

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

September 2021

## President's Message: Return to Campus Update

Dr. Tara Perrot, DFA President, 2021-2022

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Welcome back! I sincerely hope you all had some time to rest and rejuvenate over the summer. We are now a couple of weeks into a new term with some familiar and some unique challenges. The DFA has been busy since the spring trying to stay on top of the dynamic situation that is this fall term.

- **Ongoing Grievance:** We pushed from the first moment that Administration announced most classes would be in-person (memo dated April 13, 2021) by filing a grievance on the grounds that the DFA had not been provided with necessary information to ensure the safety of its Members engaged in in-person activities on campus. As part of this grievance, we demanded access to the results of classroom ventilation audit, as well as voiced our on-going request to engage in meaningful discourse with the Administration via representation on the Return to Campus (RTC) Committee. [Ventilation audit reports](#) for classrooms on our four campuses were eventually provided, but we still have little information regarding spaces such as research labs and offices. We were unsuccessful in attaining representation on the RTC committee before it was disbanded in July and are now pushing for membership on the Transition Advisory Group (TAG) co-chaired by Marlo Shinyei and Jasmine Walsh. In addition to pressing for representation on the TAG, the DFA is also calling for the establishment of a working sub-group of the Association-Board Committee (ABC). The ABC, which is the joint committee of the DFA and the Board that administers the collective agreement, was instrumental in the development of a COVID-19 Letter of Understanding for the academic year 2020/2021. As the COVID pandemic continues into the academic year 2021/2022, the DFA believes that participation on these committees will ensure the DFA has an active role in the academic decisions that affect the health and safety of DFA members.
- **Safety of Our Members:** Our top priority remains the safety of our Members as we go back into classrooms, conduct hands-on lab classes and tutorials, provide counselling services, and serve patrons in our numerous libraries. In anticipation of going back to these duties, you voiced many questions and concerns. Your opinions and comments provided the foundation for our demands of the Administration for the safest workplace possible. Dalhousie has followed the lead of many comparator institutions across Canada in asking for proof of COVID-19 vaccination or twice-weekly testing. As Nova Scotia joins other provinces in entering the 4<sup>th</sup> wave of this pandemic, we will continue to push for mandatory indoor mask use when physical distancing is not possible for the entire fall term. We will also continue to hold the Administration accountable for its promise that instructors will not be mandated to teach any course simultaneously in-person and on-line. We recently reminded Dr. Harvey of this promise and will advocate on behalf of individual Members who find themselves under pressure to do so in the event of an outbreak in their class.

## EDIA Roundtable

On August 31, DFA President Tara Perrot and DFA Equity Committee Member Raghav Sampangi participated in a roundtable on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA). The zoom, coordinated by the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT), was an opportunity for faculty associations to discuss EDIA initiatives happening in local universities. Thank you to Raghav for preparing [an overview of the discussions](#).

## DFA Website Refresh

Our DFA website is getting a refresh! We will have a site geared toward our members with information on collective bargaining, pensions, benefits and more. Plus, we are introducing a smaller site designed for the public so they can get to know our members, learn DFA's perspective on issues affecting post-secondary education and get information about our public events. The sites will be launched sometime this fall.

## DFA Members Recognized by the Royal Society of Canada

The DFA congratulates the following members who will be inducted into the Royal Society of Canada in November during their Celebration of Excellence and Engagement.

### Members

Dr. Lisa Binkley, History  
Dr. Mita Dasog, Chemistry  
Dr. Noreen Kamal, Industrial Engineering  
Dr. Debbie Martin, Health and Human Performance

### Fellows

Dr. Julie Laroche, Biology  
Dr. Boris Worm, Biology

*For info, visit the [RSC website](#).*

## Interim Senate Chair Appointed

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DFA member Dr. Louise Spiteri, Professor in the School of Information Management, has been appointed as the Interim Chair of Dalhousie's Senate. Dr. Spiteri is the first woman to hold that position in almost 30 years.

In an interview with Dal News, she says, "I do believe that we have an obligation as members

of the academy to contribute to the governance of the university. I felt this was a really good opportunity when the call came out. It's very much an interest in governance and having a voice in the way that programs are designed. With a bicameral system of governance, I think it's very important for Senate to have a strong voice ..." (Dal News, September 13, 2021)

## Important Dates

### Truth and Reconciliation Day

*Thursday, September 30, 2021*

Dalhousie will be closed and classes will not be held on Thursday, September 30 so that members of the Dalhousie community can observe the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. This day was originally proposed in 2015 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and has now been designated a statutory holiday. Possible ways that you can observe and recognize this day will soon be provided by email.

### Building Solidarity and Alliances: Indigenizing the Academy

*CAUT Workshop, Friday, October 15, 2021 at 11:30am - at 2:30pm (ET)*

CAUT will be hosting a [virtual Indigenous conference on Friday, October 15](#). [Dr. Lorna Wanosts'a7 Williams](#) will open this event with a keynote conversation. For more info, visit [CAUT.ca](#) or contact SM Leduc, Policy & Government Relations Officer, at [leduc@caut.ca](mailto:leduc@caut.ca).

### 4 Seasons of Reconciliation Online Course

*Available now*

Dalhousie is offering an online course, [4 Seasons of Reconciliation](#), available to all Dalhousie faculty, staff, and administration. Through 10 modules, the course provides decolonialized education in line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action*. The course takes 3.5 – 4.5 hours to complete and it does not need to be completed in one sitting. A certificate is issued upon completion. To take the course, [register here](#).

*4 Seasons of Reconciliation* was developed by [Reconciliation Education](#), a producer of online resources, and the [First Nations University of Canada](#), in consultation with an Indigenous Advisory Circle, comprised of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, educators, and members of the First Nations University of Canada.

## Health Spending Account: Deadline for Claims

You have a [90-day window](#) from June 30 to submit eligible HSA expenses incurred July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021. Unused balances from your HSA will carry forward for one year and will then be forfeited, so it is important to claim your full entitlement by the end of September.

## CAUT Fair Employment Week 2021

*Monday, October 18 – Friday, October 22, 2021*

To recognize and draw attention to the issues facing contract faculty in Canada, DFA has arranged for our members to view the documentary *In Search of Professor Precarious* for an 8-day streaming period. The log in details to access the film will be provided in a separate email closer to the date. *In Search of Professor Precarious*, directed by Gerry Potter of Red Heeler Media Inc., is an award-winning documentary and has been selected for several international film festivals.

## And in Politics ...

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### **Federal Election: Letter to MP**

**Candidates:** The DFA sent a letter to the MP candidates in the ridings of Halifax and Cumberland-Colchester, highlighting the issues facing post-secondary education in Canada. The letter is on the [homepage of DFA's website](#). (At the time this update was prepared, we have received [responses from NDP Lisa Roberts and Liberal Andy Fillmore](#) – both candidates in the Halifax riding.)

### **Provincial Election: Letter to NS Premier**

**Houston:** Nova Scotia's new Premier Tim Houston took office on August 31, 2021 and named his cabinet shortly after. The DFA sent to the Premier a letter outlining three issues - the health of Dalhousie's pension, Nova Scotia's increasing reliance on precarious faculty and rising tuition costs. The letter, on the [homepage of DFA's website](#), was copied to the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Labour and Advanced Education. (These portfolios have been separated into two different departments under the PC government.)

*For comments and feedback, please contact [Catherine.Wall@dal.ca](mailto:Catherine.Wall@dal.ca)*

*Find us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @dalfacultyassoc*