

President's Message: We are not alone

Julia Wright, DFA President, 2019-20

"In Nova Scotia, universities are the third largest export revenue sector." ([Association of Atlantic Universities](#))

"The contribution of universities to Nova Scotia's economic growth and development" includes "economic output [of over] \$2 billion" ([Universities: Partners for a Prosperous Nova Scotia 2013](#))

"Canada is 27th out of 32 OECD countries in public funding for post-secondary education" ([CAUT](#))

Next week, Canadians go to the polls to elect our next federal government. I'm not going to take sides here, and not only because it isn't my role to do so. The sorry fact of the matter is this: we've taken huge hits from every party that has been in government this century, nationally and provincially, in a combined push to de-fund education in Canada. Our province has been especially hard hit. For some time now we have had some of the highest tuition fees in the country while we struggle to maintain more and more of our programs.

We don't want to see universities squeezed like this, of course. Neither does the rest of the public. I say "rest of" because we are part of the public, too. There's been a tendency in our sector to put universities on one side and "the public" on another (see [here](#) for an example). This suggests that we are outsiders, beyond the reach of government responsibility (to the public) and benefit (the public good). But we are part of the public and so are our students and graduates.

Polling suggests that our understanding of the importance of universities is much more mainstream than

governments would have us believe. In 2017, Abacus Data conducted a national survey for Universities Canada. Their conclusions are worth quoting at length:

The large majority (78%) of Canadians express a positive overall feeling towards universities, with only 3% expressing a negative view. This is consistent with our findings from an earlier study 2 years ago.

Two-thirds or more of those interviewed believe that Canada's universities are friendly (77%), conduct valuable research (77%), are practical (73%), up to date (73%), open-minded (68%), dynamic (67%) and have a great future ahead of them (71%). A significant majority (63%) also consider our universities to be "world class". Canadians are split on whether universities are adequately funded ...

86% say the government of Canada should spend more on university research because the upside for Canada is tremendous. ([Abacus](#))

We are not alone in believing in the importance of university teaching and research.

The Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers conducted [a poll](#) last year, and found that "95% of Nova Scotians think post-secondary education (PSE) should be a high priority for the Nova Scotian



provincial government” and “88% of those polled support reducing tuition fees.” The latter number has risen slightly since 2010, when polling by a coalition of unions and student groups in Nova Scotia showed that [83% supported reducing tuition fees](#).

And yet, despite polling, and protests, and evidence-based arguments on economic benefits, and even [emergency funding for universities it has pushed to the brink](#), the [Nova Scotia government](#) last month again pegged university funding increases below [inflation](#) (1%/year) while allowing tuition to increase above the inflation rate. The DFA and DSU issued [a joint media release](#) outlining why this is so damaging. Federal election polling is adding to the evidence for our concerns.

“Affordability” is emerging as a key issue in the 2019 federal election, and a recent poll by Abacus found that 38% of those polled said that this was a [“major problem.”](#) Of those, fully half said that tuition was a “factor” in their “feeling that [their] cost of living is a problem,” weighting it as “moderate” (13%), “big” (15%), or “really big” (22%). There were fewer than [2.1 million post-secondary students in 2016-17](#) and Canada’s population was over [36.5 million that year](#). So we need to sit up and pay attention when 19% of Canadians polled say they’re struggling and tuition

is a significant factor in their struggle. This polling data suggests high tuition is having very hard knock-on effects—on graduates, on families, and over many years.

We, along with our students and recent graduates, can also speak to what this chronic underfunding is doing to our institutions: declining faculty/student ratios, research time, library materials, student supports, and so on, while scarce resources are [directed instead at finding other funding](#).

Government policy, federally and regionally, is doing real damage to decades of twentieth-century investment and to our students and graduates. There are lots of other important issues to Canadians, including to those of us who work in the higher-education sector, but many will have to be solved with the help of universities, including shortages of teachers and healthcare workers.

When it comes to public support for universities, we are not alone. But it seems as if our governments have [their fingers stuck in their ears](#). Let’s do what we can to make our politicians accountable for the decisions they make about universities. [Let’s vote](#).

Please contact me anytime, Julia.Wright@dal.ca, or the DFA office at dfa@dal.ca.

Collective Bargaining Consultation Meetings: Have your say!

The DFA heads back to the bargaining table with the Dalhousie Board of Governors in 2020 to renegotiate the Collective Agreement that does everything from set our salaries to protect collegial governance to define key processes, such as reappointment.

To prepare our proposals, we are holding Contract Review Consultations over the next two weeks. Please come to one near you to share your thoughts on the current Collective Agreement and how it could be improved. If you are unable to attend, you can always email Julia.Wright@dal.ca with feedback and suggestions.

- **Studley Campus** (Weldon Law Building, W305) Wed, Oct 23, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm
- **Carleton Campus** (Tupper Building, Theatre B) Mon, Oct 28, 12:00 - 1:00 pm
- **Truro Campus** (Banting, Room 25) Wed, Oct 30, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm
- **Sexton Campus** (B Building, Room 227) Friday, Nov 1, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

DFA General Meeting Tuesday, Nov. 5 at 7 pm

Halifax: Tupper Theatre A
Truro: Haley 254
Saint John: DMNB 218

Come for a review of the last round of bargaining and to meet our 2020 bargaining team. We’ll also have information to share with you about pension and benefits.

Fair Employment Week Panel Discussions

Please join us for the following panel discussions, hosted by the DFA, ANSUT, CUPE3912 and CAUT:

- [Plans & Pitfalls: Long-Term Research on Short-term Contract](#) Thursday, Oct 17, 5 - 7 pm
- [Benefits for Contract Academic Staff in Halifax: Exploring the Possibilities](#) Friday, Oct 18, 3 - 5 pm
- [STRIKE!: What to do when your union calls a strike](#) Wednesday, Oct 23, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Dr. Julia Wright highlights the issues facing part-time and limited-term faculty in an article that appeared in the [Nova Scotia Advocate](#) and the [Chronicle Herald](#). Fair Employment Week is an initiative of the Canadian Association of University Teachers and part of CAUT's [Make It Fair](#) campaign. An increasing number of teachers at Canada's colleges and universities are trapped in precarious contract and part-time work. Contract and part-time work has quietly gone from a short-term stepping stone to a career-long condition. Many earn less than a living wage. Thousands of professors are denied the opportunity each year to participate in (and be paid for) all aspects of academic work - research, teaching, and service. This has serious implications, not only for contract academic staff, but also for students, their regular academic staff colleagues, and the integrity of post-secondary institutions. We can change this, by improving the working conditions and job security of our colleagues on short-term or part-time contracts.

Teach-In on Islam & Islamophobia a Success



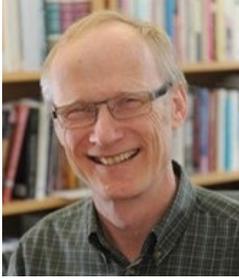
Julia Wright, DFA President & Event Moderator



Frank Harvey, Dean of FASS, welcomed the crowd.

On October 8, 2019, a panel of professors from Saint Mary's University and Dalhousie's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences spoke at the Teach-In on Islam and Islamophobia. Thank you to the panelists for their thought-provoking talks on a challenging topic and to the audience members for their thoughtful comments and questions. The event was the result of a collaboration between the DFA and the Dalhousie President's Office, and sponsored by the Halifax Public Library.

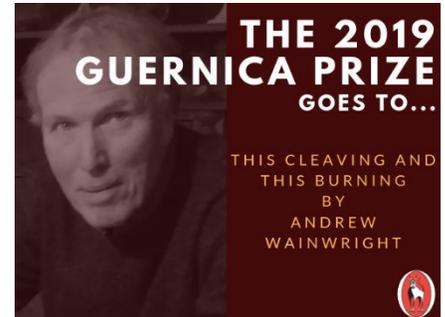
Leonard Diepeveen Recognized with Jay Newman Award



Professor Leonard Diepeveen (English) has been recognized with the [Jay Newman Award for Academic Integrity](#) for 2019. The selection committee noted in particular his “efforts as a member of Dalhousie’s academic Senate to maintain or improve standards of collegial governance, procedural transparency and accountability.” This national, biannual award was established by the University of Guelph Faculty Association, and recent winners include another Dalhousie faculty member, Jeffrey Hutchings (Biology). **Congratulations, Len, on this well-deserved recognition of your important work!** *(photo from dal.ca)*

Former DFA President Recognized for Literary Work

“This Cleaving and This Burning” by Andrew Wainwright was announced as the 2019 Guernica Prize winner in September. The Guernica Prize recognizes the best literary fiction novel that pushes the boundaries and is cutting edge. The prize includes a publication contract with Guernica Editions. A Toronto native, Dr. Wainwright moved to Halifax in the early 1970s, and taught in Dalhousie’s English Department for 30 years, specializing in Canadian material, creative writing, and the lyrics of Bob Dylan. He has authored five books of poetry, five novels, and two biographies. His work has been shortlisted for literary prizes in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. *(image & information from Guernica Editions Facebook page)* **Andy was DFA President in 1995-96 & 2001-02. Congratulations, Andy!**



Memorial for Michael Cross

Friday, December 6
5 pm
University Club
Games Room

You can also donate to the [Michael S. Cross Memorial Undergraduate Essay Prize in Canadian or Labour History](#).

Remembering Michael Cross

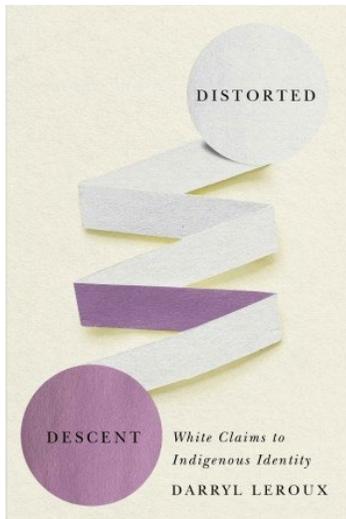
Michael S. Cross passed away Sept. 18, 2019. Born in Toronto in 1938, he earned his PhD from the University of Toronto in 1968. He taught at University of Calgary, Carleton University, and University of Toronto before joining Dalhousie’s History Department in 1975, where he stayed until retiring as full professor in 2002.

Helping to bring the union movement to Dalhousie, Michael served on two occasions as chief negotiator for the DFA. Dr. Robert Rodger, the DFA’s President in 1978, recalls that Michael was a “first class negotiator. I got to know him as we sat around the bargaining table. He was calm, rational and reasonable.”

An editor of several historical publications, Michael contributed to the Canadian Historical Association, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Canada Council. At Dalhousie, he served two terms as Chair of the Department of History, Dean of Henson College and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Michael is survived by his wife Patricia DeMeo and children Rean, Sean, Patrick, Misty, and Andy. His family notes that Michael faced his final illness bravely, surrounded by people who loved him. ‘He was a lot of things: father, Canada’s coolest professor, towering intellect, social justice champion, grandfather, author, jokester, union organizer, music lover, great grandfather, basketball aficionado, science fiction nerd, and loving husband.’

Books You Can Use



Distorted Descent: White Claims to Indigenous Identity

Darryl Leroux. University of Manitoba Press. 2019, 296 pp; ISBN: 978-0-88755-846-7

Darryl Leroux is associate professor in the Department of Social Justice and Community Studies at Saint Mary's University. He has been working on the dynamics of racism and colonialism among fellow French descendants for nearly two decades.

Distorted Descent examines a social phenomenon that has taken off in the twenty-first century: otherwise white, French descendant settlers in Canada shifting into a self-defined "Indigenous" identity. This study is not about individuals who have been dispossessed by colonial policies, or the multi-generational efforts to reconnect that occur in response. Rather, it is about

white, French-descendant people discovering an Indigenous ancestor born 300 to 375 years ago through genealogy and using that ancestor as the sole basis for an eventual shift into an "Indigenous" identity today.

After setting out the most common genealogical practices that facilitate race shifting, Leroux examines two of the most prominent self-identified "Indigenous" organizations currently operating in Quebec. Both organizations have their origins in committed opposition to Indigenous land and territorial negotiations, and both encourage the use of suspect genealogical practices. *Distorted Descent* brings to light to how these claims to an "Indigenous" identity are then used politically to oppose actual, living Indigenous peoples, exposing along the way the shifting politics of whiteness, white settler colonialism, and white supremacy. Read more [here](https://uofmpress.ca/books/detail/distorted-descent). (Taken from <https://uofmpress.ca/books/detail/distorted-descent>)

Research You Can Use

- [Monkeys outdo us in flexible thinking](#) (Georgia State University)
- [Walking speed at age 45 may indicate accelerated aging](#) (Duke University)
- [How old is the ice on the moon?](#) (Brown University)

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.

dfa.ns.ca [@dalfacultyassoc](https://twitter.com/dalfacultyassoc) [dalfacultyassoc](https://facebook.com/dalfacultyassoc)

Feedback or news we can use? Contact DFA Communications Officer Catherine.Wall@dal.ca

Dalhousie Faculty Association

dfa@dal.ca 902.494.3722

1443 Seymour Street

Halifax NS B3H 4R2