

# Dal profs strike

BY KAVERI GUPTA AND  
SHELLEY ROBINSON

HALIFAX (CUP) — Dalhousie University professors hit the picket lines this week and no one knows how long they're staying out.

Despite a 24-hour marathon of last-minute negotiations, faculty and administration were unable to resolve their differences and the profs walked out March 25, the first day they were legally entitled to strike. They are joined on the picket lines by Dalhousie's professional librarians, who are also members of the faculty association.

In the face of the strike, the university has instituted a lock-out. Professors are not allowed to teach classes or use any university facilities. And while all classes at the university have been cancelled, the libraries remain open, as do student services including the computer

centre, food service and the residences.

Michael Cross, chief negotiator for the faculty association, says while the strike may not be pleasant, it is probably necessary to spur fruitful negotiations.

"I'm not at all sure the board [of governors] believed [a strike] was going to happen," he said. "So now that they know we're serious I hope they'll come back to the table and we can have some really serious discussions."

The same day that members of the faculty association took to the picket lines, about 200 also took to the streets of Halifax to protest what they say are unfair contract proposals put forward by the university.

University spokesperson Michelle Gallant says the strike has set back negotiations.

"It's unfortunate the faculty adjourned the meetings to go on strike. We were making progress," she said.

She adds that the administration is ready to go back to the table.

"We are ready to meet at any time," she said.

The issues still on the table are increased salaries and replacement of departing faculty.

Dalhousie professors say their salaries lag behind those of faculty at comparably sized institutions and are concerned by the fact that over the last 10 years, the university has not filled 113 vacated faculty positions.

The administration's original offer of a 9.5 per cent salary hike and no guarantee to replace departing professors was rejected by a faculty membership vote.

The faculty association put forward two counter proposals. The first called for a 13 per cent salary increase and a guarantee that all departing faculty would be replaced. The second dropped the salary demand down to an increase of 11.8 per cent and asked for a guarantee that all faculty who leave through early retirement packages be replaced.

The administration rejected both. It says it has little money to spare and can't afford the requested salary increases and to guarantee that all vacated positions be replaced.

The faculty association, however, says it can't afford not to, as the reduced staff complement is hurting the quality of education at the university.

Resolution of the faculty replacement issue is particularly pressing as 46 professors will be taking early retire-

ment July 1.

Cross says the board's latest offer, which guarantees to not eliminate, but not necessarily fill, the vacant positions is a step — but a small one.

"I suppose it's a recognition that there is a problem," he said. "[But] it doesn't put any people in classrooms."

Gunter Muecke, an earth sciences professor, agrees.

Muecke is one of those early retirees. He says he is out on the picket line to prove a point, even though he personally won't benefit from a new settlement.

"I am walking because I see the programs in this university being threatened by the cutback in faculty," he said. "I am retiring 10 years

before I have to [because]... I can no longer do for the students what I want to."

Talks were scheduled to resume March 26, will a provincial conciliator mediating discussions.

Though no one seems sure of where talks, or the strike, will go from here, Cross says something has to be done, and soon.

"There are only a couple of weeks left in the term and people are going to graduate, we have to do something fast," he said.

Students at Dalhousie have been bracing for a strike for weeks. Earlier this month, over 700 gathered in protest outside a building where the university's board of governors were meeting, demanding that the two sides come to an agreement. They also want to see a student at the negotiating table.

## Attention Students & Faculty

For all Your Storage Needs

## Stow-It-All Ltd.

### Self Storage

We offer many different sized units.  
Lease by the month or long term.

Open Monday thru Friday 9AM - 5 PM  
Saturday 8 AM - 12 NOON

Located only minutes away from LPEI  
AT

Thompson Drive, Charlottetown

Phone 368-7000

You Store It - You Lock It - You Keep The Key



show your  
student id

and get  
2 new  
releases,

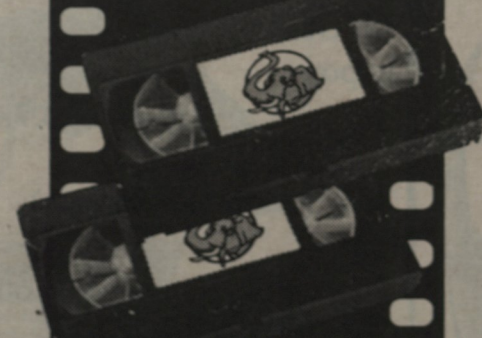
2 bags of  
popcorn,

2-750ml  
Pepsi/  
Coke

**\$8.97**

+ tax & deposit

Offer limited to Jumbo  
Video members.  
Membership is free.



**JUMBO VIDEO**

449 University Ave  
566-5626

Locally owned and operated.