



QUEEN'S MANDATORY VACCINATION – Response from PSAC 901's President Astrid Hobill

August 13, 2021

PSAC 901, the union for graduate student workers and postdoctoral scholars on Queen's campus, applauds Queen's University's decision to begin to take the collective health and safety of its community seriously with their announcement of the implementation of a mandatory vaccination policy. This step, in line with Public Health guidelines, is supported by science on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines on reducing the rates of transmission and hospitalization and will help ensure safety of the most vulnerable in our community. However, in accordance with those same guidelines the vaccine mandate is also insufficient without a wider and more comprehensive plan. As the Delta variant progresses and we face a 4th wave we know that a return to campus will require university wide protocols on masking, gathering sizes (including class sizes), rapid testing, and quick and efficient contact tracing capabilities.

Further, PSAC 901 insists that along with the mandatory vaccine policy: that there be clear plans and protocols for international members who have not or cannot access Health Canada recognized vaccines; a robust commitment from Queen's to accommodate those who cannot be vaccinated; a commitment to our membership that they will be able to perform duties remotely if they cannot be vaccinated (with duly compensated monies); a commitment to ensure barrier-free access to vaccines on campus for those who need it; that the safety protocols for each Unit are publicly available; proper ventilation of all buildings on campus; availability of rapid testing; employer-paid availability of PPE for all staff; following a commitment to ensuring the psychological and mental health of the employees are prioritized in the return to campus.

With significant anxiety around a safe return to work in the fall from our membership, mandatory vaccination cannot take the place of comprehensive protocols, which Queen's must still produce in order to ensure a safe return to campus. Queen's campuses are porous and we must consider that even with Queen's vaccinations policies, there will always be non-vaccinated individuals in the spaces.

PSAC 901 Unit 1 is currently in bargaining with Queen's and is securing a renewed Letter of Understanding around COVID-19 protocols for a safe return to campus for all its members. Despite the union's insistence since May on getting an updated agreement in place, Queen's University has failed to respond.

PSAC 901 will be hosting a health and safety workshop on Zoom, August 18th around a safe return to campus this fall, any Queen's employee may attend.

We have been waiting for a comprehensive return to campus plan since the University announced that classes would resume on campus this past April. The safety of our members and our communities is paramount, and we are disappointed with the lethargy of the Queen's administration in addressing our concerns. We continue to wait, though less patiently.

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