

# DFA DIALOGUE

## 2019-2020 Annual Report for the Dalhousie Faculty Association

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Wednesday, May 13, 2020

2 - 4 pm via zoom

*During the zoom, please refer to this report, along with the agenda, minutes & budget documents sent via email on April 29, 2020.*

*zoom & voting details sent via email May 11, 2020.*

### Territorial Acknowledgement

*The DFA is located in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.*

#### Dalhousie Faculty Association

*Contact DFA anytime to ask questions, provide feedback, or get involved. During COVID-19 physical distancing requirements, please contact us by email.*

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**DFA**  
 Dalhousie Faculty Association

## President's Report

*Julia M. Wright, DFA President, 2019-2020*

This has not been a year that any of us could have anticipated. Before March, a lot of normal business was conducted. We put together a stellar bargaining team and then had over a dozen contract review and consultation sessions with the Membership, in Halifax and Truro, to help us prepare bargaining proposals. We met with Members facing a wide range of difficulties, from bullying/harassment, including over workload, to disciplinary proceedings to collegial governance failures. We also worked on advocacy, from urging better solutions to various problems for our Members to partnering with the administration and Halifax Libraries on a Teach-In on Islam and Islamophobia. DFA representatives on the Association-Board Committee continued the important work of overseeing various matters arising from the Collective Agreement. The DFA Executive Committee met regularly to discuss a wide range of issues, from bargaining consultations to donations to fellow faculty associations on strike to benefits to the regular business of the DFA office and then emergency measures after mid-March.

One of those Executive meetings was held on the Truro campus. Among the unfortunate effects of the pandemic is the suspension of our visits to the Faculty of Agriculture. The Truro campus has had a very difficult five years: a fire in the Animal Ruminant Centre, where animals were kept, in August 2015; a major late-night fire at the Cox building, destroying labs, offices, and classrooms, in June 2018; and now a further

interruption to research and teaching because of the pandemic. The second fire seems to have partly shaped the administration's response to the pandemic in some useful ways, but those lessons cost a lot to our colleagues in the Faculty of Agriculture. Our visits were important opportunities to learn about various details that don't always come through in e-mails or overview reports. Video-conferencing with members in Truro has been helpful, but it is not the same and the scale of the disruption to their work caused by the second fire and the pandemic is almost impossible to grasp. And, of course, the pandemic has also affected the rebuilding of Cox. To keep up with the issues as well as meet with Members on other matters, we had been visiting Truro about every two months.

We've also been working with a fairly new administration, or at least trying to. The provost has only been here since Fall 2018, and spent six months of her short time here as acting president; our president arrived mid-January; the AVPs are all fairly new, as are some of our deans. This has meant more unfamiliarity with the Collective Agreement than might be wished, and a lot of planning has proceeded without taking our rights and policies clearly into account, and this has been especially so in the last few weeks.

We have also been working on what we might call "external relations." We have been meeting throughout the year with other unions and groups on campus, including NSGEU, CUPE3912, DSU, and DAGS. A few months ago, we collaborated with regional faculty

associations to establish, with CAUT's support, a regular meeting of Atlantic-region faculty associations at the twice-yearly CAUT Council that supplements the annual meeting of the Atlantic Canada Council of Faculty Associations.

With the pandemic, these relationships became even more important. The DFA is an active part of a new province-wide alliance of higher-education unions, leading first to a [Joint Statement](#) (when the group was new) and now an [Open Letter](#) encouraging support for the post-secondary sector in the months ahead. It is now an alliance of 16 unions and groups across Nova Scotia, representing students, staff, and faculty. We have been meeting weekly since late March to share information and discuss solutions.

Months before the pandemic, we were working on finding a new auditor to review Dalhousie University's financial statements and provide an update, and they did some very interesting analysis indeed. We didn't publicize [that report](#) as we had planned because we received it about a week after the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic. The Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) process was suspended and we all had too much on our plates already, moving courses online and dealing with significant changes to our work and our daily lives.

We still do not have BAC's revised budget or even an indication that BAC or Senate Planning and Governance Committee (the two groups responsible for budget oversight) are meeting to discuss changes to the budget. Cuts should not be considered without a university budget in place. Moreover, enrolment has not

yet dropped. Summer enrolments are, as a university-wide total, about the same as before. Fall is the great unknown here, but it is just that — unknown. The University lost residence revenue by sending students home a month early, but it has also saved money on utilities, paper supplies (office and washrooms), administration travel, reception costs (just think of Convocation alone), and so on. It is unclear how many people on lockdown or, worse, out of work, will want to take university courses in the Fall. The budgetary effects of COVID will be complex, and may change month to month.

I'm not here to speculate about what may happen in the Fall. But here's what I keep coming back to:

1. The DFA's commissioned analyses of Dalhousie University's finances, over most of the last decade, keep returning to one point: the Board has moved Operating Fund surpluses almost entirely into the Capital Fund, year after year, including over \$32.8m in 2018-2019 alone (see Appendix C of the [Report](#)). What is the surplus for fiscal 2019-20, ending March 31<sup>st</sup>? We won't know until the audited report is released ([normally in June](#)). But consider this: \$32.8m is over 17% of 2018-2019 tuition revenues. To what degree can deciding *not* to move the Operating Fund surplus into the Capital Fund offset any tuition losses in the Fall term due to COVID-19?
2. DFA Executives have been making a key point for years: invest in people, not just buildings. With courses online and most of us working from home, most

Dalhousie buildings effectively don't matter. *We do*. If Dal is online in the Fall, *we* are going to be our students' contact with Dalhousie—not facilities, not residences, not the quad at Studley or the lovely gardens in Truro. *Us*. This is the time to invest in people: in our expertise to do the academic work of the university, and in addressing the limitations we all face because of the usual challenges of developing online courses and the special challenges of doing high-quality academic work during a national emergency.

Without us, without our work (and our home offices), there is no Dalhousie in a pandemic. Remember that if you feel you are being pushed. Remember that if you feel like your work is being undervalued or the time it takes is being underestimated. Remember all of that and please get in touch with the DFA office for support and advice if you're facing any difficulties.

The people who work in the DFA office have also been vitally important during the pandemic. They continue to work diligently as experts committed to our members and to the academic mission that defines our work. No one can slice to the heart of a matter like Barb MacLennan or remember members and policy specifics like Lynn Purves or track a swarm of details like Kristin Hoyt or convey the big picture like Catherine Wall. Dave Westwood, who will become President at the AGM, has a

truly comprehensive view of academic processes and their intersection with Collective Agreement matters. I've worked with him closely for about two-and-a-half years now—first as a member of the Bargaining Team when he was President-Elect, then as President-Elect myself and this past year as President—and it has been a wonderful experience. Many of you might not know this, but essentially the President and President-Elect are a team; from weekly staff meetings to meetings with HR or the upper administration to meetings with members to drafting documents, we all work together. Dave and I have complemented each other's expertise but always found ourselves on the same page when it comes to principles, both academic and in relation to our Collective Agreement—as well as to our responsibilities as the employer of four staff.

I will miss working with them all. Being President or President-Elect of the DFA is hard work but it's good work: to our collective benefit and individual protection. The pandemic has only highlighted the importance of the DFA, and it was an honour and a privilege to contribute to it over the past two years. Now, I hand the baton back to Dave for his second term as DFA President and to Tara Perrot as President-Elect. Thank you to them both for taking on these vital roles, and for all of the expertise and commitment that they bring to this crucial work on our collective behalf. **DFA**

## Grievance Committee

*David Westwood (Chair), Catrina Brown, Tim Juckes, Maria Pacurar and Julia Wright*

When a Member believes there has been a breach of the Collective Agreement the case is generally reviewed by the DFA President in consultation with the DFA Professional Officer. Timelines matter greatly. At times, a satisfactory resolution can be reached without invoking grievance/arbitration procedures, through meetings with the parties or through the work of the Association-Board Committee. If not, the DFA Grievance Committee reviews the case and recommends whether or not to initiate grievance procedures (Clause 29.06). If this matter is not resolved at the informal stage, the Grievance Committee further considers the case and determines whether to file a formal grievance. Should a formal grievance not result in a favourable resolution, the Grievance Committee considers whether the case should be sent to arbitration. Approval of the Executive Committee is required to pursue arbitration because of the broader impact on the membership, the Collective Agreement and the financial implications for the Association.

There is a single case to report for the current year.

An informal grievance was filed at the level of the Vice-President Academic/Provost following concerns about the handling of search procedures for a tenure-stream position. The

grievor held consecutive limited-term appointments within the unit for many years and was short-listed and interviewed for the advertised position but not ultimately offered the appointment. During the process, concerns were brought forward about perception of bias as well as factors related to disagreement about intellectual property.

The informal grievance was denied at the informal stage; the Grievance Committee elected to pursue a formal grievance at the level of the President. This was complicated by the fact that the respondent to the informal grievance was now in the role of Interim President; the Acting Vice-President Academic/Provost thus stood in as Acting President for the purpose of the formal grievance. The formal grievance was denied at the formal stage.

After receiving a legal opinion on the merits of the case from external counsel Ray Larkin, the Grievance Committee recommended arbitration to the Executive Committee. The DFA Executive Committee approved this recommendation and an arbitrator was appointed. Several meetings were held with the grievor and potential witnesses in preparation for the hearing. Before the first arbitration date, the grievor requested that the DFA withdraw the grievance. *DFA*

## Dalhousie University Employee Benefits Advisory Committee

*Lori Dithurbide and Stephanie Kapusta, DFA Representatives*

The committee is made up of 12 voting members from the following employee and employer groups: DFA (two reps), NSGEU local 77 (two reps), NSGEU local 99 (one rep), DPMG (one rep), University Senate (one rep) and five reps appointed by the Board of Governors.

The committee meets approximately six times throughout the year. Committee members use their experience to provide ideas, guidance, and feedback to effectively administer the plan. Major objectives of the committee are to:

- Develop health strategies (e.g., wellness);
- Ensure the plan is attractive and competitive compared to relevant Canadian employers;
- Promote employee knowledge of plan selections and cost management; and
- Provide consistent benefit coverage across all employee groups, as feasible.

The committee oversees the administration of employee benefits including Group Life Benefits, Survivor Income Benefits, Long-Term Disability, Major Medical Insurance, Health Travel Coverage, Dental Plan, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Optional Life Insurance, and Voluntary Personal Accidental Insurance.

This year, the committee was chaired by Jenny White, Dalhousie Human Resources. The DFA representatives were Drs. Lori Dithurbide and Stephanie Kapusta.

### **Some numbers**

The total benefits spend for 2018-2019 came to \$12.92M (down 6% from \$13.81M last year). Of this, \$5.61M was on Life and Long-Term Disability, \$6.56M on Health and Dental, \$0.32M on Travel and Accidental Death and Dismemberment, and \$0.15M on Employee and Family Assistance.

The total health claims per employee for 2018-2019 averaged \$1,242 (down from \$1,332 in 2017-2018). The most common therapy/medication classes were: 1) inflammatory, 2) cancer, and 3) immunosuppressant agents. The amounts claimed for speciality drugs account for 42.1% of total drugs (particularly for treating cancer and immune system disorders). Next year's total health spending is expected to decrease by 4%.

The total dental claims in 2018-2019 averaged \$1,025 per employee, an increase of 2% in total paid claims when compared with 2017-2018 (most common services: polishing, restorative, and diagnostic).

The number of Long-Term Disability claims saw a rise of 28% when compared to 2017-2018. The total cost of claims increased by 11% to \$2.88M.

### **Renewal rates**

The following group insurance renewal rate changes have been recommended for 2020-2021:

Manulife

- Long-Term Disability: decrease of 7% (the rate change for LTD is calculated on the basis of the preceding five years' claims history. So, although the number of claims and cost for LTD went up last year relative to the previous year, the trend over the full 5 years preceding 2018-19 is still downward, justifying a slight decrease in premium.)
- Life: increase of 7%
- Survivor Income Benefit: increase of 25% (from the current rate of 0.148% to 0.185%)

Medavie Bluecross

- Extended Health Care: decrease of 4%
- Dental: no change

SSQ Financial

- Accidental Death and Dismemberment: no change
- Travel: decrease of 5%

**Total change in benefits: decrease of 3%****Changes in effect April 1, 2020.**

IMPORTANT: In late February, DFA members received an email from Benefits titled "Employee Benefits Update – February 2020" linking to the Dalhousie University Benefits Newsletter which outlined important changes and enhancements to the medical plan package effective April 1, 2020. These include:

- Access to an expanded list of mental health service providers, including psychologists, social workers, counselling therapists, psychotherapists,

psychoeducators, and internet Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (iCBT).

- A dedicated annual maximum of \$1,500 to be used towards the mental health practitioners listed above.
- All other existing health practitioners (chiropractor, osteopath, chiropodist/podiatrist, and physiotherapist) remain covered under a separate \$500 combined annual maximum.
- Moving diabetic supplies coverage to the pay direct card (same card used for drug coverage).
- Change to the drug formulary – moving to Rx Choices. Reimbursement levels for drugs are not changing, however the drug formulary is being updated to Rx Choices, the current and standard drug formulary of Blue Cross. This change will be effective for all prescriptions dispensed on or after April 1, 2020. What does this mean?

- The majority of members will not be impacted by the formulary changes.

- Over 500 members will have reduced out of pocket expenses.

- Plan members prescribed specialty drugs will be required to join their drug manufacturer's Patient Support Program.

Please go to the newsletter for more details regarding these points. For more info, visit <http://www.dal.ca/dept/hr.html> or contact Dal HR Benefits office. **DFA**

## Dalhousie University Pension Advisory Committee

*Jonathan Shapiro and Jodi Lazare, DFA Representatives*

The Pension Advisory Committee (PAC) is a parity committee with equal representation from the Dalhousie Board of Governors (BOG), DFA and NSGEU (Locals 99 and 77). PAC also comprises representatives from the Dalhousie Professional and Managerial Group (DPMG), which has voice but no vote (and a veto over amendments to the plan) and the Association of Dalhousie Retirees and Pensioners (ADRP), which has voice but no vote.

Jonathan Shapiro and Jodi Lazare, both in the Faculty of Law, are the DFA representatives. Mr. Shapiro is the current Chair of PAC, and Assistant Vice-President Jasmine Walsh is the Vice-Chair of the Committee.

### The Dalhousie Pension Plan

The latest quarterly figures for the Dalhousie Pension Plan (the Plan), indicate that the Plan has continued its steady recovery and growth. Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, global markets were relatively strong. As of January 2019 (our last available figures), the Plan was in a good financial position, with an improved position of 100.9% funding on a going-concern basis. The Plan continues to have a significant solvency deficit, though that deficit has remained stable compared to one year ago. While the solvency measure is a useful tool to assess the health of the Plan, the best analytic measure is on a going-concern basis since Dalhousie University will continue to operate for the foreseeable future, and enjoys full solvency relief from the provincial government.

These figures do not take into account the significant crash in global markets in the first quarter of 2020, and we expect when new figures become available in early May there will be a significant drop in the funding position of the Plan.

### New Pension Regulations

On February 24, 2020, the Nova Scotia government passed significant amendments to the *Pension Benefits Regulations*. These new regulations are designed to strengthen and protect pension plans in the province by requiring all pension plans to meet a legislated overfunding level, in order to ensure that all plans have sufficient funds to be sustainable. This overfunding level is called a Provision for Adverse Deviation. There is a five-year phased-in implementation period to meet the new legislative requirements. The new regulations also permit plans with solvency relief (including the Dalhousie Plan) to file valuations every three years, rather than the current situation requiring annual valuations.

The PAC is in the process of studying the effects of the new regulations on the Plan and making recommendations to meet these requirements.

### Annual Pension Valuation

The Plan underwent an actuarial valuation on March 31, 2019 for the third year in a row, as required by Nova Scotia's pension legislation.



Under ordinary circumstances, a further annual valuation would be conducted on March 31, 2020. However, because of the passage of the new regulations and the severe impact on world markets seen in the first quarter of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PAC is planning on backdating the 2020 valuation to January 31, 2020. This will reflect the value of the Plan before the onset of the pandemic, and because the new regulations permit a valuation every three years, should allow for stable future planning which is not as affected by the mass volatility of recent months. Once that valuation is completed, it will be available to all DFA members. This would mean the next Plan valuation after the one completed this year would not be conducted until 2023.

### **Continued Board Interest in the Abolition of the RTF**

Dalhousie's pension plan is composed of two trust funds: the Pension Trust Fund (PTF), and the Retirees' Trust Fund (RTF). Generally, pension contributions of active employees are held in the PTF until retirement when an amount equal to the commuted value of the defined pension is transferred to the RTF. This is unusual compared to almost any other pension plan. The amount transferred to the RTF depends to a considerable extent on the post-retirement interest assumption (PRIA) of 4.55%. Because actual investment returns have generally, over time, exceeded PRIA, the net effect has been to create different funding levels in the two trust funds, with the PTF usually underfunded and the RTF usually in surplus. Discretionary indexing for retirees depends on the amount of surplus in the RTF.

The Board has continued to express its desire to move the Plan into a single-fund plan. The effect of this proposal would be to reduce the likelihood of indexing for retirees under the combined PTF for a lengthy period of time. With the passage of the new regulations, we anticipate a renewed push from the Board to implement a cessation of transfers as part of the response to the new regulatory funding requirements.

The DFA representatives continue to oppose this idea so long as the likelihood of indexing for future retirees will be negatively impacted.

### **The Future**

DFA members continue to contribute substantial amounts to the Plan. This year, the DFA member will contribute about 8.06% of pensionable salary, up to a maximum pensionable salary of \$149,050. The Plan is a very good Plan, at a time when university defined-benefit plans are under attack. It is especially important that the Plan remain strong now, when there is so much uncertainty for our members and retired members because of the current global pandemic.

Our pension is a primary reason why the futures of retired Members are relatively secure. We should continue to keep the long-term health and strength of the Plan in the forefront of our minds and to protect it from cost-cutting measures that reduce the financial security of all DFA Members, past and present, especially given the pressures created by the new regulations and current difficult economic conditions. *DFA*

## Dalhousie Pension Trust Fund and Retirees' Trust Fund

*Ronald Pink, DFA Representative*

I am pleased to provide my year-end report to the membership of the Dalhousie Faculty Association with respect to the operation and results of the Dalhousie Pension Trust Fund (PTF) and the Dalhousie Retirees' Trust Fund (RTF).

When I first committed to prepare this report, it was before the COVID-19 epidemic. This report is essentially found in two parts, the 2019 results and then secondly the COVID-19 impact. When we look back at the performance of the PTF and the RTF for the calendar year 2019, the results were overall quite successful. The team of the Trustees lead by Colin Spinney and Nancy-Beth Foran, have done a remarkable job as usual. Their investment managers throughout Canada and the United States have performed remarkably well, largely in accordance with the design of the Plan and the benchmarks which have been established.

The following table shows the results for the year for both funds.

### Pension Trust Fund

Value of Fund: \$760,000,000	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	10 yrs	15 yrs
Rate of Return	13.52%	7.72%	8.14%	8.02%	9.06%	7.20%
Benchmark	15.61%	7.68%	8.42%	7.97%	8.23%	6.81%
Fund Requirement	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%	6.09%	6.37%

### Retirees' Trust Fund

Value of Fund: \$707,000,000	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	10 yrs	15 yrs
Rate of Return	15.12%	6.95%	7.57%	7.55%	8.13%	6.85%
Benchmark	15.75%	7.16%	8.06%	7.73%	7.72%	6.68%
Fund Requirement	5.05%	5.05%	5.05%	5.05%	5.05%	5.05%

Although last year was a successful year, the events which have occurred in 2020 have had a significant impact on the funds. Although I generally would not report this until next year, I thought it was in the best interest of the beneficiaries to understand exactly what has happened as a result of the COVID-19 investment impact.

As a result of the COVID-19 impact you will not be surprised to learn that there has been a significant decline in the value of the Canadian dollar versus the United States dollar, and also a collapse in the world stock markets. Needless to say, these have had a dramatic effect on the operation of the funds post March 10, 2020.

The Trustees have been meeting monthly to discuss the concerns with respect to the effect of the falling Canadian dollar and its impact on the investment strategy. We have a very explicit hedging policy to protect against variances in the Canadian dollar and this is a matter of significant concern to the Trustees. We will continue to watch this matter very closely.

In addition, the stock markets have had a significant downturn as you would no doubt be aware and for the first two weeks of March both funds have suffered approximately a 10% reduction in value. But these numbers are so tentative that they should not cause any concern. We will need to see how the market returns over the balance of the calendar year. It is too early to be overly concerned about this matter, however you can rest assured that the Trustees are watching the issues most closely.

As I have reported in the past, the Trustees have an industry leading ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) policy and we continue to watch the performance of the investments that the Trustees make to ensure that the investments in the stock market only go, as best as possible, to corporations that have high ESG ranking. We continue to work with Blackrock to analyse this matter on a semi-annual basis and their reports show continued improvement in the performance of a number of our investments in this regard. Investing in companies that have high ESG scores makes for sound investment in the view of the Trustees and provides a much better result for the beneficiaries.

Overall you can see that the Fund has performed well in the past year. We will continue to watch closely what happens as a result of the COVID-19 issue and its impact on the stock market. Rest assured that all of the members of the committee are interested in only one thing – the success of your pension plan.

I wish to extend my thanks to my fellow committee members and the investment team at Dalhousie, including consultant Robert Mitchell who continues to contribute excellent and sound advice to the committee, day in and day out. *DFA*

## Association-Board Committee

*Tim Juckes, (DFA Co-Chair), David Westwood (DFA Nominee), Barbara MacLennan (DFA Nominee, DFA Professional Officer) and Lynn Purves (DFA Observer, DFA Administrative Officer)*

The Association-Board Committee (ABC) considers matters of interpretation or application of the Collective Agreement. Along with the DFA's three nominees, the Board of Governors is represented by Laura Neals (Director of Academic Staff Relations), David Gray (Dean, Faculty of Agriculture), and Marlo Shinyei (Academic Staff Relations Manager). ABC operates by concurrent majority. Agendas largely concern the administration of certain clauses of the Collective Agreement, including matters that would otherwise not be in compliance with the Collective Agreement and matters that require the approval of ABC as defined in the Collective Agreement. ABC also deals with issues of broad concern to our membership.

There is some changing of the guard on ABC. In May, David Gray leaves ABC and will be replaced by Frank Harvey (Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences). Marlo Shinyei is also taking leave from ABC and being replaced by Silvia Behrens-Kelleher (Academic Staff Relations Manager). Thanks to both David and Marlo for their work over the past years.

ABC meets monthly to deal with particular and recurring items such as waivers of advertising, extensions of limited-term appointments, spousal appointments, automatic renewals, special salary increases (SSIs), salaries above the maximum,

administrative stipends and job descriptions, extensions to time-lines (e.g., anomalies fund, tenure limits), and parking fees.

ABC nominees also receive a copy of a monthly Academic Appointment Activity Report (AAAR) document which lists all academic staff changes (appointments, promotions, tenure, sabbaticals, etc.) and provides supporting documentation. We query missing documentation and, on occasion, note that the Collective Agreement will be violated if a proposed action is taken. Such items are brought to ABC to be resolved.

**Timetable:** Following the implementation of the new timetable system for the 2019-2020 academic year, the Board undertook a formal review of the University Timetable Policy in the fall of 2019. The DFA is still awaiting the report from this review. The Board also indicated that the Registrar's Office has made a number of operational changes to improve the timetable experience.

**Boyer Model:** With the introduction of the Boyer Model into the Collective Agreement (see Article 17.17) in the last round of negotiations, and the consequent administrative overload for designated group Members with respect to Tenure, Continuing Appointment and Appointment without Term (Article 15) and Promotion (Article 16), ABC discussed the related overload stipends

(Article 20.09(b)) and teaching and/or research support (Article 20.09(c)). The DFA wants to ensure funds for such payments are separate from a unit's budget and that Members do not feel that asking for support will place a financial burden on their unit. The Board is aware of this issue and working on it.

**Copyright:** The DFA raised issues relating to Members' copyright and potential violation of Members' rights by students. The Board agreed to include 'pop-up' information for students about copyright material. They did not agree to provide legal support to defend Members' copyright. Members are expected to monitor any copyright violations of their work and individually contact service providers.

**SRI:** The Board and Senate are reviewing SRIs and Brad Wuetherick (Executive Director, Centre for Learning and Teaching) made presentations to Senate and ABC about his analysis of the current process.

**Ergonomic Workplace Assessment:** In response to queries from Members regarding funding for an ergonomic workplace assessment, the Board indicated that Members had two options. If there is medical documentation to support the matter, Members should work through the Accommodations office. If there is no supporting medical documentation, Members should make a request through their department. There is no central funding available for such assessments at present.

**IT Services for Retirees:** In Fall 2019 a number of retirees had been denied access to MyDal and OneDrive. The Board reported that there had been an accidental change to

settings and all retirees' access had been restored.

**Supplemental Research Grants:** The DFA nominees raised the issue of proration of supplemental research grants for Members taking a six-month leave following six years of service. The Board consulted with Financial Services and has agreed that Members can request a 'full' supplemental research grant when taking a six-month leave following six years of service.

**Professional Development Allowance (PDA):** Some PDA claims contain expenses that require clarification. It seems that this might have been determined by Financial Services and/or Human Resources. The DFA Nominees have argued at ABC that this should be referred to ABC as it involves interpretation of clauses of the Collective Agreement, which is the jurisdiction of ABC. This matter is ongoing.

**Medical Coverage for Dependent Students over 21:** When a Member's dependent is a student and turns 21, the student is removed from the medical coverage in the month of the 21st birthday. The Member receives notice to this effect. The Board has agreed that going forward Members will receive a notice reminding them to complete a form to continue the coverage for each year the child remains a student, up to age 25.

**COVID-19:** A number of issues relating to COVID-19 have arisen and to ensure these matters are discussed and resolved as soon as possible, the ABC has agreed to meet for a COVID-only meeting between regularly scheduled monthly meetings. *DFA*

## Dalhousie University Environmental Health and Safety Committee

### **DFA Membership (Halifax)**

*Mark Obrovac, Chair and DFA Faculty Representative (Jan. 2017 - present)*

*Alex Speed, Alt. DFA Faculty Representative (May 2016 - present)*

*Marc Whalen, Alt. DFA Instructor Representative (Sept. 2018 - present)*

*Emanuel Jannasch, Alt. DFA Instructor Representative (Sept. 2018 - present)*

### **DFA Membership (Truro)**

*Margaret Hartling, DFA Instructor Representative (Oct 2016 - present)*

*Paul McNeil, Alt. DFA Representative (June 2018 - Dec. 2019), DFA Representative (Jan. 2020 – Present)*

### **Role of the Safety Committee**

The Environmental Health and Safety Committee (Halifax) meets on the third Thursday of the month from 1:00-2:30 pm to discuss all aspects of health and safety on campus. Committee membership includes university appointees and representatives from employee and student groups. There are positions for two DFA appointees – one Professorial and one Instructor member.

Information about the Dalhousie Environmental Health and Safety Committee can be found on the [Office of Environmental Health and Safety website](#).

The committee's purpose is stated as: "The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee is established by the President to establish an Environmental Health and Safety Program as set out in the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act. The Committee assists the University in attempting to achieve the highest possible standards of environmental health and safety. In cooperation with staff, faculty, students, and the University Administration, the Committee assists the

University in creating and maintaining a safe and healthy environment."

### **Summary of Events for 2019-2020 (Halifax)**

Achieving quorum has been challenging for the committee during this reporting period, with some employee groups not providing representatives. A communications campaign with employee groups has improved the situation. However, currently some groups still have no representation on the committee. Representation from all groups within the university is vitally important for maintaining a safe workplace. Efforts are ongoing to improve representation.

A number of power outages this year has highlighted the need for guidelines for building occupancy and procedures for evacuating and re-entering buildings, especially those with labs. In response to this need, the Safety Office has updated departments on procedures individually. University-wide guidelines are currently being drafted.

The Safety Office has continued to provide new training modules online via the

Dalhousie College of Continuing Education. Safety training modules currently available include:

- CCE-EHSO0010 - WHMIS 2015 Course
- CCE-EHSO0012 - Chemical Spill Response
- CCE-EHSO0020 - Fire Safety Course
- CCE-EHSO0030 - Lab Safety Course
- CCE-EHSO0040 - Ergonomics Course

The above courses are available free of charge for all Dalhousie staff and students. Department chairs and individual lab supervisors are responsible for determining if these courses are required for employees or students under their supervision. [A safety orientation video is available for new employee orientation from the EHS website.](#)

### Summary of Events for 2019-2020 (Truro)

- Radon testing is underway on campus
- Fire safety audits have been completed
- Exterior doors in Cox were installed to meet industrial standards
- Committee has been developed to prepare a University-wide power outage protocol
- Work continues in the aftermath of the fire
- New sidewalk was installed at the MacRae library
- New sidewalks were installed in and around Haley
- EHS has started looking after the replenishment of first aid kits in the labs.
- Fumehood testing completed by EHS
- Stericycle is looking after Biohazard waste
- Discussion has begun regarding lock in/out tags on equipment policy, along with access to electrical panel when a breaker trips. *DFA*

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## Dalhousie University Transportation and Security Committee

*Sherry Huybers, DFA Representative*

The Transportation and Security Committee meets monthly from September to June. Membership is composed of voting representatives from all unions and prominent bodies on all campuses, including the DFA, NSGEU (Local 77 and Local 99), DPMG, DSU, and Senate. Non-voting members include the Director of Security Services, the Traffic Officer, the Facilities Communications Officer, and the Office of Sustainability. The current co-chairs of the committee are Peter Jones (Sexton Campus) and Kurt Sampson

(DPMG). Minutes for the monthly meetings are posted [here](#).

### Parking Rates

The parking rates for 2019-2020 were presented and discussed at the May and June 2019 Transportation and Security Committee meetings. Based on the financial information, there were no grounds for recommending an increase to the parking permit fees. It was recommended that the rates remain the same

as last year. These rates were in accordance with the DFA Collective Agreement Clause 32.10 and were approved by this committee and the Association-Board Committee. The current parking rates are posted [here](#). It is unclear as to when the parking rates for 2020-2021 will be presented and discussed due to the current COVID-19 situation.

Further information regarding parking is available [here](#).

### **Parking/Transportation Highlights**

There is an area in the CSB parking lot that is still fenced off and will remain until the new boiler renovation is complete in the next couple of years.

The work at the Hancock parking lot has been completed with the number of spaces increased by 12.

Work is being completed now to add eleven additional parking spaces behind Dalplex.

There are 12 EV charging stations on campus, six of which are in the Dalplex parking lot. Because the spaces have not been utilized since the parking meters/pay & display were installed, some of the EV charging

stations will be converted back to general parking spaces.

The E-Pass is still ongoing.

HRM is working on a study on University Avenue down to Morris St., regarding the completion of a corridor to connect to Lower Water Street. The concept is part of a master plan that HRM is working on.

### **Security Highlights**

The Security Office relocated to the building adjacent to the Economics house on LeMarchant Place, where the Grad House used to be. Everything but dispatch has been moved to 1252 LeMarchant Street location. Dispatch will remain in the McCain parkade for another 12-18 months as the fire monitoring system is being upgraded around that time.

The security office has operated a Residence Community Security Officer Program focusing on the residences. The goal of the program is to make security officers more accessible to students.

Work has started at the rear of Dalplex. The work consists of safety enhancements to the emergency exits, by improving the accessibility accommodations, and the lighting to comply with code. *DFA*

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## **President's Advisory Committee on Sexualized Violence**

*Jacqueline Gahagan, DFA Representative*

There is nothing to report from this committee. *DFA*



## Dalhousie University Council on Employment Equity

*Jacqueline Gahagan, DFA Representative*

The Council on Employment Equity had very few meetings over the 2019-2020 academic year and the focus of these meetings was on discussing Federal Contractor Program requirements, the ways in which Human Resources present on equity issues, the types of data collected for this purpose and to provide input into the Gender Affirmation Policy. **DFA**

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### DFA Equity Committee

*Jacqueline Gahagan (Chair), Heather Andreas, Catrina Brown, Cassandra Hanrahan, Eli Manning, Ifeyinwa Mbakogu, Julia Wright (ex officio), and Catherine Wall (DFA Staff, ex officio)*

Over the 2019-2020 academic term the DFA Equity Committee met several times to discuss issues of concern to our membership which included: how the data are being gathered and used from SRIs to inform tenure and promotion decisions; the issue of additional tuition waivers for more marginalized student populations; the need for further disaggregation and analysis of data collected through Human Resources surveys of faculty and the high burden of equity-related service work expected from historically underrepresented members; and the need for better supports for members with disabilities. More recently, concerns were raised by the committee about the COVID-19 university closure creating additional challenges for faculty from outside Canada, restrictions on research, moving courses online, and the supports needed for members in light of these shifts. **DFA**

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### DFA Communications Co-ordination Committee

*Amy Birchall (Chair), Jason Brown, Susan Holmes, Deborah Tamlyn, Julia Wright (ex-officio) and Catherine Wall (DFA staff, ex-officio)*

The DFA Communications Co-ordination Committee had another productive year.

We started the year by adding two new members to the committee. We introduced Deborah Tamlyn, Associate Professor, School of Nursing, and Susan Holmes, Professor,

Continuing Education. They joined existing members; Amy Birchall, Jason Brown, Julia Wright (DFA President, ex-officio), and Catherine Wall (DFA staff, ex-officio). We are very excited to have our new members and I know the committee will do excellent work together in the future.

We once again proudly launched the DFA Speaker Series. This series is co-sponsored by the DFA, the Halifax Central Library, and the Colchester-East Hants Library. This series highlights volunteering members of our faculty, allowing them to speak about their areas of expertise with members of the public.

Our first talk took place at the Truro Central Library. Amy Birchall, RVT, Technical Instructor spoke on *The Prevalence of Periodontal Disease in Dogs & Cats: How the Disease is Identified, Treated, and Managed*. This talk saw members from the community, students, and faculty in attendance. We had a lot of fun with many good discussions about the care of teeth in our pets.

Our second event took place at the Halifax Central Library. We had a movie screening of the film, *Corporate Coup d'Etat*. This was an eye-opening film about how a democracy should protect its citizens, especially the most vulnerable among them. Increasingly the United States is failing to do so.

This investigative and persuasive documentary blended the insights of philosophers, authors and journalists with the experiences of citizens of the Rust Belt in the U.S. Midwest, where the steel industry once flourished, but where closures and outsourcing have left urban areas desolate and hopeless.

Darren Abramson, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, suggested the film

to the DFA. He attended the screening and provided an introduction and some context prior to the beginning. We are grateful for his involvement in this session.

It was a fascinating film to watch. One I would absolutely watch again. It wove together so well the story of how communities and people are affected by politics and policy.

We had another DFA Speaker Series event planned for March, with Stephanie Collins, Assistant Professor, Monogastric Nutrition, scheduled to speak in Truro. Sadly, due to COVID-19, we had to cancel this event. I am hopeful that we will be able to offer this talk in the future either in person or online.

Aside from the speaker series, the committee has reviewed our Terms of Reference and is looking at guidelines for the *DFA News You Can Use* newsletter.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Communication Co-ordination Committee will be spending the spring/summer developing guidelines for the newsletter and discussing our goals and objectives for the 2020-2021 year.

I want to personally thank the committee members for their continued hard work and dedication.

The Communications Co-ordination Committee is hoping that everyone stays safe and well during these unprecedented times.

**DFA**

## DFA Aboriginal Caucus Committee

*Patti Doyle-Bedwell (Chair)*

The committee met once this year. Terms of Reference were discussed but not revised.

## Southern African Student Education Project

*Theresa Ulicki (Chair), David Black, Gary Kynoch and Matthew Schnurr*

### OVERVIEW

#### SASEP Purpose

From its inception, the purpose of the then South (now Southern) African Student Education Project (SASEP) has been to contribute to the development of South Africa by offering black South Africans – a historically disadvantaged group – a full scholarship to pursue graduate studies at the Master’s or PhD level at Dalhousie University. This is now extended to students in the Southern African region.

#### History

SASEP has been operating at Dalhousie since 1987. Initially, the South African Education Trust Fund (SAETF) in Ottawa matched all funds which SASEP raised. Once SAETF ceased operating in 1993, Dalhousie assumed full responsibility for the project and SASEP has been completely funded by the Dalhousie community ever since.

Currently, contributions are made on an annual basis by the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU), the Dalhousie Faculty Association, and individual faculty and staff members. The DSU contribution is a result of an agreement in the spring of 1990, which annually supports a \$1.00 contribution to SASEP from each full-time student at Dalhousie.

SASEP is further supported by the university Board of Governors. First, the university Board of Governors has agreed to waive international student differential fees for SASEP students on an ongoing basis. Second, the SASEP Advisory Committee, made up of DFA faculty members who all share an interest in Southern Africa, provides administrative and academic support to the project.

SASEP covers the entire cost of student placements, including tuition, round trip airfare, a monthly stipend for living expenses, medical coverage and a modest allowance for books and warm clothing. The number of placements

available is entirely dependent on successful fund-raising efforts, and the length of academic study of scholarship recipients. As of April 2020, 16 students have been awarded graduate degrees under SASEP.

The SASEP committee last undertook recruitment for the 2019-2020 year, receiving over 140 applicants from interested students from across Southern Africa. In the end, Liandrah Gapare from Zimbabwe was selected to complete the MSc program in Chemistry, beginning in September 2019. We will be recruiting students again starting in the fall for 2021-2022.

## CURRENT ACTIVITIES

### *Administration*

As of 2019-2020, SASEP funds have started being administered by both FGS and the department in which the student will be studying. Previously, FGS handled the finances, however, it did not feel it had the administrative capacity to continue with this model. FGS administers routine finances, such as tuition, while departments handle airfare, visas, rent and any other costs. Recruitment, selection and all academic matters are handled

by the SASEP Advisory Committee, chaired by Theresa Ulicki. The incoming chair is David Black.

### **Recruitment**

The SASEP is open to eligible candidates from historically disadvantaged groups who are citizens of the Commonwealth countries of Southern Africa (South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe). We will recruit again in the fall of 2020 for one placement at the Masters level.

We are very grateful for the support the Dalhousie Faculty Association and students have provided to this program over the course of many years. It is a tangible manifestation of internationalisation that underscores the strengths and outlook of the Dalhousie community. We hope that this community will continue to support SASEP as it adapts to the changing needs of Southern Africa and contributes (in however limited a way) to the development of intellectual leaders in a region with exceptional potential but extraordinary challenges. *DFA*

## Dalhousie University-WUSC Student Refugee Sponsorship Program

*Isaac Saney, Halifax WUSC Student Committee Chair and Joy Galloway-Jones, Truro WUSC Faculty Advisor*

### Halifax

Since 1981 the DFA has sponsored more than 60 refugee students through the Dalhousie University-World University Service of Canada (WUSC) Student Refugee Sponsorship Program (SRSP), which sponsors refugee students to come to and study at Dalhousie.

Each year two students are selected through a rigorous and competitive process. On average during the year there are approximately 10 students who are in various stages of their university studies. Working together, with among others, the University Administration, Student Union, Bookstore and Alumni Association, the DFA sponsors the students for their first year of study.

These students are given financial assistance, academic support and mentorship. Guidance is also provided for settling into Halifax, in general, and Dalhousie, in particular. The WUSC campus committee coordinates these support activities, ensuring that the needs and concerns of the students are met.

The role of the faculty advisor is to furnish academic support, while shepherding the student through their Dalhousie journey. In the 2019-2020 academic year, two new students - Yuang Maduk and Gabriella Patel - were sponsored, both entering the Bachelor of Engineering. As with all WUSC-sponsored students, they are dedicated students, who are highly motivated to succeed. The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges around issues of summer accommodation and employment, but the Dalhousie WUSC committee

and the DFA have been able provide assistance towards resolving these issues.

### Truro

In addition to the two students sponsored in Halifax, the Agricultural Campus welcomes a WUSC student each year. 2019-2020 was our 34th year of participating in the SRSP, and we welcomed Ranthom (from Republic of Congo) who started an undergraduate degree in Engineering, but is now considering Agricultural Economics. Our student from 2018-19, moved to Halifax after one year to pursue Sustainability and our student from 2017-18 will be moving to the Halifax campus to complete the Engineering program. We will miss his engagement with the campus and the community.

This year the challenge came with COVID-19 and getting students settled away from communal living in the residences. The campus community stepped up without hesitation to make sure that we had the supplies to set up Ranthom in an off-campus apartment. We had many campus activities and fundraisers, with students placing a particular focus on supporting the WUSC program's Fair Trade and Shine a Light initiatives, as well as the Ride for Refuge. They held reverse trick-or-treating, SRSP information sessions, and several bake sales to raise awareness about Fair Trade and funds for the SRSP. Many of our committee champions are now graduating, so hopefully the new class of students will be able to fill in the gaps. *DFA*

## 2020-2021 Executive Committee

*Nominating Committee: David Westwood (Chair), Maria Pacurar and Julia Wright*

Congratulations to the following members of the 2020-2021 DFA Executive Committee. They will take office at the end of this Annual General Meeting.

**President** David Westwood (Health & Human Performance)

**Past-President** Julia M. Wright (English)

**President-Elect** Tara Perrot (Psychology & Neuroscience)

**Second Vice-President** Catrina Brown (Social Work)

**Secretary** Cindy Penney (Physiology & Biophysics)

**Treasurer** Dominic Silvio (Killam Library)

**Members-at-Large** *Term ending April 2022*

Katherine Fierlbeck (Political Science)

Kirstie Hawkey (Computer Science)

Mark Lewis (Law Library)

Shannon Lin (Rowe School of Business)

Matthew Numer (Health & Human Performance)

**Members-at-Large** *Term ending April 2021*

Remi Agu (Pharmacy)

Philip Bennett (Physics & Atmospheric Science)

Amy Birchall (Animal Science & Aquaculture)

Patti Doyle-Bedwell (Continuing Education)

**Member-at-Large (1 year)** *Term Ending April 2021*

Brenda Beagan (Occupational Therapy)

**Non-Bargaining Unit Member** Gabrielle Horne (Medicine)

*Thank you to all our 2019-2020 Executive Committee Members for their dedication to our members and our Association. Your time, talent and commitment is appreciated. Our outgoing members include: Lori Dithurbide, Jacqueline Gahagan, Roger Gillis, Jeff Hoyle, Elizabeth Kay-Raining Bird, and Lynne Robinson.* **DFA**