

# DFA

Dalhousie Faculty Association

## News You Can Use

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*News You Can Use* is a monthly e-bulletin featuring DFA news and links to items of interest to Dalhousie academic staff. If you have news we can use, contact us at [communications@dfa.ns.ca](mailto:communications@dfa.ns.ca).

### DFA joins campaign to free Concordia Professor Homa Hoodfar



The DFA has joined with faculty associations across the country, as well as Amnesty International and other human rights organizations, to call for the release of Homa Hoodfar, a Concordia University anthropologist imprisoned in Iran. Dr. Hoodfar, who holds Canadian, Iranian and Irish citizenship, was in Iran to visit family and pursue her research, which deals with gender, culture and development in Middle Eastern societies. She was arrested in early June and is currently incarcerated in Tehran's Evin prison.

DFA President Laurene Rehman sent a [letter](#) to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion calling on the Canadian government to intervene to secure Dr. Hoodfar's immediate release. The DFA Executive Committee also voted unanimously to donate \$1,000 to the Concordia University Faculty Association (CUFA) as its contribution to a media campaign publicizing Dr. Hoodfar's situation. More than 4,500 academics and authors in Canada and around the world have signed a petition in Dr. Hoodfar's support.

To find out more about Dr. Hoodfar and sign the academic petition, go to [www.homahoodfar.org](http://www.homahoodfar.org).

### Federal funding for science: hope for the future?

After years of what was perceived by many as an attack on science by the former federal government, things may be looking up.

The Trudeau government has appointed an expert panel, which includes Dalhousie Vice-President, (Research) Martha Crago, to conduct a sweeping review of how it supports university-based scientific research.

"The panel will spend the next six months seeking input from the research community and Canadians on how to optimize support for fundamental science in Canada," the government said in a [news release](#). "The panel will also survey international best practices for funding science and examine whether emerging researchers face barriers that prevent them from achieving career goals. It will look at what must be done to address these barriers and what more can be done to encourage Canada's scientists to take on bold new research challenges."

Click the link for more information on the federal review.

[Click here](#)

## **Academic Matters tackles university governance**



Academic Matters, a magazine published by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), has devoted its latest issue to the subject of university governance. Entitled "Whose University is it Anyway", the magazine includes articles about a number of governance controversies that have recently made headlines across the country. There are also articles about "quality assurance" program reviews, a successful campaign against Brock University's attempts at program prioritization, and an innovative partnership between the University of Toronto and an organization supporting people with intellectual disabilities. Click the link to read the magazine.

[Click here](#)

## **Brexit and the university sector**

What will be the impact of the UK's decision to leave the European Union on British universities? Just a few days before the June 23 referendum, an [open letter](#) signed by the vice-chancellors of 103 UK universities warned that leaving the EU would "undermine our position as a global leader in science and innovation, impoverish our campuses and limit opportunities for British people."

In the days immediately following the vote, there were a plethora of articles and blog posts about the impact of Brexit on the university sector. While many commentators foresee gloom and doom for the university sector, others were more optimistic. Here is a selection of what was said in the UK and European media:

- [Life after Brexit: what next for British universities?](#) (*Times Higher Education*)
- [Brexit result: what does it mean for the UK's higher education sector and students?](#) (*The Independent*)
- [What does Brexit mean for the research community?](#) (*Deutsche Welle website*)

Universities will pay a high price now our future has been voted down (*The Guardian*)

- How can universities prepare for a post-Brexit world? (*The Guardian*)
- EU referendum result: The UK's universities should be optimistic post-Brexit, 4 reasons why (*The Independent*)

## Research links from around the world

Each month, *News You Can Use* highlights several examples of new and interesting research taking place at universities around the world. With Brexit and the upcoming U.S. election in the news, this month's focus is political science research.



**Democracy for Realists: why elections do not produce responsive governments.** In a recently-published book, two political scientists from Vanderbilt and Princeton Universities conclude that random events can have a bigger impact on election results than policies.

**Do the media set the parliamentary agenda?** Researchers from seven European countries studied the role of the media in setting the political agenda for both governments and opposition parties. They found that the extent of media influence is stronger in some countries than in others, and the type of political system can have an impact.

**Is your political ideology in your head?** A new study by researchers at the University of Nebraska concludes that there are psychological differences between liberals and conservatives that go beyond just their political views.

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