review of Dalhousie University Finances](#), you will see the trend that lies behind our low morale: in 2002-03, 73.57% of Dalhousie's overall budget went to what's called "the Academic Responsibility Centre"; since 2009, that share has stayed under 66%, falling as low as 61.89% (Table 3). As the *Review* notes, "Dalhousie would have had an **additional \$43.2 million to spend** on the University's [academic] mission if the percentage had remained the same in 2016-17 as it was in 2002-03" (p. 2).

This gap has profoundly changed Dalhousie. Since 2004-05, according to [administration](#) data, enrolments have increased **26.8%** while faculty complement has increased only **14.8%**. Our students' tuition goes up and up, and graduate-student funding never really improves. The effects of these and other choices lie behind the DFA's ongoing interest in the budget process (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)—and look for more next term).

Study breaks and holidays give us some respite from the relentless pressure to do more with less—a chance to recharge our batteries. But any real remedies are going to be determined through two processes. Early in 2020, the [Budget Advisory Committee](#) will set units' budgets and so play a significant (if indirect) role in determining how many of us there are and so what our workloads look like. Later in 2020, the DFA Bargaining Team will be working hard to negotiate our next Collective Agreement with the Board of Governors. I know how busy all of us are, but please find a bit of time next term to contribute to one of those processes—attend a meeting, ask questions, or think about proposals' impact on your work. Your support and advice are especially critical to our Bargaining Team (see below).

Many winter festivals have roots in concerns about resources—awaiting the return of warmer weather and, with it, food and hope. As a university community in Canada, we have much for which to be grateful. But we can also wish for a return of the recognition of universities as an essential public good that advances knowledge, provides myriad regional benefits, and helps future generations to do the best that they can as members of civil society and in their future careers. The new year



will bring new opportunities to seek this renewal globally—and locally through the restoration of budgetary resources to the academic mission at Dalhousie.

Please contact me anytime, [Julia.Wright@dal.ca](mailto:Julia.Wright@dal.ca), or the DFA office at [dfa@dal.ca](mailto:dfa@dal.ca).

## Julia Wright Named to Board of the Royal Society of Canada

The DFA's President Dr. Julia M. Wright has been named to the board of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC). In addition to sitting as a board member, Julia will be the President of the Academy of the Arts and Humanities in the RSC for her three-year term. Take a moment to read Julia's bio on the RSC website [here](#), and you will agree that we are fortunate to have her leadership with the DFA. (Julia will continue in her role as DFA President until the new DFA Executive is elected at the May 2020 DFA Annual General Meeting.)

*Pictured right, DFA President-Elect Dave Westwood congratulates Julia on her accomplishment during the DFA Holiday Open House last Thursday, December 12.*



## Meet the DFA Bargaining Team



**DFA's Bargaining Team (l-r):**  
Barbara MacLennan (DFA staff)  
Jeff Hoyle  
Elizabeth Kay-Raining Bird  
Patti Doyle-Bedwell  
Tim Juckes  
Lynn Purves (DFA staff)  
Shelley McKibbin  
Ray Larkin, Chief Negotiator

Over the past two weeks, you have received emails with short videos introducing DFA's Chief Negotiator, and the DFA Members that make up our Bargaining Team. If you haven't seen the videos, please take a few moments to [watch them now](#) (each video is approximately 35 seconds long).

### ***News You Can Use Moves to Bi-Monthly in 2020***

In January 2020, the DFA will begin issuing a publication providing you with regular information and updates related collective bargaining. While those are being distributed, *News You Can Use* will be produced every other month, beginning in February.

## Best Wishes for a Safe & Happy Holiday Season!



DFA hosted its annual Holiday Open House in Halifax on December 12 and in Truro on December 16. We celebrated the season with guests from our membership, Dal administration, retirees and other friends of the DFA.

The Executive and Staff of the DFA wish you a wonderful holiday season. See you in 2020! (and remember our DFA dues holiday in January to get the new year off to a special start ☺)

## Corporate Coup d'Etat: DFA Public Screening

Join the DFA for a private screening of the documentary [Corporate Coup d'Etat](#)  
Tuesday, January 7, 2020 (6:30 pm - 9:00 pm)  
Halifax Central Library, Paul O'Regan Hall

*This screening is part of our Public Speaker Series. It is free & open to the public.*



A democracy should protect its citizens, especially the most vulnerable among them, but increasingly the United States is failing to do so. This investigative and persuasive documentary blends the insights of philosophers, authors and journalists with the experiences of citizens of the Rust Belt in the U.S. Midwest, where the steel industry once flourished, but where closures and outsourcing have left urban areas desolate and hopeless. It's here that Donald Trump finds some of his most fervent supporters, as he's not considered part of the hated Washington establishment.

Journalist Chris Hedges, argues that the crisis predates Donald Trump's election by many years. Like his source of inspiration, the Canadian philosopher John Ralston Saul, Hedges regards Trump as the symptom rather than the disease. Decades ago, U.S. democracy began selling its soul to big corporations. Lobbyists and corporatism took control in Washington, gradually undermining the will of the people. Journalist Naomi Klein recently described



Trump's administration as a "corporate coup d'état". Hedges and Ralston Saul argue that the real coup took place long before. (synopsis from [www.whitepinepictures.com](http://www.whitepinepictures.com))

## Dr. Robert S. Rodger Lecture Series

February 4, 2020

Speaker: Ray Larkin, QC

Dalhousie SUB McInnes Room

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

*Refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to [Kristin.Hoyt@dal.ca](mailto:Kristin.Hoyt@dal.ca)*

Ray Larkin, QC, has been selected as the 2019-20 speaker for the Dr. Robert S. Rodger Lecture Series, established by the DFA in November 2018. With more than 40 years of experience representing the DFA, Ray has supported us and our Members through several arbitrations, provided counsel on day-to-day issues, and has been the DFA's chief negotiator for three rounds of collective bargaining. His keynote note address will be followed by a panel on collegial governance.



### DFA Office Hours

7:30 am – 3:30 pm

Monday to Friday

Drop in during office hours at  
1443 Seymour Street in Halifax, call  
902-494-3722 or email [dfa@dal.ca](mailto:dfa@dal.ca).

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**Feedback or news we can use? Contact DFA Communications Officer** [Catherine.Wall@dal.ca](mailto:Catherine.Wall@dal.ca)

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