

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** The Dalhousie University community

**From:** Frank Harvey, Provost and Vice-President Academic

**Date:** Tuesday, March 1, 2022

**Re:** **Vice-Provost Student Affairs announcement**

Last fall, we launched the search for our next Vice-Provost Student Affairs. Today, I am writing both with an announcement on that search and an update regarding our current Acting Vice-Provost Student Affairs.

First, I am pleased to announce the appointment of **Dr. Rick Ezekiel** as Vice-Provost Student Affairs, effective June 1, 2022.

Rick is currently Director of Equitable Learning, Health and Wellness at Centennial College in Toronto, where he leads the college's health, wellness and student accessible learning services and strategy. Some of the service transformations under his leadership have resulted in the elimination of waitlists for mental health and accessible learning services across five campuses as well as significantly increasing service responsiveness and student engagement among international students.

Prior to joining Centennial College, Rick held progressively senior leadership roles at Western University including Interim Senior Director Student Experience and Director of Research, Assessment & Planning (Student Experience). He has a PhD in Developmental Psychology and Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, where his doctoral research focused on the impacts of oppressive structures on mental health and learning among postsecondary students with marginalized identities.

Rick is looking forward to bringing transformational change leadership approaches, grounded in a compassionate, inclusive and caring community, to support and expand on the student experience here at Dalhousie. He asked me to share the following thoughts with the Dal community:

*"Education has the potential to serve as a force for more equitable, and transformational human development outcomes in students' lives. My professional and scholarly work centers on mitigating barriers and enhancing inclusion for students with marginalized identities — building educational conditions where ALL learners can realize their potential to thrive in learning and in life. Student affairs plays a critical role in this aspect of a university's purpose. I am delighted to join this great university and intend to serve as a partner and ally to colleagues across the VPSA division, faculties, student communities, and the broader communities we serve in building on an exceptional and inclusive student experience at Dal."*

Rick is a thoughtful, compassionate leader, with a deep and proven commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility. I look forward to working with him and the entire Student Affairs team to help Dalhousie continue to deliver a truly exceptional student experience.

Rick's appointment is the result of a comprehensive search that was national and international in scope, and I thank the search committee for their work as well as all who contributed to the search and consultation process. In keeping with the principles of our Employment Equity Policy and the priorities outlined throughout our new strategic plan, and with an aim to increase the representation of underrepresented groups in leadership positions at Dalhousie, the search was restricted to candidates who self-identified in one or more of the following groups: Indigenous persons, persons with a disability, racially visible persons, women, and persons of a minority sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Dalhousie also owes a great deal of thanks to **Verity Turpin** for her service as Acting Vice-Provost since August 2020. Her leadership has been essential in guiding our university and our student community through a truly extraordinary period, and she has taken on this work with the same care, compassion and student-focused approach that has defined her 20+ years at Dalhousie.

I am pleased to share the exciting news that Verity has accepted the role of Vice-Provost Student Experience at the University of Calgary. As thrilled as I am for her, everyone who has had the joy of working with Verity knows that her unique spirit and thoughtful, passionate commitment to Dal's students will be deeply missed.

Across more than two decades, Verity's contributions have spanned the entirety of the student experience — residence life, health & wellness, accessibility & accommodation, services & support. She led the establishment of Dalhousie's interprofessional collaborative health care model for students; helped create Dalhousie's first Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy; co-chaired the Graduate Student Experience Committee; and served on the committee that developed the National Standard for Mental Health and Wellbeing for Postsecondary Students through the Mental Health Commission of Canada. She has truly left a legacy in the Dalhousie student experience that will live on for years to come. Verity's last day at Dalhousie will be on May 15, and I know many of you will find an opportunity between now and then to wish her well.

Please join me in welcoming Rick to Dalhousie and in thanking and wishing all the best for Verity.

Sincerely,

Frank Harvey  
Provost and Vice-President Academic