

President's Message

With the February break behind us we can look forward to the conclusion of the Winter term and the prospect of warmer weather, spring colours, and most importantly the DFA Annual General Meeting on **Tuesday, May 7, from 2-4 pm**. While you are noting events in your calendar, consider attending our forum on Academic Workplace Wellness on **Thursday, March 14, from 11:30 – 1 pm**. And if you are a Senior Instructor contemplating promotion to University Teaching Fellow, come to our workshop on this process on **Tuesday, March 12 from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm**. Watch your email for notices about these events.



I appreciate those of you who took the time to respond to our two recent surveys on Class Scheduling and 2017-2020 Contract Provisions.

From the Class Scheduling survey it is quite clear that many folks are experiencing significant challenges and frustrations with the way that classes are being scheduled: the process is consuming far too much time, and the lack of year-to-year consistency is making it difficult to be efficient and effective with the competing demands on our time. Through the Association-Board Committee I will bring these messages to the Acting Registrar to see how things can be improved.

From the 2017-2020 Contract Survey it seems that some Members have been able to take advantage of the expanded definitions of Scholarship for Tenure and/or Promotion, but others are not sure how the new language could support their own career advancement. Similarly, some Members from designated groups have been able to gain tangible relief for extraordinary administrative workloads, whereas others were not clear how to take advantage of this benefit. Contributing to the challenge of accessing this benefit is the lack of normative information for workloads within and between academic units. This is a perennial problem that we continue to approach during collective bargaining with little progress to date. As always, I encourage you to reach out to us at dfa@dal.ca for advice and assistance in matters related to the Collective Agreement – we are here to help ensure that all Members can take full advantage of the provisions that we have worked hard to negotiate during bargaining.

Over the past year there has been increasing recognition across the country of the significant limitations of student questionnaires (e.g., Student Ratings of Instruction here at Dalhousie) as a tool to evaluate teaching quality. Impressed by the testimony of academic experts on the statistical properties of such student questionnaires, [arbitrator William Kaplan decided that Ryerson University](#) must not use “student evaluations of teaching” to measure teaching effectiveness for tenure or promotion purposes due to inadequate reliability but also the presence of statistically significant biases based on the identity of the instructor (e.g., gender, race), and features of the class (e.g., required vs. elective, class size, level within program) and classroom (e.g., comfort, lighting, audiovisual features) that are outside the control of the instructor. Similar conclusions were reached in [a report commissioned and recently released by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations](#). It seems we are now at a tipping point. Universities, including our

own, cannot claim to value Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion while continuing to use unreliable and biased tools to evaluate teaching performance for purposes that affect career advancement. If not SRIs, then what? The Centre for Learning and Teaching has long advocated for the use of peer-based teaching assessments (e.g., Klopper, Drew, and Mallitt, 2015), and the preparation of a comprehensive teaching dossier as better ways to get information about teaching performance into the hands of tenure and promotion committees. It is time to end the reliance on Student Ratings of Instruction as a tool for shaping career decisions. Members can contribute to this effort through advocacy as members of Tenure and Promotion committees, and also as Senators in the upcoming review of the Student Ratings of Instruction policy.

On Friday March 1 our colleagues at NSCAD (Faculty Union of NSCAD) will begin a strike to continue their fight for a fair contract after years of working without increases in order to help their institution survive difficult financial circumstances. When I have more details on picket plans I will share with you so we can have a strong physical show of support.

David Westwood
DFA President

References

Klopper, C., Drew, S., & Mallitt, K. (2015). Pro-Teaching. In *Teaching for Learning and Learning for Teaching* (pp. 35-52). SensePublishers, Rotterdam.

Academic Workplace Wellness Luncheon

Join us for a discussion on wellness trends in the academic environment and support programs available at Dalhousie.

Thursday, March 14, 2019
11:30 – 1:00 pm

Locations

- Halifax: location TBC
- Truro: MacRae 208 (via videoconference)
- Saint John: 105 (via videoconference)

Presenters

- Brenda Beagan, PhD, Sociologist, School of Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Health, Dalhousie University
- Janice MacInnis, Manager, Organizational Health, Dalhousie University
- Arla Day, PhD, Director, CN Centre of Occupational Health & Safety and Professor Occupational Health Psychology, Saint Mary's University

Please RSVP to Kristin.Hoyt@dal.ca by Thursday, March 7 (Light lunch will be provided.)

DFA Public Speaker Series Presentation ...



PERFECTIONISM

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

There is nothing wrong with being a perfectionist - so long as everything is perfect. But, perfectionists often struggle with imperfections, in themselves and others. How is perfectionism assessed and treated? Why do perfectionists often behave in an imperfect manner, such as binge eating or procrastinating? Dr. Simon Sherry examines the link between perfectionism and depression, anxiety, eating disorders, relationship problems, and suicide.

Everyone - and their imperfections - is invited to attend.

**Tuesday, April 2, 2019
7:00 pm
Halifax Central Library
5440 Spring Garden Road, Halifax**

The DFA Public Speaker Series is sponsored by:

DFA
Dalhousie Faculty Association



Dr. Simon Sherry directs Dalhousie's Personality Research Team, advancing our understanding of the link between personality and mental health. In his clinical practice, he specializes in treating perfectionism, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, alcohol problems, and personality disorders. Dr. Sherry educates the public about mental health problems in a scientific, non-sensationalized way.



African Heritage Month 2019: Our History is also Your History

submitted by DFA Equity Committee Member, Dr. Ifeyinwa Mbakogu

Nova Scotia's theme for the 2019 African Heritage Month is 'our history is your history.' The theme calls for celebrating the history of African Nova Scotians in the past, the present and the future as contributors to Canadian history. In other words, to make meaningful impact in the way people live and function in a society, it is important to relate to the shared history, evident in the way people exchange ideas, and engage in activities that enhance their functioning. Moreover, this year's theme reinforces the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent's goal to support and cooperate with people of African Descent to create meaningful, full inclusion and belonging in Nova Scotia and Canada. I explore the past, in an attempt to understand the beginnings of an annual practice to determine its implications in the present and future.

What we now know as the African Heritage Month in Nova Scotia can be traced to the Negro History Week of 1976. In 1926 Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard-educated, Black Historian and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History sought to acknowledge the achievements of some African Americans. Woodson and others were also motivated by the need to include the study and teaching of Black history in colleges and public schools that enhance the intellectual and physical well-being of persons of African Descent within the larger society. This drive led to what became called Negro History Week and celebrated in February to mark the birth month of such notable contributors to the emancipation of enslaved Blacks as Frederick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. The initial celebration of Negro History Week was unenthusiastic. However, with support from State Departments of Education, Black students and educators (at Kent State University, especially who proposed Black History Month in February 1969), Churches and ultimately mayors across the United States it was officially recognised as Black History Month by President Gerald Ford in 1976. This annual event is observed in Canada and the United States in February; and Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in October.

Though Black History Month is celebrated across Canada, the province of Nova Scotia is particularly vested in promoting its African Canadian heritage in several ways. For instance, the Black History Month was officially opened in 1985 in the Halifax North Branch Library; followed in 1987 by the first meeting of the Black History Month Association; and then in 1988, Nova Scotia celebrated its first Black History Month. In 1995 a motion was introduced by the first Black Canadian woman, elected to Parliament and representing the riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore in Ontario, Honorable Jean Augustine, that led to the House of Commons, official recognition of February as Black History Month. However, Nova Scotia made a difference when the Black History Month was given its new and current name African Heritage Month in 1996. And again in 2008, based on a motion introduced by Senator Donald Oliver, the first Black Canadian man appointed to the Senate, the Senate declared February as Black History Month across Canada.

African Heritage Month means so many things to many people. Most of all, it is a time of sharing, telling stories (of sadness, strength, exclusion, inclusion, unity), letting others know about the missing pieces and silences in Canadian history that include the lack of mention of: the enslavement of Black persons in Canada; the sacrifices of Black Canadian soldiers during the War of 1812; and recognition that some Loyalists arriving after the American Revolution and settling in the Maritimes were people of African Descent. The activities across Nova Scotia, in community and educational institutions, try to capture these missing pieces across diverse demographics to provide education on the past and present. Some of these activities include: The Raising of the Pan African Flag organised by the African Nova Scotia Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO) with special presentation by Dr. Afua Cooper, Halifax's Poet Laureate and performance by 13-year-old, Zoe Tolliver; the Saint Thomas Baptist Ladies Auxiliary 6th Annual African Heritage 'Knowing your History thru Gospel;' the Diversity and Equity Committee of the School of Social Work, Dalhousie University's African Heritage Month: Public viewing of the award-winning 'Journey to Justice,' a celebration of Pioneering Black Cinematography and Struggle for Social Justice, moderated by Isaac Saney; and The Department of Social Justice and Community Studies, Saint Mary's University's month long exhibition of the Racial Apartheid and Black Freedom Struggles in Nova Scotia and South Africa.

Some events projected African scholarship. An example is the first annual Black Research Symposium organised by the Promoting Leadership in Health for African Nova Scotians (PLANS) to showcase Black scholars and encourage Black students to pursue graduate studies. There were also events that promoted racism and difficult conversations. Falling within this are: the African Nova Scotia Panel Event on Race Relations, Black Experience and the Future of Municipal Government; Ingrid Waldron's Book Reading of There's Something in the Water; a Panel Discussion on 'Discomfort in Multiple Spaces and Encounters,' organised by the Diversity and Equity Committee of the School of Social Work, moderated by Dr. Ifeyinwa Mbakogu with Wendie L. Poitras, Dr. Barbara Hamilton-Hinch, Mario Rolle, Aisha Abawajy and Devon Bundy as panellists. Also noteworthy are events that align with the theme of the Government of Canada's Black History Month campaign of Black Canadian Youth: Boundless, Rooted and Proud by serving as motivation for younger generations. Falling into this category is the session organised by Dalhousie's Black Student Advising Centre, moderated by Dr. Chike Jeffers with special guest, Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard sharing challenges and successes as a Black woman in several leadership roles.

As African Heritage Month is celebrated again in February 2019, one wonders if this is the only time to be aware of the culture, history, experiences, struggles and achievements of people of African Descent in Canada and Nova Scotia, especially. The proclamation of the United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 – 2024) coupled with the theme 'our history is your history' are indicators to move beyond the celebration of African Heritage Month to look into the educational, health and socio-economic gaps faced by People of African Descent, as a way of addressing structures that both inhibit and advance their true sense of belonging.

DFA Member named 3M Teaching Fellow

Congratulations to Dr. Anne Marie Ryan, Department of Earth Sciences, for being named a 3M Teaching Fellow, the top Canadian recognition for university teaching. Details [here](#).

Message from the Queer Faculty Caucus

In 2017 a group of DFA members founded a Queer Faculty Caucus (QFC) to provide a venue for our LGBTQ2S+ members and allies to meet and discuss issues of importance to our communities. If you are interested in learning more about the QFC, email jgahagan@dal.ca

Workplace Wellness: March is Body Health Month

As part of Dal's Workplace Wellness program, there are several workshops in March focused on body health.

- [Let's Talk About Substance Use](#). Mar 11
- [Self-Defence](#) Class (for women). Mar 12
- [Unlock the Potential of Food](#) (Halifax & Truro). Mar 13
- [Self-Defence Class](#) (open to all). Mar 28
- [Healthy Eating on Campus: Dining Hall Open House](#) (Halifax). Mar 28

Books You Can Use

Dalhousie Libraries recently launched its first in-house produced open textbook, [Environmental Science: A Canadian Perspective](#) by renowned conservation biologist and Dalhousie faculty member Bill Freedman (1950–2015). [Click here](#) for details.

Research You Can Use

[Healthy Happy Chickens](#) (Dalhousie University)

[New sepsis could save thousands of lives](#) (University of Strathclyde & University of Leeds)

[Parents need this skill for the frustrating teenage years](#) (University of Rochester)

[Three ways climate change can foster violence](#) (Iowa State University)

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