

The Letters/Opinions section of the Gazette is meant as a campus forum for all Dalhousie students. The opinions expressed within may not necessarily be those of the Gazette staff or editorial board. We welcome all submissions, but reserve the right to edit for style and content. It is the Gazette's mandate not to print racist, sexist or homophobic material.

Christopher Adams on collective bargaining

An open letter to all Dalhousie Students

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about the Dalhousie Student Union's perspective on university and staff contract negotiations.

In 1993, the Nova Scotia Government froze wages for private sector workers. This wage freeze also affected all of Dalhousie's employees. Subsequently, the government rolled back the salaries of these employees by 3 per cent.

On Nov. 1, 1997 the university's contracts with its employees expired. The three collective bargaining units, or unions, on the campus, which had agreements with the university, then went into negotiations with the university administration (the Board of Governors). The fourth bargaining unit on campus, representing teaching assistants and part-time staff has been unable to reach its first collective agreement with the university.

The four collective bargaining units on campus:

- Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA), representing faculty, librarians and counselors;
- The Dalhousie Staff Association (DSA), a section of the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union, representing the University support staff;
- The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), representing the mechanics,

carpenters, cleaning staff etc.;

- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), representing teaching assistants and part-time staff.

What is going on?

- The teaching assistants and the part-time staff have not reconvened to discuss the issues with the university since the summer. They are presently at an impasse.
- The IUOE and the DSA have just recently begun negotiations with the University.
- The Faculty Association is still in negotiations with the University.

What do the bargaining units want?

Discussion is focused on issues such as tenure, part-time replacement staff, grievances, workloads, and promotions. Issues having the largest focus relate to faculty and staff complement, and salary. The university has offered all of the unions a two percent pay increase for each of the next two years. All of the unions are looking for more substantive salary increases.

Where can it go from here?

Two steps will occur if the university and union groups are unable to reach a deal. The first step is for a party to ask the Nova Scotia Minister of Labour to appoint a conciliator to help find a compromise. The conciliator will attempt to help the parties reach agreement and if no agreement is

reached will file a report with the Minister of Labour. Once the conciliator's report is filed the union may call a strike vote. After certain time limits have elapsed either the union may go on strike, or the university can lock the employees out.

Before the union goes on strike it will call a strike vote. A successful strike vote does not necessarily mean the union will go on strike; rather the vote result becomes a tool to further pressure the administration into reaching an agreement. Even so, the union cannot strike until after arbitration is found to be fruitless.

What does this mean for students?

Students will be affected regardless of the outcome of the discussions. Should a strike ensue with any of the unions, (although I should point out no parties wants or expects a strike) the university may be forced to cancel classes. If all the parties reach an agreement then students may very well be faced with the possibility of either increased tuition or cuts to services. The possibility of increased tuition is discussed in the recently released Budget Advisory Committee Report to the president, which outlines the financial position of the university. The report suggests that even a two-percent increase in salaries for this year and next (which, as mentioned, is the university's opening offer) would create a serious budget shortfall.

student body you can be assured that the DSU will act in the best interest of all Dalhousie students. I would appreciate hearing any comments you have in regards to this situation, or any other matter. If you would like to receive direct updates, please email dsuvpca@dal.ca to be included on the DSU e-mail list.

I would appreciate you sharing this letter with other Dalhousie students so more students can be kept informed on the contract negotiations.

CHRISTOPHER ADAMS
DSU president

Correction:

In the Jan. 22 issue of *The Gazette* in the story entitled "Banner system is good to go — for now" it states that "[Dalhousie Registrar Gudrun] Curri says Dal didn't investigate other universities' experiences with the [Banner] system because they would have been largely irrelevant."

Curri, in fact, did do an on-site visit to the Banner system at the Memorial University of Newfoundland.

LETTERS CONTINUED

curriculum", implies that the College of Pharmacy requires this additional funding due to the cost of running a brand new Problem-Based Learning (PBL) curriculum.

This is not entirely true as the college's old curriculum was already chronically underfunded as noted later in the article. We would like it to be known that regardless of which curriculum is used, the College of Pharmacy requires additional funds in order to maintain its program.

Thank you very much for the time and effort put into this issue.

SEANA HENNESSEY
Acting-President
Dalhousie Student
Pharmacy Society

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TO	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
VANCOUVER	—	—	18:50	—	—	—	—
CALGARY	—	—	18:50	—	—	—	—
TORONTO	—	18:25	—	22:55	17:20 ¹	11:35	—
ST. JOHN'S	—	13:25	—	18:00	—	—	—

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TO	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
FT. LAUDERDALE	—	—	06:00 ¹	—	—	—	—
ORLANDO	—	06:00 ¹	06:00 ¹	—	—	—	—
ST. PETERSBURG	—	—	16:50 ¹	—	—	—	—

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