

CANADIAN MEDICAL FACULTIES - THROUGH THE YEARS
DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
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The Faculty of Medicine of Dalhousie University was established in 1868, fifty years after the founding of the University itself. This was the fifth Canadian Medical School, having been preceded by McGill, Queen's, Toronto, and Laval.

In 1818 the Right Honourable George Ramsay, ninth Earl of Dalhousie, and Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, obtained from the Prince Regent, approval to establish a college in Halifax. He wished it to be an institution of higher learning, "founded upon the principles of religious toleration", whose doors would be open to worthy students regardless of creed and situated in "the Capital of the Province - the Seat of the Legislature - of the Courts of Justice - of the Military and Mercantile Society". The first college building was located on the Grand Parade in what is now down-town Halifax, where the City Hall ^{now stands,} ~~is located.~~

As the original endowment of the University, Lord Dalhousie used the greater part of a fund collected in customs duties at the port of Castine in Maine. During the war of 1812 to 1814, an expedition from Halifax had occupied a portion of Maine. A customs office was set up at the new border. The

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size of the fund, when the British troops were withdrawn to Halifax, indicates that trade between the New England States and the British colonies to the north had not been appreciably reduced by the war. As a matter of fact, this war had not been a very popular one with the New Englanders.

The source of this first endowment led the writer of an article for Saturday Evening Post a few years ago to describe Dalhousie as the University "founded on pilfered funds".

In spite of the high hopes of the founder, the full realization of his ideas did not come for several years. Dalhousie did not function as a college until 1838. From that time it progressed, slowly and often erratically, but none the less certainly.

Discussions regarding the advisability of establishing a medical school in Halifax began in 1863 although no official action was taken at that time. Late in the following year the Board of Governors of Dalhousie University asked the Halifax Medical Society whether the physicians of the city would be willing to co-operate in establishing a Faculty of Medicine. There was some opposition from the medical profession because of the lack of hospital facilities and the illegality of procuring bodies for dissection. The first building of what is now the Victoria General Hospital had been completed in 1859 but had functioned as a hospital for only one year. There had been some disagreement as to whether the City or Province should be financially responsible for its operation. The

Halifax physicians considered it necessary that this fifty bed hospital be put into operation before a medical school could be established. When the hospital was re-opened in 1866 as a Provincial and City hospital, the physicians agreed to co-operate with the University and the Faculty of Medicine was established in 1868.

At that period there lived in Halifax a number of men who were intensely interested in all educational matters. They were the strongest advocates of the new medical school. This group included the Honourable Joseph Howe, Nova Scotia's political hero, who was then a member of the Board of Governors of the University. Another was Dr. Charles Tupper, at that time a general practitioner in Halifax and a member of the first local Legislature. He was later Sir Charles Tupper, Prime Minister of Canada, the only medical practitioner to achieve that office. Incidentally, Dr. Tupper was also one of the founders of the Canadian Medical Association and its first president. Another active member in the establishment of the Medical School was Dr. D. MacNeill Parker who became the second president of the Canadian Medical Association.

The first session of the Medical School opened on May 4th, 1868, with fourteen students in attendance. Classes were held during the summer periods only, covering the primary subjects such as Anatomy. The winter period was free for apprenticeship training or for clinical study in one of the other medical schools. McGill, Harvard and New York accepted the primary

training at Dalhousie and admitted students directly to the clinical departments.

This system was followed for two years only and in 1870 it was decided to give the full course in Halifax including the clinical subjects. The first degrees were conferred in 1872 on five candidates.

The facilities provided by the University consisted of one room in the old Dalhousie College building, together with the use of an attic, which served as the dissection room. Bodies were not properly embalmed and neither the medical students nor the other occupants of the building were very happy about this situation. One student in 1873 lost his life from infection of a small wound received during dissection.

Difficulties soon arose in the financing of this small medical school. An approach was made to the Provincial Government to obtain financial support. For some reason it seemed difficult for the Government to provide a grant to Dalhousie University, but assistance could be given to an independent body. In 1874, therefore, the Halifax Medical College was incorporated by an Act of the Legislature and functioned as an independent school, receiving an annual grant of \$300.00 from the Provincial Government. A building and equipment were purchased for \$12,000.00 and the professors waived all fees for a number of years in order to finance the new building. For nine years the Halifax Medical College granted degrees, but gradually it became more and more closely

associated with the University. In 1885 an arrangement was made whereby the University provided the basic courses and the Medical College was responsible for the clinical training. The examinations were conducted conjointly with the Provincial Medical Board and the degrees were again conferred by Dalhousie. However, it was only in 1911 that the University finally bought the physical equipment of the Medical College and assumed full responsibility for the teaching in all its phases. It was said at the time that the Medical School was an abandoned baby placed on the doorstep of the University. The support of the independent Medical College by the Provincial Government had hardly been sufficient to warrant its separation from the University.

Like several other medical schools in Canada, the Halifax Medical College and Dalhousie University received a rude jolt when the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching made a survey in 1908 of all medical schools in Canada and the United States. Of one hundred and sixty-four schools only thirty-six were considered properly equipped and capable of providing adequate teaching in Medicine. The remainder, including Dalhousie, were marked for extermination or re-organization. Several ^{local} writers of the day expressed in unvarnished and heated language the opinion that the survey had been perfunctory, inaccurate and unfair. ^{The} ~~This~~ reaction was similar in most other centres which were criticized.

Nevertheless, ^{the report} it served the useful purpose of stimulating the authorities to take steps to improve conditions and to bring the Medical School more closely under University supervision and control.

In 1911 the first full-time professor was appointed in Pathology, and in 1912 in Physiology, and in 1915 in Anatomy. Full-time teachers were later appointed in other departments, the major increase occurring during the 1930's.

In 1920 the Rockefeller and Carnegie Foundations surveyed Dalhousie and were impressed by its future possibilities. They gave the University one million dollars for the Medical School, which made possible the erection of a modern Medical Science Building and a Public Health Clinic, and provided a certain amount for endowment and equipment. In 1939 the Honourable James Tory, at that time Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, contributed generously to the establishment of a medical library.

Since its establishment Dalhousie University Medical School has graduated fifteen hundred and seventy-five students. The largest number of graduates are practising in the Maritime provinces and Newfoundland, but many have settled in other parts of Canada, in the United States and a few in other countries. Prior to 1920 the number of graduates did not exceed twenty per year but this number increased slightly during the 1920's with one large class of forty-seven graduates in 1925, the veterans

of World War I. In the 1930's the number of graduates ranged from twenty-five to thirty-five each year and remained about thirty-five during the 1940's. Since World War II the number ~~of graduates~~ has ranged from forty-five to fifty-five per year. Many Dalhousie graduates have attained distinction both at home and abroad, and Dalhousie has every reason to be proud of their accomplishments.

Since its establishment Dalhousie Medical School has had on its staff many of the most highly qualified medical practitioners and specialists of Nova Scotia. For several generations the families of Almon and Reid were represented on the Medical Faculty. Numerous others should be mentioned in any extensive historical article, but perhaps one of the most outstanding was Dr. John Stewart. Dr. Stewart was a houseman with Sir Joseph Lister, when he first demonstrated the value of antiseptics in Surgery. He went with Lister from Glasgow to London and continued his clinical work there. Later he returned to Nova Scotia where he practised first at Pictou and later in Halifax. He was Dean of the Faculty of Medicine from 1919 to 1932. As one of the pioneers of antiseptic and aseptic surgery in Canada, Dr. Stewart has his name perpetuated at Dalhousie in the John Stewart Memorial Lecture, which is held annually in association with the Dalhousie Refresher Course.

Dalhousie University is a privately endowed institution.

It receives no government grants except for the professional faculties of Medicine, Dentistry and Law. The first two have obtained financial grants from the governments of the four Atlantic provinces since 1947. However, these grants still constitute less than twenty per cent of the total operating costs of the two faculties.

Admission to Medicine at Dalhousie requires three years' pre-medical work after junior matriculation. The medical course is of five years' duration including a rotating internship. The first four years are in the University and the academic year extends from early September to mid-May. The internship is of twelve months' duration. All students have two months on a general medical service, two months on medical specialties, two months on a general surgical service, two months on surgical specialties (including one month of emergency surgery), two months on obstetrics and two months on paediatrics. Out-patient as well as in-patient training is included on all services. The degree is granted on completion of this rotating internship. Conjoint examinations are held at that time with the Medical Council of Canada and the Provincial Medical Board of Nova Scotia. The degree and licence to practise are therefore received in the same year. The rotating internship is also accepted by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons as one of the years qualifying for certification or fellowship. Dalhousie University will continue to grant the dual degree of M.D.,C.M. until 1959. Following

that year the degree will be M.D.

The chief teaching hospitals are the Victoria General Hospital (524 beds), Halifax Children's Hospital (204 beds), Grace Maternity Hospital (60 beds and 60 bassinets), Camp Hill Hospital (D.V.A.) (550 beds), Halifax Tuberculosis Hospital (126 beds), the Dalhousie Public Health Clinic and the Nova Scotia Hospital (450 beds). In addition the rotating internship includes the Saint John General Hospital, Saint John, New Brunswick (443 beds); and certain services in the St. John's General Hospital, St. John's, Newfoundland (456 beds); Prince Edward Island Hospital, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (110 beds); Halifax Infirmary (192 beds); Nova Scotia Sanatorium, Kentville, Nova Scotia (400 beds); ^{CITY OF SYDNEY} ~~Sydney City~~ Hospital, Sydney, Nova Scotia (167 beds); Victoria Public Hospital, Fredericton, New Brunswick (207 beds). The rotations centre around the Victoria General Hospital in Halifax and the Saint John General Hospital in Saint John.

In selecting students for admission to the Faculty of Medicine priority is given to residents of the four Atlantic provinces, but a small number are accepted from the other provinces of Canada, the United States and the British West Indies. The first-year class usually numbers fifty-eight, and ~~in recent years the number of graduates has varied from forty-eight to fifty-four.~~

A complete revision of the curriculum has been carried out during the past two years and is now in effect. The main

aim has been to increase interdepartmental teaching and to alter the emphasis on certain subjects in accord with modern trends in medical education. The University is also proceeding with the appointment of full-time professors in the clinical departments, and a number of these departments ^{will shortly} have full-time associate professors as well. All of the pre-clinical departments have a full-time staff.

In recent years one of the interesting developments at the Dalhousie Medical School and its affiliated hospitals has been the extension of postgraduate education for general practitioners. With the aid of a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation a programme has been developed for the continuing education of physicians in the four Atlantic provinces. Visiting lecturers in various fields of medicine and surgery have been brought to Halifax and to other centres in the four Atlantic provinces to give lectures and clinics. In most instances the lecturer has visited two centres while in the Maritimes.

The second type of programme has consisted of intensive special courses of approximately one week, which have been arranged for general practitioners by the departments of Surgery, Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Paediatrics and Anaesthesia. In addition, the departments of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, Urology, Preventive Medicine and Psychiatry have made contributions to some of these programmes.

The Dalhousie staff members have also carried their postgraduate activities to the smaller centres of the four Atlantic provinces. This is the largest and most important aspect of the programme. Most of the lectures or clinics are arranged through a local medical society. The programme usually consists of an evening lecture or symposium by one or more of the university staff, but in some instances discussions or clinics are continued on the following morning in the local hospital. During the past year increasing emphasis has been placed on clinical teaching rather than lectures or other formal presentations, and at the same time more active participation has been expected from the physicians in the area. A specialist from a department of the Faculty of Medicine is invited to one of the small local hospitals to discuss clinical cases with the staff members. The local practitioners work up a number of problem cases and present them to their confreres and the visiting specialist, who then leads the discussion.

During the past year another type of decentralized programme has been introduced with considerable success. A group of practitioners in a small town enrol for an organized course of lectures, clinics and demonstrations, to be held at weekly intervals. Each evening programme of three hours' duration includes presentations by two visiting Dalhousie teachers, and clinical presentations by one or more members of the study group.

From a small and humble beginning the medical school at Dalhousie University has developed into a well equipped and

→ The Dalhousie Refresher Course is of one week's duration and in recent years has attracted approximately 200 physicians from the four Atlantic Provinces. Four or five visiting lecturers, including one chosen to give the John Stewart memorial lecture, assist the University staff in presenting a varied program designed for the continuing education of general practitioners.

well staffed school which provides the medical education of most of the students entering Medicine from the four Atlantic provinces. Extensive additions have been made to the teaching hospitals during the past ten years and these are now fully adequate for the clinical training of the Dalhousie students as well as for graduate training in most fields of Medicine. The primary function of the school is, as it always has been, the training of good family physicians for the four Atlantic provinces. But the course is designed to provide basic training which will permit students to proceed into graduate work in any field of Medicine, and approximately forty per cent continue in specialty training after the rotating internship.