

D I A L L O G U E

Annual General Meeting Tuesday, May 7, 2013 14:00 Room 1014, Kenneth Rowe Bldg

Please bring your copy of this publication, and the agenda, minutes and budget documents emailed in April.
Or download them at www.dfa.ns.ca/general

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President's Report

By David Mensink

I have appreciated the opportunity to serve the DFA as your president for a second time. After a very tempestuous year in collective bargaining, it was nice to take a breath and start addressing some of the issues that will occupy our faculty union going forward. I am pleased to report on some of the work with which we have been involved over the past year.

Faculty of Agriculture

First, we have been working with the NSGEU and employees from former Nova Scotia Agricultural College regarding their transition into the DFA. It is actually harder than it sounds with disagreement about who should be in and who should be out. We want to ensure salaries and benefits are fair and equitable and to facilitate a smooth transition regarding other factors of employment. We are looking forward to welcoming these individuals to the DFA.

I am Dalhousie Campaign

Second, we have been working on a campaign for a more transparent, alternative budgeting process at Dalhousie University. In addition, the DFA is urging "the Senior Administration and Board of Governors to place the mission of Dalhousie University—Learning, discovery and innovation, and engagement—ahead of all other considerations and direct funding to properly support and defend academic programs" (Quote from the **I Am Dalhousie** postcards sent to the President Traves). We have produced a document entitled **Review of Dalhousie University Finances: Are budget decisions serving the University's mission?** that is posted on our website and distributed to our Members in addition to other individuals and groups. We are planning to work on developing a strategy to carry this initiative into the future months and years.

Communications Committee

Third, the DFA Executive has established a new committee called the **Communications Committee**. The committee will be working closely with the Executive to fulfill strategic goals.

I am very pleased with this development as it has been discussed for quite some time and has now come to fruition. I am also happy to report that our invaluable Communications Officer in the person of Karen Janigan has now been offered and she has accepted a permanent position (60%) within the Dalhousie Faculty Association Staff Union. We hope she will be with us for many years to come!

Canadian Association of University Teachers

Fourth, we have been involved with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and its initiatives through the year. I attended the Forum for Presidents which was very useful. In light of the "austerity movement" across the country regarding higher education, three major conclusions from the forum are becoming increasingly important:

1. Academic staff associations must play a decisive role in making educational decisions and setting educational policy.
2. Academic staff associations must mobilize their members; now more than ever.
3. Given the present movement to corporatization, academic staff associations must protect academic freedom and institutional autonomy in research, teaching, publication, service, and intramural speech (Guiding Principles for University Collaborations, CAUT, April 2012).

In further support of addressing these challenges, we sent an executive member to the Harry Crowe Conference on Academic Freedom and our Communications Officer to the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations Conference on *Academia in the Age of Austerity*. We also participated in CAUT's Envisioning the Future exercises as the Executive Director will be retiring as of June 2014 and CAUT is currently using this opportunity to solicit feedback from member associations regarding important future

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directions.

As you can see, the DFA President, Executive, Committees, and staff have been working hard for its members. We have a lot more to accomplish as well. As most know, we are entering a *contract review* year to be followed by a *collective bargaining* year. I encourage one and all to become involved in the DFA; this is your union. It has been both challenging and satisfying for me as your president.

In closing, I'd like to thank President-Elect,

Kevin Grundy, for his contributions over the past year. His service has been remarkable and extremely valuable. I would also like to thank the members of the DFA Executive, the ABC, the Communications Committee, and all the other committees and individuals that have dedicated their time and energy to the goals and objectives of the DFA. Finally, our talented and hard-working staff, Karen Janigan, Barbara MacLennan, Lynn Purves, Linda Robertson, have provided expert advice and assistance throughout. Not only that, they have made my tenure with the DFA pleasant and enjoyable. Thanks to all.

Grievance Committee Report

Chair: Kevin Grundy; Members: Tim Juckes, Catrina Brown; *ex officio*: Barbara MacLennan, David Mensink

Supplementary Employee Retirement Plan -Sexton

This grievance involves many former TUNS Members who elected to remain in the Public Service Superannuation Plan (PSSP) rather than transfer to the Dalhousie Pension Plan following amalgamation.

In 2004, the provincial legislature approved modification of the PSSP to allow for the payment into a Supplemental Employee Retirement Plan (SERP) on behalf of those those members whose salaries were sufficiently high to result in pensions in excess of the Income Tax Act (ITA) maximum. These members, in turn, contributed commensurately higher premiums. This legislation also afforded the right to certain employers to "opt out" of the SERP plan. Dalhousie was such an employer, and, in April 2006, then Assistant Vice President (Personnel Services) Michael Roughneen informed the PSSP of Dalhousie's intention to "opt out".

It was not until some time later that the full impact of this decision became apparent. Not participating in SERP not only involved loss of the supplementary pension paid by Dalhousie (a relatively small amount for many of the grievors) but also resulted in a decrease in regular benefits by comparison to those of a comparable member of the Dalhousie plan. It is this disproportionate reduction of regular benefits as a result of Dalhousie's decision to opt out that is at the core of this grievance.

During the informal grievance, the parties agreed on the financial impact to the grievors of Dalhousie's decision to withdraw from the SERP. Based on this analysis, a proposal for resolving the grievance was formulated and presented to the Board for consideration. The Board responded with an offer consisting of a monetary award equal to 10% of our proposal. Any Member accepting the offer would be required to retire at the earliest opportunity. Furthermore, Members already retired would not be compensated. The Members rejected the Board's offer unanimously.

This grievance went to arbitration May 31, 2012.

The arbitrator found that the Board violated Article 36.01 of the Collective Agreement by failing to consider, at that time, the impact of their SERP decision on the Members affected. The Board was directed to reconsider their decision taking this information into account. Given the Board's position during the grievance and arbitration process in which they steadfastly refused to reverse their opt-out decision, the DFA thought it prudent to try another avenue suggested by our counsel, Ray Larkin.

Accordingly, Mr. Larkin approached the Province seeking a legislative change that would exempt Dalhousie from the SERP regulations. This would relieve the Board from SERP payments while allowing PSSP members to avoid the so-called "lost pension" resulting from the application of the ITA maximum pension limit. Since this is the

closest we could come to a “win-win” scenario, we invited the Board to join with us in this endeavor, but they declined.

Towards the end of 2012, the Board presented the DFA with a compilation of documents that they intended to use in reconsidering their SERP decision and asked for our input. We asked them to put their decision-making on hold while our proposal to Government was under “active consideration”. They declined and gave us a deadline for adding any information to their dossier. We submitted a detailed analysis of the impact of the opt-out on a person-by-person basis. Despite the Board’s deadline being long past, we have yet to hear back from the Board as to their decision. In the meantime, we have now scheduled a meeting with the government about this.

Policy Grievance: Sabbatical

In 2011, the DFA launched a policy grievance on the issue of sabbaticals, as the Administration’s current policy limits sabbatical leaves to tenure track and tenured faculty. The DFA believes this is inconsistent with past practice and violates the Collective Agreement’s provisions, particularly (1) Article 14.04, which defines appointments to the teaching staff (faculty) by rank rather than by appointment type, and (2) Article 30.15, which states that sabbaticals are available to faculty members.

The informal grievance process came to an end when the Administration withdrew and indicated the DFA should move to the formal process if they wished to continue. The DFA submitted a formal grievance at the end of April, 2012.

In the spring of 2012, the President and the Director of Academic Staff Relations met with the DFA (Grievance Officer, President, and Professional Officer). The President suggested a solution could be found in consultation with the Deans, and suggested the Administration would likely have a proposal in the fall of 2012. This did not happen, and the DFA continues to press the Director of Academic Staff Relations, who has assured us a proposal will be offered shortly.

Policy Grievance: Parking

In the fall of 2012, the DFA launched an informal grievance with the Vice President of Human

Resources regarding parking at Dalhousie. Two grievance officers, the DFA Professional Officer, the Vice President of Human Resources, the Director Academic Staff Relations, and the Vice President of Finance and Administration met to discuss the issue.

The DFA sees parking as a benefit, guaranteed in the Collective Agreement (Article 32.11). The Administration wishes to recover the costs it incurs for providing parking (i.e., increase rates).

The DFA informally suggested a number of possible solutions to the parking crisis, but none were deemed viable by the VP Finance and Administration. The grievance remains at the informal level, with the VP Human Resources currently collecting statistics on Faculty use of parking on Dal campuses.

Ratio of Bargaining Unit Faculty

The DFA launched informal grievances in the Fall 2012 and Winter 2013 terms regarding Article 14.18 that ensures that duties of Members are not redistributed to part-time or other staff excluded from the bargaining unit. This is referred to as the 90-10 ratio, which requires that 90% of teaching faculty across the university belong to the bargaining unit. Meetings were held with the DFA Professional Officer, the DFA Grievance Officer and the Vice President Academic.

The winter term is often when this rule is not observed. The DFA has noticed that some faculties and units are more likely to have a much smaller ratio of DFA faculty than others. Indeed some units are way below this ratio. We expect to continue to have a problem around this article because of the growing reliance on hiring sessionals and contract faculty who are not DFA, and the virtual freeze on hiring tenure track faculty within the current budgeting policies and practices of the Senior Administration. We are exploring ways to address this proactively.

Denial of Sabbatical

The DFA launched an informal grievance on behalf of a faculty member who was denied a first sabbatical because years of service in a limited term appointment were not counted towards her sabbatical.

At the informal stage, the Administration stated

that the Member had failed to apply for sabbatical by the deadline, thereby violating Clause 30.27. The Member had inquired of the Dean ahead of the deadline and been told that sabbatical would be denied, but subsequently the Member learned that the Administration’s current practice differs with past practice and violates the Collective Agreement.

The Administration proposed, without prejudice, a resolution for the Member under Clause 30.19, and recognized that the outcome of a policy grievance on denial of sabbaticals might affect when the Member can apply for a subsequent sabbatical. The Member decided last spring to accept the Administration’s offer

Dalhousie University Employment Equity Council

By Robin Whyte, DFA Representative

The Equity Council met twice in the last academic year under the chairmanship of its new advisor, Lisa Delong. The Dalhousie University statement on prohibited discrimination has been updated and now includes age on the list of grounds of prohibited discrimination. Council also takes note of, and is incorporating, the 2012 Transgender Persons Protection Act passed by the Nova Scotia Legislature in December.

Council continues to report on an annual basis on the representation of various target groups in the workforce as compared with the external workforce defined by the Census of Canada Participant and Activity Limitation Survey (PARS). It currently reports that Dalhousie women are not numerically under-represented, but there remain significant gaps in senior management and semi-professionals. There is increasing under-representation of racially visible persons in all groups and an increase in under-representation in aboriginal persons in all groups. Persons with a disability are still under-represented, but this under-representation is improving.

Dalhousie continues to maintain its commitment to the Federal Contractors Program that requires the University to demonstrate equitable employment and opportunity in return for access to federal contracts. This despite the uncertain commitment from the federal government since the passage of Bill C-38, which exempts federal

contractors from the federal Employment Equity Act.

Dalhousie University has been recognized as one of Canada’s best diversity employers for 2013. This list is sponsored by BMO Financial Group and published by Mediacor Canada. The list includes 53 major employers, three of which are universities.

Equity Council will continue to work through the Human Rights and Equity Advisor to implement and make continuously effective Dalhousie’s policy of affirmative action and equal opportunity.

Dalhousie continues to maintain the Imhotep Legacy Scholarship, new scholarships for Black and First Nation Students, the Black Student Advising Centre, the Native Education Counseling Unit, the Aboriginal Health Sciences Initiative, the Transition Year Program, and the Indigenous Black and Micmac Initiative.

The Dalhousie Diversity Faculty Award Program continues and in 2012 was awarded to the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Engineering.

Recruitment and interviewing guidelines continue to be maintained.

The Council has agreed to increase its meetings to a quarterly schedule.

DFA Office Hours

September-May

Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
(except university holidays)

June-August

Monday - Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
(except university holidays)

Dalhousie University Environmental Health and Safety Committee

By Cindy Penney and Mark Obrovac, DFA Representatives

The Environmental Health and Safety Committee meets on the third Thursday of the month from 1-2:30 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 two DFA appointees – one Professorial and one Instructor Member.

Information can be found on the Office of Environmental Health and Safety web site: http://safety.dal.ca/committees/joint_committee/

Role of Committee

The committee's stated purpose is:

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.

2012/2013

Ian Blair (Information Technology Services) became the chair of the Committee in October 2012, taking over this role from Marlene Daye-Smith.

Ray Ilson retired as director of the Office of Environmental Health and Safety on December 31, 2012. Dalhousie is currently advertising for candidates to fill this role. Pauline Jones is serving as the acting director.

Martin Gillis resigned as the EH&S chemical safety officer December 31, 2012, and Steve Beaton has taken over this role, leaving his former position as hazardous materials safety officer that has not yet been filled. No announcements have

yet been made by Dalhousie regarding filling this position.

The Committee has an interest in physical safety within the Dalhousie community and encourages feedback from DFA members regarding health and safety issues. Addressing the lack of qualified advanced first aiders available at all times as identified by the Department of Labour, the Committee requested that this training be arranged. Sessions have been scheduled so that 20 Security and Safety Office staff members will be trained to meet this requirement.

Safety Services NS provided a one-day session March 28 for Committee members on the roles and responsibilities of the Committee.

Fire Extinguisher training for staff and students of the Chemistry department and Physics department was conducted during October 2012, organized by Chemistry and EH&S. EH&S agreed to offer this training campus-wide in the future. This will have to be put forward to the EH&S office again, since their leadership is being replaced.

An automated log-in/log-out system that uses Dal ID cards was suggested by the Committee to keep track of persons working alone in buildings after regular business hours on campus. Details regarding implementation are still under discussion.

The Committee presents an Annual Environmental Health and Safety Award to recognize significant accomplishments in campus environmental health and safety. In 2012 the award went to Dr. Josh Leon and Dr. Blaine Cleghorn.

Association-Board Committee

By Mark Lewis, DFA Co-Chair (Law Library)

on behalf of Tim Juckes, DFA Nominee, (Psychology); Barbara MacLennan, DFA Nominee, (DFA Professional Officer); Lynn Purves, DFA Observer (DFA Administrative Officer)

The functions of the Association-Board Committee (ABC) are set out in Article 8 of the DFA-Board Collective Agreement: *The ABC considers matters of interpretation or application of the Collective Agreement. It has three nominees each from the DFA and Board, and operates by concurrent majority.*

In practice the agenda of the ABC largely concerns 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.

In 2012-2013, Jasmine Walsh (Director, Academic Staff Relations) was the Board Co-Chair and Robert Summerby-Murray (Dean, Faculty of Arts) and Sandy Logan (Academic HR Administrator) were Board Nominees.

The ABC agendas are often lengthy and most agenda items relate to matters such as waivers of advertising and extensions for limited-term appointments, extensions to time-lines, appointment renewals and special salary increases. As long as proper information is provided the committee is able to deal with most matters in a thorough and efficient manner. When proper information is lacking the business of ABC can drag on.

Ongoing issues

Previously we had reported that the awarding of Special Salary Increases (SSIs) had been causing some difficulties; however, in the past year the ABC was able to reach an agreement that we hope will streamline the process and reduce complications going forward.

Another area where the ABC has been working to streamline procedures revolves around pregnancy/adoption leaves that might overlap with a sabbatical; both sides of ABC have been working to resolve complications that have arisen and we believe that we will soon have this issue resolved.

We have previously reported on the issue of Waivers of Advertising coming late to the ABC (i.e. after Members have already taken up their appointment) that causes difficulties at ABC. There is improvement on this front, but we would like to remind DFA members that they are able to have a direct impact on this issue through various hiring committees.

Another issue that merits mention is the 2% increase to salary to offset the 2% increase in pension contributions. The ABC has taken measures to ensure this process was done equitably across Dalhousie and that everyone who deserved the increase, received it.

The nominees to ABC also receive a copy of a monthly *Staff Matters*, a document that details all academic staff changes – appointments, promotions, tenure, sabbaticals, etc. We examine it with supporting documentation, query missing documentation and, sometimes, note that the Collective Agreement will be violated if a proposed action is taken. In those circumstances, we insist the matter be brought to the next ABC meeting to be dealt with properly. Steps have been taken to streamline this process; however, in some instances, the problem of missing documentation persists longer than we are comfortable with.

Of course, there will always be differences of opinion about how some matters should be treated, or how the Collective Agreement should be interpreted. When such differences of opinion occur, the nominees from both sides work in a professional and respectful manner to resolve them.

Dalhousie University-World University Service of Canada (WUSC) -- Student Refugee Sponsorship Program

By Theresa Ulicki, Faculty Advisor-DFA Representative

The DFA participates in the Dalhousie University-WUSC Student Refugee Sponsorship Programme (SRSP), which sponsors refugee students to come study at Dalhousie. Other partners include the Administration, Student Union, Bookstore, Alumni Association and Aramark. Together, we sponsor one or two students a year for an initial 12-month period. The Dal committee has sponsored over 50 students since first joining the program in 1981.

These students come from refugee camps where Canadian aid workers and their affiliates identified them as having sufficient ability and academic preparation to succeed in Canadian universities. The process of selection is highly competitive and takes from 18 to 24 months. Upon arrival in Halifax, the students begin the difficult process of adjusting to a new country and culture, and new academic demands, with the assistance of the committee members.

This year's students

The two students we are currently sponsoring were born in Somalia, but have lived almost all their lives in asylum in Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. With a few exceptions, Dalhousie has typically had male students in the past, but this year we have one female and one male student. Both are currently registered in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. One will continue in FASS and the other is hoping to switch to a BComm. Both are adjusting well to the many

demands upon them.

The committee will soon be helping them file their taxes, register for summer classes, put together cv's, find accommodation and are in the process of trying to find part-time employment for the summer months and fill out student loan applications. In the meantime, we are also beginning our part of the process to bring two new students here for the next academic year.

The Dalhousie WUSC Local Committee has been very busy this year. In addition to recruiting a number of new members, the Committee put together a mock refugee camp in the SUB, which raised awareness about WUSC and refugee issues. Additionally, the Local Committee hosted a WUSC regional meeting with St. Francis Xavier, Acadia, Mount Saint Vincent University, University of Prince Edward Island and Saint Mary's University.

The program continues to do well, thanks in no small part to the generous and varied contributions of so many members of the University community and not least those of the DFA membership.

If DFA members would like to become personally involved, they can assist with the students' orientation to Canada through offering to host them, showing them around Halifax on holidays or weekends, or helping them in their studies. If you wish to help or need more information, please feel free to contact the committee at wusc@dal.ca.

South African Student Education Project (SASEP)

By Gary Kynoch, DFA Representative

From its inception, the purpose of the South 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 and PhD levels at Dalhousie University.

History

SASEP has been operating at Dalhousie since 1987 has been completely funded by the Dalhousie community since 1993. Currently, contributions are made on an annual basis by the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU), the Dalhousie Faculty Association, and individual faculty and staff members.

SASEP is further supported by the university administration that waives international student differential fees for SASEP students on an ongoing basis. Second, both International Research & Development (and the Department of International Development Studies have provided administrative and academic support to the project. Over the past three years, primary responsibility for the program has been taken over by a steering committee of DFA Faculty members who share an interest in Southern Africa.

Due to a changed mandate, International Research & Development is no longer able to oversee the day-to-day administration of SASEP, though it continues to monitor the project's finances. Recruitment, selection and all academic matters are handled by the SASEP Advisory Committee, which consists of several faculty members and has been chaired by Dr. Gary Kynoch since the Fall of 2012. International Student & Exchange Services provides support services for SASEP students, including visas, health insurance and housing.

SASEP covers the entire cost of student placements and is comparable to scholarship funding provided by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The number of placements available is entirely dependent on successful fundraising efforts, and the length of academic study of scholarship recipients. In general, annual donations to SASEP are equal to the cost of supporting one student in full-time study per year.

As of April 2011, thirteen students from South Africa have been awarded graduate degrees under SASEP. Historically, SASEP has been able to support, on average, one full-time student per year.

More recently however, we have had some difficulty recruiting qualified South African students. For the 2010-11 year, SASEP was not able to recruit a suitably qualified candidate, and the chosen candidate for the 2011/12 academic year withdrew to pursue studies elsewhere.

Current Activities

In light of our difficulty in attracting applications from sufficiently qualified candidates over the past several years, despite a flexible approach to admissions requirements, we took a pause from

recruitment this year.

At last year's DFA annual meeting we proposed a broadening of the population from which we are able to recruit. Specifically, we propose to change the name of the project to the Southern African Student Education Project and to broaden the pool of eligible candidates to students 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 have found over the past several years that the South African students from whom we have received applications have typically not had the academic qualifications necessary for success in Dalhousie graduate programs, while at the same time we have had to turn away a number of highly qualified candidates who are citizens of other Southern African countries – almost all of which have significantly greater educational needs than South Africa – who have heard about the program while pursuing their studies in South African universities.

Given both the limited demand from South African students, and the apparent demand, and need, from students in other regional countries, we propose that the program's terms of reference be changed to allow us to offer places to students from this broader pool of Southern African countries. We have taken this issue up with the DSU executive and have been informed that they anticipate approving the change at their meeting of May 8, 2013. If we receive approval from the DFA Executive, we will be able to launch a new recruiting call and competition in Fall 2013 for the 2014-15 academic year.

We are very grateful for the support Dalhousie's academic staff and students have provided to this program over the course of many years. It is a tangible manifestation of internationalism that underscores the strengths and outlook of the Dalhousie community. We hope this will continue as the program adapts to the changing needs of Southern Africa, and contributes to the development of intellectual leaders in a region with exceptional potential but extraordinary ongoing challenges.

Transportation & Security Committee

By Gwendolyn MacNairn

This committee meets on a monthly basis. At the beginning of the academic year, the chair was Ray Ilson (director, Environmental Health and Safety). After his retirement in December, we elected two co-chairs for the remainder of the 2012/2013 term: Steve Andrews (DPMG rep) and Kathie Wheadon-Hore (Dalplex Rep).

Transportation

The Bus Pass program was implemented in January. Dal was the first employer to offer this kind of assistance for the SmartTrip EPass program, in partnership with HRM. (A SmartTrip EPass is a discounted MetroTransit bus pass purchased by employees through Dalhousie's payroll deduction.) This program was a pilot project developed by HRM's SmartTrip initiative to reduce the number of vehicles driven to the workplace. Of course, we still have lots of cars driven to campus.

Transportation Ongoing building projects have both reduced and added to the pool of available parking spaces. This will continue for the upcoming 2013/2014 year, as the next building project gets underway - the Collaborative Health Education Building, on the corner of University Avenue and Summer Street.

There was a new initiative implemented this year, with Dalhousie issuing its own parking tickets and collecting the revenue. This was a new source

of revenue that amounted to approximately \$30,000. (Previously, all the ticket revenue had been going to HRM.) The new system included using the boot, once a car had been issued three tickets. This resulted in many fewer vehicles being towed, at the expense of the owner.

The amount allocated in the budget for snow removal was overspent by approximately \$100,000 (an increase to the annual operating cost).

The online system will be used to issue and renew parking permits (<https://parkingpermit.dal.ca/parkingpass>). Persons with unpaid parking tickets will not be allowed to purchase new permits until they rectify their account.

Security

In terms of security situations and medical emergencies, we need to remind everybody on campus that a call to 911 is not appropriate. We have too many buildings and peculiar locations on campus that are not easy to find. You must instead call 494-4109 (in Halifax) and 893-4190 (in Truro). Our own security person will direct your call to an appropriate responder.

Lastly, I would like to encourage all members interested in transportation and security issues on campus to consider serving as our representative on this committee. I have been the DFA Rep for that past two years and will finish serving in this capacity on June 30, 2013.

Dalhousie University Employee Benefits Committee

By Sarah P Bradley, DFA Representative

The Employee Benefits Committee is a joint committee composed of representatives from the Board of the University, as well as all employee bargaining units (DFA, DPMG, NSGEU Local 77 and NSGEU Local 99). The Committee deals with the administration of benefit programs for employees of the University, including health, dental, group life, and long term disability

insurance, as well as the survivor income benefit and certain other benefits members are entitled to under the collective agreement. In recent years the EBC has also considered as part of its mandate a number of wellness initiatives intended to benefit employees and reduce the costs associated with insured benefits.

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Professor Sarah Bradley (Law) and Professor David Persaud (Health Administration) have served as the DFA representatives on the EBC throughout the year. Sarah Bradley is currently serving as Chair of the Committee, having taken over this responsibility from Carolyn Sisley (DPMG) in April of 2012.

In the past year, the EBC met four times. The work of the Committee has included:

ISI Preferred Pharmacy Provider Network

Joining this network was discussed, and included:

- Introduction of a pharmacy benefit card with \$3/\$4 coverage per prescription, and how this would be administered;
- Client group discount card program and the NSGEU that currently has this service; and
- The impact of the health management services on the plan and members.

The Committee has not made a decision regarding implementation of this program.

Coverage for Natural Health Products

A program amendment relating to Natural Health Products (NHP) was recommended to and considered by the Committee. Health Canada has created a Natural Health products list that have been issued a NHP number. To address this Medavie Blue Cross provided three options:

- 1. Keep NHP's deemed life sustaining, prescription requiring or smoking cessation (when covered);
- 2. Keep all NHP's; or
- 3. Grandfather existing claimants and remove for any new future claimants

The EBC's benefits consultant recommended electing the first option. This is considered to be the standard approach. Medavie Blue Cross would be responsible for maintaining the list of NHP for the situations described above.

After discussion and consideration, the Committee determined to "continue the coverage to keep all Natural Health Products available for staff, when prescribed by a Doctor, to assist in maintaining their health."

Discussion of Cross-Experience Rating – Dalhousie Retirees

Consultant Kirk Shand reviewed the data relating to the Retiree Benefits Advisory Committee (RBAC) and the cost of health/dental coverage for retirees.

M. Bradfield on behalf of the RBAC requested to have the 65+ retiree groups health premiums cross-experienced with the active employee group. He suggested that it is an opportunity for the active employees to contribute to their retiree premium while earning a salary rather than at the time of their retirement when they are on a fixed income.

Retirees currently pay the full premium cost for their health benefits. Active employees have a cost-shared arrangement in which Dalhousie pays 60% and the employee pays 40% of the health premiums. The impact of the cross-experience rating would be borne entirely through an increase in the employee's premiums. Dr. Bradfield said the current impact to the rates as an increase of \$1.64 to the employee's health premium and a decrease of \$12.83 for the retirees.

He suggested that it is an opportunity for the active employees to contribute to their retiree premium while earning a salary rather than at the time of their retirement when they are on a fixed income.

For this arrangement to be adapted it would need to be agreed to by each employee group and accepted by the Employee Benefits Committee.

A concern was raised that the number of members of NSGEU 77 who retire and elect the retiree health plan will be minimal compared to the other employee groups and subsequently will not benefit from the cross-experience rating. The Committee requested a report of the elections for the retiree health plan for the NSGEU 77 retirees.

It was observed by some Committee members that the retiree 65+ currently has a surplus in their account which could be used to offset the retiree premiums.

Agricultural Campus Benefit Update

The Committee was provided an update of benefit coverage for Union & Non-union employees of the Faculty of Agriculture.

CPP Disability Offset and Maximum Benefit

The Committee discussed when the maximum benefit amount changed. The Plan Sponsor sets the maximum, which if increased the LTD premium costs would require an increase. The Committee requested a report on the percentage of LTD members affected. The requirement for the LTD member's application for CPP Disability was reviewed and was to remain as *status quo*.

Plan Renewals

The Committee reviewed the annual renewal recommendations for the insured benefits program, examined the claims experience of each benefit plan, and determined the premium renewal rates for the coming year. These renewal rates have been sent to all employees by special notice. The following is a summary of changes effective April 1, 2013:

- Long term disability (100% employee paid) – increase of 20%.
- Major Medical plan (40% employee paid, 60% University paid) – decrease of 5.4%.
- Dental plan (40% employee paid, 60% University paid) – decrease of 3.4%.

- Group Life (100% University paid) – increase of 15%.
- Survivor Income Benefit (50/50 cost shared) – increase of 39.1 percent in the contract rate and an increase of 15 percent in the remitted rate.
- Health Travel Plan (40% employee paid, 60% University paid) – increase of 49%
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment (100% University paid) – no change
- Optional Life Insurance (100% employee paid) – no change
- Voluntary Personal Accident Insurance (100% employee paid) – no change

Further information about plan renewals can be found at: http://www.dal.ca/news/today/2013/04/02/employee_benefits_program_renewals_april_1_2013.html

If you have any questions regarding your benefits, you can get more information from the Pensions and Employee Benefits office at 494-1122, or email benefits@dal.ca.

Pension Advisory Committee

By Faye Woodman, DFA Representative

The Pension Advisory Committee (PAC) is a parity committee with equal representation of the Board and the unions. The Chair is Faye Woodman, and the Vice-Chair is Katherine Sheehan, Assistant Vice-President, Human Resources. Kevin Grundy is the other DFA Representative on the Committee.

The Dalhousie Staff Pension Plan (DSPP)

The Plan continues to experience significant funding challenges. As of June 2012, there was a going-concern deficit of \$108 million (funded ratio of 89%) and a solvency deficit estimated at \$333 million (funded ratio of 70.5%).

The DSPP is required to fund the going-concern deficit within 15 years. The university has been exempted from eliminating the solvency deficit, but where the deficit is greater than the threshold amount of the Plan assets, the Plan is subject to a yearly valuation, rather than the usual three-year valuation. Therefore Dalhousie will be subject to

an actuarial valuation in 2013.

Increase in Pension Contribution Rate

DFA members now contribute an extra 2% supplementary contribution to the Dalhousie Pension Plan as per the agreement reached under the most recent collective bargaining. Interest will be credited at a lower rate on these contributions and supplementary contributions will be excluded from the sum of contributions compounded (SOCC). The amount that may be withdrawn from the pension plan by a terminating members is the greater of SOCC or "commuted value," so this change may have a negative effect on some Plan members. Retiring members are not directly affected.

The salaries of Dalhousie Plan members will be "increased" by the amount of the increased contributions. From a public relations perspective, Dalhousie salaries will appear higher.

Dalhousie University Pension Trust Fund/Retirees' Pension Fund

By Ron Pink, QC., DFA Trustee

It has been my honour to serve as a member of the Dalhousie Pension Trust Fund and the Dalhousie Pension Retirees' Fund Committee on behalf of the members of the Dalhousie Faculty Association.

On your behalf, I have attended most of the quarterly meetings over the past year, and I have participated actively in the oversight and management of the investments.

I want to comment on the excellent service provided by Rogers Casey and now Segal Rogers Casey. Mr. Bob Mitchell, who has served our Funds so admirably over the past many years, has retired from Segal Rogers Casey. However, he has elected to remain as a consultant to our Fund notwithstanding his retirement. His knowledge and understanding of the various Funds of Dalhousie and his extraordinary knowledge of the industry is most valuable and provides a significant contribution to the success of our Fund. In addition, Mr. Ian Nason and Mr. Colin Spinney of the Financial Services Department of Dalhousie also worked most diligently on behalf of the Funds to ensure success.

As you can appreciate, the obligation of the Committee has met and exceeded the Benchmark of each Fund each year. Fluctuations in markets pose significant obstacles to continuing success. The need to meet the "actuary's rate of return" can be an elusive goal when the markets are underperforming.

Notwithstanding the difficulty in the market in 2012, I am pleased to report the results of the Funds. The total value of the Pension Trust Fund is \$487 million. The total value of the Retirees' Trust Fund is \$346 million.

The combined expense of both Plans is approximately \$1.3 million, or 1.5%, which, in my view, is very reasonable.

The Committee regularly reviews the performance of various investment managers and obtains advice of the consultant with respect to any

Pension Trust Fund Performance:

	Fund	Benchmark
1 Year	9.9%	8.5%
2 Years	5.8%	4.9%
3 Years	7.6%	6.3%
4 Years	9.0%	8.2%
10 Years	6.7%	6.5%

Retirees' Trust Fund Performance:

	Fund	Benchmark
1 Year	9.3%	7.6%
2 Years	5.6%	5.2%
3 Years	7.3%	6.3%
4 Years	8.8%	7.8%

change. Continuing underperformance will put an investment manager on "watch" and failure to improve as a result of the removal of the mandate from that investment manager. The results of a particular quarter or year should not be determinative of any particular action.

Pension plan investment is for the long-term, and the Committee generally prefers to look at performance over a minimum of three years but preferably over a five and 10 year basis and certainly not over the past previous quarter. As you can determine from the figures above, the results of both the Pension Trust Fund and the Retirees' Trust Fund over a 10-year basis show that the Funds have exceeded the Benchmark. All this meets the obligation of the Committee.

It is my view that, overall, the members of the Committee worked diligently on behalf of the beneficiaries. They are active participants in reviewing the performance of both the Dalhousie staff and external managers. The Committee members are very concerned about the success of these Funds to provide long-term success of the Plans.

New Pension Benefits Act and Regulations

These are still ongoing. Highlights include:

- enhancement of Advisory Committee responsibilities at Dalhousie PAC has significant responsibilities because of the provisions of our collective agreement, not legislation;
- retirees given additional limited rights as members of pension plans at Dalhousie, on PAC, our retirees have a voice but no votes;
- phased- retirement benefits have been codified. Phased- retirement allows pension plan members to reduce their workload and receive pension benefits, while still contributing to their pension plans in order to preserve future benefits. The regime must be voluntarily adopted by a plan and at Dalhousie improvements to the Plan are currently prohibited because of the solvency deficit;
- the Superintendent of Pensions has been given greater powers regarding actuarial reports; and
- Universities with defined benefit plans are exempted from solvency requirements.

Pension Administration

Some improvements have been made to the online interface between pension members and the Pension Administrator. Other improvements have not been adopted because of cost considerations. These include introducing the capability for those over 65 to calculate projected pension benefits, and a capability for terminating members to model termination benefits, including commuted value calculations for their pensions.

Withholding Death Benefits

Terminating members who want to withdraw pension benefits from the Dalhousie Plan are subject to having about 30% of those benefits withheld by Dalhousie for the earlier of the elimination of the solvency deficit or five years. In the interim, interest of a little over 2% is paid by the Plan on the amounts withheld. Recently, after complaints and consultations, the Plan Administrator agreed not to withhold amounts from death benefits paid out of the Dalhousie Plan.

Pension Plan for Grant Paid Employees

In 2010, a policy was introduced that would no

longer permit Researchers to offer their employees membership in the Dalhousie Pension Plan. In any case, significant numbers of their employees were denied any pension coverage due to Researchers' oversight or reluctance to pay the high cost. The Administration has proposed a new pension plan for grant-paid employees. It will be a defined contribution plan.

Indexing

The longest retired members of the DSPP now are facing a 17% shortfall in indexing. In other words, these retirees have seen their pension purchasing power reduced by 17% during their retirement. It is unlikely that there will be any non-discretionary indexation in the near future, although there is perhaps hope for some discretionary indexing. The problem of no or only partial indexing of pension benefits at Dalhousie should be of concern not only to retirees but to current employee members of the Plan.

The Dalhousie Plan has what is called "excess-interest indexing." This means that pensions will be automatically indexed only if Plan investment returns exceed a threshold amount of about 5% a year and prior lower-than-threshold returns in previous years are made up. In addition, the Plan provides for discretionary indexing, to catch up past non-indexation. This can take place only if the Retirees Trust Fund is in surplus and its cost cannot exceed one-half of the surplus. The Trustees of the Retirees Trust Fund, a majority of whom are appointed by the Board of Governors, exercise this discretion. The RTF presently has a surplus of about \$20 million.

The primary reason for non-indexation, other than the failure of the Trustees to exercise their discretion, is poor investment performance by the Dalhousie Plan. The Board of Governors (BoG) seems reluctant to release meaningful comparisons, but estimates suggest that the Dalhousie Plan is in the bottom quarter of pension plan investment performance at Canadian universities over the period since 2000.

Jointly sponsored Governance Proposals

In the last Collective Agreement, the DFA agreed to join a committee to discuss joint governance of the pension plan. To date no committee has been constituted.

DFA Executive Committee 2013-2014

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

David Mensink - Chairperson; Kevin Grundy & Christine Morse

The following persons have been elected by acclamation for positions on the 2013/2014 DFA Executive Committee and will take office at the end of the Annual General Meeting

President-Elect: Catrina Brown (Social Work)

Second Vice-President: Jason Haslam (English)

Secretary: Cindy Penney (Physiology & Biophysics)

Treasurer: Susan Holmes (College of Continuing Education)

Non-Bargaining Unit: Paola Marcato (Pathology/Medicine)

Members-at-Large *Term Ending April 2015:*

Andrea Chircop (Nursing)

David Jackman (Pharmacy)

Jack Novak (Continuing Education)

Thomas Trappenberg (Computer Science)

They will join the following people on the 2013/14 DFA Executive Committee:

President: Kevin Grundy (Chemistry)

Past President: David Mensink (Counselling & Psychological Services)

Members-at-Large *Term Ending April 2014*

Sarah Jane Dooley (Sexton Design & Technology Library)

Gianfranco Mazzanti (Process Engineering and Applied Science)

Shelley McKibbon (W. K. Kellogg Health Sciences Library)

David McNeil (English)

Laurene Rehman (Health & Human Performance)

President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment

There is no report as the annual meeting was scheduled after the deadline for this newsletter.

Information on resources around sexual harassment are available online at <http://hrehp.dal.ca/index.php>. Resources include a general brochure on sexual harassment, as well as specific information for international students on

Canadian culture in relationships and guides for Faculty, Instructors and Teaching Assistants.

For more information contact Gaye Wishart, Advisor, Harassment Prevention/Conflict Management at gaye.wishart@dal.ca or 494-1137 or call the DFA Office to be directed to a resource.