

Open Letter on the DFA

By now you are aware of a breakdown in the negotiations between the Dalhousie Faculty Association and the University's Board of Governors. As of Wednesday afternoon (Jan. 9) D.F.A. members will be in a legal strike position and may opt for a strike or for some other job action, at the time.

As you may know, strikes are not extraordinary events in our society but they are unusual occurrences at universities. Sooner or later we will have a settlement in this dispute, but in the meantime we all must work hard to preserve ongoing relationships within the Dal community.

The phrase, "in the event of a strike" now guides our preparations should a walkout of faculty become a reality. This open letter is intended to inform students of the level of preparation in progress as of Jan. 7. Several questions still remain unanswered for the administration and we must therefore ask student members of the Dal community, to come forward with their individual questions as these questions become more immediate.

In the event of strike action, the university will be working to continue normal operations as much as possible. We anticipate that several classes might continue and we will continue to meet our obligations to students and to the community which uses our services. Student services of health, chaplaincy, housing, study skills and career counselling, foreign student advising and student aid will operate on a normal schedule; transcript service and program advice will continue to be available in the Register's office. Library hours and Dalplex programming may be extended for students. Residences will remain open and food services will continue to supply meals as usual. Community services, Cohn performances and Art Gallery exhibitions will continue on schedule. The Computer Centre will remain open, on an extended hour basis.

Students may wish to consider their options for the intelligent use of time should a work stoppage affect them—such an occurrence will, no doubt, challenge us all. Non-D.F.A. members of the Dalhousie faculty, along with administrative and support staff members of the university, will be expected to carry out their duties and responsibilities to students during a strike. Unlike D.F.A. members deemed to be "on strike", these staff members and Dal students would have a right to be on the campus and use campus facilities. Stipends to graduate students for scholarships, bursaries, and student assistantships will be paid if these students continue to show up for their normal obligations.

Although picketing of the

campus may occur on city street areas, students should be aware that they are entitled to be on campus.

Questions about the possible cancellation of spring break, extension of the school year, fee rebates and credits, extra work assignments and make-up program, are all under review by an administrative committee assigned to the task of planning and preparation. Phone lines have been installed in the strike operations office in the A & A building. The phone number is 424-7041. Student questions are welcome.

Parents, of course, will have special concerns for any special program arrangements related to a potential strike. As members of the university community, we can monitor events and react in appropriate ways. Parents cannot do this. The university will make every attempt to maintain a level of communication with you to keep you informed of the answers to questions dealing with everything from convocation plans to supplemental examinations. We would ask you to pass on any information you deem helpful. Parents need answers, too.

President Andrew MacKay,
January 8, 1985

Silent shivers

To the editors,

The breakdown of negotiations between the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) and the administration has begun to send silent shivers down the spines of Dal Student Nurses. The Nursing Society has felt it their responsibility to keep a close scrutiny on the press releases and contentious issues between the DFA and the administration. We don't like what we hear. The probability of a strike by the faculty is coming closer and closer to reality. The consequences of this for nurses could be devastating. Because of our extra six weeks clinical rotation after April exams, we have less time to find summer employment. If we were forced to go further into the summer to make up for time lost in a strike we would; a) lose employment time, and b) somehow have to find more money for rent, food, etc. while staying longer at school.

If strike action is taken the professors stand to lose some wages—which the average professor can afford. The student stands to lose thousands of dollars, and if they can't afford to stay longer at school, a whole year of their life.

We are looking at facts and one of those includes Ontario students losing an entire month of school this past October. This could happen to us. True to form, when university politics are negotiated, the students have been handed the short end of the stick. We are paying for our education and the Dal Nursing Society believes we have a right to get it. So, come on DFA and Administration, it's time to start

talking; and to stop using the students as pawns.

Sheilagh O'Driscoll
Executive member,
Nursing Society
Dal School of Nursing

Gigeroff looks at options of strike

To the editors,

The Dalhousie Faculty Association will be going on strike within the next few days. While it is impossible at this writing to determine what kind of strike action is to occur, or precisely when it will occur, this news comes as a cause of grave concern for all students, as our immediate futures are in jeopardy. It had been hoped, I think by both sides, that this situation could be averted, but the time for that is apparently over.

Over the Christmas break, a conciliator was appointed by the provincial minister of labour. That process failed to result in a settlement. Last week the conciliator was called in again, but still the two sides could not reach an agreement on the major issues of pensions and salaries. The board of governors and the D.F.A. have not met to discuss the collective agreement since that time.

The primary concern of students must be for a settlement to be reached. I have sent letters to President MacKay and President Young (D.F.A.) urging both sides to return to the table. Also a petition is available in the Student Council Offices. Last week, student union executive

members met with labour minister David Nantes and education minister Terry Donahoe to express the concern of students. Government efforts aimed at resolving the dispute have not been successful, and the two sides remain far apart on the outstanding issues.

Many students will be wondering whether they should pay their second-term tuition fees. Students would be strongly advised to seriously consider withholding payment of second-term tuition fees until a negotiated settlement is reached. You don't want to pay for an education that you're not sure you're going to get. The university administration has indicated that they will look into the possibility of extending the deadline or not imposing late charges.

In addition, the Dalhousie Student Union will examine every legal option open to us. Many students are concerned about whether or not they'll graduate, whether or not they will be able to find summer employment, and a host of other concerns. We feel it is important for some form of remuneration to be made available should services be withdrawn. If it is necessary for students to sue the University for loss of services, then we will not hesitate in doing so.

Both sides have indicated to the student union that they do not want to harm students, but this is a moot point; the reality is that any strike action will adversely affect students. We will be prepared to act accordingly.

Sincerely,
Alex Gigeroff
President

Student says support DFA

To the editors,

The students' union must support the Dalhousie Faculty Association in their current struggle with the university administration. The students' council must pass a motion in support for the DFA's efforts to achieve: salaries commensurate with those at other Canadian universities, and secure a pension for its members. Council should indicate to the administration that they would support a fundamental restructuring of the Board of Governors so that representation of DFA members on the board would be equal to the number of government appointees, and so that board meetings are more open to public scrutiny. The administration's diplomatic tact with the provincial government must be questioned.

Blame for the occurrence of a strike should be placed on the provincial government. If there is a strike the students' union should seek to sue the minister of education and the board. It also should encourage students not to pay their fees.

For the past four or more years the government has been consistently underfunding the university. This university is no longer the fat cat it once was and continued cutbacks are not making the university any more

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Swimming in malaise of CUP 47

THERE I WAS SWIMMING IN the hotel pool. It was like I had forever been in this pool and would continue to do so for the rest of my life. The combination of work, politics and the absence of sleep have produced my first mild bout with insanity at this conference. It is a reassuring feeling — like the return of an old friend.

About 180 of the country's student journalists are here from more than 50 university and college newspapers. For eight days they will try and set the direction of their co-operative — Canadian University Press — for the upcoming year.

But something is askew on the plenary floor.

"I'd like to amend the amendment..."

"I'd like to table this motion until the final plenary..."

"Point of information..."

The junior debating society had arrived. It was only a matter of time — student politicians have long found pleasure in playing with their *Robert's Rules of Order* at the expense of creating a real student movement. Now the student press, bored and smug, is having a go at it themselves.

A lot of traditions have slipped

away in the student press' annual meeting. Some are gratefully banished. Others are sorely missed.

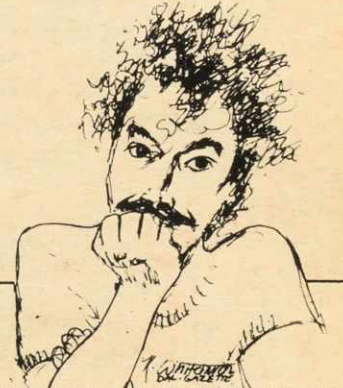
When CUP rewrote its statement of principles last year it became an end item. The debate ceased. Some had stated previously that having an imperfect statement at least made

those responsible for maintaining it aware that it existed.

According to that statement, papers are supposed to be agents of social change, providing information as a catalyst to help mobilize society against various forms of social and political injustice.

It may be a simple, straightforward charge. So simple that it may seem pointless in discussing. But then again, more than 50 "agents of social change" spent most of the conference debating the mechanics of CUP's services and finance.

It is an interesting time on campus. In the midst of a colossal crisis in the post-secondary education system, students are



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caught-up in an overwhelming malaise. It is reflected in the type of students that run the unions, and perhaps now in those who join the papers.

Here at Dalhousie we face the prospect of a faculty strike. It is not the fault of an anonymous deficit, but that of constant underfunding by tangible governments. The crisis is about to come home to us.

Walking into a national conference of student journalists dedicated to social change one expects to hear a challenge to that malaise. There was no animated discussion over the politics of post-secondary education. It didn't happen.

Instead the pool water was warm.