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DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

NORTH AMERICA'S OLDEST CAMPUS NEWSPAPER *EST. 1868*



THE RETURN TO CAMPUS IS FULL OF EXCITEMENT AND UNCERTAINTY. PHOTO BY LANE HARRISON.

Back to campus

For real this time

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Print isn't dead

Dear reader,

I've never been more excited for the first day of school, to sit down somewhere that isn't in my apartment, take out my notebook and watch a lecture. After an insufficient and overwhelming year of on-line courses, classes are finally back on campus at Dalhousie University.

That means students will once again be rushing to find their classes in the Life Sciences Centre, stopping for lunch in the Student Union Building and looking for study space in the Killam Library, passing Dalhousie Gazette paper stands along the way. So, after a year of digital issues, Dalhousie's student newspaper is following students back to campus. As the *Gazette's* new Editor-in-chief, I'm thrilled that you're reading this in print. I'm pleased to say you can expect to see our paper copies around campus — published every other Friday — for months to come, or so I hope.

While I feel that my excitement is warranted, I also believe that our return to campus brings some concern. It must be acknowledged that many people in the Dalhousie community rightfully do not share my excitement. As you'll learn in this issue, Dalhousie's recently announced vaccine mandate isn't the only measure the university must take this fall to ensure a safe return to campus. Many faculty members are concerned that, while they may be protected from the worst effects of the virus, their children who they will go home to every night are not. There are students with underlying health issues who won't be able to feel safe in class without proper masking and social distancing restrictions. The university has created its reopening plan without consulting many of the people it matters to the most. As you'll read, that has started to change. Hopefully, Dalhousie will listen to the community it's trying to keep safe.

I have little trust in Dalhousie but complete faith in its community. For this year to be a success, the university must listen to that community. I cannot say for certain whether every issue of the *Gazette* will be in print and on campus this term, but whatever happens during this academic year, I can certainly say the *Gazette* will be here to keep our community informed.



Lane Harrison, Editor-in-chief

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NORTH AMERICA'S OLDEST CAMPUS NEWSPAPER,
EST. 1868

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THE FINE PRINT

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International students struggling to return to campus

Despite excitement to rejoin their classmates in Halifax, a lack of communication from Dal has made it difficult for many international students to return

BY XIXI JIANG



DELAYED RESPONSE TIMES FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S INTERNATIONAL CENTRE CREATED STRESS AND CONFUSION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AS THEY FLEW TO HALIFAX. PHOTO BY LANE HARRISON.

As Dalhousie University prepares to welcome students back on campus, international students struggle against unclear government policies and slow university responses on their way back to class.

Returning international students have received conflicting, confusing and late information from the Dalhousie International Centre (IC.)

Dalhousie did not respond to the *Dalhousie Gazette's* requests for an interview regarding this article.

The “Cold, mechanical voice” of the International Centre

To return to campus, students who are required to quarantine under the federal government's travel restrictions must submit a quarantine plan to the university and the federal government. Upon receiving the plan, Dal is supposed to book students a taxi from the airport and a hotel room in Halifax to quarantine in.

Zhuang Fu is a computer science student returning to Dalhousie from China. Fu received an email response from the IC two weeks after he sent his quarantine plan, twice. “The IC wrote in their auto-response email that they would respond within two to four business

days,” said Fu. “But obviously they are not able to fulfil this. So why are they telling us?”

“It's making me panic,” said Fu before leaving China.

Computer science student Hao Cheng found herself in the Vancouver airport with very little information from the IC. Chen emailed the IC about her quarantine plan two weeks before her departure, but they didn't respond until she left and arrived in Vancouver for a connection to Halifax. “I can understand that they are slower than usual in responding to emails, but it shouldn't be like this,” Hao Chen said. “Not only me, but several of my peers did not receive an email response,” she said.

Chen finally got confirmation from the IC, when she called them at the airport in Vancouver. However, getting a confirmation doesn't mean students can rest assured things will clear up.

Jenny Pan, a second-year commerce student, emailed the IC five times in the two weeks before she was expected to leave China. The day before she left, they replied. The IC told her that her hotel room and airport pick-up taxi was booked.

On July 30, when Pan and her friend arrived at the airport in Halifax, no taxis came. They called the IC to inquire about it, but they couldn't get through. “Every time we dialed the

phone, it was an automatic reply with a mechanical voice telling us to leave a message,” Pan said.

Jianfu Lan, a masters of journalism student at the University of King's College, is another student who hadn't received a response from the IC when he was about to leave China. He called the IC to no avail, so he attempted to leave a voice-mail, “when I was ready to speak for the message, the cold mechanical voice told me that there was no room for recording,” said Lan.

Vaccines and visas

Another challenge facing students coming from China specifically is vaccine status. A Canadian government website states Canada does not recognize the Chinese vaccines Sinopharm and Sinovac-CoronaVac.

According to these rules, students who received these two Chinese vaccines are not considered fully vaccinated. However, The Nova Scotia safe check-in form recognizes these two vaccines, causing confusion for students.

When asked why this was the case, Kristen Lipscombe, a media relations advisor for the province of Nova Scotia said in an email to the *Dalhousie Gazette*, “People who are travelling to Nova Scotia from outside of Canada must follow the

federal rules. You'd have to speak with the federal government for information about its requirements.”

In addition to the fluctuating policies and delayed response speed of the IC. The slow pace of visa approval is keeping international students from stepping foot on campus this fall.

Second-year psychology student Xiang Meng handed in her visa application at the beginning of May. A customs and immigration consultant from her home in Inner Mongolia — an autonomous region in northern China — told her that all visas are issued slowly now. If Meng doesn't hear back soon, she will switch to a full online course load and stay at home. “I want to go back to school and take regular classes. I already rented an apartment,” she said.

Second-year computer science student Qijie Yue is one of the international students unable to return to school on time due to his visa. He handed his visa application in back in June. Due to the slow response, and to avoid risks, he did not register for any classes for the 2021 fall term.

Ex-international student steps up to help

Linda Zhang graduated from Dalhousie's anthropology program as an international student last year. With the confusion caused by the IC, Zhang has taken it upon herself to provide helpful information for returning international students, specifically those from China.

“International students are having a hard time entering this country and quarantine is lonely... they're facing huge pressure to meet this new semester. I'd like to provide more help for them,” Zhang said.

Zhang has posted 15 specific and useful guides for international students coming to Canada. The guides clear up confusion about Canadian customs and help prepare students for hotel quarantine. Zhang's posts are particularly popular among Chinese students. She has 4600 followers on WeChat, a social media app popular in China.

Writing these guides is not easy with constantly changing rules. There are different policies for different groups entering Canada. On the day of a new policy announcement, Zhang and other volunteers spend five to six hours updating their guide.

According to Zhang, the announced entry and quarantine policies are usually vague and variant. Zhang has to frequently communicate with the Nova Scotia government and the universities so she can help her readers come to Halifax.

Questions remain after Dal announces vaccine mandate

The announcement brings some relief, but many in the community are concerned it's not enough

BY ADAM INNISS, NEWS EDITOR AND LANE HARRISON, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



STUDENTS, STAFF AND FACULTY MUST PROVIDE PROOF OF VACCINATION, OR GET TESTED FOR COVID-19 TWICE WEEKLY, TO RETURN TO CAMPUS THIS FALL. PHOTO BY LANE HARRISON.

Dalhousie University has joined the growing list of post-secondary schools in Canada requiring vaccination from students, staff, and faculty returning to campus this fall.

In order to access a Dal campus, proof of vaccination must be provided, the university announced in a memorandum on Aug. 25. Those who are not vaccinated or decline to share proof of vaccination must provide two negative COVID-19 tests a week, the memo said.

The Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) demanded a vaccination mandate on Twitter on Aug. 18 and in an open letter to university president Deep Saini on Aug. 23. Also on Aug. 18, Dalhousie's Health Law Institute — an institute within the Schulich School of Law made up of faculty from the faculties of medicine, health professions, dentistry, and law — published an open

letter they sent to Saini demanding vaccination requirements for students, staff and faculty.

"I think this is a very good result that will keep more people safe," said Jocelyn Downie, the James S. Palmer Chair in Public Policy and Law at Dal and a member of the Health Law Institute who wrote the first draft of the letter. "I'm grateful that the university listened and shifted," she said.

Dal's announcement followed other post-secondary institutions in the province. At the time of this writing, the university joins Nova Scotia Community College, Mount Saint Vincent University and Saint Mary's University (SMU) in requiring people on campus to be fully vaccinated.

Dalhousie did not respond to the *Dalhousie Gazette's* repeated requests for an interview regarding their campus reopening plan.

Mounting pressure from faculty prior to decision

"From the start of the pandemic we were not in the loop," DFA president Tara Perrot said in an interview with the *Gazette*.

The DFA has been publicly calling for the university to provide more information on its reopening plan since the summer began.

In July, the DFA tweeted that with only eight weeks left until the fall term, the DFA still had zero clarity from Dalhousie regarding their plan to safely reopen classes.

As the first day of classes neared, Dal's reopening plan became less clear, Perrot said.

On Aug. 13, Dal released a memo with updates on its masking policy for the fall term, a policy that the DFA had been publicly asking for clarification on through Twitter since July 19.

The memo said the university is, "asking

everyone to continue wearing non-medical masks in common spaces indoors (including classrooms) for the month of September." However, on the university's COVID-19 safety plan frequently asked questions site, it reads, "Provided Public Health's broader mask mandate has been lifted, [wearing masks] will not be formally enforced."

As of this writing, Nova Scotia is slated to enter phase five of its reopening plan and remove the province-wide mask mandate on Sept. 15, meaning mask wearing could be optional in Dalhousie classrooms after six days of classes.

"It left everybody feeling really even more nervous than we had been," Perrot said about this lack of enforcement.

With concern rising after Dal's unclear mask policy was revealed, the DFA held an executive meeting where the union's execu-

tive team decided to draft the Aug. 23 letter demanding mandatory vaccinations for all faculty, students and staff. The letter also calls for mandatory masking in all indoor public spaces; mandatory physical distancing where possible; and ventilation that meets public health guidelines.

On Aug. 24, Perrot met with Dalhousie administration and learned that the university would be announcing a vaccine mandate.

The DFA's push for a vaccine mandate was supported by the Health Law Institute, who also quickly mobilized their formal demand for a vaccine mandate. Downie wrote the letter's first draft on Aug. 17 and it was published the following day.

"This was one of those rapid response, rapid mobilization exercises," Downie said. "We had to move, because, I mean, it was already too late."

The Health Law Institute shared their letter publicly on Twitter as a Google form, this allowed members of the Dal community to add their signatures in support; the letter was signed by 464 people when Dal's decision was announced.

Community concerned about the details

While the vaccine mandate brings some relief, the details of Dalhousie's policy warrant some concern, according to Sarah Nersesian, a second-year PhD candidate in the department of microbiology and immunology at Dalhousie.

According to Nersesian, Dal's plans to test unvaccinated people twice a week isn't

enough.

"Testing bi-weekly won't change the proportion of individuals that are vaccinated and immune," Nersesian said in an email to the *Gazette*. "So the requirements for herd immunity to prevent outbreaks will not be maintained," she said.

Mal Hedrick, a PhD student in chemistry at Dal, shares Nersesian's concern that Dalhousie is leaving too many cracks for the virus to slip through.

"[Dalhousie] has got a part of the puzzle, but they don't have everything," Hedrick said.

Like the DFA and the Health Law Institute, Hedrick would like to see a stricter masking and social distancing policy on campus this fall. As the rules currently stand, Hedrick said they'll be wearing an N95 respirator — a more effective mask that is commonly found in healthcare settings — or two masks at once, to protect themselves.

Risk of an outbreak still present

Perrot said one of the DFA's main concerns is what happens if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 on campus. An event that Nersesian said is still a possibility despite the vaccine mandate.

"Having unvaccinated individuals on campus being potentially exposed to breakthrough infections or carrying infections will substantially increase the risk of a larger outbreak on campus," Nersesian said.

If an outbreak were to take place, faculty

are unclear on what would happen, Perrot said.

"Are we going to have to combine online and in person in that situation? We've been told we won't have to do both, but I think that's ignoring the possibility of outbreak," she said.

Madeline Stinson, president of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) shares this concern and said other students do to.

"It's not realistic that we go into the fall and see twenty thousand people, not including faculty and staff, go into the same area and not see cases," said Stinson.

Stinson said the DSU is hoping to set up a campus case tracing mechanism for exposures, similar to ones set up by the province. She said this is separate from efforts the university might be undertaking.

Stinson said Dal should be "better at communicating the details" of what will happen in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak.

Dalhousie's Response

Dalhousie's vice-president of Student Affairs, Verity Turpin said Dal is confident in its plan. The *Gazette* interviewed Turpin on Aug. 4 for a story about university residences.

"I have been personally involved in dealing with COVID-19 cases with students on campus," said Turpin. "Let me tell you from personal experience, those measures that Public Health has put in place, they work."

When asked about Dalhousie's plans specifically, she said "Dalhousie has a strong track record of dealing with the pandemic.

Our success has come from our students and staff and faculty following those [Public Health] guidelines."

In a meeting with President Saini on Aug. 24, the DFA raised their concerns about outbreaks.

"[Saini] was a bit vague, he did say that they would be handled at a local level," Perrot said. Whether a local level means on a per class basis or something else, "I don't know," said Perrot.

"So that is definitely a hole, and it's one reason why we absolutely need a seat at the table," she said.

A seat at the table

To avoid further grievances with Dalhousie, Perrot said the DFA wants more involvement in the reopening decisions.

"They're not valuing our voices in all of this, that's been at the heart of a couple grievances we've had with this [reopening] process."

When establishing a reopening plan, Dalhousie administration formed a return to campus committee, which was disbanded over a month ago, according to Perrot. Perrot said DFA members were shut out of that committee, "we did not have a seat at that committee. We were never consulted. Now, that committee is being reconvened."

Perrot would like to see DFA members on the new committee to ensure faculty have a voice in the next stages of the reopening decisions. "We want to demand a seat on that committee so we're not left in the dark until the last possible moment," she said.

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DSU bringing campus events back to students

The student union shares their hopes and concerns for a fun return to campus

BY ADAM INNISS



THIS YEAR, THE DSU WILL HOST FOUR OR FIVE IN-PERSON O-WEEK ACTIVITIES PER DAY, AS OPPOSED TO THE ONE PER DAY THEY HOSTED LAST YEAR. PHOTO BY PATRICK FULGENCIO.

The Dalhousie University Student Union (DSU) wants to see a fun but safe return to campus. They're planning a return of all traditional student life events, in accordance with the safety protocols set by the province and university.

"Most university students miss the time they didn't get to spend socializing last year," said DSU President Madeline Stinson. "I think we'll see students making up for lost time."

Last year, Dal's Orientation-week (O-week) was heavily restricted due to the pandemic. Most events were online and there was only one in-person event per day, this year there will be four to five on-campus events per day over the four day period.

"We want to bring students back in as large of a way as we can," said Stinson.

Welcoming students back

Stinson said, "unless something happens in Nova Scotia, we're looking for all the events coming back." That includes all Orientation-week planning, Welcome Week, First Class Bash and Dal-fest, she said.

O-week runs from Sept. 4 to Sept. 7 and is a ticketed event specifically for first-year students. After that, Sept. 8 to Sept. 11 is welcome week, which offers free on-campus programming for all Dalhousie

students.

O-week has a wide range of in person events including an on-campus beach party, a carnival in the Studley quad and an outdoor movie night.

Stinson said people unable to attend O-week are encouraged to come to Welcome Week events, "I know second-years didn't get a big welcome to campus last year because of [the

pandemic]. We want to make sure second-years have an experience as well."

Welcome week has more causal events like a welcome back party on the Studley quad and a trivia night in the Grawood, the DSU's bar in the Student Union Building.

Both DSU operated students bars, the Grawood and the T-room, are reopening after a year-long hiatus due to COVID-19 restrictions.

They will be open the first week of classes, according to Stinson. Both bars are hosting some of the O-week and Welcome Week events. Stinson said both bars will be installing plexiglass barriers for added safety.

Keeping it safe

Like Dalhousie's reopening plan, these events will be following the safety guidelines laid out by the province.

The government calls the final stage of the phased reopening plan "the new normal of living during COVID-19." At the time of writing, the province plans to move into phase five on

Sept. 15.

Part of that new normal is heading back to student events and programming.

Nova Scotia is currently in phase four of its reopening plan, which limits outdoor gatherings to 250 people. "We were hoping for phase five a little bit sooner, but we adapted," said Stinson.

The DSU has come up with ways to host events while following those safety guidelines. There will be 500 attendees at O-week, according to Stinson, but events will be rotational, "we'll only have up to 250 people at a time at a given event," she said.

The DSU is taking additional precautions to ensure safety on campus during the return, "we'll have hand sanitizer stations on campus. We'll also be hosting rapid testing out of the Student Union Building that week," said Stinson.

Stinson believes that at a certain point, the health and safety of students is up to them, especially when it comes to social distancing, she said.

"It's up to individuals on their own to maintain their bubbles and social distance. But we've been living with COVID for going on two years so we're all used to it at this point," she said.

Verity Turpin, Dalhousie's acting vice-provost of student affairs, trusts the DSU and the students themselves to have a safe return to campus, "I have no doubt our students and our community will keep each other safe," she said.

"As vice-president of student affairs, I have had great pride over how students have handled safety during this pandemic," Turpin said.

Stinson agrees.

"The big point to drive home is if everyone comes into the space with concern for one another and makes the right choice for them," said Stinson. "We'll be able to deal with whatever happens."

DSU asking for student input

Stinson wants students to push for campus events throughout the year. "If there's programming students want to see, contact the DSU and we'll try to make it happen safely," Stinson said.

Students with ideas for future campus events, or concern for the safety of these events, can contact the DSU's vice-president (student life) Mazen Brisha at dsuvpsl@dal.ca.

Residence rejections leave students in a housing crisis

Dalhousie students face the city's increasingly expensive rental market with little university support

BY NATALIA TOLA

As classes return to campus, Dalhousie University has limited its residence capacity to 80 per cent this fall due to COVID-19 concerns, housing around 1800 students as opposed to the 2300 they did prior to the pandemic, according to a statement on the university's website.

As the average rent in Halifax continues to grow, many students who weren't able to secure a spot in residence are rushing to find a place to stay with little luck.

"There's a deadline in finding a place", said Neo Ragsac, a third-year international student studying marine biology. Ragsac's residence application was rejected, "If we don't find a place, we will be homeless. And who wants to study on the sidewalk?"

University Explains Decision

After informing multiple students there would not be a space for them in residence this fall, Dalhousie posted an explanation for the rejections on their website.

The university's update on the decision said "priority is given to current residence students who re-applied by our March deadline and new, direct-from-high-school students who applied by June 15. Demand for rooms among these groups is high, leaving very little space available for current students."

There are also still no roommates in residence, further reducing capacity, according to Verity Turpin, Dal's acting vice-president of student affairs.

"We want to make sure that when students are coming back to campus this fall, they will have their own space," Turpin said in an interview with the *Dalhousie Gazette*.

"We didn't want the students to worry about their roommates or their roommates' vaccination status," she said. Turpin spoke to the *Gazette* prior to Dalhousie's announcement of a vaccine mandate.

Turpin said plans for the return of post-secondary students to residence are strongly regulated by the province of Nova Scotia, which is currently in phase four of its reopening plan.

"They are the health experts, they are the COVID-19 experts," said Turpin. "They helped us put together a plan of what a safe environment in residence looked like," she said.



DALHOUSIE'S DECISION TO PRIORITIZE RESIDENCE APPLICATIONS FROM STUDENTS WHO WERE IN RESIDENCE LAST YEAR AND NEW DIRECT FROM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LEFT MANY STUDENTS CONCERNED ABOUT FINDING HOUSING FOR THE FALL. PHOTO BY LANE HARRISON.

The Struggle to Find Housing

Some students who received residence rejections have been scrambling to find living accommodations in Halifax.

This is no easy task, as Nova Scotia is currently facing what many journalists and activists call a housing crisis. The average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Halifax has increased by 20 per cent since last year, according to a national rent rankings report from Rentals.ca, a website that lists available rental properties across Canada.

While the housing market becomes more competitive by day, students are left with less

and less affordable accommodations close to campus.

Bhamidipati Srikanth is a prospective computer science masters student who has been searching for housing in Halifax since July.

One issue facing students, Srikanth said, is the timing of leases are more accommodating for landlords than students. According to Srikanth, landlords often want students to take leases beginning in May rather than September, which makes finding sublets harder for students who go home in the summer.

He also said some landlords advertise low rent prices, but increase the listed rent just before students sign the lease.

To find decent pricing, students like Srikanth sacrifice personal space, often by doubling up in rooms. In the past, he's had to share a three-bedroom apartment with six people simply to afford a place to live. "Sharing a single bathroom is quite tough," he said of the experience.

Mathew Ghirardi, a third-year engineering student from Ontario, said poor landlord communication makes searching difficult, "By the time you see their advert they'll have sold the place or are waiting on a group to respond. Knowing where to look for housing too is a little tricky, since many sites are

Continued on next page

fraudulent or outdated.”

Besides affordability in housing, fair treatment from landlords when applying for a lease has become a concern for students. “When we go through some websites, they say that rooms are available but when we really put an application, we get rejections” Srikanth said. Srikanth and Ghirardi mostly used Kijiji during their searches.

Srikanth believes his rejections — as an international student from India — can be based on landlord’s prejudices, “they don’t believe we can really afford rooms. Showing our property in our home country is not sufficient for them.”

DSU hopes to work with Dal on issue

Madeleine Stinson, president of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU), said the union is concerned about this issue, “I think we’re going to end up with a lot of students showing up to Halifax with nowhere to stay,” she said. “International students and out of province

students may be showing up for school and going to stay at Airbnbs and hotels hoping to find a place within a week, which if you’ve ever looked for an apartment in Halifax, you know isn’t easy,” Stinson said.

The DSU has begun asking Dal for alternative support, “We’re hoping Dal will partner on us with a bursary for students. A fund to help students pay for basic deposits, basic home furnishing. Things that are a given in residence that might be an unexpected expense for students who’ve been cut out.”

Dalhousie has a housing advisor to answer students’ questions about rent, utilities, and amenities. Similarly, there is an off-campus housing website to facilitate the search for a living accommodation.

But Stinson said these services need improving, “Dal should add more people to the off-campus housing team because right now there’s one person working on that team to support a student population of twenty thousand.”

The Dalhousie off-campus living team

The “one person” Stinson was referring to, off-campus housing advisor, Peri Lockhart, was unable to speak with the *Gazette* prior to the publication of this article.

But her colleague, Student Engagement Coordinator Rigel, was able to answer

some questions about off-campus housing. Cruz coordinates with Lockheart on off-

campus housing issues.

“Peri takes on the majority of the work in helping students,” said Cruz. “But we work with other offices, the residence office for example. So, if students reach out to residence coordinators they can be helped there as well.”

The off-campus team helps students understand ideas like how to find housing, how to spot fraud and what their rights are as tenants. They answer questions and can even help pair up prospective roommates for off-campus living.

Cruz said a bursary from Dalhousie or the DSU would be “helpful.” But she also called on the city for change.

“On one hand the school can support students where they can, but that doesn’t impact affordable housing in Halifax. There is a housing crisis in the city and that needs to be tackled first so we can do our job.”

Students struggling to find housing off campus are encouraged to contact Dalhousie Off-Campus Living by phone (902) 494-2429, or to email Peri Lockheart at housingsupport@dal.ca.

“On one hand the school can support students where they can, but that doesn’t impact affordable housing in Halifax. There is a housing crisis in the city and that needs to be tackled first so we can do our job.”

OPINIONS

Back to Dal starter kit - opinions not included

ARTWORK BY DAN BLAIS



The complications of going back to campus

Student share their concerns about going back to class

BY MANDY KING, OPINIONS EDITOR



ASIDE FROM CATCHING COVID-19, RETURNING STUDENTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT FINDING HOUSING IN HALIFAX AND GOING BACK TO REAL TEST TAKING. PHOTO BY LANE HARRISON

Dalhousie University and other post-secondary institutions across Nova Scotia are offering in-person learning once again, and unsurprisingly, some students have concerns about classes returning to campus.

Having my own concerns about heading back to campus, I was curious to know what other students are most worried about, so I asked them for their thoughts. I was surprised to learn that while the COVID-19 pandemic remains an issue, there is more focus on restrictions and in person challenges than potential illness.

My second change with digital learning

I feel optimistic that if everyone can respect the rules the year will go smoothly

For me, going back to in-person classes means making sacrifices.

I've always hoped Dal would expand distance learning options. Being a full-time mother, working and studying, it's difficult to juggle attending campus as well.

Last year I saw the accessibility I needed to learn, work and parent. Personally, back to in-person learning means my life is about to get hectic.

My classes are meticulously scheduled to align with my son's school schedule. To maintain my course load, this means scheduling night courses when my husband is home to help with the kids.

I live in Dartmouth. Transportation eats up a lot of time as I get kids to school or to the baby-

sitter, set out for campus, and rush back to pick everybody up before heading back for late classes.

I'm nervous about what the coming year will look like, but like my peers, I'm excited to see everyone and meet professors and classmates face to face.

Test stress

Learning at home offers advantages some students will miss, especially during test time.

Loren Mosher, a third-year Dal student studying recreation management is worried about in-person testing.

"Test-taking has never been one of my strong suits. All the alternatives to traditional testing during online learning, such as essays and projects, really worked in my favor," she says. "While some people work fine in the traditional educa-

tion system, others don't. Providing options and flexibility for student learning will help students get more out of their classes."

Fortunately, Mosher isn't letting the worry of upcoming tests daunt her.

"I think my excitement of returning to in-person classes outweighs test stress at the moment."

With her excitement overshadowing nerves, Mosher says her main concern now is getting to Halifax on time. She currently lives in Victoria, B.C., and will be flying to Nova Scotia in September, cutting things close.

"Between making sure I receive my second vaccine to avoid quarantine, my work contract ending in August and my lease in Halifax not starting until September, trying to balance everything has been a bit wild."

On the bright side, she's been keeping a positive attitude about COVID-19 and future precautions the province may take.

"I know from living on campus the last two years that Dal and Nova Scotia are quick to act when it comes to COVID-19 cases," she says. "I feel optimistic that if everyone can respect the rules the year will go smoothly."

Finding a home

For Jonah Kurylowich, returning to Halifax for his third year of environmental design at Dalhousie means finding a home. With a housing crisis looming over the city, many students are left with the same concern.

Kurylowich hails from Alberta and spent a week in August driving across the country to return to Dal.

"We've been running around like crazy trying to find a place to live for school," he said. "It seems the housing market in Halifax has really heated up. We've seen many listings and it seems renters are especially vulnerable in this supply drained market."

Kurylowich also explains he has seen at least one scam for student housing, making the search for a home more difficult.

"It just popped into my email one afternoon," he says, talking about the fraudulent student housing offer. "It seemed too good to be true, and when I googled it, I found it was the exact same message sent to people all over Canada."

Despite the stress of moving, he is excited to collaborate, see friends and meet new classmates.

When asked whether learning in person poses any other concerns, he said, "Being online gave me the opportunity to stay connected with my home community. Being in person lets me connect with a new community."

To drink or not to drink?

The choice should be yours

BY MANDY KING, OPINIONS EDITOR



HALIFAX DRINKING CULTURE IS OPTIONAL, BUT IT DOESN'T ALWAYS FEEL THAT WAY. PHOTO BY MORGANE EVANS

What's the deal with pushy drinkers?

This is a question I pose to all Haligonians, especially those dealing with young drinkers who may be inexperienced with alcohol limits.

There seems to be an expectation in social situations that everyone partakes of the offered beverage. This isn't the case for every outing, but it's an assumption which has been made clear to me on multiple occasions.

The worst part isn't saying no while a gaggle of peers look on, it's the accompanied judgement, or worse, pushy nagging to submit.

Halifax is known for many things, including our drinking cul-

ture. There ain't no party like an east coast party, after all. I propose, as we return to campus this year, we be more accepting of what party means to others. It's important that students remember, drinking isn't for everyone.

Back to school celebrations

Back to school means many things, including welcome parties, initiations and orientation celebrations.

For those new to Halifax, it might mean a tour of the bar district followed by a hasty slice at pizza corner.

This can be a lot of fun. It can also be an

awkward experience for non-drinkers in the

spotlight.

There are many reasons somebody might abstain from alcohol, such as designated driver status, an early class, medication or medical condition, pregnancy, culture, religion or simply not wanting to.

Whatever the reason, as Nova Scotians we need to be supportive of our non-drinking companions.

Maybe I'll have some, maybe I won't

Being an older student at Dalhousie, I lived out my frosh days long ago. While I remember having a blast at the time, I also remember feeling like I put myself in some unnecessarily dodgy situations because I didn't say no to "just one more."

My first year at Dal, I attended a student-

hosted party near campus. Invitees were required to bring a small bottle of alcohol. All the bottles were collected and poured into a questionable looking cooler filled with juice and soda. There was no forced drinking of the muddy concoction, but there was a distinct vibe that those who didn't partake could see themselves out. I left early.

To be honest, I was more worried about what I'd catch from the dirty cooler than I was about peer pressure, but it's attitudes like those at that party which need to improve.

What if not drinking was the norm?

It's not unusual to visit any restaurant in HRM on any given weekend and see friends and colleagues clinking glasses of beer, wine and spirits.

A 2007 report by the Government of Nova Scotia found 74 to 80.7 per cent of Nova Scotians were alcohol drinkers. While a study on alcohol consumption changes during the COVID-19 pandemic, conducted by the Public Health Agency of Canada, found 12 per cent of participants in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick drank more frequently.

What if not drinking on a Saturday night was the norm? Might we be more supportive of everybody at the table?

I remember last year, writing a piece about Halifax graveyards for the *Dalhousie Gazette* and interviewing local journalist Craig Ferguson. He took me through Camp Hill Cemetery on Summer Street.

I was shocked to see one of the monuments covered in bottles and cans. This was the grave site of Alexander Keith, late politician and brewery founder. Ferguson told me that people come here to drink with Keith and leave their empty cans on his grave as tokens of appreciation.

Is drinking so normal that we find it appropriate to litter in graveyards just because a brewery founder is buried there?

Just have fun and let others be

I'd like to be clear. There's nothing wrong with enjoying a drink if that's your thing and you're of age to do so.

My point is simply this – you never know what somebody else's reason could be for saying no to alcohol.

Let's be respectful and enjoy the company of everyone at the table, whether they imbibe or not.

I propose we be more accepting of what party means to others.

From boudoir to dress codes

Sexuality does not define a woman's worth

BY MANDY KING, OPINIONS EDITOR



IF THERE ARE NO OTHER MEANS OF MEASURING A WOMAN'S VALUE THAN HER BODY, WE HAVE BIGGER PROBLEMS THAN THE VOTERS' OPINIONS ON BOUDOIR. PHOTO BY MORGANE EVANS

Editor's note and trigger warning: This article contains the brief mention of sexual assault and violence against children.

A woman's sexuality is not a reflection of her work ethic, ability or professionalism.

In July, Nova Scotia Liberal Party Candidate for the provincial election, Robyn Ingraham, faced scrutiny because of her experience with boudoir photography. This was information she had shared with the party prior to her candidacy to be the member of legislative assembly for the Dartmouth South district.

She says she was removed from her Dartmouth South riding because of her connections with the risqué photography and was asked to lie. Ingraham said the Nova Scotia Liberal Party told her to tell the public she had withdrawn due to mental health reasons.

The party lost the election, seeing a majority Progressive Conservative government take the reins.

Boudoir is a style of photography focusing on sensual images, often containing lingerie and other items found in a woman's boudoir or changing room. The concept began in France and can be traced to the 1920s. While some boudoir photos depict nudity, they differ from pornography in their artistry.

Taking part in boudoir photography should have no sway over a woman's value as an employee.

What happened to Ingraham is an all-too-common occurrence for women in the workplace and it doesn't start there. Young women are exposed to misogyny long before they graduate and seek to join the workforce.

It starts in the classroom

Women have come a long way since the suffrage movement, but as Ingraham's situation demonstrates, there are still miles to go. When it comes to policing women's bodies, we need to begin in

the classroom.

This spring, West Kings District High School in Annapolis Valley, N.S., experienced its own encounter with misogyny. Kenzie Thornhill, 17, was suspended for voicing concerns in-school and online about another student's inappropriate clothing.

The clothing in question was a t-shirt printed with the lyrics, "Deck the halls with mounds of babies...Tis the season to be rapey..." While Thornhill was penalized for taking a stand against the shirt, the student wearing the lyrics went unpunished.

Eva Crook, another student at West Kings, told the *Dalhousie Gazette*, "Girls at our school get dress-coded daily and boys are rarely told they can't wear something. Most of the outfits that the girls wear shouldn't even be considered inappropriate. For example, girls with a larger chest get in trouble for wearing almost anything."

Crook was disappointed in the decision the

school administration made regarding Thornhill's case.

"The entire situation was unbelievable. I'm disappointed in the principals and the school board. Yes, the student who wore the shirt got suspended after our walk out, but that's the problem. It was only after we made a big deal. Because it is a big deal. The glorification of rape needs to stop," she says.

Changes are coming

Recently, Sydney Academy in Cape Breton updated their dress code after a student protest. Students felt the school was sexualizing female belly buttons by acting on rules banning crop tops, while ignoring male code-breaks.

In response to the change, Glace Bay principal Donnie Holland voiced his concerns to the regional centre for education about creating a distinct dress code, because students might try to "make a point" by breaking the code, the CBC reported.

He said the only issue at his school is girls wearing "extremely revealing" clothing.

I find it difficult to believe with the number of male teenagers I see leaving the high school near my house with beer logos on t-shirts, pot leaves on hats and underwear hanging out of their jeans that females are the only ones dressing inappropriately at school.

Rather than focusing on how much skin our children are showing in the classroom, perhaps we should focus on our attitudes about showing skin.

The amount of skin one shows does not reflect aptitude, personality or worth. This is clearly a message the Nova Scotia Liberal Party needs to hear when considering candidates like Ingraham.

It's only skin deep

Like the boudoir photography deeming Ingraham incapable of performing in a government position, I wonder what is it about seeing a woman's skin that offends?

Is it the skin itself, something we all share? Or is it the sexual connotation attached to that skin?

Why is our skin considered sexual in areas like shoulders, bellies and legs, while a man's skin isn't?

Why should my skin, and how much of it I choose to show, have anything to do with my job or role in my community?

I agree that there are times and places for all things, and I'm not about to wear a bathing suit to a jury summons. However, what a woman chooses to wear (or not wear) in her personal time, should have no bearing on her work life.

If there are no other means of measuring a woman's value than her body, we have bigger problems than the voters' opinions on boudoir.

Keeping up with Zara Matrix

The Halifax-based drag performer talks about her career and what's to come

BY ELIZABETH FOSTER, ARTS & LIFESTYLE EDITOR



ZARA MATRIX IS A DRAG QUEEN BASED OUT OF HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA. SHE HAS BEEN DOING DRAG FOR ABOUT FOUR YEARS. PHOTO BY ADAM CORNICK.

It takes Zara Matrix up to four hours to get into full drag. It's a labour of love but it pays off. Because when Matrix steps on stage, all eyes are on her.

Trading skates for stilettos

Matrix is a drag queen based in Halifax, who's been performing professionally for about four years. She began her career while a student at Dalhousie University, where she graduated in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in community design.

Before her time in drag, Matrix — originally from Dartmouth — was a competitive figure skater, training in Ontario and Quebec for most of her ado-

lescence.

"I've always been a creative soul," explains Matrix. "Once I retired from competitive skating, I moved back home to Halifax, and some friends of mine were into makeup and RuPaul's Drag Race. We just started watching, and if anybody was to tell me five to six years ago that I was going to be a drag queen, I would not have believed them because it was just not on my radar."

A complete drag look includes elaborate and exaggerated makeup, a corset, hip pads, an equally elaborate costume and a wig — all held together by duct tape, glue and bobby pins. Matrix says she creates 85 to 90 per cent of her own costumes,

which is "challenging, but fun."

"I would say skating almost prepared me for drag, because of all the rhinestoning, all the performing, all that stuff. There are some similarities."

An emerging career

The very first time Matrix performed in drag was for a youth pride event put on by the Halifax Central Library. She was also attending Dal at the time, and describes attending school while breaking into the drag scene as stressful.

"But drag ended up helping me out and relieving some of that stress," she says, "which was nice. Un-

expected, but nice."

As Matrix's career progressed and her performing opportunities increased, so did her ambition. For one Halifax pride event, Atlantic Drag Star 2018, she reached out to The Woods, a Halifax hip hop company, to hire backup dancers. It's through The Woods that Matrix met Sara Steele.

Steele, who is assistant artistic director at The Woods and owner of Onset Hip Hop Company in Dartmouth, says that while she's worked with drag queens in the past, she's never worked with any in the capacity she has with Matrix.

It can take Matrix and The Woods dancers anywhere from three to six hours a week to prepare for

one drag show, depending on the size of the show. When it comes to performance day, it's all hands on deck.

"The day of the show, I'll typically run the music and be kind of a 'stage manager,'" Steele says. "I do a lot of passing the microphone off, but also stuff like tying Zara's corset up really tight for her, so she can go onstage looking great... all that fun stuff."

For Matrix, a typical show consists of performing alongside five or six other drag artists. Each performer will do two sets, where they'll typically lip-synch and dance to high-energy numbers.

A (very brief) history of drag

The term "drag" is thought to originate from British theatre slang, in which men described the "dragging" sensation that came with wearing women's dresses and skirts.

William Dorsey Swann, a formerly enslaved person and gay liberation activist, is known for being the first person to identify themselves as a "queen of drag." Swann would host drag balls attended by other members of the formerly enslaved Black community in Washington D.C. throughout the 1880s and 1890s. In 1920s New York, prohibition-made speakeasies served as the perfect spot for queer people to gather, and Harlem's Hamilton Lodge hosted drag balls. It is during this period that drag began to take on its recognizable form, with vaudeville performances led by "female impersonators."

Within Nova Scotia, the Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE) was founded in 1972. In 1976, the GAE opened the Turret, a gay bar and disco on Barrington Street in Halifax that would frequently host drag shows. Halifax had its first pride march in 1988, with 75 people marching through the North End.

"Drag is really just a form of expression. It's your art. It's whatever your vision is, really."

While the performers and venues may have changed over the decades, the city has never been a stranger to drag or its culture.

Finding a place to perform

Prior to COVID-19 and the widespread lockdowns that closed venues for most of 2020, Matrix was doing about one drag show a month. She would usually perform at venues such as Reflections, Spatz Theatre, and the now-closed Menz and Mollyz — which was one of Halifax's few queer-owned bars and widely regarded as a safe space for the community. The bar closed for good during April 2020, and with it, Halifax lost a cherished queer performance space.

Lately, Matrix has been doing most of her performances at The Garden, a restaurant and bar located in downtown Halifax.

While COVID-19 restrictions closed many performance spaces and tightened capacity limits, Steele says the pair have looked at the unprecedented free time brought on by lockdowns with optimism.

"For my personal business as a dance studio own-



MATRIX CREATES ALL OF HER OWN COSTUMES FOR HER PERFORMANCES. PHOTO BY SARA STEELE.

er [the pandemic] was terrible, but for Zara and my working relationship, the lockdowns were actually a huge blessing," she explains. "It kind of gave us time to hyper-focus on the shows, and really if it wasn't for COVID-19 I don't know how many of these shows we would have done."

What's to come

When asked what she sees herself doing in the future, Matrix says one of her biggest goals is to combine her two passions.

"I want to do a drag show on ice, combining skating and drag. It was supposed to happen in 2020, but CO-

VID-19 happened. That's probably my biggest goal, I would love that."

She says she'd also like to do Canada's Drag Race, the Canadian version of US reality competition show RuPaul's Drag Race, someday.

"I would love to be the East Coast queen there, because they haven't had anybody yet. I want to use this year, coming out of the pandemic. I want to have everything planned... I'm hoping we'll keep on going up."

Matrix says a common misconception she sees is that people often assume drag performers are extremely feminine all the time, even when they're

not in drag. She also says that people tend to believe that there's only one type of person who can do drag. Matrix works to challenge both of these beliefs, and says that at the heart of what she does, drag is all about self-expression.

"There's a variety of identities and people who do drag. Drag is not just a drag queen," she explains. "There are drag kings too, nonbinary performers, so, drag is really just a form of expression. It's your art. It's whatever your vision is, really."

Editor's Note: The author of this story was previously employed at The Garden, the bar and restaurant mentioned in this story.

Trading campus for the British country-side

How one Dalhousie student created their own study abroad experience

BY RACHEL COOKE

During a time of lockdowns, cancelled events and postponed study-abroad programs, I decided to move to England and continue my studies remotely. There was no roadmap and little assistance, yet a great deal of determination.

Needing a change

As I packed my suitcase full of trench coats and rubber boots, I also crammed Moleskine notebooks, highlighter pens and packs of flashcards between the stacks of rain-ready clothing. I was preparing the best I could for a year away from Halifax — a gap year while still enrolled and smack in the middle of my degree — provoked by the pandemic. I would be in England for 12 months, from July 2021 to July 2022, working as an au pair (a live-in nanny) for a family in the countryside. Though my studies would not end, they would need to be reformulated and moulded to fit my new life.

Why this sudden change? The answer is simple: I had spent a copious amount of time over the last year and a half feeling like I was unable to make a move in life, to progress, to grow and to learn in new ways. This was not an emotional feeling, but rather it was an expression of literal limitations due to COVID-19 restrictions. I was completely done with waiting on the circumstances surrounding me to change so that I might begin to live the life I desired. Although classes were resuming in person at Dalhousie University, the study abroad programs remained suspended with no indication of when they would resume. While Dal has since announced that the programs will resume in 2022, at the time of my decision in December I had no estimation on if the study abroad programs would recommence at any time during the remainder of my degree. Studying abroad has always been a plan of mine and I knew that there was a slim chance that I would make that happen while in the last half of my time at Dalhousie. So, I decided to take matters into my own hands.

Making the decision

The decision to continue my studies abroad was a difficult one. I asked myself many questions: Where would I go? Would I be distracted by my new surroundings? Would I be able to balance work and school? Would my grades decline without the help of other classmates nearby? Would I be able to meet friends if I go all alone? I also had the added worry of how to make studying abroad work when all the formal study abroad programs through Dalhousie were cancelled or postponed.

After finding a couple of au pair agencies online, I submitted my applications and waited to hear back



CHAWTON HOUSE (LEFT), AN ELIZABETHAN MANOR IN CHAWTON, ENGLAND, IS KNOWN FOR BEING THE HOME OF JANE AUSTEN'S BROTHER. ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH (RIGHT), LOCATED ON THE PROPERTY OF THE CHAWTON HOUSE IN CHAWTON, ENGLAND. RACHEL COOKE DECIDED FOLLOW HER CHILDHOOD AFFINITY FOR JANE AUSTEN AND BEATRIX POTTER TO A YEAR ABROAD IN ENGLAND. PHOTO BY RACHEL COOKE.

from families around the world. I was lucky enough to have a selection to choose from, but I always knew England was the right decision. It has been my dream place to live for as long as I can remember. Having grown up on Beatrix Potter and Jane Austen, I wanted nothing more in life than to call the English countryside my home. Unfortunately, the process to get there would not be so simple.

The dream becomes a reality

To move to the United Kingdom, I needed a certain type of visa which requires a biometrics appointment at a third-party office building. Normally, this office would be in Halifax. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was closed. Meaning the closest one was in Toronto. I had to fly to Toronto

for a weekend to get my fingerprint taken and my face scanned in preparation for the visa. This was only one of the complications I faced. The extended list includes a plethora of COVID-19 tests, flight changes and a struggle to communicate with agencies that only operate with a foreign number.

Another issue was sorting my classes. Due to study abroad programs being cancelled through Dalhousie, I did not have any institutional help or support in my decision to relocate my studies from Canada to England, though I was able to contact academic advisors. Advisors at Dal assisted me in ironing out details on how I could best find courses that were still useful towards my combined degree in law, justice and society and political science, but that were also offered online. Eventually, I made progress

and came up with a plan that worked for me: I will take available classes while the children I care for are in school, which is September through June, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every weekday. The children are enrolled in a private school that includes sports, activities, clubs, games, a homework hour and other events that run into the early evening. That means I should have more than enough free time to work on my courses, especially considering it will be a reduced course load.

There are destined to be complications, difficult moments and unexpected challenges this year as I embark on a study abroad journey of my own creation. However, the joys of exploring a brand-new place make every obstacle I've had to face on the way here worth it.

Fall reads

A list of books to get you in the mood for the fall season

BY GOKCE ON

The fall season can mean a lot of things to different people. Regardless of personal feelings, its shorter days and brisker winds make it a great time to start a new book.

***The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde (1890)**

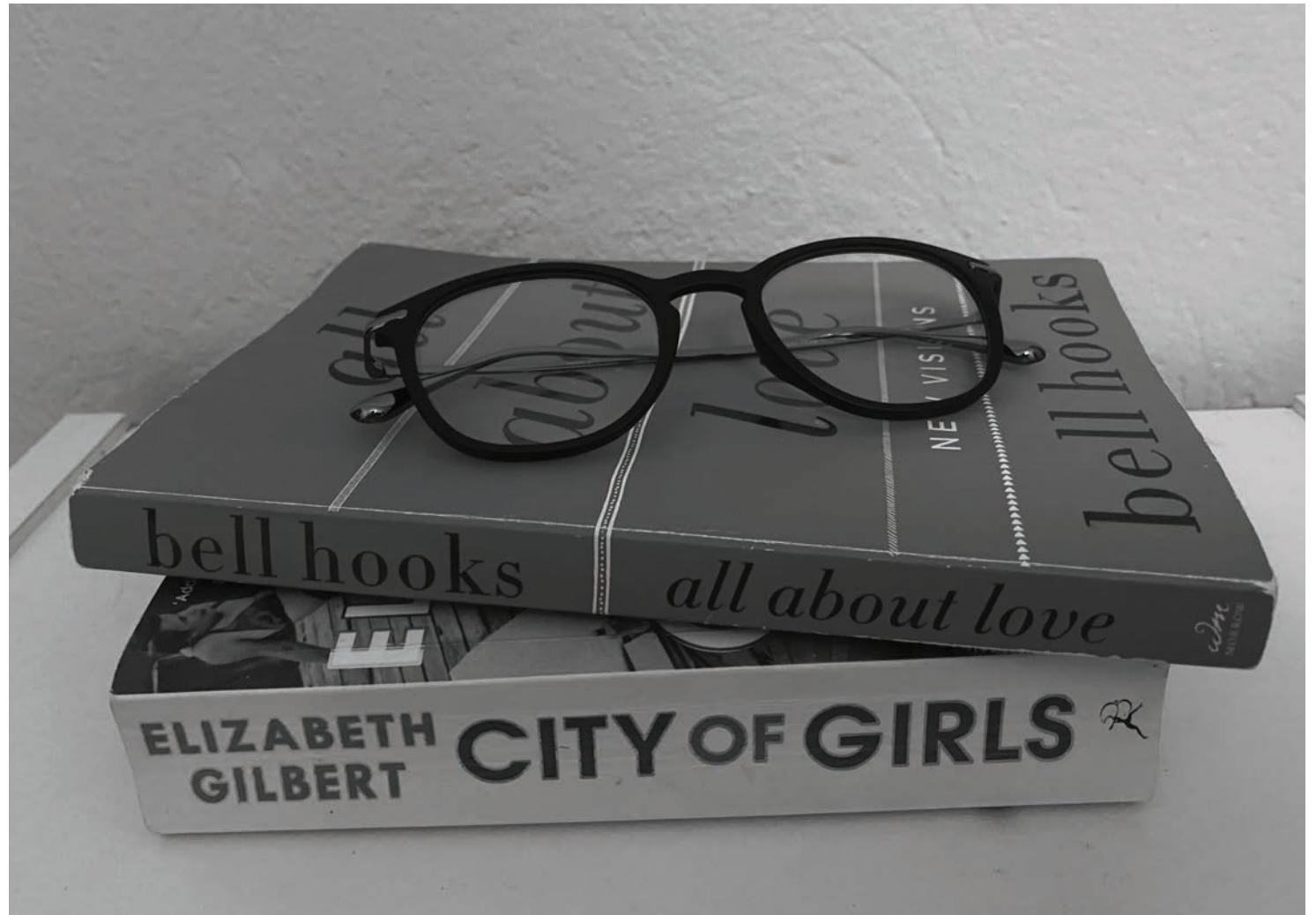
First published in 1890, this classic is the perfect book to kick off spooky season. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* follows the story of the titular character as his wish to stay young and beautiful forever is granted, and he is forced to face the consequences. This book will carry you into fall as the pacing and tone keep changing while the plot progresses. The way the story takes its reader from quaint tea parties to horrendous murders is a marvelous trip that is worth attending. It is an easy read, and a great distraction if you need one.

***The Sea Was in Their Blood: The Disappearance of the Miss Ally's Five-Man Crew*, Quentin Casey (2017)**

The Sea Was in Their Blood, a non-fiction chronicle, follows the events of the crew of the Miss Ally on the night of their disappearance in 2013, when an unexpected storm hit the ship. This thriller investigates how it all went down, while piecing together the mental state and background of the crew aboard. This book might hit a little close to home for some, as it tells real-life events that took place in Nova Scotia, but it gives you a taste of the people that make up this province. If you are looking for a non-fiction, local read with high tension and suspense, this one is for you.

***All About Love: New Visions*, Bell Hooks (1999)**

If you're the type of person to tell yourself every fall that it's time to get your life together, consider weeding through your emotional baggage with this book. *All About Love: New Visions* is a collection of essays that will help you take an introspective approach to your relationships by discussing what love is and what it could be. The author, Bell Hooks, discusses where people learn to love, and how love does not always mean one thing, and rarely does. This book would pair perfectly with a rainy evening, because



ALL ABOUT LOVE BY BELL HOOKS AND CITY OF GIRLS BY ELIZABETH GILBERT ARE TWO BOOKS THAT SHOULD GET YOU IN THE MOOD FOR FALL. PHOTO BY GOKCE ON

— fair warning — it can get pretty emotional.

***The Leaving and Other Stories*, Budge Wilson (1990)**

This collection of short stories marks new beginnings. It illustrates the feeling of being caught between choosing to stay and choosing to venture into unknown territories of life. Set in Nova Scotia, these stories carry a comforting familiarity. *The Leaving and Other Stories* consists of eleven short stories about women and girls, discussing themes like power of language, family and making or breaking important bonds. With numerous quick stories to read, this can easily become anyone's comfort book. The

collection is especially good if you're not necessarily crazy about reading and have a limited attention span.

“This is a book that will have you looking forward to the future as you begin a new chapter in your life this fall.”

***City of Girls*, Elizabeth Gilbert (2019)**

City of Girls follows the life of Vivian Morris, as she makes a place for herself in New York City. From the same author that gave us *Eat, Pray, Love*, Gilbert takes the reader through decades of growth, self-exploration, and shifting relationships via the protagonist's life in the theatre scene of 1940s New York City. Vivian is an extremely vibrant character to see the world through, although conceited at times. Experiencing an extinct New York through her eyes is exciting and revelatory. This is a book that will have you looking forward to the future as you begin a new chapter in your life this fall.

Return of the rink

Proposed on-campus Dalhousie Events Centre marks new era for Tigers hockey and ice sports in Halifax's South End

BY LUKE DYMENT, SPORTS EDITOR



A DIGITAL PREVIEW OF DALHOUSIE'S SOON-TO-BE NEW HOME ARENA. DAL ATHLETICS HOPES THE RINK WILL CREATE A NEW ATMOSPHERE FOR THE TIGERS. PHOTO COURTESY OF DALHOUSIE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT.

The Dalhousie University Tigers' announcement of the new Dalhousie Events Centre caught dozens by surprise, especially within Dal's hockey programs.

One of those caught off guard was men's hockey assistant coach, Andrew Wigginton.

Tiger's head coach Chris Donnelly called him the day before the news broke, "and said, 'it's happening for sure,'" Wigginton, a former Tigers player, said. He's spent the entirety of his Dal playing and coaching career at the Halifax Forum — Dal hockey's current home, 15 minutes by bus from Studley campus. "We were still kind of like 'No, it's not,'" he said. When Donnelly told him, "I'm not joking, it's a done

deal,'" Wigginton said.

Men's hockey forward, Derek Gentile, was pleasantly shocked too. He, alongside some teammates, heard of the news about an hour before word hit social media.

"The really exciting part for all of us is that it's directly on campus," Gentile said. "It's not only the great atmosphere the building will have, the students will be nearby and we can draw them [into games]. At the same time, as student-athletes, we're busy and it's so much easier for time management being right on campus. You can practice, then walk right to class or to physio."

Katie Cameron found out in a similar way

around the same time. The women's Tigers defender learned the news when head coach Troy Ryan told everyone through the team group chat.

"I toured Dal in grade 11 and the coach at the time said 'We'll get a new rink eventually, so it's something to look forward to,'" Cameron said. "A lot of the girls and I weren't really sure ourselves. Now it's happening, and the thought of having a rink on campus is exciting. The Forum's great, but for travel and convenience on-campus is so much better."

Arena plan

Tigers athletic director Tim Maloney re-

vealed the Dalhousie Events Centre in a statement on June 22. The Dalhousie board of governors voted in favour of the rink's construction that day. It's slated to be ready by fall 2023.

The arena will be built on the parking lot between Wickwire Field and LeMarchant Place, where the Dalhousie Memorial Arena stood until 2012. It will include flooring to cover the ice for special events, other event spaces and a large space where the Dalhousie Physiotherapy Clinic (currently at Dalplex) will move to.

Since 2012, Dal's program participation and offerings in ice sports for students has nosedived. According to the Events Centre's project website, student participation dipped 55 per

cent in that timeframe because of distance and lack of ice time availability.

“It’s a really important asset for our campus and community, and it goes well beyond just our men’s and women’s varsity hockey programs,” Maloney said in an interview with the *Dalhousie Gazette*. Dal Athletics created proposals over the previous school year for review by the appropriate university committees. It submitted the current proposal to the Dal board in spring 2021.

“From intramural participation to ice-related club sports and programming, in addition to community access and the important role we play in the community, an asset like this is critical,” Maloney said. “When we looked at the long-term needs for our athletic facilities and where the gaps are, the arena was at the top of the list.”

Home-ice advantage

The arena will mark a turning point for the varsity hockey programs. In Atlantic University Sport (AUS) men’s hockey, Dal is the only team without an on-campus rink. Dal, Mount Allison University and St. Thomas University are the only teams in AUS women’s hockey who play off campus.

Alongside low attendance, the hockey programs have struggled to compete over the last decade. Dal teams have made the playoffs only five times combined (four of those berths coming from the women’s team) in the eight seasons they’ve been at the Forum. They’ll play two more seasons there, but a change of scenery is on the horizon.

“It’s a thing we’re all looking forward to as a team. To have our own rink is so special,” Cameron said. “Everything for this program is coming together. We got a new coach [in Troy Ryan] last year, hands-down the best coach I’ve ever had. Him leading the program and now getting our own rink will make our program a lot stronger.”

On-campus university rinks are notorious for their atmospheres, and the excitement of one thousand fans packed into the small facility, bolstering the players’ energy at the same time, is great for a team. Gentile hopes the new arena will spark that.

“It builds excitement to see the atmosphere in these rinks. When you have a rink on-campus, students show up in colours and walk there from residences, which creates a buzz. It’s a home-crowd advantage,” he said. Gentile uses the most recent Stanley Cup final as an example, where the Tampa Bay Lightning had a full crowd, due to a complete lack of COVID-19 restrictions in the state of Florida, while the Montreal Canadiens did not, due to tighter COVID-19 regulations in Quebec. The Lightning turned out victorious.

“It makes a huge difference to have a community and school behind you,” Gentile said.

Use in South End Halifax

On peninsular Halifax, the only two arenas besides the Forum are the Scotiabank Centre downtown and the Dauphinee Centre, Saint

Mary’s University’s rink that opened in 2019. The Scotiabank Centre is already busy in a typical year with the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League’s (QMJHL) Halifax Mooseheads, the National Lacrosse League’s (NLL) Halifax Thunderbirds and as the city’s home of large concerts and other events. That leaves southern Halifax residents and organizations to compete for ice time at SMU, or to make longer trips to the Forum or facilities in Bedford or Dartmouth.

Not only will the Events Centre house Dal programs, but, as Maloney said, provide an arena for the community.

“It fits perfectly into our role in the community. When the old rink was torn down in 2012, it left a lot of people in peninsular Halifax without a place to skate or play hockey,” he said.

Those near Dal will have another option to catch a hockey game on the weekend, adding, according to Wigginton, a “whole new dynamic” to the program.

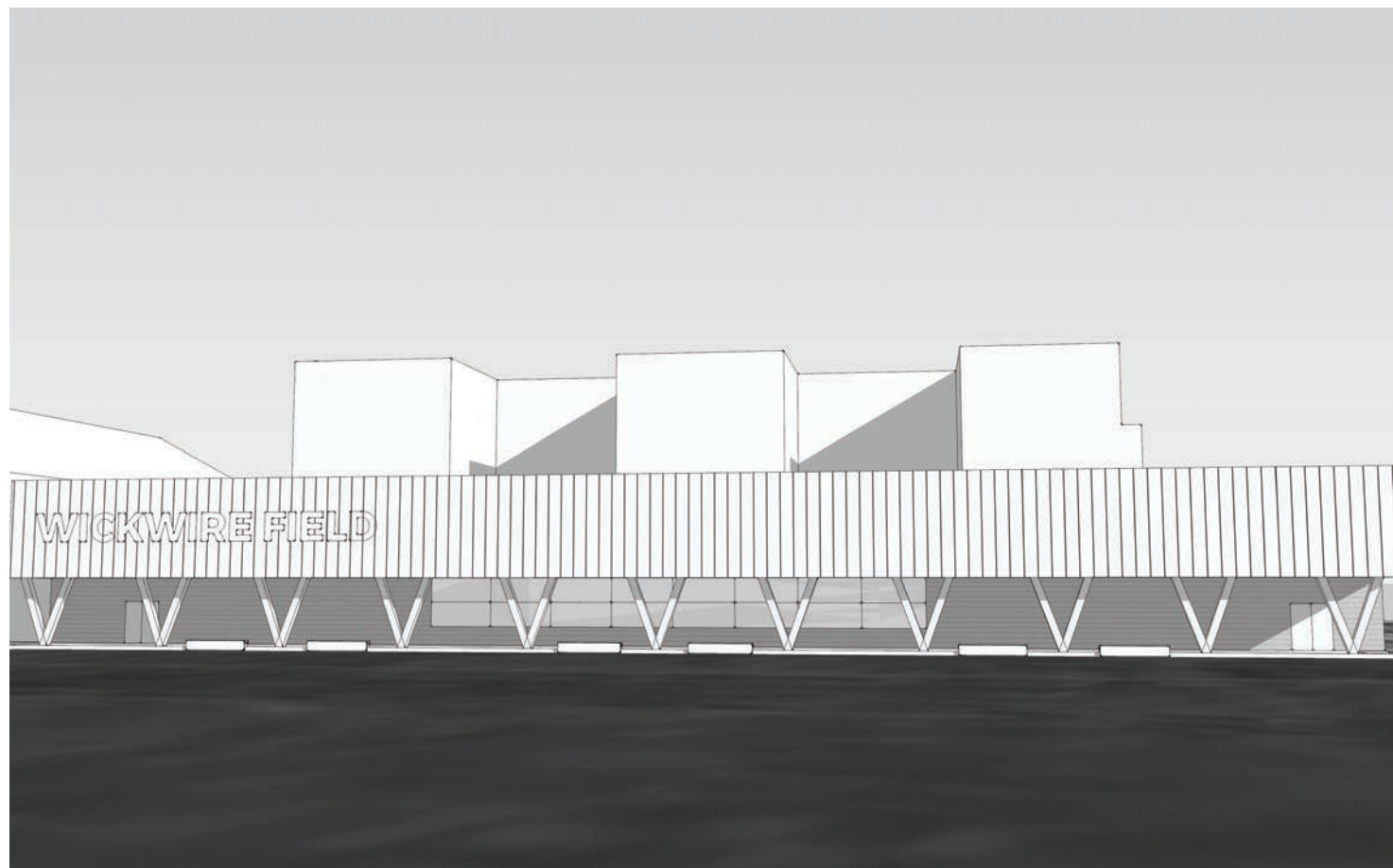
“Being able to say we have a rink on campus and having players able to walk there, with our own dressing room and maybe free ice time, that recruitment tool alone brings more players in,” he said. “The jump to our own rink is going to change things a lot.”

Gentile is one of the younger players on the team, having only joined in fall 2020. But he’s well aware of the significance the Events Centre holds in this point in program history.

“Although I’m part of the group of younger players and will be among the faces of the new rink, it started years ago with the guys who laid the foundation for the culture of the team,” he said. “It’s a really exciting time for this program. This school, program, Chris [Donnelly] and the staff have deserved a winner for a while and they’ve built the culture to do that.”



THE PARKING LOT BETWEEN WICKWIRE FIELD AND LEMARCHANT PLACE ON SOUTH STREET WHERE THE EVENTS CENTRE WILL BE BUILT. THE LAST ARENA AT DALHOUSIE, THE DALHOUSIE MEMORIAL ARENA, STOOD HERE UNTIL 2012. PHOTO BY LUKE DYMENT.



2021-2022 Tigers fall preview

A look at varsity teams kicking off seasons in September and early October

LUKE DYMENT, SPORTS EDITOR



DALHOUSIE'S WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM WILL BE LOOKING TO TAKE DOWN THE UNB TEAM THAT KNOCKED THEM OUT OF THE AUS QUARTERFINALS IN 2019. PHOTO BY TREVOR MACMILLAN, COURTESY OF DALHOUSIE ATHLETICS.

For the first time in 18 months, the Dalhousie University Tigers will play meaningful games.

There's been a lot to digest since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020. We last saw the Tigers in the U SPORTS final eight men's basketball championship against the Carleton University Ravens on March 8, 2020. The resulting silver medal was the team's highest-ever finish. The women's volleyball Tigers were scheduled to play in the U SPORTS championship the weekend of March 13, before U SPORTS cancelled the tournament the day prior.

Dal's basketball, hockey, soccer, volleyball and swimming teams took part in limited exhibition action last school year, but it wasn't the same as the anticipated return to the regular season.

At the time of this writing, it's unclear whether

spectators will be allowed back in games, but there are some varsity teams' first appearances at home in 2021-22. Teams beginning seasons later on, like swimming, basketball and volleyball, will be previewed in the near future.

Women's soccer: Sept. 11 at 1 p.m. versus University of New Brunswick (UNB) Varsity Reds

The Tigers have been hungry to exact revenge on the University of New Brunswick, who knocked them out of the AUS quarterfinals in 2019. Guess who's in town for the first game of the season?

The Tigers will be testing out a change of the guard compared to 2019, Dal strikers Zoe Brown and Riley Donovan will be leaned on to keep the offence rolling, now that some older players have

moved on. Olivia MacIntyre will hold down the defence again after starting every game in 2019, with the help of Breagh Bates and Haley Birrell.

According to the *Gazette's* analysis, Annabel Gravely should be the frontrunner to start between the sticks, only allowing two goals in six 2019 regular season games.

Men's soccer: Sept. 11, 3:15 p.m. versus UNB

Later that afternoon, the men's squad gets a crack at the Reds.

The men too fell in the 2019 quarterfinals, but in a nail-biter against cross-town rivals the Saint Mary's University Huskies. Important returnees upfront include strikers Enrico Rodriguez and Gracious

Kasheke, alongside midfielder Adam Murphy who started every game in his rookie season.

Emilio Roche and Callum Legge should eat most of the minutes on defence. Same with veteran Ben Grondin in net, who started at least 10 games in each of the last two seasons.

Sept. 18, 12 p.m. (women), 1 p.m. (men) in Antigonish, N.S.

This isn't a home event for the Tigers and they won't have one this season, per the current schedule.

The St. Francis-Xavier (StFX) X-Men and X-Women will host the season's first meet. For intrigue, the men have won two of the last three AUS titles, with StFX winning every other one since 2011.

Dal's team, led by Jonathan Goodridge, Hudson Grimshaw-Surette and Nick Robertson, will be neck and neck with the meet hosts again this year.

On the women's side, Dal is the team to beat, having won every championship since 2013. With the X-Women looking to break Dal's streak starting at home, look for Lauren Lowther and Renata Kingston to lead the way this year for the Tigers.

Women's hockey: Oct. 6, 7 p.m. versus StFX

Dal faces a tall task on AUS hockey's opening night, with the defending conference champion X-Women coming to the Halifax Forum.

Two off-seasons of recruits will finally debut in regular season action, although some played in a thrilling five-game exhibition series last spring against the highly-ranked SMU. Kennedy Whelan is back after leading Dal's scoring in 2019-20 and their youthful defence corps will feature Taylor Carr-Babineau and Alexandra McArthur.

After strong performances in the SMU games, Taylor Beam should be ready to take on more responsibility in net this year.

Men's hockey: Oct. 9, 7 p.m. versus SMU

The Tigers begin their home schedule with the Battle of Halifax, having not faced SMU since February 2020.

The men too have a young team, recruiting several rookies in both the summers of 2020 and 2021.

Campbell Pickard should get big minutes after tying for second in team scoring in 2019-20, with Chandler Yakimowicz and Brett Crossley taking on greater leadership roles.

Aiden Jamieson and Jack Hanley are names to watch on the blueline, while Connor Hicks and Reilly Pickard are likely to split starts in net as they have the last two regular seasons.

Second shot for seniors

Unfinished business and leadership opportunities among incentives for student-athletes using final years of eligibility after a COVID-19-ruined season

BY THOMAS SCOTT



TIGERS MEN'S BASKETBALL'S KEEVAN VEINOT WILL RETURN FOR A FIFTH YEAR OF SCHOOL AND HIS FOURTH YEAR OF U SPORTS ELIGIBILITY. PLAYING THE FULL FOUR YEARS WAS A GOAL OF HIS FROM THE START OF HIS TIME AT DAL AND HE WILL DO SO COMING OFF THE TEAM'S SECOND-PLACE FINISH AT NATIONALS IN 2020. PHOTO BY TREVOR MACMILLAN, COURTESY OF DALHOUSIE ATHLETICS.



RILEY DONOVAN OF THE WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM LOST TWO SEASONS IN HER DAL CAREER: 2017 DUE TO AN ACL INJURY AND 2020 BECAUSE OF COVID-19. WITH ADDITIONAL YEARS OF ELIGIBILITY, DONOVAN'S LOOKING TO MAKE THEM COUNT IN 2021. PHOTO BY TREVOR MACMILLAN, COURTESY OF DALHOUSIE ATHLETICS.

In 2020, U SPORTS said senior-aged student-athletes could retain their final year of eligibility due to the cancelled season. Many Dalhousie University Tigers athletes chose to stay in school through the 2021-2022 season to redeem it.

That list of players includes men's basketball leading scorer, Keevan Veinot. He chose to delay his graduation for the opportunity to play his last season.

Coming off of a loss against the Carleton University Ravens in the U SPORTS Final 8 men's basketball championship final, Veinot did not want to end his tenure with the team in a COVID-19-ruined season. Helping his team to 19 wins and only one loss during the 2019-2020 Atlantic University Sport (AUS) regular season, anyone could see why Veinot would want one last chance with the Tigers.

"I would have graduated with only three years of eligibility instead of four, and I always wanted to do four," Veinot said. "The fact that we couldn't have a season last year, I wanted to come back to fulfill the duties that we as a team think that we can do, like

win a championship."

U SPORTS' decision

U SPORTS repeated through the cancelled 2020-2021 season it would not charge a year of eligibility against student-athletes without an actual season. Its rule of thumb was whether it could offer a national championship in a sport. If no national championship was held, players retain a year of eligibility, with few exceptions getting in the way of that, like U SPORTS football's age cap.

Riley Donovan, a striker for Dal's women's soccer team, always had her eyes locked on an extra season. Donovan tore her ACL in May 2017 in a club practice a couple of weeks after joining the Tigers. Since that forced her to miss the entire 2017 campaign, she kept a year of eligibility. Only two of her years have been used up, in the 2018 and 2019 seasons.

Due to the cancelled season last year, many players have not been in an official game. This puts experienced players like Donov-

anto the test.

"We have a lot of younger players coming in," she said. After not using a year of eligibility last year due to COVID-19, Donovan will complete her fifth year of university and still have another year of eligibility. "It will be good to have the existing fourth-year players, and me as well, out there on the field because we've played in AUS seasons before and the rookies we had last year, they didn't actually get to play in a season."

For Donovan to recover from the ACL tear and finish 16th in the AUS in goals in 2019 took determination. Perhaps that determination can trickle down to her teammates, as Donovan will captain her team this year.

"It's kind of like we'll be having two years of new players out there who haven't actually played in a real AUS game," she said. "With that being said, having the fourth-years and myself as a fifth-year out there will be crucial to keep everyone calm and to make sure we win games."

Leading the way

The experience athletes possess in their final years of eligibility holds value. Having an experienced player brings leadership, a crucial factor considering influxes of young

athletes need time to transition to the university level each year.

Alex Carson, a guard on the Dalhousie men's basketball team who led the AUS in three-point shots made per game in 2019-2020, said he is ready to take on a larger leadership role in his last year of eligibility.

"With all the younger guys, [someone must] show them the work ethic it takes to get to nationals and get a medal on the court and off the court, putting in work in the classroom, helping them with finding tutors," Carson said. "Also, it's how to cope with basketball and university, because it's a whole new thing for these high school students coming in. It's pretty eye-opening. It's good to be that calming veteran voice for the young guys. That's what I had. I want to be that for our young guys."

Veinot has a work ethic that can rub off on the youngsters. Increasing his points-per-game average from 8.2 in his first season to 15.6 in 2019-2020 is proof of just that.

"Now being 22 and playing basketball at a higher level, coming back to 18-year-olds with us for the first time," he said, "with the maturity I think I've developed since being in first-year, I can sort of show them the ropes and teach them what's going on."



MEN'S BASKETBALL'S ALEX CARSON WILL BE ONE OF THE TEAM'S LEADERS IN 2021-2022, HIS FINAL YEAR AT DAL. HE'LL HAVE THE CHANCE TO SHOW THE TEAM'S YOUTH THE ROPES AFTER NOT GETTING THE SAME OPPORTUNITY LAST YEAR WITHOUT GAMES. PHOTO BY ELLERY PLATTS, COURTESY OF DALHOUSIE ATHLETICS.

The state of non-varsity sports

With sports beginning soon and COVID-19 still a concern, Dal Athletics and Recreation expects near-normal year

BY LUKE DYMENT, SPORTS EDITOR



VARSITY ATHLETES AREN'T THE ONLY ONES GOING BACK TO SPORTS AT DAL THIS YEAR. PHOTO BY CHRISTINE DARRAH, COURTESY OF DALHOUSIE ATHLETICS.

As Dalhousie University prepares to welcome students back to campus, athletics and recreational activities are expected to look more normal than during the online 2020-2021 school year.

But not everything will be like what campus life was pre-pandemic. Nova Scotia remains in phase four at the time of writing, with restrictions like masking, gathering limits and contact tracing being enforced until Sept. 15, when the provincial government currently plans to move into phase five.

There are lots of factors and grey areas, some of which can change quickly and impact how campus life looks when classes resume. Within athletics, campus recreation coordinator, Chris Keough, said he anticipates most activities to be up and running.

"We're planning everything as per a normal year," he said in regards to student recreational of-

ferings like intramural and club sports. One part of his job is accounting for contact tracing and other safety measures within activities. "We'll react to what restrictions are when the time comes but we should be near back to normal by the time we start programming.

Evolving Public Health measures make planning uncertain

In August, Dal faced a dilemma of uncertainty regarding when phase five will be and what it might consist of.

On the province's website, Nova Scotia describes phase five as "the easing of public health measures" and expanded travel into the province. It's possible the next phase could contain protocols that athletic activities must adapt to early in the school year. For instance, athletic director Tim Maloney said Dalplex activities that require users to book appoint-

ments will remain that way until Dalplex is no longer required to contact trace.

Also, Keough said spectators for sports may be kept out of the stands a bit longer because of contact tracing measures.

"There's no good way to contact trace spectators. Once we have that removed, spectating is something we could allow again," he said.

Remaining restrictions' impact on campus sport and rec

Maloney shared Keough's approach in preparing for a more normal year. He said almost all pre-pandemic athletics and recreation offerings will be available to students.

"We plan to offer almost a full slate of programming. The big differences would be the capacity of those programs, compared to a quote-on-quote normal year," Maloney said. These offerings include intramural, club and varsity sports, "Once we get to phase five, the expectation is things will be pretty normal."

Without the clarity the Tigers would have liked around the province's reopening plans, they do have some things on their side. Most sports that run early in September are outdoors, meaning larger gathering limits and less risk of COVID-19 transmission. Dal has a few extra weeks to communicate with the province before indoor intramural and club sports ramp up, plus varsity sports like basketball and volleyball, in late September.

The state of intramurals

Intramural sports, which draw more students to athletic facilities, don't begin until a couple of weeks after classes. Those few weeks of timing will be on the intramural team's side too. Intramural sign-ups were launched on the athletic department's website recently.

Whenever phase five comes into effect though, Maloney said he's confident Dal can hold activities as they were before COVID-19 with precautionary cleaning measures.

"I don't want to speak for [the university] but it has demonstrated over the last 18 months it's in pretty good lockstep with the province," he said, noting the university has the final say on what on-campus restrictions exist when the next phase arrives. "As

the province loosens restrictions, so have we for the most part. I expect we'll remain aligned with the province."

Registration and other evaluations from this year will be compared to 2019 to aid with planning and, as Keough said, the beginning of this school year is already garnering

comparison to the last non-COVID-19 school year in 2019-2020.

"Our hope is we're back to something like 2019," Keough said. "We're still waiting on health orders to come down but our anticipation is that we're almost the same as where we were."

"We're still waiting on health orders to come down but our anticipation is that we're almost the same as where we were."