

## Profs and Dal hammer out tentative deal

*Agreement must pass a faculty vote*

BY SHELLEY ROBINSON

One week after it started, the Dalhousie faculty strike may be

over because of a tentative settlement between professors and the university's Board of Governors.

Dalhousie faculty and administration agreed on the outstanding terms of contract negotiations the night of Mar. 31,

hammering out a final proposal by Apr. 1.

The strike and ensuing university lockout began Mar. 25.

The latest proposal must be successfully passed by the 722 member Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) before the

strike will officially be over. The association includes full-time professors and instructors, as well as professional librarians and counsellors.

DFA president Ismet Ugursal said that while the deal didn't include everything the faculty

were looking for, it was fair and the association would likely support it.

"I think the [DFA] membership will probably find [the settlement] acceptable," he said.

"Obviously we aren't totally and completely happy...this is an imperfect agreement — nothing is ever perfect — so I think given the situation it is a good agreement."

The two unresolved issues were salaries and the replacement of departing faculty members — called complement.

The specific terms of the settlement cannot be released until the faculty association has voted to accept or reject the offer.

If the association rejects the offer, the strike — and talks — will continue.

University spokesperson Michelle Gallant says the proposed settlement is good news, but with a price tag.

"Everyone is delighted that we have a settlement so that students can come back to class," she said.

"[But] the strike was about money we don't have — so the issue of university funding continues to be a priority."

The administration's original offer of a 9.5 per cent salary increase over 32 months and no guarantee of complement was overwhelmingly rejected by the faculty association. And it was an offer the university said it already couldn't afford.

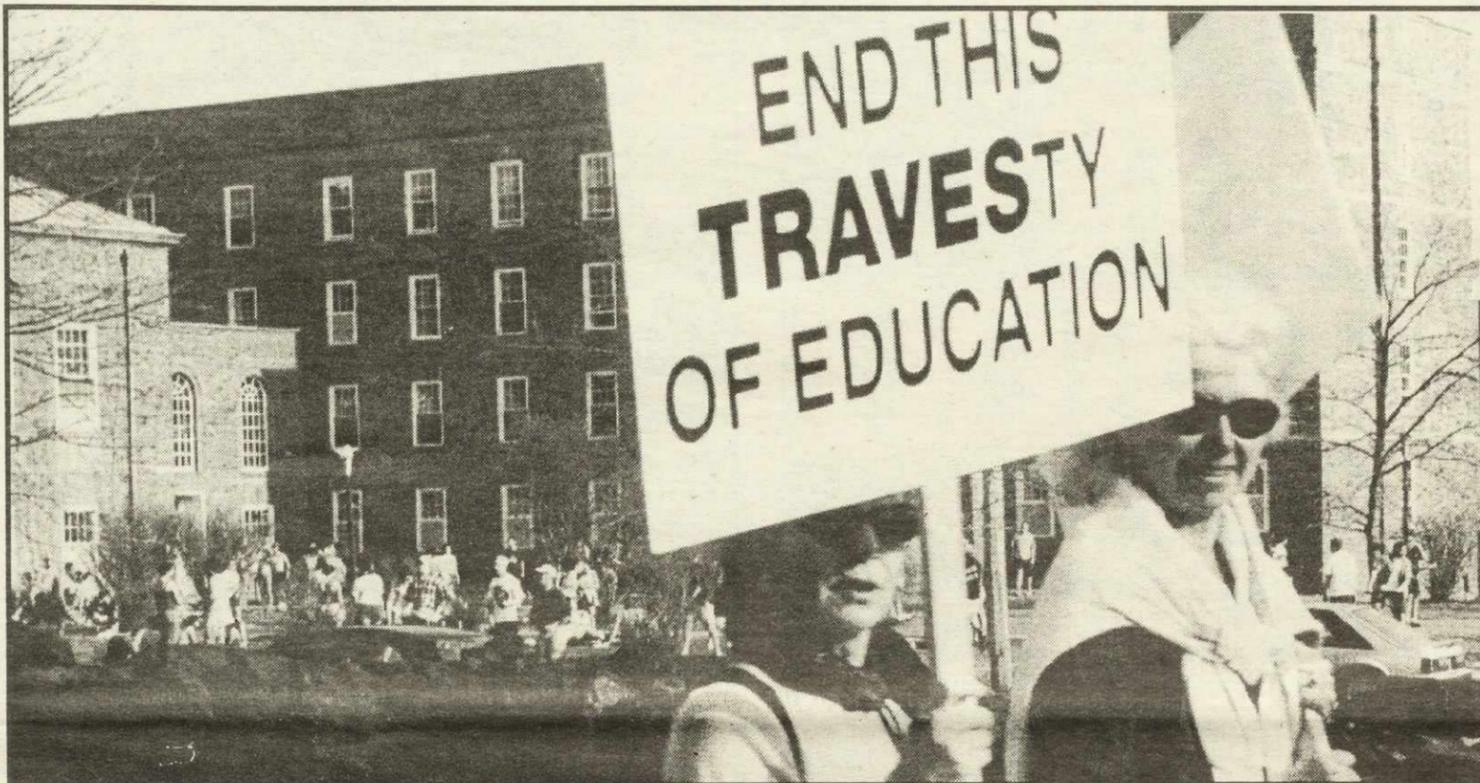
But the DFA proposal for a 13 per cent salary increase and a guarantee of full replacement of all leaving professors fared no better.

Both sides say they had to make hard choices to defend the quality of education, but they also acknowledge how hard the strike was on students.

Ugursal says he knows students may be bitter, but that the faculty had no choice but to strike.

"The worst outcome is probably some resentment from the students," he said.

"I hope [they] will eventually understand that this was something that had to happen...If you believe something is right, you have to fight for it — although the fight could be painful."



Professors picket on Coburg Road while Howe Hall residents party on a sunny Tuesday afternoon. (Photo by Ryan Lash)

## Students suing Traves, Ugursal

BY ANDREW SIMPSON

Frustrated by the strike, and the resulting disruption in classes, some Dalhousie students filed small-claims lawsuits against university president Tom Traves and faculty association president Ismet Ugursal.

Several students, observed by an equal number of journalists, staked out Traves' office to serve him with legal papers on Mar. 30.

The Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) had originally looked into filing a class action suit against the university and the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA). But a clause in the university calendar includes strikes in a list of circumstances deemed beyond the university's reasonable control.

"[A class action suit] would be unprecedented," said Chris Adams, DSU president.

"Our lawyer is still investigating it, but we don't have a case."

The unlikelihood of winning a

full-fledged trial, and the low cost of a small-claims suit made it the best option.

The DSU provided court fees and transportation to the courthouse for 18 students. Each was given the opportunity to file a claim against Traves, Ugursal, or both.

The total cost of court fees to the DSU was about \$900, but incoming DSU vice-president, Brian Kellow says it was some of the best public relations money the organization has spent all year.

"When we came out of the place in the court house where you file, there was media all down the hall," he said. "There were TV cameras everywhere."

DFA president Ugursal admitted that such media attention made the students' position abundantly clear and placed extra pressure on the negotiators.

"Seeing how the students were becoming extremely agitated brought home the urgency of the situation,"

he said. "Students suing the president and suing the faculty president is not a trivial thing."

University spokesperson, Michelle Gallant, says the university was always very aware of the students' plight, but that responding to legal challenges is not a priority.

"[Traves] has certainly met with the students and certainly accepted the documentation from them and has turned the papers over to his lawyer," she said.

"Regardless of what kind of claims [were] being made during this strike situation, we [were] focussed very specifically...on the negotiations."

But despite the tentative settlement reached between the university and the DFA, some students still plan to pursue the charges.

Third-year student Robin Mace, who is suing Ugursal, says she plans to continue.

"I asked for \$100 or 15 classes on my court form," she said.

"They need to be held accountable and that is why I filed in the first place."

But the suits are no longer necessary, says Ugursal, who has not yet received official notification that he is being sued.

"I think the suits have done their job from a practical perspective," he said. "From a legal perspective I don't think there was a lot of merit in them."

Kellow remains defiant.

"It's up to each of the students — I plan to continue," he said.

"I'm suing Dr. Traves and Dr. Ugursal because I am paying for services I didn't receive."

While Gallant said the university does not want to speculate on the outcome of any of the cases, she says there was a precedent set during Dalhousie's last strike in 1988.

"I wouldn't want to presume...but I gather in that faculty strike, three students pursued a similar action and the court did not find in their favour," she said.

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