

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

## President's Message

*by Dave Westwood, DFA President*

November was a particularly busy month for the DFA as we set aside time to celebrate our 40th anniversary as a bargaining agent. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the eight excellent panelists at our November 13 conference on the academic workplace, and Dr. Susan Sherwin gave an inspiring keynote address on the importance of the academy in confronting the challenges of modern times including climate change, the rise of anti-intellectualism, and the re-emergence of fascism. Unfortunately Dr. Bob Roger was unable to deliver the inaugural Dr. Robert Sinclair Rodger lecture in person, but I was pleased to be able to read his written remarks to those in attendance, recounting the days and events surrounding the certification of the DFA.

At our reception the following week, we welcomed back many former Presidents of the DFA to hear reflections from their time in office, and I was pleased to see many current and former members of the Association in addition to members of our staff. We released our commemorative booklet, "40 Years of Activism: Working for a Better Dalhousie", at the reception and we have plenty of copies available if you wish to drop by the DFA office. We concluded our anniversary celebrations in Truro at our Holiday get together on Monday, December 10.

Special thanks to the members of the 40th Anniversary Planning Committee: Amy Birchall, Barb MacLennan, Catherine Wall, and Julia Wright, with able assistance provided by Kristin Hoyt. I would like to recognize and thank Catherine Wall, DFA Communications Officer, for her tireless efforts which ensured that all of our events went off without

a hitch, and that our commemorative booklet was professional, accurate, and on time!



On November 30, I attended the workshop on "Non-traditional forms of scholarship and Traditional ways of knowing" organized by the Office of the Vice-President Academic and the Senate. I heard from several Members who were unable to attend due to the time, or because they had not received adequate notice, but I was pleased to see a reasonably good turnout despite these challenges. The DFA had some input in the planning of this workshop, the purpose of which was to help provide guidance in the interpretation of Article 17.17. You might recall that this Article was updated in the last round of bargaining to provide an expanded definition of scholarship. We heard from three academics who provided useful perspectives on scholarship, and there was a short discussion afterward which highlighted the need to develop appropriate ways to assess the quality and impact of scholarly work. We will continue to work with the Board on this important issue, and we hope to see future workshops focusing specifically on Boyer's model, and on Traditional Ways of Knowing. As ever, the DFA is happy to provide input and perspective on any and all matters contained in the Collective Agreement and we encourage you to speak to us if you are or will be applying for tenure or promotion, or if you are a member of a tenure/promotion/reappointments committee.

As the Fall semester winds down, I am looking to January with a priority to begin preparations for the next round of bargaining. We are pleased to have made some gains in key areas last time around, but there are still many areas of concern where we would like to make progress, and we will be engaging with you in the coming months around this critical aspect of our mission. On a related note, I encourage you to reach out to provide support and solidarity for our local colleagues at Saint Mary's

University and Mount Saint Vincent University as they enter the holiday season with tremendous uncertainty about their contracts and the looming possibility of a strike in 2019.

I wish you all a rewarding and relaxing Holiday season, and I hope you find some time outdoors to enjoy the crisp December air with your friends and loved ones.

## Frankenstein, Frankenfood and the Forgotten Farmer

Join us at the Truro Public Library on Wednesday, January 30, 2019 from 6:30-8:00 pm for the third talk in our Public Speaker Series.

In Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein*, Victor Frankenstein's brother Ernest appears early in the novel, but he disappears shortly thereafter. Once sickly, later hale and hearty, Ernest is encouraged to become a farmer and enjoy "a very healthy, happy life; and the least hurtful, or rather the most beneficial profession of any." In her talk, Dr. Deborah Stiles, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture, will discuss the ethical dilemma involving farmers, food and GMOs, and show how Shelley's *Frankenstein*, written 200 years ago, contributes to today's discussions.



## Dalhousie Black Faculty and Staff Caucus Seeks Input

The following is taken from a letter circulated by the Dalhousie Black Faculty and Staff Caucus

Dear Black Faculty,

As Co-Chairs of Dalhousie's Black Faculty and Staff Caucus (DBFSC), we are reaching out to Black faculty at Dalhousie to introduce DBFSC and determine interest in meeting with a few members of DBFSC Executive in early 2019 to discuss how the DBFSC can provide support in addressing concerns around equity and inclusion in the workplace and on campus.

The mission of DBFSC is to promote a greater sense of community, advocate progress, and maintain ongoing support for Black faculty, staff and students at Dalhousie University in an effort to enhance cultural diversity within the University and support the academic mission of the institution... To indicate interest in meeting with DBFSC Executive, please contact [dbfsc@dal.ca](mailto:dbfsc@dal.ca) or reach out to one of us below...

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## 40 Years of Activism: Working Toward a Better Dalhousie

*DFA wraps up celebrations for the 40th anniversary*



**Eight DFA presidents (past, present & future) at the DFA 40th Anniversary Reception.**

(L-R): David Tindall, Philip Welch, Colin Stuttard, Terry Mitchell, Sue Sherwin, Julia Wright (incoming), Helen Powell, Dave Westwood (current)



(above) Nov. 13 conference - Academic Freedom panelists (L-R): Gabrielle Horne, Catrina Brown, Karen Foster, Barbara Hamilton-Hinch



Nov. 13 conference - Equity, Diversity & Inclusion panelists (L-R): Kevin Hewitt, Nancy MacDonald, Debbie Martin, Howard Ramos



Nov. 13 conference - Dave Westwood & keynote speaker Sue Sherwin **3**



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*News You Can Use features DFA news and links to items of interest to Dalhousie academic staff. If you have news we can use, please contact Catherine Wall, DFA Communications Officer, at [Catherine.Wall@dal.ca](mailto:Catherine.Wall@dal.ca). Submissions must be received no later than the 15th of the month to be considered for the following month's issue.*

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