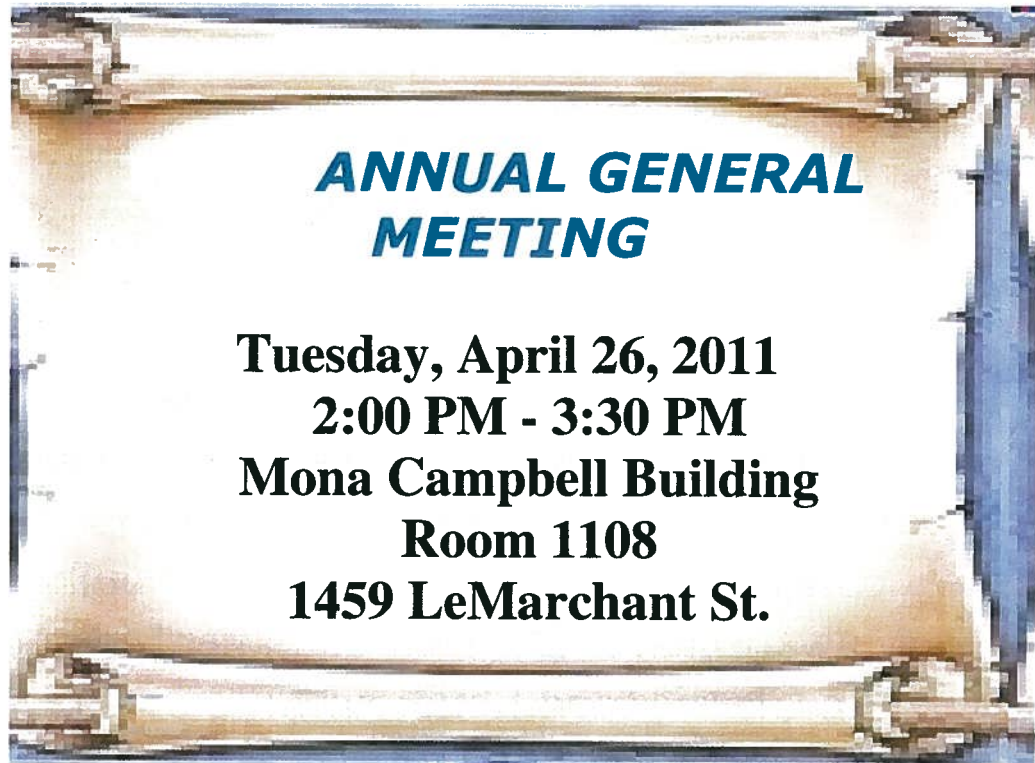


**DFA**

Dalhousie Faculty Association

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**NOTICE TO DFA MEMBERS**

*This special “Year-End” edition of the DFA Dialogue contains reports from all Committees. Highlights of each report will be provided by the DFA Representative(s) on the Committee.*

*Please bring along your copy of this Special “Year-End” Edition of the DFA Dialogue and documents sent to you earlier by email (AGM Agenda, 2010 AGM Minutes and budget information).*

*Ian Colford  
Editor-in-Chief  
DFA Dialogue*

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**DR. TOM FAULKNER**  
**MEMORIAL PRIZE**

Please join us at **2:00 pm on April 26<sup>th</sup>** (at the beginning of the Annual General Meeting) when we will honour the memory of our colleague and long-time DFA supporter, Tom Faulkner, by awarding the Dr. Tom Faulkner Memorial Prize to Classics and Religious Studies student, Gerjan Altenburg.

Before the presentation of the prize, Professor Emeritus, Ravi Ravindra will say a few words about Dr. Faulkner.

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Inside this SPECIAL “Year-End” Edition of the DFA  
Dialogue Reports From:

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# Report from the DFA Grievance Committee

**Anthony Stewart, on behalf of the Committee**

Grievance Committee Members:

Sina Adl, Carrie Dawson, Kevin Grundy, Tim Juckes, Barb MacLennan, David Mensink, and David Tindall

To start with the words of Carrie Dawson, last year's chair of the Grievance Committee, and our outgoing President:

In response to a Member's query/complaint, the Grievance Committee reviews the Collective Agreement and, with the guidance of the Grievance Officer assigned to the case, considers various actions that the affected Member might take in order to arrive at an acceptable solution. In the best circumstance, the Member and the Board come to an agreement at the informal stage—that is, during or as a result of a meeting between the Member, the Member's Grievance Officer, and representatives of the Board. If a mutually satisfactory result is reached, no further action is taken. If, however, the parties are still at odds, the case may proceed to the formal stage. At this time, the Grievance Officer presents the Member's case to new representatives of the Board (usually the President of the University). If a solution is not reached, the Grievance Committee will meet again to decide whether or not to recommend that the Executive Committee take the case to arbitration. The Executive Committee then decides whether or not a case should go to arbitration, which is a costly venture for both the Association and the Board.

Grievances can be brought by individuals seeking remedies, or they may be policy grievances, in which the DFA finds that a principle is at stake and seeks a remedy, even if no potentially aggrieved Member has come forward.

This year the Committee dealt with cases that covered the range of possible resolutions.

## **Early Retirees**

Nothing was resolved in this matter at the informal or formal stages, and so it recently went to arbitration. Based on the provisions of Articles 24 and 32 of the Collective Agreement, the DFA's contention is that early retirees should pay no more for their benefits than should current DFA Members. The Board's position is that there is no express wording in the Collective Agreement prohibiting a higher fee being charged to the early retirees. The arbitration hearing took place on March 14, 2011, and the arbitrator has assured both sides that he will render his decision soon

**LATE BREAKING NEWS!** Arbitrator Swan has decided the Board "is in breach of the Collective Agreement in removing the early retirees from coverage under the delivery agreement including the Dental Care Plan and the Major Medical Insurance".

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**School of Nursing—Election to Tenure Committees**

There was a grievance in the School of Nursing involving the process by which members are elected to tenure committees. The grievance hinged on the prospect that the election process threatened to affect the resolution of tenure cases. This grievance was resolved—through the hard work of Sina Adl, our grievance officer in the matter—at the informal stage.

**Supplementary Employee Retirement Plan (SERP) – Sexton**

Also at the informal stage (technically) is the grievance involving the Supplementary Employee Retirement Plan (SERP). Our long-serving grievance officer on this matter, Kevin Grundy, explains this situation as follows:

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 of SERP to those members of the Plan whose salaries were sufficiently high to result in pensions in excess of the Income Tax Act 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 was made 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.

The parties have agreed on the financial impact to the grievors of Dalhousie's decision to withdraw from the SERP. Based on this analysis, a proposal for resolution of the grievance has been formulated and presented to the Board for consideration. The Board has indicated their acceptance of the form of the settlement but did not agree to the magnitude. We are currently awaiting a response to this proposal.

This case makes abundantly clear the point that “informal” does not necessarily mean “quick.”

**College of Continuing Education**

This is a policy grievance. The College of Continuing Education has six Members whose work environment has been negatively affected by the central Administration’s practice over the academic year of attempting to re-assign the Members to other units without having first followed the procedures laid out in Article 37A (governing the College of Continuing Education) in the Collective Agreement. Representatives of the Administration had been speaking to Members individually, thus effectively opposing each individual’s interests to those of the group and creating an uncomfortable and unstable working environment. Our grievance officer, Sina Adl, has made some progress on this matter at the informal stage and it is our hope that this situation will be resolved amicably.

**Sabbatical Leaves**

The Collective Agreement provides sabbatical leaves to members of the bargaining unit who have met the conditions described in Clauses 30.15 and 30.17, namely that the leave will be of benefit to the Member and the University and that the Member has completed the required years of service.

The administration has interpreted the Collective Agreement to restrict sabbatical leaves to tenured and tenure stream service. In other words, Members on limited term contracts will not be entitled to apply for a sabbatical leave. Members who have had their limited term appointments converted to tenure stream appointments will not be allowed to count their full limited term service toward a leave. The administration’s interpretation is inconsistent with past practice. This grievance is at the informal level.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the members of the Grievance Committee: Sina Adl, Carrie Dawson, Kevin Grundy, Barb MacLennan, David Mensink, and David Tindall, for their hard work, considered judgment, and good humour in working on some quite serious questions over the course of the year. You will, no doubt, recognize these names because of the various capacities in which each has served over the course of this and past years in the DFA, and I would like to recognize their unflagging contributions to our Association.



**Employee Benefits Committee**

**S. Bradley (Law)  
DFA Representative to the Committee**

The Employee Benefits Committee is a joint committee composed of representatives from the Board of the University and all employee bargaining units (DFA, NSUPE, NSGEU and DPMG). The Committee is chaired by Carolyn Sisley (DPMG), and 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. Approved minutes can be found on the Employee Benefits website at: [http://humanresources.dal.ca/Faculty%20&%20Staff%20Resources/Pensions\\_&\\_Employee\\_Benefits/Insured\\_Benefits\\_Plan/Employee\\_Benefits\\_Co/index.php](http://humanresources.dal.ca/Faculty%20&%20Staff%20Resources/Pensions_&_Employee_Benefits/Insured_Benefits_Plan/Employee_Benefits_Co/index.php)

Professor Sarah Bradley (Law) has been a DFA representative on the EBC throughout the year. David Persaud (Health Administration) has served as the second DFA representative since September, 2010, replacing Scott Laing (Business Administration), who served from January to April, 2010.

# D I A L L O G U E

In the past year, the EBC met 10 times. The work of the Committee has included:

- **Use of Surpluses:** The committee spent considerable time this year considering the appropriate use of various surpluses, including whether such surpluses might be best used to provide some benefit enhancements to our current major medical plan, or to promote employee wellness initiatives intended to have an institutional impact on employee health, engagement and achievement. Discussions took place on the cost factors of a variety of options as well as the impact each would have for the employees and the University. After considerable discussion it was agreed that the committee would engage in the development of a funding policy for benefit enhancement to guide such decision-making.
- **Funding Policy for Benefit Enhancements:** Developed a framework of guiding principles on how we will review proposed changes to benefits plans in the future.
- **Critical Illness Coverage:** Implemented the introduction of critical illness coverage for employees. Critical illness insurance provides a one-time non-taxable lump-sum payment to an insured person who is diagnosed with an illness that appears on a predetermined list of covered illnesses. Participation in this benefit is voluntary and premiums will be paid 100% by the employee. The committee recommended this benefit be offered to employees on a “no pre-existing condition” basis. This benefit will be administered by the Employee Benefits Office, which administers our other voluntary benefits. This benefit is to be underwritten by AXA, and arrangements will be made for them to conduct employee seminars on campus.
- **Drug Plan Analysis:** The committee was advised that the University has agreed, along with all other Atlantic Universities, to participate in an analysis of drug plans by Cubic Health. The committee will be looking at the report on a transactional basis relative to the other institutions.
- **Withdrawal of Kings & AST from Dalhousie Benefit Group:** The committee was advised that effective September 1st, 2010 Kings members have elected to leave the Dalhousie benefits umbrella and enter into the pooled group set up for smaller institutions. Surplus amounts associated with the Kings Plan were transferred from the Dalhousie Plan to the Kings Plan. The Atlantic School of Theology is considering a similar change but have stated that their decision will be deferred to next year.
- **Health Benefits for Employees Over Age 65:** The committee was advised that the University has seen an increase in the number of employees electing to continue working past June 30th following their 65 birthday. In these cases the current premium for the Major Medical plan for these employees will be reduced by 50% due to the fact that they must apply for Nova Scotia Pharmacare at this time. The Dalhousie plan then becomes supplemental to the Pharmacare plan for prescription drugs.

- **New Provider for Travel Medical Benefits:** The committee decided to change the Travel Medical Benefits coverage from Blue Cross to AXA. The information provided to the Committee is that the AXA plan offers enhanced benefits to employees at a substantially lower cost to the University.
- **Retirees’ Surplus:** Determined to transfer funds actuarially found to be attributable to the retirees group from the active employee’s surplus to a separate account to be managed by the University in conjunction with the Association of Dalhousie Retirees and Pensioners. Representatives of the Board undertook to continue discussions with ADRP relating to the retirees surplus.
- **Plan Renewals:** Reviewing the annual renewal recommendations for the insured benefits program, examining the claims experience of each benefit plan, and determining the premium renewal rates for the coming year. These renewal rates have been communicated to all employees by special notice. The following is a summary of the rate changes effective April 1, 2011:
  - o Long term disability (100% employee paid) – increase of 2.3%.
  - o Health plan (40% employee paid, 60% University paid) – no change.
  - o Dental plan (40% employee paid, 60% University paid) – no change.
  - o Group Life (100% University paid) – increase of 3.9%.
  - o Survivor Income Benefit (50/50 cost shared) – no change.
  - o Accidental Death and Dismemberment (100% University paid) – 6.7% decrease.



**DFA Representatives to the Pension Advisory  
Committee (PAC)  
Faye Woodman, Kevin Grundy**

The PAC is a parity committee with equal representation of the Board and unions. The Chair is Faye Woodman, and the Vice-Chair is Katherine Sheehan, Assistant Vice-President, Human Resources. Kevin Grundy is a member of the Committee.

**1. The Dalhousie Pension Plan**

The Dalhousie Pension Plan continues to face serious funding challenges. As of March 31, 2010, there is a going concern deficit of approximately \$73 million and a solvency deficit of about \$129 million. In response to the financial difficulties engendered by the solvency deficit, the provincial government has granted the Dalhousie Plan relief from the solvency funding regulations for one year (the solvency funding exemption). Even so, total contributions this year for current service costs and payments towards amortization of unfunded actuarial liabilities will amount to about \$32 million or over 18% of the salary budget. Of that amount, employees will pay 6.04% and the plan

sponsor, the Board of Governors of Dalhousie University (BoG), will pay 12.32 % of payroll. There are indications that the Government will extend the solvency funding exemption for another year or two. If the exemption is not made permanent, however, under the present constitution of the Dalhousie Pension Plan, BoG contributions will increase to over 16% of the salary budget while employee contributions will remain unchanged.

### 1.1 EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS

Over the past year, the BoG and employee groups including the DFA have held exploratory discussions concerning pension plan funding. (see section 2 regarding DCOPS). The problem is complex and the solutions are not easy. The membership in the Dalhousie Plan is unusually diverse. Unlike many other university pension plans, it includes both faculty and staff. Within and between unions there is a wide array of incomes, ages, and retirement goals. Members are represented not only by the DFA, but by two other unions, one professional management group and the retirees' association (See section 2 below).

Discussions have been hampered as well by the absence of proposed new provincial pension legislation. This will finally be available later this spring. Even so, the regulations which incorporate the details of the new legislation may still not be available. It is inconceivable that your representatives would agree to any changes to the Plan without this information.

Finally, any discussions must take account of the current and projected financial climate. Markets have rebounded and that has helped the Plan. However, the future remains uncertain. Long-term interest rates remain low and, as a result, Plan liabilities on wind-up are high. The lower the interest rate, the higher the cost of buying life annuities for members upon winding up a plan (the source of a solvency deficit). An increase in interest rates would be of considerable assistance to Plan funding.

### 1.2 NECESSITY OF FUNDING A UNIVERSITY PENSION PLAN'S SOLVENCY DEFICIT

The necessity of funding the Plan's solvency deficit is, in any case, a contentious issue. Many provinces, including Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador have given their universities permanent relief from funding solvency deficits. Ontario is presently formulating its policy.

Generally, when the provinces have given a solvency relief/exemption they have imposed certain conditions. For example, during the relief period, pension benefits are permitted to be improved only if paid for up front. Other restrictions relate to when employers can take contribution pension holidays or withdraw surplus funds from the plans. In Nova Scotia, the Government has been reluctant to commit to a permanent exemption for universities with defined benefit plans (King's, Acadia and Dalhousie). The Government has looked to the position of Ontario for guidance and it is expected that the new pension legislation will follow the lead of that jurisdiction. To date, Ontario has extended temporary solvency relief/exemption to its universities for three years.

It appears, however, that permanent relief might be tied to concessions including transformation of plans into some type of jointly-sponsored plans (the details are not clear).

We have already mentioned the one-year solvency funding exemption granted to the Dalhousie and other plans. Indeed it is expected that the exemption will be extended to two years. Nonetheless it is the DFA's position is that a permanent exemption should be granted. It is highly unlikely that the University will be required because of its financial position to cease operations. In any case, even in the eventuality, the University's physical assets are so substantial (compared to many private companies) that it is probable that its pension obligations could be met.

### 1.3 THE DFA POSITON ON PENSIONS

During discussions this year the position of the DFA has been that the present provisions of the Dalhousie Pension Plan, which has existed since 1982, should be retained with some negotiated modifications. The DFA stated this position in a letter to Lee Crowell, Director, Pensions and Benefits, on December 13, 2010. This letter was also signed by the other employee unions and the retirees' association. The letter reiterated that the signatories recognize the seriousness of the funding difficulties of the Plan. Further, the DFA and other employee groups called for an independent audit of the Plan in order to ascertain the reasons for the poor performance of the Plan in the previous five years when compared to most other comparable plans during the same period. (Investments in the Plan are overseen by two investment trustees committees in which employees have a very limited role). In subsequent discussions, moreover, the signatories have indicated that they do not agree with the BoG's position that the operation and staffing of the University necessarily need to be fundamentally impeded because of pension obligations. While the Plan's returns have rebounded, the DFA is concerned that some of the Plan's investment policies may be fundamentally flawed to the extent that long-term performance will be adversely affected. It is important to recognize that the return on investments is the key to the Plan's funding because the majority of pension assets are derived from the investment of contributions, not the contributions themselves.

### 1.4 BoG TOWN HALL MEETINGS

In the last two months, the BoG has held several town hall meetings which many of our members have attended. In these meetings, the BoG has offered up one solution to the current pension funding deficit. It is the introduction at Dalhousie of a jointly sponsored pension plan.

A jointly-sponsored plan is one in which the employees and employer are jointly responsible for plan governance and funding. Governance mechanisms normally provide for a 50/50 voting split between employers and employees with some or all plan participants—employers, unions, retirees—having vetoes over certain plan fundamentals. It could be expected that plan administrators, professionals and actuaries would be “neutral.”

# D I A L L O G U E

Joint governance imposes a considerable burden on employees, however. It can be expected that any jointly sponsored plan will ensure three important negative changes for employees:

1. Member contributions to the plan will be increased to better reflect the joint nature of the plan.
2. Members will shoulder up to 50% of the investment risk of the plan. In other words, if the plan falters, members will have to pay up. This is not the case under our present plan.
3. Depending on the nature of the plan, funding shortfalls may be accommodated by a decrease in plan benefits for active and, sometimes, retired members.

In today's uncertain economy, the assumption of substantially more investment risk by plan members is a profoundly significant change. Further, it is possible the members will be forced to take on risks arising from past as well as future investments.

## 2. **DCOPS, Dalhousie Committee on Pensions - (son of ACOPS)**

Both of these committees were subcommittees of the Pension Advisory Committee (PAC). The Ad-Hoc Committee on Pension Sustainability (ACOPS) effectively ceased to operate in late spring of 2010 after negotiations between the BoG and employees to provide short-term funding relief for the Plan failed. In the fall of 2010, The Dalhousie Committee on Pensions (DCOPS) was born with a slightly different constitution, which it was hoped would make it more efficient than its predecessor. In later winter, union employee groups and the ADRP joined with the DFA in withdrawing from DCOPS for an unspecified time for the purposes of further cooperation and to formulate their own position(s). In addition and significantly, the union employee groups did not agree with the underlying assumption of DCOPS as formulated by the BoG: that a jointly sponsored 50/50 pension plan was inevitable.

The parties to DCOPS are:

- DFA;
- NSGEU (Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union);
- NSUPE (Nova Scotia Union of Public Employees);
- DPMG (Dalhousie Professional Managerial Group);
- ADRP (Association of Dalhousie Retired Pensioners); and
- Board of Governors of Dalhousie.

## 3. **Temporary Solvency Funding Relief/Exemption-15% withholding**

The Nova Scotia Government extended temporary solvency relief to the Dalhousie Pension Plan on condition that the Plan would withhold 15% from amounts paid out of the Plan, except for payments to pensioners (pensions in pay). The 15% charge will be repayable to the member in 5 years with interest. The 15% levy will affect members terminating from Dalhousie and withdrawing their pension in a lump sum (which you can do up to age 64), and the payment of death benefits to a member's estate on the member's death before retirement. The 15% represents roughly the member's share of the solvency deficit.

**4. Online Access to Information about Pension Entitlements by Plan Members**

The Ariel Pension Administration system has now been implemented. It provides annual member statements and a pension projection tool. The system also permits members to do some simple financial planning.

**5. Pension Errors and Corrections Policy**

A subcommittee of PAC is currently reviewing Plan policy on the correction of errors and payment of interest.

**6. The Financial Position of the Dalhousie Plan in Detail**

Provincial legislation requires a valuation at least every three years, and in March of 2010 there was an actuarial valuation of the Dalhousie Pension Plan. (The Dalhousie Plan's valuation was a few months early for strategic reasons). The valuation revealed, not unexpectedly, that the Dalhousie Plan has substantial deficits when the Plan is valued either on a going concern basis or a solvency basis. The going concern valuation measures the performance of a plan on the assumption of its continued operation. The solvency valuation assumes that a plan will be immediately wound up, and the plan will purchase annuities for members of the plan over 55 years of age.

**The Going Concern Deficit**

There is an overall going concern deficit of about \$73 million, comprised of an \$86 million deficit in the Pension Trust Fund (PTF: the trust-fund holding contributions and investments (generally) of non-retired members) and a \$16 million surplus in the Retirees Trust Fund (RTF: the trust-fund holding amounts transferred from the PTF on a member's retirement to fund her pension). The solvency deficit is about \$129 million. By comparison, in the last valuation in June, 2007, the Plan had a small overall going concern surplus of \$259,000 and no solvency deficit. To put these numbers in context, the Dalhousie Plan has something less than three-quarters of a billion dollars in assets.

**The Solvency Deficit**

The cost of annuities which must be purchased under a wind-up scenario is directly and adversely affected by the present low interest rates. The solvency deficit is a major concern since it normally must be amortized over 5 years. The Nova Scotia government has enacted legislation to help ameliorate the situation in certain plans. It extended the time for the solvency deficit repayment to 10 years. In the first year only limited payments need be made, but the solvency deficit must then be eliminated in the following 9 years.

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**Rates of Return on Investments**

The net one year rates of return to June 30, 2010 were 8.06% for the RTF and 8.75% for the PTF. (Expenses run about 0.4% to 0.5 %.). By comparison, the 3 year average was -3.20% for the PTF and -1.60% for the RTF.

**Summary**

**Required Contributions**

**Going Concern**

Total annual current service cost	15.59% (of payroll)	\$32,060,000
Employee Contributions	6.04%	12,427,000
Employer "Matching" Contributions	6.04%	12,427,000
Balance of Cost-employer responsibility	3.51%	7,206,000

**Solvency Deficit and Special Payments**

Year commencing March 31, 2010	2.77%	5,699,000
Year commencing March 31, 2011	6.85%	14,094,000

**For March 31, 2010**

Total employer contributions to plan equal 12.32% (of payroll)

**For March 31, 2011 (without solvency relief/exemption)**

Total employer contributions to plan equal 16.40% (of payroll)

**Plus 6.04% employee contributions**

Your pension representatives may be contacted at faye.woodman@dal.ca and kevin.grundy@dal.ca.

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**Report from the Pension and Retirees' Trust Funds**

**By Ronald A. Pink, Q.C.  
Representative to the Funds**

As you know, I joined the Board of Trustees in the fall of 2010 and have met with Dalhousie representatives and have also attended meetings. Unfortunately, many of the meetings are pre-set and occurred the time when I had pre-established trials. I have attempted to arrange my future schedule around the Trustees meetings so that I am not absent.

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Overall, for the year ending December 31, 2010, the Pension Trust Fund had a return of 11.29% and the Retirees Trust Fund had a return of 10.69%.

The return the Canadian Equity Manager's for 2010 was approximately 17.79 (Greystone and 18.43 Burgundy) as compared to a 7.61% from the TSX.

The US equity returns exceeded the SMP 500 which recorded a 9.05%, and Ashford returned 17.74, Wedge Capital return 11.45% and SSGA returned 20.26%.

The EAFE investment managers returned exceptionally better than the Index with First Eagle returning 13.49% and Sprucegrove 12.61%.

The Fixed Income performed less than the index with Addenda performing at 5.75% and CIBC performing 7.07%. That is compared to DEX Universe at 6.74%.

The Absolute Bonds returned 6.10% vs. 10.95% in the Index.

The Trustees had diversified their portfolio marginally and have entered into two infrastructure funds: one is a public fund and one is a private placement fund of JP Morgan. These two funds equate to about \$6 million in the Pension Trust Fund and \$4.5 million in the Retiree's Trust Fund. In addition, the Trustees approved the purchase of a private placement fund in series, Maritime Fund (CERES) at approximately 1% of assets.

Overall, the funds have met the benchmark as determined the actuary for the past year. There continues to be attempts to regain the losses which occurred over the 2007 to 2008 period of time. The annualized returns for the Pension Trust Fund for the past 4 years is:

2007 – 1.33%  
2008 – 1.32 %  
2009 – 12.24 %  
2010 – 11.29%

For the Retirees, the annualized returns are:

2007 – 2.27%  
2008 – 2.41%  
2009 – 11.96 %  
2010 – 10.69%

I shall continue to monitor the performance of the investment of the funds. Generally speaking, I remain satisfied that the performance is generally acceptable with its present asset mix and diversification.



## Association- Board Committee

**David Tindall (DFA Co-Chair, Department of Physics & Atmospheric Science),  
Sina Adl (DFA Nominee, Department of Biology),  
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.

Until the end of 2010, Katherine Sheehan (Assistant Vice-President, Human Resources) was Board Co-Chair and Will Webster (Dean, Faculty of Health Professions) was a Board Nominee. Beginning in January 2011, Jasmine Walsh (Director, Academic Staff Relations) became Board Co-Chair and Robert Summerby-Murray (Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) a Board Nominee. Sandy Logan (Academic HR Administrator) was a Board Nominee throughout the 2010/11 year.

The ABC agendas are often lengthy and most agenda items relate to matters such as waivers of advertising and extensions of appointments 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. Otherwise, the business of ABC tends to drag on.

One recurring issue that gives your nominees a lot of difficulty is that of Advertising Waivers. The Collective Agreement (e.g. 14.11(c)) provides that appointments shall be advertised. However, far too frequently and often very late in the process we are called upon to waive advertising requirements – in some cases well after the person has taken up the appointment. In those cases we are forced to choose between not approving the waiver and getting the Member’s appointment rescinded, or holding our noses and approving it. We have made it very clear to the Board’s nominees that this is not an acceptable situation and that we are looking for more vigilance from their side to prevent this from happening in future.

Your nominees also receive a copy of the monthly “Staff Matters,” a document which details all academic staff changes – appointments, promotions, tenure, sabbaticals, etc. We scrutinise this document, together with its supporting documentation, quite often querying missing documentation and, sometimes, noting that the Collective Agreement is about to be violated if a proposed action is taken. In those circumstances, we insist that the matter be brought to the next ABC meeting to be dealt with properly.

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The “Action List,” developed last year to keep better track of cases as they flow through ABC, seems to be working quite well, although the Board nominees don’t appear to want to use it to create the “matters arising” agenda item.

The volume of paper we have to deal with has been greatly reduced by the online electronic distribution of documents. This has also given us more time to review the documents between our receiving them and the date they are to be dealt with. The system had some teething troubles, such as the documents not being searchable and access disappearing too soon, but these seem to have been dealt with.

We still see more delay than we would like between our requests for documents and when we receive them, but things seem to be improving.

In general, all aspects of ABC are functioning much more smoothly with the new Director of Academic Staff Relations, Jasmine Walsh, and we look forward to this continuing.

Of course, there will always be differences of opinion at ABC about how some matters should be treated, or how the Collective Agreement should be interpreted.



## **Dalhousie University Environmental Health and Safety Committee**

**by Cindy Penney, DFA representative since October 2009**

The Environmental Health and Safety Committee meets on the third Thursday of the month from 1-2:30 pm. Committee membership includes university appointees and representatives from employee and student groups.

Information about the Dalhousie Environmental Health and Safety Committee can be found on the Office of Environmental Health and Safety web site [http://safety.dal.ca/committees/joint\\_committee](http://safety.dal.ca/committees/joint_committee). The committee's purpose is stated as:

The Dalhousie University Environmental 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.

The committee is in the process of reviewing the NS Occupational Health & Safety Act.

The office of Environmental Health and Safety informs the committee about issues and activities. Ray Ilson is the Director of the Office of Environmental Health and Safety. The Safety Office is located at 1391 Seymour Street. They can be reached by telephone at 494-2495, FAX 494-2996 and email Safety.Office@Dal.Ca

The committee has an ongoing interest in physical safety within the Dalhousie community and encourages feedback from DFA members regarding health and safety issues.

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## Report from the Dalhousie University Transportation and Security Committee

by Faith Wight Moffatt (Nursing, Health Professions)

No Report Available

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## Dalhousie -WUSC Student Refugee Committee

By Krista Kesselring (History)

The DFA participates in the Dalhousie University-WUSC Student Refugee Sponsorship Programme (SRSP), which sponsors refugee students to come and 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 twelve month period. The Dal committee has sponsored over 50 students since first joining the programme 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 eighteen to twenty-four months. Upon arrival in Halifax, and with the assistance of the committee members, the students begin the difficult process of adjusting to a new country and culture, and new academic demands.

The two students we are currently sponsoring came from the Sudan, followed by a lengthy period of asylum in a Kenyan refugee camp. One is in the Faculty of Science and hoping to become a physician; the other is currently in Science but in the process of switching to Engineering. Both are adjusting extremely well to the many demands upon them. The committee is presently helping them file their taxes, register for summer classes, and find part-time employment for the summer months. In the meantime, we are also beginning our part of the process to bring two new students here for the next academic year.

The programme 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](mailto:wusc@dal.ca).

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## South African Student Education Project (SASEP)

Prepared by Dr. David Black, SASEP Academic Advisor, April 2011

### OVERVIEW

#### *SASEP Purpose*

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 level at Dalhousie University.

#### *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. When SAETF ceased operating in 1993, Dalhousie assumed total responsibility for the project and SASEP is now completely funded by the Dalhousie community.

Currently, contributions are made on an annual basis by the Dalhousie Student Union, 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 administration. First, the university has agreed to waive international student differential fees for SASEP students on an ongoing basis. Second, International Research & Development (formerly Lester Pearson International) and the Department of International Development Studies provide financial oversight of and academic support to the project, and neither unit receives funding from the project to undertake SASEP responsibilities.

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 fund-raising 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. We expect to welcome our next student in September 2011, as discussed below.

## CURRENT ACTIVITIES

### *Recent Students*

**Talia Meer** arrived at Dalhousie from KwaDukuza, South Africa, at the end of August 2008. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (2007). Ms. Meer pursued a Master of Arts degree in International Development Studies, and conducted fieldwork in South Africa during the summer of 2009. She defended her MA thesis, on “Finding the Community in Community Based Resource Management: the Case of Ndumo Game Reserve, South Africa” in August 2010. She plans to pursue additional post-graduate training at the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town to strengthen her knowledge of social development and gender, and enable subsequent research at the doctoral level on women's roles in social and political development, as well as the vulnerable position of women in South African society. She is currently a full-time intern at the Gender Health and Justice Research Unit at the UCT medical school.

### **Administration**

In autumn 2009, a series of meetings was held to discuss the future administrative arrangements for the program. During the 2009-10 academic year the administration of the project was overseen by Jennifer Morawiecki, International Research Facilitator at International Research & Development. Dr. David Black, Professor, Department of Political Science and the Department of International Development Studies, served as the academic advisor.

However, due to a changed mandate, International Research & Development is no longer able to oversee the day-to-day administration of SASEP, though it will continue to monitor the project's finances. This is the first full year during which recruitment, selection and all academic matters have been handled by the newly established SASEP Advisory Committee, which consists of several faculty members and is chaired by Dr. Black. While Dr. Black has been on sabbatical in the first half of 2011, Dr. Gary Kynoch has been chairing the committee and overseeing the recruitment process. Support services for SASEP students, including visas, health insurance and housing, will in future be provided by International Student & Exchange Services.

***Recruitment***

Historically, SASEP has been able to support, on average, one full-time student per year. However, we were able to offer two full scholarships to South African graduate students for 2008-2009. As noted above, Talia Meer's studies continued into the 2009-10 academic year. With the administrative transitions of the past year, we were not successful in recruiting a suitably qualified candidate for September 2010 admission, despite a significant number of applicants. However, we are pleased to report that we have recruited a highly qualified candidate for September 2011 admission.

**Zenobia Ismail** graduated in 1991 from the University of the Witwatersrand with a Bachelor of Commerce degree. In 1996, she graduated with an MSc in Management from the LSE. Since completing her degrees, she has worked with Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) and the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa). While at Dalhousie, Zenobia is interested in exploring dominant party states and multi-party politics in Africa. She is particularly interested in the preconditions for democracy and exploring possible solutions to conflict, such as those arising from electoral disputes. She will begin her studies for an MA degree in IDS in September, and will be a welcome addition to the Dalhousie community.

During the talks held in 2009/10 regarding the future of SASEP, and in an effort to ensure the program's usefulness and sustainability, discussions took place regarding the most pressing needs of South African students and institutions. The South African government's current emphasis on the desirability of PhD education led SASEP administrators to open up subsequent competitions to students interested in pursuing any graduate degree at Dalhousie, at the Master's or PhD level. It is hoped that this policy change will result in a greater number of applications to programs that are the most useful and relevant to South Africa's future development. We did have the sense this year that there was a growing level of awareness of the program at key South African institutions, and we will follow up with recruitment efforts for 2012 admission in the fall of 2011.

We warmly welcome input from DFA members who may have contacts and/or research interests in South Africa, and who may be able to help identify strong candidates for this scholarship. We thank the DFA for its continuing support.

# Employment Equity Council

By Robin Oakley

No Report Available

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## President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment

By Catrina Brown

No Report Available

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## DFA President

By Carrie Dawson, DFA President

UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.

Dr. Seuss

At the end of Dr. Seuss's story *The Lorax*, these words are spoken to a young boy who looks out over a clear-cut landscape. He remembers the Truffula trees, the brown Bar-baloos, and the other Seussian species that once thrived there, and he wonders what he might do to fix things. If you've read the recently released BAC report, you might think that I am attracted to Dr Seuss's story because it is about the consequences of "axes that hack." Maybe you'll assume that I cite Seuss because new tenure-track appointments at Dalhousie are as rare as Truffula trees (This, despite the fact that enrollments are at an all time high.) Or, if you know the story well and have also noted the rate at which Dalhousie's administrative structure has grown over the last 5 years, you might think that I mean to raise questions about the "figgering" behind the Administration's "biggering and biggering." You're not wrong. And yet, Dalhousie University—a place I know a whole lot better than I did a year ago—bears no resemblance to the damaged environment imagined by Seuss. It is a vibrant, dynamic, and generally wonderful place to work. Certainly, its strengths owe much to the students, whose intellectual curiosity and appetite challenge us to be creative and rigorous. But, having spent a year working with a number of DFA committees that consider everything from pensions to parking, I am entirely certain that Dalhousie's strengths owe as least as much to the vigilance and resourcefulness of the DFA members who work so hard to create a fair, equitable workplace.

# D I A L O G U E

Over the last year, I have had the genuine pleasure and privilege of working with committed, imaginative, and incredibly hardworking people from across the university. Among the best of them are the members of the DFA Executive, the Negotiating Committee, the Grievance Committee, the Pension Committee, and the DFA Staff Union. As we gear up for what will, no doubt, be a tough round of collective bargaining, I am deeply grateful to all of you for your generosity, your tenacity, and your time. But mostly, I am grateful that people like you “car[e] a whole awful lot.”



# DFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2011 – 2012

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<b>President</b>	<b>Anthony Stewart</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>President-Elect</b>	<b>David Mensink</b>	<b>Counselling &amp; Psychological Services</b>
<b>Second Vice- President</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Sina Adl</b>	<b>Biology</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Suzanne Budge</b>	<b>Food Science Program, Engineering</b>
<b>Past-President</b>	<b>Carrie Dawson</b>	<b>English &amp; Canadian Studies</b>
<b>Non-Bargaining Unit</b>	<b>Robin Whyte</b>	<b>Pediatrics</b>
<b>Members-at-Large</b>	<b>Jennifer Adams</b>	<b>Law Library</b>
	<b>Catrina Brown</b>	<b>Social Work</b>
	<b>Susan Holmes</b>	<b>Continuing Education</b>
	<b>Tim Jukes</b>	<b>Psychology</b>
	<b>Gwendolyn MacNairn</b>	<b>Killam Library</b>
	<b>Terry Mitchell</b>	<b>Dental Hygiene</b>
	<b>Mi Park</b>	<b>Sociology &amp; Anthropology</b>
	<b>Cindy Penney</b>	<b>Physiology &amp; Biophysics</b>
	<b>VACANT</b>	
	<b>VACANT</b>	

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**DAVID TINDALL'S  
RETIREMENT  
SOCIAL**

Please join us for a celebration of David's  
outstanding service to the  
Dalhousie Faculty Association

**LOCATION:** The Earl of Dalhousie Pub  
**DATE:** Tuesday, April 26, 2011  
**TIME:** 4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Refreshments will be served.

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