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# THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

NORTH AMERICA'S OLDEST CAMPUS NEWSPAPER, EST. 1868



STUDENTS RAISE VALID SECURITY QUESTIONS WITH THE MOVE TO VIRTUAL LEARNING AT DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY. (PHOTO BY GEOFFREY HOWARD)

## Cybersecurity at Dal

Who has access to your data?

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## Accepting failure (and success)

Dear reader,

Last Friday I was up at 4 a.m., half-awake in front of my laptop scrawling out the conclusion to an art history essay — an assignment I received an extension for yet was still completing at the last minute.

Look, this semester is rough. It has been right from the start. Like other students who survived the past fall semester, I truly believed this term would go somewhat smoother than the last. How woefully wrong I was.

If you got through winter study break like I did, which is by barely catching up on courses you were three modules behind on, please know this: I applaud you. Even if you procrastinated so much on schoolwork you considered dropping out of university, congratulations on continuing through the grind of this incredibly difficult semester.

The past few weeks have felt like a series of small wins and failures: I've nearly finished my honours thesis, but I also handed in a subpar essay worth a wee 30 per cent of my final grade for one required course. It's hard to appreciate the wins when the failures threaten to overshadow everything. It's easy in this ungracious middle-of-the-semester time to be filled with questions of self-doubt: Am I doing well enough in school? Am I dedicating adequate time to my job? Am I being supportive enough to my loved ones?

Perhaps these are important questions to occasionally ask yourself. But they aren't helpful as constant thoughts. What I've learned during the past week is how to accept the fact my answer to some of these questions is no.

Earlier on I envisioned my bachelor's degree as some ideal quest of gracefully earning a diploma despite the obstacles. But the simple fact is there's nothing ideal about finishing a degree during a pandemic. I've accepted this semester — my last one — is not going as well as I hoped it would. And that's OK.

Failure does not mean a complete downfall; it's merely a setback or redirection. It's all right to take missteps in life because alongside them small successes will arrive to reward your efforts. Success and failure: I'm learning to accept both.



-Tarini Fernando, Editor-in-chief

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## THE FINE PRINT

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# Keeping student data safe

## Cybersecurity and what Dal is doing about it

BY LANE HARRISON, NEWS EDITOR



DALHOUSIE PLANS TO HIRE NEW IT STAFF TO ENHANCE CYBERSECURITY. (PHOTO BY EVG CULTURE ON PEXELS.COM)

Even though Dalhousie University plans to hold many in-person classes next fall, the university's future, like many post-secondary institutions, is looking undoubtedly more digital for years to come. But a digital realm doesn't just open up new opportunities for Dal. It also exposes the university to a constantly evolving world of cyberthreats.

At a recent Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) council meeting on Jan. 28, 2021, councillors met with members of Dal's Digital Strategy Steering Committee to discuss the university's Digital Strategy Initiative, the digital portion of the university's strategic plan.

When it came time for questions, councillors turned the consultation into a discussion about cybersecurity at Dal and the security of students' personal data within Dalhousie systems.

"I hope that the university and specifically the committee that presented was able to understand that [cybersecurity] is an issue that students care about," Aaron Sophocleous,

faculty of management representative, said in an interview with the *Dalhousie Gazette*.

### Increased cybersecurity at Dal

Aparna Mohan, one of the DSU's board of governors representatives, began the conversation at the council meeting around data security by asking how the university plans to increase protections around students' privacy as a part of the new plan.

Joshua Leon, Dal's assistant vice-president of information technology (IT) services, said in the meeting that Dal currently has one privacy officer and will soon have another to meet the increasing workload.

"As more things are online there's simpler access to data. It just creates more and more hoops to jump through," Leon said in an interview with the *Gazette*. "Every [digital tool] that comes in, we have to evaluate it to make sure that it's safe."

While the privacy officer evaluates the

legal ways different software companies may be attempting to access student or staff data, Leon said, the IT office's cybersecurity officer ensures no one is attempting to access that data illegally. Dal is in the process of hiring another cybersecurity officer, Leon said.

The cybersecurity officers attempt to prepare the university for everything from small-scale email scams (known as phishing attempts) to international hacking.

"We do have accounts hacked every day through phishing," Leon said. "Because Dalhousie does do a lot of research, there are countries that are doing significant espionage on Canadian universities to steal research data. So we spend a lot of time tracking that."

In 2013, a cybertheft campaign backed by the Iranian government successfully accessed the data of 42 Canadian universities. Dal was not compromised by the attack, Leon said.

## Who can access student information?

“Right now, I have no idea who has access to my data,” Mohan said at the meeting. She asked how students can gain some insight into its security.

In an interview with the *Gazette*, Mohan said, “I know that there is a policy somewhere that describes how our transcripts and our B00 [student] numbers and all of these different pieces of information are managed. But the average student doesn’t really know that.”

At the meeting, Leon acknowledged the university needs to better educate students on these policies, something he said the university will work on in the future.

“It’s really nice to be heard and have these contributions kind of validated within the moment. But as for follow-up and action afterwards, I haven’t seen that translation just yet,” Mohan said.

According to Leon, Dal maintains a simple principle when it comes to managing student data: “Nobody should see any data about an individual unless they have a reason to do so for their job,” Leon said in an interview with the *Gazette*.

Even though classes are online, the university limits faculty access to information to the level that would have existed in a pre-internet world, according to Leon. Faculty have access to a student’s name, photo and grade in the class, Leon said.

“[Faculty] used to just get a paper list with [student] names on it, now they get an electronic list with [student] names on it, but nothing more than that,” he said.

Access to student information does slightly increase with seniority, Leon said, as department heads have access to a student’s

entire transcript.

According to Leon, student data is the responsibility of the registrar’s office. They hold the keys to information students can access through the Dal Online website, such as personal phone numbers and addresses.

“Within the Registrar’s [office] there’s a pretty small list of people that have access to individual student records,” Leon said.

At the council meeting, Susan Spence, Dal’s vice-provost of planning and analytics, expanded on Leon’s point. Spence said there is a Data Access Committee within the Registrar’s office who have a strict application process for those at Dal requesting data who don’t have access to it.

“The only people that need the keys are those who need to walk through the doors,” Spence said at the meeting.

**“Nobody should see any data about an individual unless they have a reason to do so for their job.”**

## Increased digitization requires increased advocacy

Mohan said the DSU needs to maintain an active role in advocating for students’ safety throughout this process of digitizing Dal, to ensure students are not left behind. Mohan said this is already happening.

In December, when Dal first presented the Digital Strategy Steering Committee to the DSU, there were no students included in the committee, Mohan said.

When the DSU asked why no students were asked to join, they were told the committee believes students have too much on their plate to take part in these discussions, Mohan said. After efforts by the DSU Jad Ghiz, vice-president (student life), was added to the committee.

“To not even know what it is that we don’t have enough time for is incredibly frustrating,” Mohan said. “As much as they’re doing several rounds of consultation, I think

it shouldn’t be lost on us that they didn’t have a single student on there until the DSU asked for it.”

In an email to the *Gazette*, Lindsay Dowling-Savelle, a communications advisor at Dal, said the committee was made up of employees and “not intended to be representative of all stakeholder groups during the early stages.”

Dowling-Savelle said members of Dal’s Student Affairs Office who were on the committee provided input on student-centric concerns. At a Board of Governors meeting in November 2020, DSU President Maddie Stinson asked for a student representative to be added to the committee. After that meeting, Dal “immediately reached out to the DSU to ensure there was representation from the DSU on the committee,” Dowling-Savelle said.

Advocacy surrounding student safety online needs to come from Dalhousie as well, said Mohan.

“We keep talking about the university, and what Dal should do and all of these things as if we’re in a bubble, right?” she said. “And we’re not in a bubble. We’re so interconnected and integrated with the world.”

As the university becomes more reliant on technology developed by large companies focused mostly on turning profits, universities should use their cultural sway to advocate for the safety and security of student data within these programs, Mohan said. She raised this idea in the meeting. In response, Leon said the internet began on university campuses and didn’t become mainstream until someone realized they could make a profit off of it. So he supports putting it back in the hands of universities, he said.

In an interview with the *Gazette*, Leon said, “I don’t know if Dal is lobbying, per se. Certainly, people within Dalhousie have been active in encouraging governments to invest more in cybersecurity for students.”

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# Changing the face of Canadian media

## J-School Noire inspires next generation of Black journalists

BY NATALIA TOLA



J-SCHOOL NOIRE AIMS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BLACK JOURNALISTS IN CANADA. (PHOTO FROM RAWPIXEL.COM)

Black journalists in Atlantic Canada and beyond have come together to inspire the next generation of Canadian media across the country.

The second edition of J-School Noire Halifax took place on Feb. 13 to 14, 2021. The free two-day workshop provided journalism courses for Black high school students by Canada's top Black journalists.

Held by the Canadian Association of Black Journalists (CABJ), J-School Noire began last year in Halifax. This year workshops took place virtually in Ottawa, Halifax, Edmonton and Toronto during Black History Month.

The goal of the program is to show young Black Canadians a career in media is possible for them, said Brian Daly, the CABJ Atlantic director who runs the J-School Noire program nationally.

"I couldn't begin to list the number of different things that [the Black community] has to say and can contribute," Daly said in an interview with the *Dalhousie Gazette*. "So part of our goal as an organization is to simply carve out more space in the Canadian tapestry for Black voices."

The program provides training in video production, podcasting, writing and interviewing, but is always changing to adapt to media trends, Daly said. The program's main sponsors are Google and the University of King's College. It is also supported by CTV and the CBC.

### Changing the media landscape

"When you're a teenager and you come up with what you want to do when you grow up, being a journalist is just not on the list for Black families," Daly said.

As such, the ultimate goal of J-School Noire is to make young Black Canadians see themselves in journalism, Daly said. After the first edition

of the program in 2020, they saw some success.

"The big payoff came when one of our students informed us a few weeks after the event that she was going to apply to journalism school. She had wanted to pursue a career in law. But she said that she decided to change her mind, and she's going to apply to journalism school," Daly said. "That's incredible right there."

J-School Noire is working to combat the lack of racial diversity in Canadian newsrooms. Reporting that neglects issues affecting racialized people contributes to the mythology that Canada is not a racist country, Daly said.

"Part of the problem there is that Black voices haven't been loud enough, haven't been prominent enough in our culture," he said. "These institutions need us. We need to take a bigger and more proactive role in being part of this extremely important institution called media."

Daly said the current media landscape in Canada doesn't accurately represent the country. "In [the Black community], we have an issue with the media where there is a small number, a really low number of Black journalists. The numbers in the media don't come close to representing the population in the community."

At the moment, Canadians associate Black people with racism, crime, sports and entertainment, he said.

Increasing diversity in Canadian newsrooms will allow for the broader acceptance of Black people inhabiting a variety of roles in Canadian society, Daly said.

An increase in the presence of Black journalists in Canadian

newsrooms will also prevent tokenism from happening within media organizations, Daly said. Speaking from personal experience, Daly said Black journalists often feel isolated in their newsrooms by the pressure of being the only Black person within the organization.

"People are turning to you for solutions to problems you couldn't possibly solve yourself," he said. "Sometimes you wonder: 'Are they looking at me for what I am? For what I am here to do, which is to do a job? Or are they looking at me as the Black guy?'"

The University of King's College, is also working to improve diversity in Canadian newsrooms through the creation of new scholarships for Black Canadian students who'd like to study journalism at King's.

In an email to the *Gazette*, Tim Currie, the director of the school of journalism at King's, said J-School Noire is a great opportunity for King's to advertise these scholarships to future journalists.

"The Canadian media industry needs a broader spectrum of voices within it," Currie said in his email. "J-School Noire is encouraging students at an early age to consider a career in the media, and it's offering them skills training and support to make that happen. It's an important initiative and King's is very pleased to support it."

### Providing the tools for a new age of media

Daly said J-School Noire seeks to provide students with basic storytelling and reporting skills that encompass the full definition of media in 2021, which can take many forms from social media reporting to traditional print writing.

"If a young person decides to get into the media, it doesn't have to be the mainstream media," Daly said. "It could be that they decide they want to start a YouTube channel or that they want to start up their own digital publication."

Though the program was forced to become virtual this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students in 2020 received hands-on training in the Nova Scotia Community College TV studio.

This year, the program had a heavier focus on podcast production and social media reporting to keep up with the trends in the media market, Daly said.

Thanks to the support the program has received from its sponsors, J-School Noire looks to improve in the years ahead, Daly said. Currently, there is work being done to make the program count as a high school credit. Likewise, the CABJ is working with YouTube to create a webinar on video journalism.

**"When you're a teenager and you come up with what you want to do when you grow up, being a journalist is just not on the list for Black families."**



# Helping hungry students

Dalhousie Urban Garden Society harvests funds for food security

BY ANDY JUNG



A NEW INITIATIVE BY THE DALHOUSIE URBAN GARDEN SOCIETY (DUGS) ENCOURAGES STUDENTS STRUGGLING WITH FOOD SECURITY TO APPLY FOR THEIR \$200 MONTHLY BURSARY. (PHOTO PROVIDED BY DUGS)

While their garden may be emptier than usual, one student society at Dalhousie University is still finding a way to put food on students' tables.

The Dalhousie Urban Garden Society (DUGS) launched a new monthly grocery bursary on Feb. 4, 2021, to support students from Dalhousie and the University of King's College who are struggling with food security. Students will be able to apply for the bursary each month, with four students selected a month to receive \$200 from DUGS.

"We realized that the pandemic has probably made it a lot more difficult for students, and community members, but particularly students, to afford groceries," said Ashley Osa-Peters, an executive member of DUGS. "[The bursary is] something that we've been wanting to do to kind of bridge the gap in food insecurity in our community."

## How the bursary came together

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, DUGS provided small pieces of land in their garden on Henry Street to students interested in gardening. Students could grow crops and harvest them, with all produce going back to students, the Loaded Ladle or the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) Foodbank.

DUGS is a levied society, meaning they receive funds through students' DSU fees to con-

duct their operations. But this winter, with students off-campus due to virtual classes, DUGS decided to use all their funds to support student food security, Osa-Peters said.

Using their levy funds, DUGS is supporting the grocery bursary and sponsoring the free food boxes at the DSU Foodbank, she said.

"[The grocery bursary] makes the most sense for us in a year where we can't interact with our student population as much as normal. It makes the most sense for us to give back in this way," Osa-Peters said.

The goal of the bursary, according to Osa-Peters, is "making sure that people can at least for one month just not worry about where their next meal is coming from."

The bursaries will be awarded each month through a selection committee of students created by DUGS, Osa-Peters said.

The committee selects students based on need and strives to be as wide-reaching and as equitable as possible.

"We selected people who are like-minded, who are knowledgeable on food insecurity, who are well versed on confidentiality and equity, and everything like that," Osa-Peters said.

Students who are awarded the bursary must re-apply if they require it again the next month to ensure all applicants always have an equal chance, Osa-Peters said.

## How food insecurity affects students

Lord Abbey, associate professor in the department of plant, food and environmental sciences at Dal said food insecurity can have far-reaching effects on a student's life.

"Studying, reading, assignments and tests, and all this is already stressful. On top of that, students have to eat. If the student finishes their schoolwork and goes back home with not enough food or adequate food to eat or nutritious food, this impacts student mental health, and it's very significant," Abbey said.

Students are also facing decreased employment opportunities due to business closures during the pandemic, Abbey said, which can make it more difficult for students to ensure they're food secure.

For a person to be food secure, Abbey said, they must have an adequate supply of nutritional and culturally appropriate food all year round. The culturally appropriate aspect means international students are more prone to food insecurity, Abbey said.

When international students come to Canada, they may be in a location where food is available, but their specific cultural foods are not, Abbey said. Forcing students to adapt to a

Canadian diet can be difficult for students just arriving in the country, Abbey said.

"If food is enough, it's adequate and it's available all year round. But [if] it's not culturally appropriate, it means I will not have what I need to eat," Abbey said. "That's why, you know, every component is very important when you are defining food security."

Osa-Peters said DUGS hopes the bursary will help students secure the culturally appropriate food they need.

**"If the student finishes their schoolwork and goes back home with not enough food. . . this impacts student mental health."**

# Shining a light on the future

## TEDx virtual speaking series inspires Dal students

BY LANE HARRISON, NEWS EDITOR



ONCE THE PANDEMIC HIT, ORGANIZERS OF THIS ANNUAL SPEAKER SERIES EMBRACED THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE STUDENTS SOMETHING ELSE TO FOCUS ON. (PHOTO PROVIDED BY TEDxDALHOUSIEU)

While the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for many to imagine a life without masks and social distancing, some students at Dalhousie University have tried to brighten the recently darkened future.

Knowledge that Transforms: Open Your Mind to the Future was the title of this year's TEDx-DalhousieU speaking series, which was held virtually on Feb. 6, 2021.

According to Mahmoud Agha, a second-year environmental engineering student and the event's lead organizer, the aim of the event was to inspire and motivate students about the world they'll soon be in charge of.

"I think when we start to think: 'This is my life, and this is how it's always going to be,' that can be a tough hole to dig yourself out of," said Binta Goodridge, a third-year environmental engineering student and the head of speakers and programming for TEDxDalhousieU.

"With a theme like open your mind to the future, and being in such uncertain times, I think it was really important to give people something more to look forward to. After this pandemic, after this is all over, what's next?" Goodridge said.

### Why focus on the future now

Agha began planning the event in August 2019 with the hopes it would take place in April 2020. At that time, the theme focused on different ways people rise above challenges, Agha said.

"But as soon as the pandemic hit, we decided it's the perfect opportunity for us to go with [a theme] related to the future," he said.

After deciding to focus on the broad idea of the future, Agha and his team developed three sub-

themes for the event.

The first, women in male-dominated fields, examined the way women combat sexism in fields such as science, technology, math and engineering (STEM).

The second, sustainability and culture, looked at the ways humans can adjust their collective lifestyles to help combat climate change, as well as different cultures that have already existed in a sustainable manner. For this theme, Goodridge said the event was lucky to secure Chief Andrea Paul of Pictou Landing First Nation.

Paul spoke about her work advocating for the closure of the Northern Pulp mill in Pictou County, as well as other environmental challenges she has fought in her lifetime, Goodridge said.

"Growing up in Canada, you learn about Indigenous culture in school, but it's so frequently, like, the Indigenous culture of 200 years ago," Goodridge said. "But not how it is now, or how [Indigenous] culture has evolved and changed with the rest of the world."

Goodridge said it was important to have Paul speak because she represents "a culture that has from the get-go preached about sustainability and understood that our actions have impacts."

"I think there's so much to be learned from [Indigenous cultures] for us as a society, especially as such a wasteful society," Goodridge said.

The third theme, Future of Literature, exam-

ined the new forms of writing in an increasingly technological society. Here the speakers attempted to make people reconsider what literature can be: Dal grad student Hunter Stevens spoke about how scientists can use social media to share research and advance their writings.

"I just never had really considered [social media] from an academic perspective, or even just as a tool for science," said Goodridge. "I thought that was a really fresh and interesting idea."

### How it came together during a pandemic

TEDx is a grassroots program facilitated by TED Conferences LLC, an American media organization that shares speeches online. TEDx allows communities to hold their own TED conferences, which are not controlled by TED, but must adhere to certain guidelines and formatting to be licensed as TEDx events.

This was Dal's first TEDx event since 2018. In 2019, the TEDx event at Dal was cancelled due to licensing issues, according to the event's Facebook page.

Though it already took place, this year's event is still waiting for its license to be approved, which will happen after TED reviews the videos of the speeches, according to Agha.

Agha said he expects TED to approve the event and publish the videos of its speeches by the end of February.

Agha has experience within the TED system: TEDxDalhousieU was the 11th TED event he worked on, the prior 10 being before he

came to Dal. But they were never online. "I had to do a lot of research and see a lot of different examples of events that previously happened virtually, just so I can learn," Agha said. "So it was a new experience for me, definitely."

Having no experience with the TED system was somewhat frustrating for Goodridge. She said it was difficult to already have so many protocols set in stone.

"To not even have, like, a person to have a discussion with about why it should be done a different way, that part was certainly very interesting. But trust in the process, it all worked out great," she said.

**"It was really important to give people something more to look forward to. After this pandemic, after this is all over, what's next?"**



# Streaming non-English music

## Why students should expand their playlists

BY DARSI AVERY



IF YOU'RE WILLING TO LISTEN BEYOND YOUR COMFORT ZONE, MUSIC CAN OPEN UP WHOLE NEW WORLDS. (PHOTO BY GEOFFREY HOWARD)

Music is a universal pleasure. We all have some artists, albums or genres we listen to on repeat. Sometimes we feel deeply connected to the words and stories of certain songs. But what if those lyrics are sung in a language we don't speak?

A common complaint I hear about listening to non-English music is the language barrier prevents you from connecting to the song. But there is so much more to a song than its lyrics, and there are many benefits to listening to music in languages you don't speak.

### Music is universal

A 2019 study conducted by Harvard University found music can in fact be universal. Through

gathering music from 315 societies and analyzing responses from listeners, the researchers found anyone could understand a song's meaning (regardless of the language) through its acoustic features, such as accent and tempo.

What can we learn from this study? Well for one, we should take a chance on listening to music in different languages because it's clear music can help you get in touch with your emotions. For example, maybe a strong guitar riff makes you feel excited, or a soothing harp

makes you relaxed. You can connect with a song through its non-lyrical aspects.

A good example of music breaking language barriers is K-pop (or Korean pop music), which is a hugely influential music genre around the world. Many K-pop songs are catchy and uplifting due to their upbeat tempos. You don't need to understand the lyrics to become a mega fan.

That being said, it can also be fun to do research into the meaning of lyrics you don't understand. Take the phenomenon of BTS, one of the biggest K-pop groups around today. While their music is generally uplifting and fun to listen to, there is also important meaning behind their lyrics, which often explore serious themes like loss, mental health and the pains of growing up. While translations may not convey the same depth of emotion as the original words, unpacking the meaning of lyrics you don't understand can be a valuable experience.

### Non-distracting study songs

Some people find it helpful to listen to music while they study, while others find it distracting. We've all had this debate before with our friends, but ultimately it depends on the person's personal preferences.

One primary reason I find music distracting while studying is because I feel the need to sing along to the lyrics. When working on an essay the night before it's due, it's not helpful to get into your feelings with some Taylor Swift tune when you're supposed to be writing about the French Revolution.

So, one advantage of listening to study music in a language you don't speak is you won't distract yourself by singing along. Just listening to the melody and emotion of the song may be enough to keep you in the zone.

---

**“One advantage of listening to study music in a language you don't speak is you won't distract yourself by singing along.”**

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### Going global

Listening to music in languages you don't speak can open up whole new worlds. It may be hard to get out of your comfort zone, but I promise you it's worth it. Get out there and really push yourself

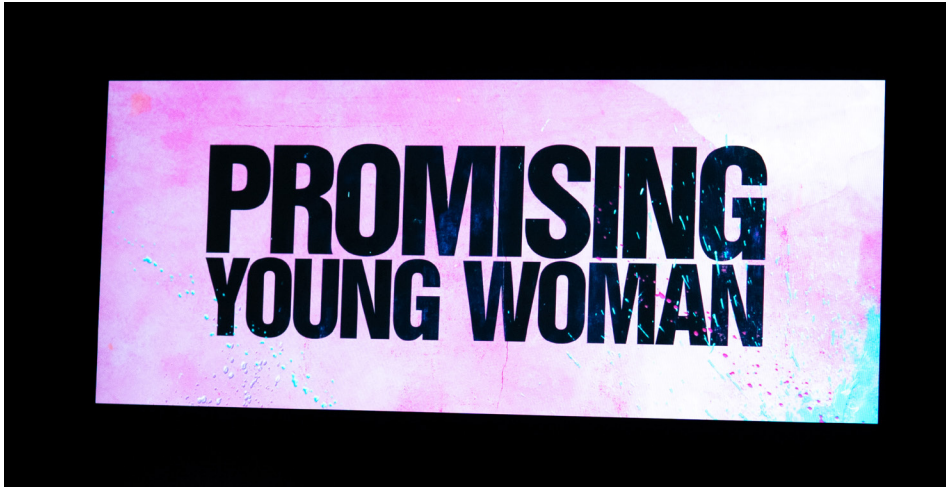
to experience all the music you can. It may be the start of an appreciation for a particular culture, artist or style of music.



# What's wrong with *Promising Young Woman*?

## The film is not for survivors

BY MEG COLLINS



IF YOU'VE EXPERIENCED ANY TYPE OF HARASSMENT OR SEXUAL ASSAULT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO THINK TWICE BEFORE WATCHING THIS FILM. (PHOTO BY GEOFFREY HOWARD)

*Editor's note and trigger warning: This article deals with sexual assault, trauma, suicide and violence against survivors.*

The first thing I did after watching the 2020 film *Promising Young Woman* was look up movie reviews.

Reading reviews is something I often do after watching movies. This time, though, my experience was a little different than usual. It was hard to stop shivering and focus my eyes on the screen. Many reviewers were not seeing the huge problems I saw with the film.

### Plot and reactions

First of all, skip this paragraph if you don't want spoilers on plot events. *Promising Young Woman* follows Cassie, a woman still living with her parents, as she attempts to catch men who take advantage of intoxicated women. We discover later she is doing this to avenge her best friend, Nina, who was assaulted by a fellow student at the medical school they attended together; an experience that pushed Nina to die by suicide. Cassie finally finds the man who assaulted her friend and, pretending to be a stripper for his bachelor party, arrives to seek revenge. But in a moment where we might expect Cassie to succeed, the man kills her instead. Until the very end of the movie, it seems he might actually get away with it.

I am a survivor of sexualized violence. It has taken me a while to come to terms with this, which is also the reality for many survivors. We are often blocked from understanding our trauma is ac-

ceptable. We repeat — in our heads and to others — phrases like, “this isn’t that bad,” or “others have it worse” and “it doesn’t count if I gave in.” In other cases, we are systemically or socially blocked from speaking about our experiences. We hear again and again from social media and other online platforms sentiments such as, “you were asking for it” and “that doesn’t really count.”

With all that in mind, this film was not made for sexual assault survivors.

The film demonstrates how assailants can act and look like anyone: attractive, nice, funny people and anyone in between. It shows how trauma from an assault can stay with you and take over your life. The film reveals how often justice is exceptionally hard to come by. But I know all of this, and I’m sure many other survivors know this too. I don’t want to watch this story, though a revenge fantasy might take the edge off. But instead, this movie simply reminds

survivors of loss and injustice by reflecting this reality back at us. The only character attempting to find some justice, in this particular film universe, is eventually killed by those same assailants.

For some, this ending is tragic, important and true. For me, it is yet another rape narrative leaving us survivors with less than nothing, not even

bits of escapism where we can find refuge.

The film also doesn’t explore the complexities of what can constitute rape. It doesn’t explore why, according to the Rape, Abuse and Incest Nation Network (RAINN), eight out of 10 rapes are committed by someone known to the victim. The film doesn’t consider how sexualized violence disproportionately affects certain groups more than others along gender and race lines. For example, according to RAINN, Indigenous Peoples in America are twice as likely to experience sexual assault compared to all other races. RAINN also says transgender, genderqueer and gender non-conforming (TGQN) college students are more likely to be sexually assaulted than non-TGQN students. Overall, it seems the film’s creators did not take into consideration all the nuances of sexualized violence and how a tragic narrative like this one could retraumatize its viewers.

### What to take away

I want to speak directly to sexualized violence survivors: This movie and its tragedy does not define you. Sexualized violence is horrific, but there are communities and supports available for you to draw on. It is not inevitable you will end up like Cassie or Nina. And lastly, I believe you.

If you have experienced sexual assault or harassment, take a moment to consider if this movie is worth the watch.

If you are a survivor or are looking for support around experiences of sexualized violence, there

are several relevant resources at Dalhousie University and the University of King’s College. King’s has a Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Officer, Jordan Roberts (jordan.roberts@ukings.ca; 902-229-6123), who assists survivors through any disclosure or reporting

process they’re interested in. Dal students can contact the Human Rights and Equity Services (HRES) for reporting options (902-494-6672). The HRES also has a new project called PEGaSUS where they hold weekly online discussions for adult sexual assault survivors. The free six-week program continues this term until March 3, 2021.

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**“I want to speak directly to sexualized violence survivors: This movie and its tragedy does not define you.”**

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# All eyes on Washington

Residents from U.S. capitol share stories from the riot

BY MORGANE EVANS

Washington, D.C., is more than just the capital city of the United States. The Washington metropolitan area, or DMV as we like to call it, is composed of almost 6.2 million people who live in the city, and the surrounding states of Maryland and Virginia.

I was born in Washington, went to elementary school there and had my high school graduation ceremony there even though I live in Bethesda, a neighbouring town in Maryland.

When former president Donald Trump's supporters stormed the U.S. capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, I was infuriated. The rioters yelled awful things about Washington and the U.S. Congress. On social media, many rioters quickly expressed they didn't break into the Capitol, while other social media accounts made memes about the tragedy only hours after the aftermath.

It disturbed me people were actively not taking responsibility while others laughed at my city in pieces. The attack also made me worried for my community. By the time the riot occurred, I had already left Bethesda and was safely in the middle of my first day of quarantine in Halifax. But distance didn't stop me from being terrified, and these feelings of fear were shared by friends and other D.C. residents.

## Words from D.C. residents

Alex Van Nieuwkoop, a first-year Dalhousie University student and commerce major, was already in Canada for the winter school term when the Capitol Hill attack occurred. He is also from Bethesda, and worried for his friends and family back home.

"I was anxious that something else would happen, and there would be more violence and unrest in the country," he says.

Anita Rasmussen, a business consultant who grew up in Maryland and now lives in D.C., remembers she initially found the rioters staying within the roped areas of the Capitol comical, but soon became shocked at the lack of police presence.

"Growing up in D.C., there is always a security presence and this was just odd," Rasmussen says.

A longtime Washington resident Ryan Miller remembers being horrified when he saw the attack unfold. He has been going to Trump protests the past couple of years to calmly talk and share ideas with the former president's supporters. Miller says standing amongst rioters on Jan. 6, 2021, was nothing like he has ever experienced before.

"I've never seen a violent mob before, and I've never been literally surrounded by enraged white



ON JAN. 6, 2021, TRUMP SUPPORTERS SHOCKED LOCAL RESIDENTS AND THE WORLD BY STORMING THE U.S. CAPITOL BUILDING. (PHOTO BY TYLER MERBLER ON FLICKR)

supremacists. Everything you're hearing on the news and in video footage is true," he said.

## After the storm

After the attack, more than 20,000 National Guardsmen were deployed to the city to protect President Joe Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20 from attack. Roads around the monuments, government buildings and the White House were closed, and were only open to essential workers and residents who had to show identification cards at checkpoints.

It was eerie to see how militarized my hometown had become — something I never imagined seeing in my lifetime, even from 800 miles away watching on TV.

Jenny Wolski, a business analyst living in Capitol Hill (the neighbourhood surrounding the Capitol building), saw her street being heavily guarded in the two weeks between the attack and the inauguration.

"Sidewalks had huge fences up. Cars couldn't drive down my street. The National Guard presence was very unsettling. I had never seen so many guns in my life. It was very surreal," she says.

Sophie Geernaert, a first-year Dal student and health promotion major, is currently living in Frederick, Md. She says "everything and everyone [in the DMV] was moving slower than normal and doing everything with hesitation," between Jan. 6 and the inauguration.

Rasmussen remembers walking near the Washington Monument after the attack and seeing the heightened security.

"Layers of fencing and barricades were being put up all over the National Mall making it feel like a prison yard," Rasmussen says. Later that

week, she decided to leave Washington until after the inauguration.

Similar to Rasmussen, Cristy De Olbaldia lived in Washington around the time of the attack, and was in the middle of moving when she and her husband decided to stay in their new empty home in Virginia until after the riot ended. They waited until later to return and retrieve the rest of their belongings.

"We decided we wanted to get away from the city as soon as possible," De Olbaldia says.

Some worry the city of Washington could be forever changed, like Risa Oshinsky from Maryland.

"I am scared that every time I go into D.C., now there's going to be such increased security that I can't enjoy my own city. I've never been in the White House or the Capitol and I'm thinking I never will now," Oshinsky says. "I really love the city. It's beautiful and welcoming and I want it to stay that way."

## Hometown spirit

Though the inauguration is now over, 5,000 troops will remain in the city through March 2021 and Capitol Police want to erect a permanent fence around the Capitol. All these measures are an unfortunate reminder of how the events on Jan. 6 will continue to affect Washington's millions of residents for many months to come.

However, Washington is more than just a government capitol and the city's spirit will never die out. We will continue to have our National Cherry Blossom Festival, enjoy free museums and cheer on our sports teams. The citizens of the DMV will continue to cherish our home no matter what happens in government buildings.

# The show must go on

Local theatre production embraces technology and virtual reality

BY NATALIA TOLA



THE IDEA OF VIRTUAL REALITY IN ENTERTAINMENT MAY SEEM FAR IN THE FUTURE, BUT A HALIFAX THEATRE GROUP USED THE TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR LATEST PRODUCTION. (PHOTO BY BRUCE MARS ON STOCKSNAP)

The COVID-19 pandemic has halted in-person plays nationwide since last spring, but a local performance company called Heist recently collaborated with other Canadian theatre companies to showcase *Frequencies*: a play presented entirely in virtual reality.

"There is no footprint and the possibilities are endless," says Sylvia Bell, the virtual reality operator and production manager for *Frequencies*. "There's no ending in what we can do to make entertainment, to make art and to make stories."

## A new way to tell stories

From Feb. 17 to 21, Heist presented *Frequencies* live through their website as they performed at the Bus Stop Theatre Co-op in Halifax. Written by local artists Aaron Collier with Francesca Ekwuyasi and Stewart Legere, *Frequencies* is one-part live techno concert and one-part autobiographical confession.

The play projects vivid animations through a virtual reality headset with cameras worn by the production manager. Using the headset, Bell sits as the created virtual reality moves around her: The camera on her head records three-dimensional drawings of children, planets and plants in a black-and-white palette. The play presents a conversation between a man and his dead brother.

"It's such a big production," Bell says. *Frequencies* was organized in partnership with Pi Theatre, Theatre Outre and Prairie Theatre Exchange, which provided funding and promoted the show in British Columbia, Winnipeg and Alberta. The play has been

a three-year project in the making with its debut date originally set for June 2020. That was until the pandemic hit.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Bell says "the direction the show has gone in is really technically advanced, but also feels like the right way to tell the story."

For *Frequencies*, Bell wears the reality headset for seven hours on performance days. She says she felt entirely out of her comfort zone at first, having never used virtual reality to direct theatre before.

"Am I the right person to be doing this?" Bell recalls having wondered. "Is the technology something we have access to? Can we do this? What will this look like?"

## The future of theatre and technology

Heist recently hired personnel specialized in software design. Such technicians work in different categories: Coding, two-dimension and three-dimension graphics. Their job is also to remain next to Bell during all performances, ensuring virtual reality cables are properly connected.

"Technology may seem like a restriction compared to the old ways, but it's actually forcing people to innovate and create new ideas," says Alex Sinclair, one of the newly hired technicians. He says he feels amazed at the beauty coming out of virtual reality.

"There are things that you don't expect. But as you are going through the process of transcribing the play, something pops up that would never have

come just by reading the script out loud," Sinclair says.

Bell likewise agrees with the benefits of experimenting with theatre and technology. Bell adds that even when COVID-19 ends, she sees a future for virtual reality theatre. One of her ideas is giving audience members

individual virtual reality headsets.

"I think it will be really thrilling for our community to see all the possibilities out there if we look in the right direction for them."

**"Technology may seem like a restriction compared to the old ways, but it's actually forcing people to innovate and create new ideas."**



# Dalhousie poets: change Thoughts on moving on

BY ALEX AFFONSO

## The last page

They say, turn the last page  
Give way to a new age  
Go play on the next stage  
Don't stay in your old cage

A new day, a new change  
A little gay, a little strange  
An old day, an old shame  
All the grey, all the same

Every start shall end  
Every end soon starts  
Too heavy for hearts  
Too painful to pretend

Even Arthur entered Avalon  
Even Dorian encountered death  
All gods are long gone  
All breathe a last breath

Waves are meant to crash  
Storms are meant to cease  
Fires end in ash  
Wars end in peace

Nothing lasts  
Nothing should  
All blasts  
All good.



ART BY PABLO STANLEY ON BLUSH.

*Dalhousie poets is a rotating column in the Gazette's Art & Lifestyle section featuring poetry by students on various subjects. Interested in submitting your verse? Email [arts@dalgazette.com](mailto:arts@dalgazette.com).*

## ***Dalhousie Gazette*** **2021 AGM**

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# Slowly making a comeback

## Tigers to play exhibition games against Acadia, SMU teams until mid-March

BY LUKE DYMENT, SPORTS EDITOR



ALTHOUGH NO TROPHIES LIKE THIS ONE WILL BE UP FOR GRABS THIS SEASON, DAL AND TWO OTHER AUS SCHOOLS WILL SHARE THE YEAR'S BIGGEST VICTORY: THE CHANCE TO PLAY. (PHOTO BY LUKE DYMENT)

The Dalhousie University Tigers will finally be back on the ice, court and pool against other teams as part of an informal competition schedule over the next month.

Dal, the Saint Mary's University Huskies, and the Acadia Axemen and Axewomen have begun a five-week exhibition schedule featuring the possibility of games in as many as four sports: basketball, hockey, swimming and women's volleyball.

For teams in each sport, this is their first taste of play against Atlantic University Sport (AUS) opponents in roughly a calendar year. With the exception of women's volleyball, the teams primed to play this semester had finished their 2019-2020 seasons before the first COVID-19 shutdowns hit in March 2020. Last November, the AUS cancelled the 2020-2021 season's official regular season and playoffs.

"Based on what we're pulling together, most of our teams wouldn't even be playing one game a week. We're still confirming a lot of those [scheduling] details,"

Tim Maloney, the Tigers' executive director of athletics and recreation, said of the schedule the three schools are planning. "We're just excited to provide our student-athletes with an opportunity to compete after training all year."

### Structure of exhibition schedule

The schools haven't committed to a formal schedule of exhibition games publicly, but plan to hold a series of controlled scrimmages that may not be the same as a typical game. A spokesperson for Acadia said the athletic department is planning to confirm most games about a week in advance to ensure times and protocols work with involved teams.

Maloney said teams, for some games, may simply meet up to play in shorter or modified matches. He added scores may not be published for every game if teams decide to count scores at all.

Regular game lengths and scorekeeping will remain the same in hockey, based on games played so far. The *Chronicle Herald* also confirmed the hockey teams would play a four-game schedule, twice against each opponent.

But in the past, basketball teams have played four quarters while resetting the score after each quarter in exhibition play. Six or eight-minute quarters have been played as well, instead of the usual 10.

"It's very special that they're now going to get a chance to be able to compete, even if it's just a small number of games over a short period of time," said Kevin Dickie, executive director of athletics at Acadia, in a CBC interview earlier in February 2021. "It really isn't so much about winning now, it's just about getting the chance to play the sport they love."

### The distance (and risk) factors

The St. Francis Xavier University (StFX) X-Men and X-Women teams were in talks to join the three southern Nova Scotia universities in their exhibition schedule. The school's administration, however, said at the start of February it won't allow its teams to take part.

StFX is in Nova Scotia Health's eastern health zone, compared to Dal and SMU's locations within the central health zone. Acadia, although in the western zone, lies roughly 20 km from the central zone and 90 km from Halifax. StFX is more than 200 km away from Halifax, a much longer and less flexible trek to play other schools.

Swimming, should it return in the five weeks, will be virtual. This was hinted at during the summer, but hasn't taken place yet due to the COVID-19 case spikes in November. Theoretically teams outside of the three-team bubble could take part since this competition would not involve travel and simply compares times.

Fans or anyone else not authorized by teams won't be allowed inside games or events this year. Maloney said the earliest fans could be back at Dal games is next year.



# Getting back in the game

## Isolated students gear up for return of intramurals

BY DYLAN ALECK

For Dalhousie University students, the return of intramurals brings benefits for the mental health of those forced out of the classroom.

Since the Nova Scotia government eased restrictions on gathering limits for sports on Jan. 25, 2021, intramural programming has been in the process of returning. Programming will be limited to basketball, volleyball, indoor soccer and e-sports for the semester, and will be limited to only Dalhousie students, rather than allowing for outside participation like in recent years.

Despite the limits, the return of sports is still a major milestone for Dal's campus recreation program, which focuses on much more than just keeping students active.

"Our department as a whole is very cognizant of [mental health]," said Chris Keough, Dal's campus recreation coordinator. "Part of our recreational offering is not just the physical aspect, but the mental aspect as well and the social aspect." He added hockey might eventually be among intramural sports this semester, but in a pickup format instead of as a league.

The opportunity to participate in these sports will come as a welcome change for students who have been without the social



INTRAMURALS ARE MAKING A LIMITED COMEBACK THIS SEMESTER, BUT THE OPPORTUNITY MEANS A LOT FOR DAL STUDENTS WHO MISS REGULAR SOCIAL INTERACTION. (PHOTO BY BRYN KARCHA)

interaction that comes with on-campus learning. Dalhousie student Cale Hattori-Caspi said he hopes intramurals will help with the adverse effect online learning takes on mental health.

"Sitting on the computer every day and only really communicating with people over video or email takes its toll. It seems like every day is the same," Hattori-Caspi said. "I think playing in intramurals will really help with that, it gives you something to look forward to every week."

### Focus on social interaction

While students have had access to the Dalplex throughout the year, this is the first opportunity for students to participate in activities with other people.

"The intramural offering is nice too because it's not just an individual coming in. Most of our other activities we can offer are just individual activities," said Keough. "You can come in and weightlift, you can walk in with a friend, but you can't physically lift with a friend, you have to maintain distance. So, when you're playing a sport, you're allowed to get a little closer and get that closer contact, and with a larger group as well."

Not only does the social interaction that comes with intramurals help with mental health, but research shows that physical activity itself benefits mental health. A study published in 2018 by the *Lancet*, a medical psychiatry journal, showed out of 1.2 million Americans studied those who were physically active experienced fewer days of poorer mental health than those who did not.

Adam Checkroud, one of the authors of the study, told the website Science Daily in 2018 the research showed team sports were especially effective in mental health support.

"Our finding that team sports are associated with the lowest mental health burden may indicate that social activities promote resilience and reduce depression by reducing social withdrawal and isolation, giving sports an edge over other kinds," Checkroud said.

"Our hope is to get the students out and to allow them something to do. We'd like to get a lot of residence students out because they're even more isolated since they're stuck in their rooms most of the time," said Keough. "We just hope that COVID numbers stay low and we can continue playing. That's all we can do."



INDOOR SOCCER WILL HELP TAKE THE EDGE OFF ONLINE LEARNING. (PHOTO BY GEOFFREY HOWARD)

# Dal athletics staffer calls it a career

## Pat Nearing to retire after almost 30 years in university sport

BY LUKE DYMENT, SPORTS EDITOR



PAT NEARING LEAVES A LASTING LEGACY ON THE TIGERS. HIS WILLINGNESS TO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR HIS STUDENT-ATHLETES WILL BE SORELY MISSED. (PHOTO ON THE LEFT BY TREVOR MACMILLAN, PHOTO ON THE RIGHT BY CHRISTINE DARRAH)

Pat Nearing, veteran Dalhousie University Tigers assistant athletic director and former men's soccer coach, will retire in May 2021 following the current winter semester.

Nearing, after nearly 30 years working in university athletics, is fully retiring after stepping down from coaching the soccer team in 2019. Throughout his time working in university sport, he's also coached minor soccer teams around Halifax and provincial soccer programs.

"I was circumstantially lucky that opportunities [to coach and work in athletics] presented themselves," Nearing said, who started at Dal after his former school, the Technical University of Nova Scotia (TUNS), amalgamated with Dal in 1997. "I never expected I'd spend 21 years as the coach at Dal, but it was an opportunity I embraced. Coaching university men was always in my DNA."

### Driving force behind soccer and athletic programs

Nearing began as TUNS's athletic director in 1993 while coaching its men's soccer team. After the amalgamation, he oversaw athletics at Dal's Sexton Campus (former TUNS location) and became Dal's men's soccer coach in 1999. He was named assistant athletic director in 2012.

Nearing's coaching record of 131 wins for men's soccer speaks for itself: He led the team to two Atlantic University Sport (AUS) championships, including one in his first season. He won national honours from U Sports as coach of the year in 2008 and the Austin-Matthews Award for outstanding

contributions to U Sports this past summer.

"When you reflect back on your career, you think of the people who supported you along the way. I've had some great mentors," Nearing said, naming people like Rod Shoveller, a Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame inductee, who helped him early in his career. Shoveller served as TUNS's athletic director before Nearing took over, shortly after the former passed away in 1991.

### Smarts combined with laughs

Nearing and Tim Maloney, Dalhousie's executive director of athletics and recreation, knew each other long before working together at Dal. Nearing first met Maloney while coaching him in summer soccer in the 1990s. "Pat brings a jovial and comedic element to the workplace. He's also someone who grew up in and around athletics, and he has a great passion and affection for our student-athletes," Maloney said, whose father taught Nearing when he attended Dal in the 1970s. "He's been the glue in our department for many years."

Maloney said Nearing's textbook-like knowledge of U Sports regulations and standards is valuable to the Tigers, an asset few other schools in Canada have. But Nearing's personality and drive are his most valuable traits.

"Great teams are made up of great people," he

said. "He's someone who cares deeply about what we're trying to do and the environment we're trying to create. He always went above and beyond for our coaches and student-athletes. That's what we'll miss most about him."

Dal men's soccer veteran Ben Grondin met Nearing on his first campus visit and said he was a big reason why he chose Dal. He played under Nearing for three seasons.

"He was a great coach in his ability to manage different personalities, his experience really shone through there. He understood the student-athlete situation, with how we have to manage school along with the expectations on the team," Grondin said, who still meets Nearing around campus often. "My first reaction [to his decision] was 'What a career,' because he truly did have a great impact on the program."

Nearing said until he and his wife can travel after COVID-19, he'll ease into retirement and focus on health and possibly volunteer work. He'll also reflect not only on his career but who he met along the way.

"I can go back over my pictures of my teams over the years, and know the name of almost everyone and many I've stayed in touch with. I'm a person that likes to stay in touch," he said. "You could pick out a bunch of other highlights like games or championships won. For me, the highlights are the personal relationships."

**"When you reflect back on your career, you think of the people who supported you along the way. I've had some great mentors."**