

President's Message: "Five to One, Baby, One in Five"

Julia Wright, DFA President, 2019-20

[Last month](#), I went through a few million-dollar figures from the Dalhousie budget—a surplus of \$6 million, a cool \$1 million thrown in the general direction of buildings, a \$43.2 million reduction in academic spending over the last couple of decades, and so on. This month, let's talk about ratios.

Online, the administration reports that Dalhousie has "[more than 6,000 faculty and staff](#)" of which [999 are professors](#), a tad higher than the full count of DFA Members in 2016 (professors, instructors, librarians, and counsellors, including limited-term appointments). That puts the staff to faculty ratio around five to one—part of the reason my title is taken from [Jim Morrison's 1968 lyrics](#). This imbalance is registered in other figures. The administrative [Dalhousie Professional and Managerial Group \(DPMG\)](#), which does not typically include staff in academic units, is now nearly as big as the DFA: according to the 2018 Dalhousie Census, 957 DFA members and 721 DPMG members responded (and an even 100 in "Senior Administration"; see [page 2 of the pdf](#)).

The Census suggests another ratio: if the DFA response rate to the Census was 91% and 957 responded, then that puts the administration's 2018 DFA count at about 1,050; 134 non-union faculty also responded, so the number of faculty may be closer to 1,200. Even if the

proportion of university employees who are faculty may be as high as "one in five," to again quote Morrison, it sure isn't anything to brag about.



The University of British Columbia was criticized in 2015: "[UBC has a 2:1 staff-to-faculty ratio, while \[the University of\] Toronto has a 1:2 ratio.](#)" UBC is closer to the norm, though. Here are Dalhousie's closest Atlantic peers and some other U15s (using their terminology for employee groups):

- Western University, [1,405 faculty and 2,455 staff](#) (36%);
- UNB, [599.2 faculty and 1,026.4 staff](#) (37%);
- Memorial University, [1,285 academics and 2,438 staff](#) (35%);
- University of Waterloo, [1,311 faculty and 2,548 staff](#) (34%); and
- University of Calgary, over [1,800 academics and 3,200 non-academic staff](#) (36%).

"DFA concerns about workload and fairness are not rooted in speculation, or belly-aching, or faculty failure to organize their time. Workload problems are real and they are discernible in the numbers as well as palpable in our daily experience, especially for our limited-term colleagues."

So the university website puts Dalhousie's proportion of faculty (1 in 6) at less than half of the lowest ratio reported by these seven universities.

Universities do vary in terms of who they count and how. The [University of Victoria is unusually detailed about its count](#) and it has close to a 1:1 ratio of academics to non-

academics: it recognizes instructors as academics but separates them from faculty and many of its academics are precariously employed. And some of these universities are reporting slightly different years, though they're all the most recent available.

Even recognizing such variations, there seems to be a general trend in those universities that put this information clearly on their websites: at least one-third of their workforce is faculty. If Dalhousie were in a comparable range, we would have **over 800 more faculty colleagues**. Take a moment to think about what even half that would mean to our academic programs, our students, our research, our workloads—and the province, given the role of universities in driving [economic success](#) and other social [benefits](#).

Let's move beyond staff-to-faculty ratios. If Dalhousie had the same ratio of faculty to [full-time students](#) as Memorial, a similarly sized medical university in the region, then Dalhousie would have 1,444 faculty. (You can see this at a granular level—I checked some comparable units and numbers of professors at the two universities are either similar, as in Biology, or Memorial has more, as in Social Work.)

Our ratio also affects the university culture. Five to one, Human Resources and myriad other units are not dealing with us. Five to one, our Collective Agreement is irrelevant to the work of the administration. In policy development, planning, and so on, we're not a significant cohort. Our Collective Agreement is just one in [five](#) at Dalhousie.

According to [Research Infosource's](#) 2017 data (and using the university's 999 figure), Dalhousie has

over 25% more research income than Memorial, even though it has over 25% fewer faculty, and more than three times the research income of UNB, even though it has less than twice as many faculty. Since faculty numbers are differently calculated, let's look at this from the perspective of total employees: York University (the second-largest university in Canada by [undergraduate enrolment](#)) has [7,000 faculty and staff](#) to Dalhousie's 6,000, but less than two-thirds the research income of Dalhousie.

Again, these numbers may be differently calculated; moreover, disciplines are highly variable in terms of whether external research funding is needed and how much, so the discipline mix is always a factor in research income. But these and other calculations all point in one direction: **we are doing more with less**. #DalProud, indeed.

"Five to One" is a song about revolution, recorded just weeks after [anti-war protests at the Pentagon](#): "They got the guns, but we got the numbers," sang Morrison. We've got numbers, too, like those I've detailed above and [last month](#), as well as many others [collected by the DFA](#) over the years (with more to come!).

DFA concerns about workload and fairness are not rooted in speculation, or belly-aching, or faculty failure to organize their time. Workload problems are real and they are discernible in the numbers as well as palpable in our daily experience, especially for our limited-term colleagues. We are less than "one in five" doing the work that in other universities is done by over one in three.

Please feel free to contact the team at dfa@dal.ca or me at julia.wright@dal.ca.

Save the date! **October 8, 2019 Teach-In on Islam/Islamophobia**

Join us at Halifax Central Library for a panel discussion and Q&A session.
Paul O'Regan Hall, 7 pm (*session title & time subject to change*)

Brought to you by the DFA in concert with Dalhousie Administration



DFA executive members, bargaining team members and staff at the DFA annual retreat August 20, 2019 in Truro. Issues discussed included salary comparators, pension, workload and career advancement. Concerns, ideas and suggestions will help form some of our proposals for the upcoming round of collective bargaining.

Bob Rodger Lecture Series: Call for Recommendations Sept 15

In November 2018, the DFA established the Dr. Robert S. Rodger Lecture Series as part of the celebration commemorating the 40-year anniversary of the DFA as a certified bargaining agent. Dr. Rodger's extraordinary efforts resulted in the successful certification drive; his exceptional vision helped conclude a model collective agreement, which has protected the rights of academic staff for over 40 years. The Dr. Robert S. Rodger Lecture Series was instituted to honour and to recognize outstanding achievements in the promotion of collective bargaining and academic rights.

We invite you to submit a recommendation for the 2019 lecture (**deadline for submission is September 15, 2019**). While candidates do not need to be a member of the academic community, their contributions must have benefitted the cause of collective bargaining in the post-secondary sector. The selected candidate will deliver a lecture in November 2019. For Terms of Reference and recommendation form, [click here](#).

Can You Access the Member Login for dfa.ns.ca?

During collective bargaining, we post confidential information and updates to the password-protected Members Only area of our website. **Please make sure you can access this area of the website** by following these steps:

- Visit dfa.ns.ca and click on **Member Login** (black box in the upper right corner)
- In email field, enter your **email address** and in password field, enter **Member1**

There is no information in the Member Only area that is specific to you – we do not keep information about salaries, employment or personal details on our site. If you have any issues when trying to log in, please email Catherine.Wall@dal.ca.

International Student Conference

One World: creating a positive international university experience

September 19 & 20, 2019

The Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers will host a conference on International Students at Saint Mary's University. Nova Scotia hosted almost 14,000 international students in 2015, and that number continues to rise. There are many benefits to welcoming international students to Nova Scotia. In addition to financial benefits, international students bring a cultural and intellectual diversity to our universities. But there are challenges as well, which range from overcapacity and differential fees to transportation, housing needs and other cultural nuances. Join us September 19 & 20 to share perspectives with a wide array of stakeholders in university education in the province, including faculty, students, the government and university administration.

- Conference program found [here](#).
- Registration info available [here](#).

DFA is sponsoring 10 Dal students to attend the conference, on a first-come-first-serve basis. Contact Catherine.Wall@dal.ca for student sponsorship information.

Fair Employment Week 2019

This year, Fair Employment Week is October 7-11, 2019. Thousands of professors are denied the opportunity each year to participate in and be paid for all aspects of academic work - research, teaching, and service. This has serious implications, not only for contract academic staff, but for students, their regular academic staff colleagues, and the integrity of post-secondary institutions.

Stay tuned for info, events and initiatives by CAUT and the DFA designed to raise awareness of the issues and improve the working conditions and job security of contract academic staff. Visit <http://makeitfair.caut.ca/> for more info.

DFA Office Hours

Until the end of August, the DFA office will be open

7:30 am - 3:30 pm, Monday to Thursday. Starting in September, the office will be open 7:30 am – 3:30 pm, Monday to Friday. Drop in during office hours at 1443 Seymour Street in Halifax, call 902-494-3722 or email dfa@dal.ca.

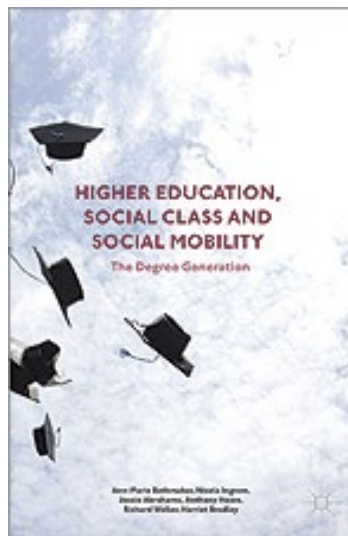
Research You Can Use

[Killer cells the key to potentially lifesaving cancer vaccines](#) (Dalhousie University)

[Fighting mental illness stigma at college with fun](#) (Indiana University)

[How much Vitamin D is enough? It depends](#) (Rutgers University)

Books You Can Use



Higher Education, Social Class and Social Mobility: The Degree Generation

Ann-Marie Bathmaker, Nicola Ingram, Jessie Abrahams, Anthony Hoare, Richard Waller & Harriet Bradley. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016; 188 pp; ISBN: 978-1-13753-480-4.

“... universities alone cannot eliminate structural inequality. Still, this book offers suggestions for mitigating it on both individual and systemic levels. On the latter, Canadians should pay special heed to the dangers posed by tuition hikes and attempts to establish exclusive university groupings with disproportionate claims on public resources.”

For a book review by Robin Whitaker, associate professor of anthropology at Memorial University of Newfoundland, visit the CAUT website [here](#).

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Feedback or news we can use? Contact DFA Communications Officer Catherine.Wall@dal.ca

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