
President's Message

Julia Wright, DFA President, 2019-20

I arrived at Dalhousie in 2005, after working as a tenure-stream faculty member in Ontario for a decade. I went to DFA meetings, especially in bargaining years, but wasn't very active in the DFA otherwise until recently. I've been working on the edges of workplace issues for a while in other ways, though. I've published on university matters since grad school. I chaired my Faculty's Working Group on Finances in 2012-13, and learned a lot about Dalhousie budgeting—and thought a lot about my third-year undergrad math class on errors (a whole course on how mistakes affect results, especially over time). Our prof seemed to have an endless supply of stories about big problems that arose from someone not checking the little details.



When I became Associate Dean Research in FASS (2013-16), it became clear to me that there was a growing gap between researchers' capacity and what they could actually do with dwindling time and resources (see [this relevant study](#)). I saw reports that gathered dust while new groups were corralled into doing the same work over again. I saw early career researchers scrambling with high teaching loads and everything else that they needed to do. I started to explain administrative work to colleagues as a game of Snakes and Ladders, in which one tried to solve a problem by taking evidence and a solution to someone and persuading them (climbing the ladder), and then were told that person was the wrong person or that it was the wrong time (snake!). These are all, in their way, workload issues: under-resourced teaching leads to less time for research for everyone who teaches, from graduate students to faculty; ineffectual, even "[pointless](#)," administrative processes take time away from all aspects of the academic mission, including the essential work of collegial governance over that mission.

Scholars are problem solvers. In teaching, research, advising, and collegial governance, we try to apply sound methods and facts to make things better—for our students, our fields, our units, and our university. I wanted to be in a role where that was possible, or at least seemed less impossible. So, when I was asked to join the DFA Bargaining Team in late 2016, I said "yes."

Bargaining has its own challenges, of course, but the Collective Agreement is our best guarantee of clarity and consistency. New policies can spin out of Hicks and drop around us like spiders, but the Collective Agreement articulates key elements of our work and the processes through which important decisions about our work are made—including those spider-policies. It gives us a framework that is invisible when we don't need it but rock-steady when we do. So, when I was asked if I would agree to be nominated for president last year, I said "yes."

Over the last year, as president-elect, I've been part of the team in the DFA house: it's a team that *works*. Barb MacLennan's profound knowledge of the Collective Agreement is invaluable, and so is Lynn Purves'

understanding of the numbers, policies, and so much else; Catherine Wall is our communications expert, and Kristin Hoyt keeps it all running smoothly, including our often chaotic meeting schedules. Dave Westwood and I (as president and president-elect) brought our experience in the jobs described by the Collective Agreement, and all that we've learned from the staff, members of the Executive, and you.

Weekly team meetings in the DFA boardroom are about problem-solving: what are the priorities, what will do the most good, and how are we going to get it done? We check the little details. We listen to the different experts in the room. We solve problems. With Dave generously agreeing to be president-elect this year, the same team will be in place, working to solve problems for the membership and getting ready for bargaining in 2020.

We can't solve all of the problems, but you can help us do more. Help us work through the priorities for the next round of bargaining: which problems would you most like to solve? Please feel free to contact the team at dfa@dal.ca or me at julia.wright@dal.ca.

Congratulations to DFA's 2019-20 Executive Committee

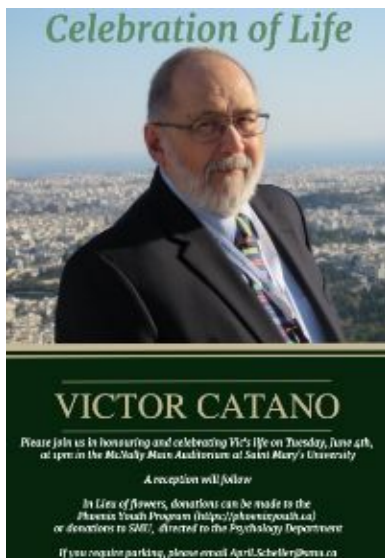
President	Julia M. Wright (English)
President-Elect	Dave Westwood (Health & Human Performance)
Second VP	Cindy Penney (Physiology & Biophysics)
Secretary	Lynne Robinson (Health & Human Performance)
Treasurer	Dominic Silvio (Killam Library)
Past-President	Dave Westwood (Health & Human Performance)
Members-at-Large	<i>(term ends April 2020)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brenda Beagan (Occupational Therapy)• Lori Dithurbide (Health & Human Performance)• Jacqueline Gahagan (Health & Human Performance)• Roger Gillis (Killam Library)• Elizabeth Kay-Raining Bird (Communication Sciences & Disorders)
Members-at-Large	<i>(term ends April 2021)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remi Agu (Pharmacy)• Amy Birchall (Animal Science & Aquaculture)• Philip Bennett (Physics & Atmospheric Science)• Jeff Hoyle (Plant, Food & Environmental Science)• Patti Doyle-Bedwell (Continuing Education)

The Non-Bargaining Unit member position is vacant.

Thank you to DFA's Outgoing Executive Committee Members

Thanks to the following outgoing 2018-19 Executive Members for their time and expertise has been appreciated: Darren Abramson, Jason Brown, Melissa Helwig, Susan Holmes, Nancy MacDonald, Kalyani Prithviraj and Deborah Tamlyn.

Celebration of Life Honouring Victor Catano



Tuesday, June 4 at 1 pm
McNally Main Auditorium, SMU
Reception to follow.

*In lieu of flowers, donations to Phoenix Youth Programs
(www.phoenixyouth.ca) or SMU Psychology Department.
If you require parking, email April.Scheller@smu.ca*

DFA Summer Office Hours

For June, July and August, the DFA office will be open 7:30 am - 3:30 pm from Monday to Thursday (with the exception of statutory holidays). Drop in during office hours at 1443 Seymour Street in Halifax, call 902-494-3722 or email dfa@dal.ca.

CAUT Releases Discussion Paper on OER

Earlier this spring, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) released a Discussion Paper on Open Educational Resources (OER). The paper is available [here](#).

DFA Member Erin Johnson Awarded E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowship

Earlier this month, Dr. Erin Johnson, Faculty of Science, received the E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowship, a prestigious fellowship awarded to enhance the career development of outstanding and highly promising university faculty who are earning a strong international reputation for original research. [Read more](#).

Retirement Workshop for Dal Faculty

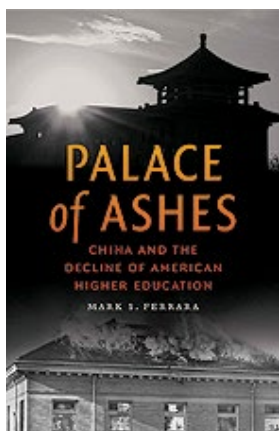
DFA members are invited to Dalhousie's first retirement seminar designed specifically for faculty. Register for [Planning Your Next Chapter](#), scheduled for June 12, Dal SUB, Halifax. Sessions include pension and benefits, maintaining connections to the university, and a recent retiree panel discussion. Faculty can attend individual sessions or the full day (breakfast/lunch provided).

Dal Workplace Wellness: June is Healthy Relationship Month

Please register 10 days before the event, so please sign up soon to register your interest in attending. For info, healthy@dal.ca

- [Parenting: The Early Years](#) (0-6 years) (Halifax, Truro, Saint John) June 5
- [Parenting: The Teen Years](#) (Halifax, Truro, Saint John) June 12
- [Creating More Balance in Your Life](#) (Halifax, Truro, Saint John) June 19
- [How to Handle Food Allergies](#) (Webinar) June 20
- [Enhancing Couple Relationships](#) (Halifax, Truro, Saint John) June 26

Books You Can Use



Mark S. Ferrara. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015; 216 pp; ISBN: 978-1-42141-799-8.

This provocative book focuses on the contrast between the increasing government funding provided to Chinese higher education in recent decades and the parallel decline in financial support for American universities. The numbers are indeed disturbing: as recently as the 1970s, about 70 percent of teaching faculty at American colleges and universities were tenured or on the tenure-track, and administrative responsibilities were largely undertaken by faculty members who returned to teaching once their administrative service was completed. Now less than a third of faculty members are in tenured or tenurable positions, while the remainder are on term contracts or hold adjunct positions, their work managed by a proliferating number of highly paid professional administrators.

Click [here](#) for a book review by Ruth Hayhoe, professor of comparative higher education in the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

Research You Can Use

- [Food Insecurity Linked to Higher Rates of Mental Illness and Distress In Indigenous Groups](#) (Dalhousie University)
- [Long Term Antibiotic Up Heart Risks in Women Over 40](#) (Tulane University)
- [Costs and benefits of social relationships in the collective motion of bird flocks](#) (Stanford University)

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

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