



Sustaining Our Progress

Budget Advisory Committee report 2026

Proposed draft budget for fiscal 2026-27 and lookahead to 2027-28 and 2028-29

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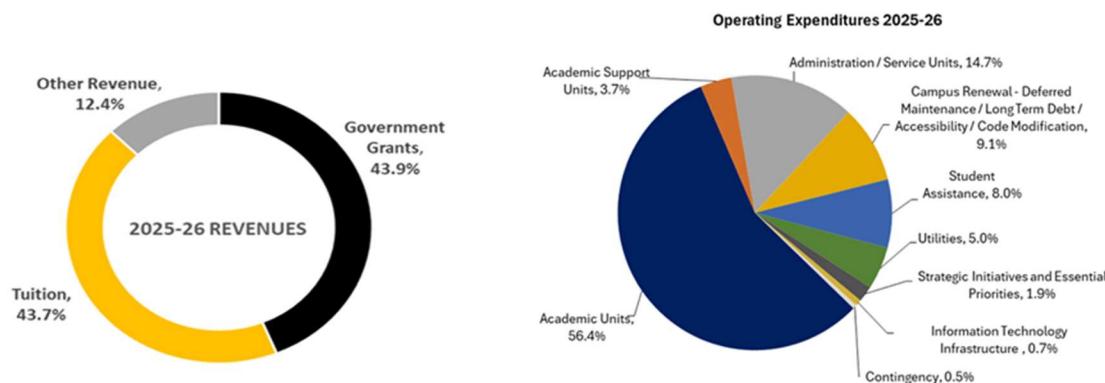
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Introduction

About the operating budget

The operating budget funds the day-to-day operations of the university. It is [one of six distinct funds the university manages](#), but by far the largest, accounting for the majority (70%) of the university's financial activity. Nearly 90% of the operating budget comes from just two sources: tuition fees (set by the university's Board of Governors subject to constraints put in place by the Province of Nova Scotia) and the provincial operating grant (set through our bilateral agreement with the Province). The remainder comes from smaller sources, most notably the university's endowment.

60.1% of operating costs are allocated directly to academic and academic support units. An additional 14.7% goes to administration and service units. These allocations allow Faculties and Units to deliver on priorities in support of the university's mission and to carry out their day-to-day work. The budget also includes allocations for student assistance, facilities renewal, technology infrastructure and other key university-wide priorities.



The university is only able to use operating funds to support expenses in the operating budget. The university's other funds (including capital, research, etc.) are restricted to their designated uses and not available to balance the operating budget.

About the Budget Advisory Committee

The Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) provides strategic, informed, and institution-wide guidance to the President in the development of Dalhousie University's Operating Budget. Grounded in the university's mission and long-term academic and financial planning, the BAC ensures that budgetary decisions reflect institutional priorities, promote financial sustainability, and support equitable resource allocation across academic and support units. Through inclusive consultation, data-driven analysis, and a commitment to transparency and stewardship, the BAC plays a critical role in shaping multi-year funding directions that advance the university's academic excellence, student experience, and service commitments. The BAC is chaired by the Provost and includes membership

from senior leadership, faculty, staff, and students. A full list of members can be found in Appendix E.

Consultation and engagement

The recommendations in this report have been informed by engagements this fall with Senate, Deans' Council, and Senior Leaders, while also reviewing and considering input collected through prior surveys and engagements with students, faculty, and staff. A summary of feedback to-date can be found in Appendix A.

Following release of this report, the BAC invites further feedback on our budget scenario and recommendations. Input can be submitted via email to bac@dal.ca. Feedback will be considered as the committee prepares a final operating budget plan to be submitted for approval by the Board of Governors.

We know many in our Dal community continue to have questions as the university works through our current financial realities. Some common answers can be found [on the Budget Consultation myDal site](#), which is updated regularly.

While the Board of Governors approves the annual operating budget each year, this report also contains a multi-year projection to provide broader context on how Dalhousie is addressing its budget scenario over the longer term.

Realities and assumptions

The following are key factors which inform our recommendations for the 2026-27 operating budget and projections for the years that follow.

Provincial funding and tuition rates

Two key pieces of Dalhousie's revenue are set by the bilateral agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia, signed in April 2025 and covering the budget years 2025-26 and 2026-27.

The first is the university's operating grant, which will increase by 2% in 2026-27. In total, the government provides \$240M, or 43%, of the university's operating funds. The operating grant is subject to holdbacks of \$37M which are not released to Dalhousie until key objectives are met (in health seat utilization, academic program review, housing construction and occupancy rate, and strategic alignment actions). Dalhousie is currently on track to meet all these requirements for 2025-26.

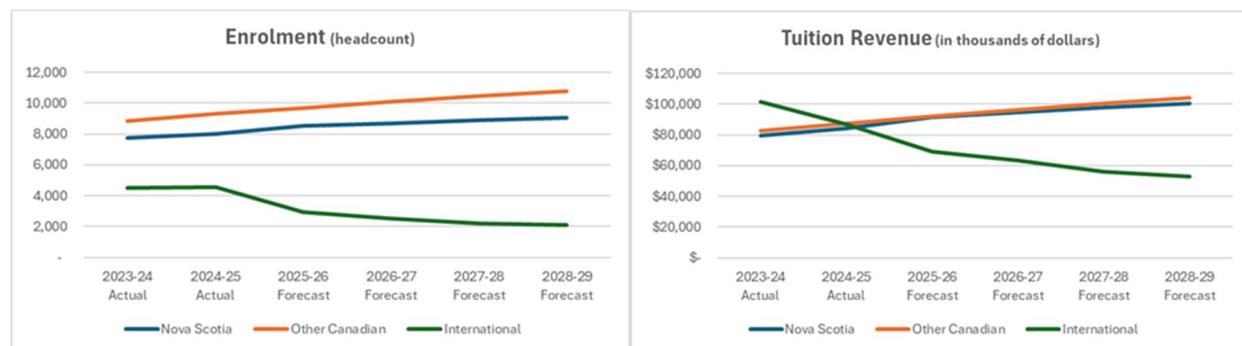
The bilateral agreement freezes Nova Scotia undergraduate tuition fees at 2024-25 rates. The university is allowed to raise tuition fees for out-of-province students, graduate and professional students, and international students. Dalhousie has generally increased international tuition each year, as the university's international fees are low in comparison to many of our peer institutions. The university has typically refrained from increasing out-of-province undergraduate tuition to avoid creating a further tuition differential, as Nova Scotian students benefit from the Nova Scotia University Student Bursary to reduce their overall tuition while out-of-province students do not.

Changes to domestic and international enrolment

Dalhousie saw a significant increase overall in new domestic students in fall 2025, welcoming more than 5,000 new students from across Canada — 600 more than in 2024, and increasing total domestic enrolment, year over year, by more than 900 students.

International enrolment continues to decrease, with an overall decline of nearly 750 international students this fall. This is the result of international student retention, a significantly larger class of international students graduating from the university, and a smaller incoming class of international students.

Because international students pay roughly 2.5 times more in tuition fees than domestic students, these enrolment shifts significantly affect our tuition revenue as outlined below. These charts show trend lines for both enrolment and tuition revenue, for Nova Scotian, other Canadian, and international students. They include forecasts for 2026-27 through 2028-29.



The draft operating budget plan is based on an enrolment model that includes continued growth in domestic enrolment alongside continued decline in international enrolment. Detailed projection charts can be found in Appendix B.

Impact of increased compensation costs

In 2025, the Dalhousie Board of Governors concluded collective bargaining with the Dalhousie Faculty Association, NSGEU Local 77, and CUPE Local 3912. These agreements define

compensation levels for those employee groups for the next three years. They also establish baselines that inform negotiations with remaining employee groups, as well as the range of increases offered to non-union employees.

The compensation increases agreed to in collective bargaining were beyond what was forecast in last year's three-year budget outlook. In 2025-26, these additional increases were partially offset by salary savings resulting from the DFA labour disruption. In 2026-27 and 2027-28, the university will need to incorporate the full impact of these increases into our financial planning.

Based on projections, with assumptions made for remaining employee agreements, Dalhousie is looking at an additional \$4.7M in overall compensation costs for 2026-27 and \$6.0M for 2027-28 above prior forecasts. In 2026-27, the total compensation increases across all Faculties and Units across the university is estimated at \$29.1M. This is roughly the equivalent of a 6.3% cut for every Faculty and Unit — from senior administration through to academic and support units — that they will each absorb through increased revenue (where possible) or by reducing expenditures. For comparison, last year the budget impact from compensation increases was only 4%.

Increased compensation requirements also affect the university pension plan; preliminary estimates show a deficit of \$40M in the plan resulting from increased compensation commitments. A final valuation this spring will determine the additional level of funds Dalhousie will be required to contribute to resolve the deficit. Past budget planning practice has been to set aside a small amount of operating funding in a Pension Stabilization Fund to limit operating impacts should pension deficits occur (though the university has not contributed any funds in the past two years due to our current financial challenges). At the moment, we believe this fund should contain sufficient resources to cover required annual payments to resolve the pension deficit without putting additional strain on the operating budget.

Other cost pressures and priorities

Student assistance: Dalhousie allocated more than \$15M in operating funds to scholarships and bursaries in 2025-26, in addition to \$11.2M provided through the NS scholarship and bursary program and \$10.2M from endowment funds. (In total, across all funds and sources, Dalhousie spends nearly \$100M on student financial assistance each year.) Student financial assistance consistently ranks as a top priority in feedback from our Dal community, reflecting affordability concerns.

Facilities renewal: Dalhousie operates over 160 buildings and utility distribution facilities across four campuses, with a replacement cost estimated at \$2.5 billion. The state of university facilities has been a regular focus of discussion and comments from students, faculty, and staff. Historical estimates indicate over half a billion dollars in deferred maintenance across Dalhousie's buildings and underground electrical and heating tunnels. Later this year, Dalhousie will receive an updated facilities condition assessment, providing a more current valuation of our deferred maintenance needs. As Dalhousie does not have a budget allocation for capital investment, the Facilities Renewal

budget plays a critical role in ensuring our facilities continue to support teaching, learning, and research. While Dalhousie has historically aimed to increase this budget to align with the replacement value of our campuses, it is also a budget line that has often been constrained or reduced during periods of financial pressure. Last year, the Facilities Renewal budget only increased by \$91,000, which is the amount raised by a 2% increase in the student fee for Facilities Renewal.

Information technology infrastructure: As the university supports its Digital Strategy and continues to build its digital network infrastructure, we must not only maintain and modernize existing systems but also keep pace with rapidly expanding technology needs across research, teaching, learning, and administrative operations. At the same time, the digital cybersecurity threat landscape continues to intensify, and the university is a target for ransomware, data theft, and other cybersecurity threats. The risks of not increasing investment in IT infrastructure are significant. Aging systems and insufficient capacity can impede research competitiveness, diminish the student experience, and increase operational vulnerabilities. Underinvestment in cybersecurity exposes the university to reputational, financial, and compliance risks.

Library acquisitions: Investment in the Libraries' acquisitions budget ensures access to current, relevant, and curriculum-critical resources that underpin Dalhousie's research and teaching mission. Library resource costs now average annual increases of 4–5%. Investment in this budget line allows the Libraries to maintain critical subscription commitments with only modest cuts. It also ensures funds to respond to emerging academic needs and enhance the student learning experience by developing collections that align with evolving format preferences and expectations.

Draft operating budget plan for 2026-27 and future-year forecast

The table below reflects assumptions and recommendations associated with funding sources and expenditures that support the university's day-to-day operations, including teaching, research, and service to the community. It includes:

- A 2% increase in provincial operating grant funding as outlined in the current bilateral agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia.
- No increase to domestic undergraduate tuition fees (for both Nova Scotian and out-of-province students).
- Increase of 2% for domestic graduate and professional program tuition fees.
- A 6% increase to the guaranteed tuition price for new international students starting in programs with a tuition guarantee, with other international tuition fees increasing by an average of 6.9%.
- Every part of the university will continue to absorb the annual increase in compensation costs for faculty and staff. For 2026-27, this represents roughly a reduction of 6.3% that will need to be addressed in all Faculties and Units through spending reductions or new revenue.

- A \$300K increase to student assistance funding to support PhD students. This funding recognizes the continued priority and importance of student financial aid at a time when affordability is a concern.
- An investment of \$8.1M for strategic initiatives, prioritizing critical work during this time of change. This investment will be reduced by \$2.0M in 2026-27 on a one-time basis to support working a balanced budget for 2028-29.
- Contingency funds of \$2.6 million, which is approximately 0.5% of operating revenues.
- A 3% increase to funding for facilities renewal, IT infrastructure and library acquisitions to reflect rising inflationary costs and vital strategic needs in these areas.

While measures have been taken to reduce expenditures, Dalhousie is not in a position to submit a balanced budget for 2026-27. The projected deficit for 2026-27 is \$13.1M. Over the next two years we will continue to leverage multiple initiatives focused on enrolment growth, expansion of other revenue sources, and significant cost reductions to achieve a balanced budget by 2028-29. This forecast would result in an accumulated shortfall of \$37.4M that will need to be addressed following the return to balance.

Operating Budget Model 2026-27, 2027-28, 2028-29

Dalhousie University Operating Budget Revenue and Expenditure Model

	2025-26 Adjusted Budget Restated (Note 1)	2025-26 Forecast Actual	Variance	2026-27 Recommendations and Estimates	2026-27 Recommended Budget For Consultation	2027-28 Recommended Budget For Consultation	2028-29 Recommended Budget For Consultation
REVENUES - INCREASE (DECREASE)							
1. Government Funding	236,223	236,223	-	4,102	240,325	244,525	248,925
2. Gross Tuition Revenue	254,573	249,413	(5,160)	(288)	254,285	253,841	257,426
Gross Up for Waivers	2,745	2,887	142	(2,745)	-	-	-
Total Gross Tuition Revenue	257,318	252,300	(5,018)	(3,033)	254,285	253,841	257,426
3. Investment Income							
a) Endowment Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
b) Operating Interest Income	7,600	7,600	-	-	7,600	7,600	7,600
Total Investment Income	7,600	7,600	-	-	7,600	7,600	7,600
4. Facilities Renewal Student Fee	4,633	4,633	-	100	4,733	4,800	4,900
5. Federal Research Support Fund Grant	9,064	9,064	-	-	9,064	9,064	9,064
TOTAL REVENUES - INCREASE (DECREASE)	514,838	509,820	(5,018)	1,169	516,007	519,830	527,915
EXPENDITURES - INCREASE (DECREASE)							
6. Cost of Student Acquisition							
a) Tuition Waivers	2,745	2,887	142	108	2,853	2,947	3,068
b) Agent Fees	1,000	500	(500)	(500)	500	500	500
Total Cost of Student Acquisition	3,745	3,387	(358)	(392)	3,353	3,447	3,568
7. Faculty and Unit Budget Allocations							
a) Salary, Pension and Benefits	463,683	463,278	(405)	0	463,683	463,683	463,683
Cola & Merit Adjustments	-	-	-	29,100	29,100	22,800	17,500
Savings Required at Unit Level to Balance Budgets				(29,100)	(29,100)	(22,800)	(17,500)
b) Non-Salary	214,937	214,937	-	0	214,937	214,937	214,937
2025-26 In-Year Budget Cut (flow through)	-	(2,856)	(2,856)	(2,856)	(2,856)	(2,856)	(2,856)
c) Library Acquisitions	8,705	8,705	-	261	8,966	9,235	9,512
d) Information Technology Infrastructure	4,107	4,107	-	100	4,207	4,333	4,463
e) Faculty/Unit Revenue	(294,500)	(294,500)	-	-	(294,500)	(294,500)	(294,500)
f) Faculty Expenditures- Supported by Tuition Revenue Transfers	18,025	15,255	(2,770)	7,488	25,513	25,137	24,936
Faculty and Unit Budget Allocations Subtotal	414,957	408,926	(6,031)	4,993	419,950	419,969	420,175
g) Budget Unit Adjustments							
i) ERBA adjustment (estimate)	-	-	-	2,610	2,610	2,610	2,610
ii) Masters Revenue Model Change				(9,747)	(9,747)	(9,747)	(9,747)
iii) Necessary Cost Reductions (Cuts & Savings Initiatives)	(1,000)	(1,000)	-	(2,500)	(3,500)	(6,000)	(6,000)
iv) Estimated Incremental Pension Payments	-	-	-	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
v) Support for Research - Provincial Funding	250	250	-	-	250	250	250
Total Faculty and Unit Budget Allocations	414,207	408,176	(6,031)	(644)	413,563	411,082	411,288
8. Student Financial Assistance and Employment:							
a) Operating Budget	15,245	16,245	1,000	300	15,545	16,045	16,045
b) Endowments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
c) Nova Scotia Scholarship and Bursary Programs	11,190	11,190	-	-	11,190	11,190	11,190
Total Student Assistance	26,435	27,435	1,000	300	26,735	27,235	27,235
9. Energy, Water, Taxes and Insurance	28,657	28,157	(500)	(1,000)	27,657	28,457	29,357
10. Facilities Renewal	44,586	44,586	-	1,400	45,986	47,400	48,800
One Time Reduction in Facilities Renewal	-	-	-	-	-	(5,000)	(5,000)
11. Campus Renewal - Long term debt/rent	6,058	6,058	-	-	6,058	6,058	6,058
12. Accessibility and Code Modifications	1,000	1,000	-	-	1,000	1,000	1,000
13. Strategic Initiatives and Essential Priorities	8,190	4,190	(4,000)	-	8,190	8,190	8,190
One Time Reduction in Strategic Initiatives and Essential Priorities	-	-	-	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
14. Contingency	2,564	564	(2,000)	-	2,564	2,564	2,564
15. Capital Investment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES - INCREASE (DECREASE)	535,442	523,553	(11,889)	(2,336)	533,106	528,433	531,060
SHORTFALL	(20,604)	(13,733)	6,871	3,505	(17,099)	(8,603)	(3,145)
Transfer from Pension Stabilization Fund				4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
SHORTFALL AFTER TRANSFERS				7,505	(13,099)	(4,603)	855
2024-25 Shortfall			(6,802)				
Cumulative Shortfall	(27,406)	(20,535)			(33,634)	(38,237)	(37,382)

Notes:

1. The 2025-26 adjusted budgets were restated to gross up tuition to include waivers historically reflect as a contra to tuition revenue. Faculty salary and non-salary expenditures were also grossed up by external and internal cost recoveries and by Faculty and Unit Revenues. Further information is available in Appendix F.

Operating Budget Model Notes

These notes have been prepared to provide further background on the nature of the revenues and expenditures included in the model and any estimates or assumptions for the 2026-27 budget and modelled 2027-28 and 2028-29 budgets. Note this Budget Model does not include Endowments which will be incorporated into the final budget and report.

REVENUES

Government Funding (Line 1): This budget line includes grants from the Province of Nova Scotia. The 2026-27 budget includes a 2% increase in the operating grant as outlined in the Bilateral Agreement. The forecast reflects an assumption of a 2% for 2027-28 and 2028-29 which will be determined during the negotiations for the next Bilateral Agreement.

	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Budget
Government Funding		
Operating Grant	207,685	211,837
Support for Research	250	250
Scholarship and Bursary Program Grants	11,190	11,190
Program Specific Grants	16,098	16,048
Facilities / Space Grants	1,000	1,000
Total Government Funding	236,223	240,325

In addition to the Operating Grant, this line also includes:

- Scholarship and Bursary Program Grants include provincial grants which provide direct bursary and scholarship support to students. For further details, see the scholarship section below. These revenues directly offset scholarship and bursary expenditures (for further information see Student Financial Assistance and Employment line 7).
- Program Specific Grants include other targeted funding and direct program funding for enrolment expansions (Medicine and Health).
- \$1.0 million grant that supports space costs.

There is no expected change in funding for these programs in 2026-27 through to 2028-29.

Tuition Revenues (Line 2): This line includes student tuition revenues that support the operating budget. Changes in tuition revenues are generated by enrolment changes and fee rate changes:

Enrolment: The 2026-27 enrolment budget and figures reflect an overall enrolment increase of 219 students from 2025-26 enrolment forecast as outlined in the table below. This includes 6,642 New-to-Dal students, an increase of 63 over 2025-26.

Enrolment (headcount)	2025-26 Forecast	2026-27 Forecast	Change
Undergraduate Domestic	15,349	15,817	468
International	1,359	1,002	(357)
International Cohort	462	525	63
	<u>17,170</u>	<u>17,344</u>	<u>174</u>
Masters			
Domestic	2,294	2,432	138
International	757	604	(153)
	<u>3,051</u>	<u>3,036</u>	<u>(15)</u>
PhD	total	883	943
		<u>883</u>	<u>943</u>
			60
	Grand Total	21,104	21,323
			219

The forecast for 2027-28 and 2028-29 reflect overall enrolment increases of 237 (400 New-to-Dal) and 348 (400 New-to-Dal) respectively. These enrolment increases include an increase of 400 New-to-Dal students over the 2026-27 baseline value in 2027-28 that is sustained in 2028-29.

Tuition Fee Increases: The budget plan for 2026-27 assumes annual increases in tuition fees as follows:

- No tuition fee increases on domestic undergraduate tuition fees.
- An increase of 2% (\$1 million) on domestic graduate and professional programs.
- An increase of 6% for International Student Cohort Tuition for students entering Fall 2026 (\$0.2 million).
- There will be no tuition fee increase for returning international students who are part of the 2023-24, 2024-25 or 2025-26 tuition guarantee pricing model. The

- tuition guarantee model ensures a fixed tuition price
- An increase of 6.9% on average (\$1.8 million) for all international undergraduate and non-thesis master's students.

Investment Income (Line 3):

(a) Endowment Revenue: Endowment revenues and corresponding expenditures are not included for the purposes of the modelled budget and will be added into the final report.

(b) Operating Interest & Investment Income: The University invests short-term excess cash flows not immediately required for operations under the guidelines outlined in the Expendable Funds Investment Policy. A portion of investment income earned is used to support the University's operating budget. Based on current projected cashflows and current interest rates there is no change in Operating interest income projected for 2026-27. There is no change modelled for 2027-28 and 2028-29.

Facilities Renewal Student Fee (Line 4): The University collects a student fee that supports Facilities Renewal expenditures (line 9). The fee is recommended to increase by 2% to support increased facilities renewal expenditures.

Federal Research Support Fund Grant (Line 5): This line includes the grant received from the Federal Government to support the indirect costs of research. It is estimated that the 2025-26 operating budget included \$62.1 million in costs such as lighting, heating and maintenance for research space, salaries for staff that provide technical or administrative research support, cost of regulatory requirements such as training costs for workplace health and safety, and the costs associated with intellectual property. Further information on the program and detail on the types of expenditures can be found on the Research and Innovation website.

Funding for the program in 2026-27 has not been confirmed but is expected to be maintained at the 2025-26 level.

EXPENDITURES

Cost of Student Acquisition (Line 6):

(a) Tuition Waivers: This budget line reflects tuition that is waived by Dalhousie and includes Dependent Care Waivers, International Exchange Waivers, Waivers for Indigenous Studies, Masters to PhD Waivers, Waivers for students that are part of articulation agreements, Senior Waivers and other miscellaneous waivers.

(b) Agent Fees: This budget line includes the cost of agents used to recruit international students. The budget line has decreased from \$1.0M to \$0.5M to reflect the decrease in international enrolments.

Faculty and Unit Budget Allocations (Line 7):

This section includes the details of the budget allocations to Faculties and Units.

This budget line is shown net of direct salary and benefit and other recoveries. Faculty and unit allocations are also supported by endowment allocations which will be included in the final budget report.

Further details related to the breakdown of Faculty and Unit allocations are as follows:

(a) Compensation (Salary Pension, and Benefits): Compensation is the most significant component of Dalhousie's expenditures. Each Faculty and Unit is expected to fund compensation increases within their existing budgets. For 2026-27, estimates of the increase of salaries is \$29.1M which represents an implicit cut of approximately 6.3%.

(b) Non-Salary Expenditures: This line includes University expenditures for all costs that are not related to compensation within Faculty and Unit budgets. Costs

include program supplies, materials, and contracted services. There is no change to this line for 2026-27, and 2027-28 and 2028-29. In 2025-26, an in-year budget cut was implemented, reducing the in-year deficit by \$2.9M.

(c) Library Acquisitions: This line includes the costs of library acquisitions including electronic media. The budget model assumes an increase of 3% 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29.

(d) Network and Technology Infrastructure: Network and technology infrastructure includes network equipment, and wireless networks and capacity. This line includes an inflationary increase of 3% for 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29.

(e) Faculty/Unit Revenue: This line includes other revenue sources that are managed by Faculties and Units. In Faculties, examples include revenue from auxiliary fees, full cost recovery programs, and extended learning and farm revenue in Truro. Other revenues included in this category are the student services fee, application fees, Kings transfer for teaching services, and revenue from services provided to external parties. No increases have been modelled for 2026-27 through to 2028-29.

(f) Faculty Expenditures Supported by Tuition Revenue Transfers: This line includes premium fee program revenue and Masters program revenue that is allocated to Faculties.

(g) Budget Unit Adjustments:

(i) Enrolment Based Budget Adjustment (ERBA) (estimate): ERBA is the mechanism by which Dalhousie links program enrolments and class registrations to the annual budget allocations of the Faculties. Annually, there is an adjustment to Faculty budgets based on year-over-year changes in enrolments. The adjustment approximates 60% of the change in

tuition revenue generated by the change in enrolments. The overall change across all Faculties has been estimated to be \$1.560 million for 2026-27. Final calculations will be completed after March 1, 2026, once enrolment statistics are finalized. Also included is an enrolment related adjustment for the PharmD program which is currently excluded from ERBA while enrolments reach steady state of \$1.05 million. This is the final year for the Pharm D adjustment, after which Pharm D enrolment changes will be reflected as part of ERBA.

(ii) Masters Revenue Model Change: A change to the allocation of Masters Tuition Revenue will be implemented effective April 1, 2026. This is the estimate of the reduction in budget allocations to impacted Faculties which will be offset by increased tuition revenue allocated to Faculties.

(iii) Necessary Cost Reductions (Cuts & Savings Initiatives): The 2026-27 budget includes cost reductions and savings requirements for the next 3 years as outlined in the chart below:

	Cost Reductions and Savings		
	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Budget Reduction	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Provision for Compensation Costs	~6.3%	~4.9%	~3.8%
Savings Initiatives	\$3.5M	\$6.0M	\$6.0M

(iv) Estimated Incremental Pension Payments: The pension plan undergoes a valuation every three years, with the next valuation (for the pension year ending June 30, 2025) scheduled to be completed in early 2026. Earlier this year, the Pension Advisory Committee was briefed that preliminary estimates show a deficit in the pension plan resulting from increased compensation commitments

(v) Support for Research – Provincial Funding: This budget line reflected

increased funding from the Province to specifically support research initiatives at Dalhousie.

Student Financial Assistance and Employment

(Line 8): The budget plan for 2026-27 includes student assistance totaling \$26.7 million (not including endowment supported student assistance). Student Assistance supported by the operating budget is increasing by \$0.3 million for PhD scholarships in 2026-27 and by an additional \$0.5 million in 2027-28.

Grants from the Province also provide students with \$11.2 million in direct support. A total of \$8.2 million is provided to support the Nova Scotia Bursary Program which provides full-time Nova Scotia Students with an automatic bursary of \$1,283 applied against tuition. The Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarship program provides \$3.0 million in student support. The model assumes the programs will continue at the same level of support in 2026-27.

Energy, Water, Taxes, and Insurance (Line 9): This line reflects an overall decrease of \$1M primarily driven by a decrease in pricing in natural gas related to the carbon tax, offset by pricing increases in electricity, water and insurance. An inflationary increase of 3% has been modelled for 2027-28 and 2028-29.

Facilities Renewal (Line 10): The 2026-27 budget provides for \$46.0 million in funding to support the annual maintenance of facilities. The funds are used on an annual basis for building envelopes such as exterior facade and brickwork, roof and window replacements; building systems such as heating, ventilation, electrical and mechanical upgrades; underground tunnels for electrical and heating distribution. For 2026-27 this line includes an inflationary increase of 3% and an increase of \$100,000 related to the 2% increase in the student fee for Facilities Renewal. For 2027-28 and 2028-29, the Facilities Renewal line has been modelled with an increase of 3%. To relieve

pressure on the bottom-line deficit and achieve a balanced budget by 2028-29, a one-time reduction \$5.0M has been modelled annually for 2027-28 and 2028-29.

Campus Renewal – Long term (Line 11): This line includes the costs of debt service and rental requirements for University space. This line includes no inflationary increase for 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29.

Accessibility and Code Modifications (Line 12):

This line includes the costs to implement the physical infrastructure component of the Accessibility Act and to fund investments required related to fire and safety code modifications to University buildings. There is no inflationary increase in 2026-27 or for the three-year model.

Strategic Initiatives & Essential Priorities

(Line 13): No additional funds have been allocated to Strategic Initiatives & Essential Priorities. To relieve pressure on the bottom-line deficit and achieve a balanced budget by 2028-29, a one-time reduction of \$2.0M has been modelled annually for 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29. Base commitments reducing this line are outlined in the table below.

Strategic Initiatives & Essential Priorities Commitments (in thousands of dollars)	2026-27 Base Commitments	2027-28 Base Commitments	2028-29 Base Commitments
Opening Balance	8,190	7,459	6,959
Impact Projects Approved - 2024-25 Budget	-	-	-
Impact Projects Approved - 2025-26 Budget	300	500	-
Impact Projects Approved - 2026-27 Budget	431	-	-
	731	500	-
Closing Balance	7,459	6,959	6,959

Contingency (Line 14): This line is the annual allocation for contingency items. The budget is set at 0.5% of operating revenues.

Capital Investment (Line 15): No budget has been allocated to this line within this three-year model.

Appendix A – Consultation

As part of the consultation process, the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) has completed consultations with Senate, Deans Council, Senior Leaders and the campus community (faculty and staff). Below is a key summary of the feedback received to date from this consultation on how to address Dalhousie's significant financial pressures and will continue to update the consultation feedback as it is received:

Student Enrolment and Retention

- Improve timing of acceptances and program admissions.
- Engage student ambassadors and alumni to in the recruitment of students.
- Reduce costs for students (textbooks, materials) and increase affordable accommodations for students.
- Increase resources for our admissions platform to deliver a responsive, high-quality student experience.

Financial Sustainability

- Explore opportunities to increase revenues through grants and federal funding.
- Offer early retirement incentives to reduce staffing costs.
- Investigate licensing and upscaling opportunities.
- Improve reputation through external communications, update the website, and boost fundraising to increase revenue.

Revenue Generation

- Host conferences to generate income and enhance Dalhousie's appeal.
- Leverage alumni support for housing and cost-of-living reductions.

Building and Infrastructure

- Ensure portion of the budget is protected to support deferred maintenance.
- Support investment in research and programs where there are areas of opportunity for growth (i.e. Vet School, Simulation Centre, etc..).

Student Financial Pressures and Needs

The summary below outlines student feedback collected over the year to help guide our planning process.

Overview

Throughout the year, we have continued to gather student feedback through various methods to identify priorities across a wide range of projects and to actively incorporate this feedback into both short- and long-term budget planning. In addition to the annual Student Transition Survey, we have also initiated a Student Journey Mapping process. This initiative aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the student experience, including identifying key financial pressure

points throughout the academic lifecycle, from pre-arrival to graduation, with findings aligned with Dalhousie's Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) priorities and retention strategy. While this process is ongoing, some themes related to institutional priorities and focus have emerged.

As part of Dalhousie's broader student success and retention strategy, the university has expanded its analysis of financial support, demonstrating that renewable entrance scholarships are a strong indicator of student persistence, providing both financial stability and a sense of institutional commitment. Renewable scholarships up to \$5,000 increase retention by 10% on average and as much as 38% in some faculties. These scholarships offer not only financial stability but also foster a sense of belonging and institutional commitment, which are vital during transitional phases. Retention modelling also confirms that residence-living and full course loads are key predictors of persistence. These insights reinforce the importance of financial aid, housing, and academic support in budget planning. Maintaining, refining, and increasing these awards, even during financial constraints, is an evidence-based approach aligned with Dalhousie's priorities for student success and retention.

The following provides an analysis of student financial pressures and needs based on various student surveys and consultations conducted in the 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years. It highlights key issues related to housing, food security, employment, and financial support among students.

Tuition Increases and Financial Strain

- In the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS), about a third of graduate and professional students expected to graduate with debt ranging from \$10,000 to \$39,999, while only 46% anticipated graduating debt-free, compared to 72% among U15 peers.
- Financial pressures and work commitments were identified as major academic barriers in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) by 35% of first-year students and 37% of seniors, slightly above the U15 average. International students were especially affected, with 74% stating that work income was vital to support their studies and living costs. Additionally, 40% of first-year students worked during their first year.
- The 2025 Student Transition Survey (STS) showed that 40% of students often or constantly struggled to cover basic expenses, up from 38% in 2024.
- Food insecurity remains an urgent issue, with 17% of Dalhousie students reporting very low food security, a level similar to U15.

Financial Assistance for Students

- According to the 2023 International Student Survey, International students reported relying heavily on family support (70%), personal savings (46%), and off-campus work income (35%) to fund their education.

- These figures are comparable to U15 benchmarks, where family assistance accounts for 71%, personal savings for 51%, and off-campus work income for 41%.

Quality of Education and Experience

- Cost considerations play a significant role in students' choice of institution.
- According to the Canadian University Consortium Survey (CUSC), 74% of international students cited tuition and fees as key factors when choosing a university, a figure closely aligned with the 78% reported among U15 students.

Engagement and Communication

- During the 2024 BAC survey, students voiced dissatisfaction with the transparency and clarity of communication regarding how tuition revenue is allocated and how budget priorities are set.
- Students felt uninformed and called for clearer explanations, more accessible communication channels, and opportunities to give feedback on budget decisions.
- Improving awareness of academic resources was also highlighted as a priority.

Study Space and Facilities

- In the 2023 NSSE, students identified several areas for improvement, including higher-quality, more accessible student spaces, expanded academic and personal support services, and greater opportunities for research collaboration with faculty.

Mental Health and Wellness

- Mental health issues continue to emerge as a critical concern, with financial and academic pressures cited as the main contributors.
- In focus group sessions, students report long wait times and limited access to health services.
- Recommendations included expanding resources, cutting wait times, and offering comprehensive support systems across all campuses.

Transparency and Accountability

- A common theme in the 2024 BAC survey and student consultations this past year is students' frustration with the perceived lack of transparency in financial decision-making and budget allocation.
- Concerns focused on administrative spending, including high salaries and the need for detailed fund usage breakdowns.
- Feedback emphasized the importance of greater accountability and of aligning spending priorities with student needs, particularly amid rising tuition costs.

Housing Availability and Affordability

- Housing affordability and availability posed major challenges.

- On the STS, one-third of students reported that high costs influenced their decision to live off campus. Issues included the expense (95), limited availability (88%), proximity to campus (79%), and rising food costs (71%).
- When conducting focus groups for the housing project, participants emphasized the importance of offering a variety of affordable options and basic rooms to promote inclusivity and accessibility in on-campus housing.

Conclusion

Student financial pressures remain a significant and growing concern. Students often emphasize the need for more transparent, timely communication regarding financial support and procedures. Consistent messaging and proactive engagement can help lessen uncertainty and improve the overall student experience. These findings underscore the importance of continuous investment in financial aid, strategic scholarship programs, student employment, and enhanced communication to alleviate financial pressures and promote student success throughout their academic journey.

Appendix B – Enrolment Information

Note that 2025-26 enrolment numbers below are a forecast based on projected enrolment through the entirety of the academic year, calculated to support budget planning. This is slightly different than the university's official reported enrolment for the year, which is documented annually as of December 1.

Enrolment (Headcounts)									
Enrolment	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Budget	2025-26 Forecast	2025-26 Variance	2026-27 Forecast	Variance to 2025-26 Forecast	2027-28 Forecast	2028-29 Forecast
Undergrad									
Nova Scotia	6,602	6,860	6,734	7,223	489	7,357	134	7,562	7,743
Other Canadian	7,300	7,688	7,703	8,126	423	8,460	334	8,823	9,133
International	2,629	1,853	1,397	1,359	(38)	1,002	(357)	758	678
International Cohort	292	429	539	462	(77)	525	63	525	522
	16,823	16,830	16,373	17,170	797	17,344	174	17,668	18,076
Masters									
Nova Scotia	906	922	871	1,023	152	1,081	58	1,066	1,031
Other Canadian	1,288	1,280	1,205	1,271	66	1,351	80	1,345	1,334
International	1,212	1,057	1,098	757	(341)	604	(153)	498	449
	3,406	3,259	3,174	3,051	(123)	3,036	(15)	2,909	2,814
PhD									
Nova Scotia	251	240	220	264	44	268	4	272	279
Other Canadian	260	255	246	260	14	276	16	287	294
International	348	337	348	359	11	399	40	424	445
	859	832	814	883	69	943	60	983	1,018
Total	21,088	20,921	20,361	21,104	743	21,323	219	21,560	21,908
Total by Region									
Nova Scotia	7,759	8,022	7,825	8,510	685	8,706	196	8,900	9,053
Other Canadian	8,848	9,223	9,154	9,657	503	10,087	430	10,455	10,761
International	4,481	3,676	3,382	2,937	(445)	2,530	(407)	2,205	2,094
	21,088	20,921	20,361	21,104	743	21,323	219	21,560	21,908

Appendix C – Tuition Revenue Forecast

The table below reflects tuition revenue by fiscal year. Tuition revenue forecast is calculated based on projected enrolment (as detailed in Appendix B).

Tuition Revenue (in thousands of dollars)									
Tuition Revenue (in thousands of dollars)	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Adjusted Budget	2025-26 Forecast	2025-26 Variance to adjusted budget	2026-27 Forecast	Variance to 2025-26 Forecast	2027-28 Forecast	2028-29 Forecast
Undergrad									
Nova Scotia	70,000	74,300	73,100	79,900	6,800	82,200	2,300	85,100	87,700
Other Canadian	70,400	75,500	78,700	79,600	900	83,100	3,500	87,000	90,500
International	70,300	52,100	40,100	36,500	(3,600)	27,800	(8,700)	21,300	19,100
International Cohort	7,600	13,500	19,100	16,200	(2,900)	20,600	4,400	20,600	20,300
	218,300	215,400	211,000	212,200	1,200	213,700	1,500	214,000	217,600
Masters									
Nova Scotia	7,900	8,500	9,100	9,900	800	10,700	800	10,700	10,700
Other Canadian	10,500	10,500	10,600	10,600	-	11,500	900	11,800	11,900
International	21,700	19,200	21,700	13,700	(8,000)	12,000	(1,700)	11,000	10,300
	40,100	38,200	41,400	34,200	(7,200)	34,200	-	33,500	32,900
PhD									
Nova Scotia	1,500	1,600	1,400	1,800	400	1,900	100	2,000	2,000
Other Canadian	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,600	100	1,700	100	1,800	1,900
International	2,100	2,200	2,100	2,500	400	2,700	200	2,900	3,100
	5,100	5,300	5,000	5,900	900	6,300	400	6,700	7,000
Total	263,500	258,900	257,400	252,300	(5,100)	254,200	1,900	254,200	257,500
Total by Region									
Nova Scotia	79,400	84,400	83,600	91,600	8,000	94,800	3,200	97,800	100,400
Other Canadian	82,400	87,500	90,800	91,800	1,000	96,300	4,500	100,600	104,300
International	101,700	87,000	83,000	68,900	(14,100)	63,100	(5,800)	55,800	52,800
	263,500	258,900	257,400	252,300	(5,100)	254,200	1,900	254,200	257,500

Appendix D – Fund Accounting

Operating Fund

The Operating Fund encompasses the day-to-day revenue and expenditures required to carry out the Academic mission and operate the University. Government grants, tuition revenue, and other general revenues support operating expenditures. Budget allocations to Faculties and Units are based on Budget Advisory Committee recommendations. The Operating Budget report includes the activities of the budget for Operating, Ancillary and Endowment Fund.

Ancillary Fund

Ancillary units provide important services to the University community and are segregated from the core functions of teaching and research. Ancillary operations include Housing & Campus Connections (including Residence Life), Food Services, the Bookstore, the Dalhousie Arts Centre, Dalplex, Printing Services and Parking Services.

Endowment Fund

The University has more than 1,600 endowments that supplement University operations. Endowments support student bursaries and scholarships, research, library materials and services, and academic chairs and salaries. The funds must be spent according to the terms of the individual endowments established by the donors.

Capital Fund

The Capital Fund accounts for funds received and expended on property, plant, and equipment. Revenues and transfers to the Capital Fund support capital assets, and payments on long-term debt. Capital reserves are funds set aside by the University to support future costs of large-scale capital upgrades or replacements and are included in the Capital Fund.

Research Funds

Research Fund expenditures are supported by revenues that are restricted for the purposes designated by the funders and sponsors. These funds cannot be used to support operations. Researchers managed approximately 3,500 segregated research grants and contract accounts in 2024-25.

Special Purpose Funds

Special Purpose Fund expenditures are supported by revenues that are restricted for the purposes established by contributors. In 2024-25, there were approximately 1,200 special purpose accounts used for a variety of purposes including annual giving, conferences, service and lab accounts, and joint projects with contributions from external parties.

Appendix E – Budget Advisory Committee Members

The President established the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) in 1992 to advise on budgetary matters. The BAC members do not represent particular interests but are chosen for their knowledge and expertise. The Committee employs an open and consultative approach to budget discussions at the University.

The current membership of the Committee includes:

Wanda Costen (Chair), Provost and Vice-President, Academic
Cathie O'Toole, Vice-President, Finance and Administration
Christopher Hartt, Professor, Faculty of Agriculture
Michael Fournier, Associate Professor, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Charles MacDonald, Dean of Science
Rick Ezekiel, Vice-Provost, Student Affairs
Jody Couch, Chief Information Officer and Assistant Vice-President ITS
Patricia Porto de Barros Ayaz, Student Member
Amelie McLean, Student Member

The Committee's resource members are Cheryl Earle, Chief Financial Officer & Assistant Vice-President Finance – Sonia Beattie, Assistant Vice-President Planning and Institutional Effectiveness and Chief Data and Analytics Officer – Mary-Ann Rowlston, Senior Director, Budgets & Financial Analysis – Jennifer Murray, Chief of Staff and Executive Director, Provost Office – Joanna Shipley, Manager, Budgets & Financial Analysis – Ryan McNutt, Director, Integrated Communication and Publications.

Appendix F – Dalhousie Budgeting Practices

Historically, Dalhousie has budgeted a net budget, using a practice whereby Faculty revenues and recoveries are netted against related expenditures so that they balance the net operating budget target. The 2025-26 budget has been restated to reflect a gross budget, allowing for a more transparent representation of university finances. Individual components that have been restated include tuition, tuition waivers, internal cost recoveries, revenues, external cost recoveries, salaries and non-salary expenditures.

The adjustment from a net budget to a gross budget is reflected below:

Budget Component	2025-26		2025-26
	Approved	Adjustments	
	Budget (Net)		Budget (Gross)
Salary	391,929	71,148	463,077
Non-Salary	51,506	163,431	214,937
Internal Cost Recoveries		(105,177)	(105,177)
External Revenue / Recoveries	(59,921)	(129,402)	(189,323)
Library Acquisitions	8,705	-	8,705
IT Infrastructure	4,107	-	4,107
	396,326	-	396,326