

# PSAC 901

An Open Letter to Principal Patrick Deane on the lifting of the Tuition Freeze

January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dear Principal Deane,

PSAC 901 members are shocked to learn that [you have been actively lobbying the Ford Government for an end to the current Ontario tuition freeze](#). We write to you as graduate student workers whose teaching and research is foundational to the success of Queen's to publicly express our outrage and disgust at this position.

Lobbying for the end of a tuition freeze shows that **Queen's administration is completely out of touch with the financial crisis currently facing Queen's students** and more specifically facing graduate student workers. Over the past few years, we have seen an unprecedented rise in the costs of housing, utilities, and food, putting many of our members, already living in economic precarity, into increasingly untenable living situations. **Particularly issues of housing and food insecurity are straining the mental and physical health of our members.** Each week we hear more and more reports of our members living in precarious or unsafe conditions, the only conditions they can afford. Increasingly our members are encountering food insecurity, skipping meals, not able to afford fresh or nutritionally dense food, and relying on food banks. **These are your employees, your students, and sometimes (when they can secure it) your tenants.** All of this is unacceptable.

FYI. [The current median rent in Kingston is \\$1699.00 per month, an increase of 30% since last year alone](#). University housing, while below market cost, is completely insufficient given the demand; last year applications from graduate student for Queen's Community Housing exhausted the supply in a matter of minutes. [The housing office received over 300 applications for 60 units at John Orr and Ann Clachlan](#) in less than half an hour! [Food costs in Ontario have increased by more than 10% in the last year and are expected to continue to increase as much as another 7%](#) this coming year according to the 2023 Food Price Report. The food insecurity issues of graduate students at Queen's are already well known to the administration with [Queen's Food Insecurity Report from last March indicating that 52% of users of the AMS Food Bank are graduate and professional students](#) (p 12).

Each year, graduate student workers fall further behind and further into debt as funding fails to keep up with dramatic increases to the cost of living. **Queen's has seen record profits since the pandemic**,<sup>1</sup> all while your students and graduate student workers have struggled. If Queen's is in such dire straits, might we suggest redirecting your lobbying efforts towards demanding the government put more funding into universities, lowering tuition, and making education more accessible. Queen's efforts would also be better spent working towards affordable housing solutions which would also positively impact the wider Kingston community. Surely, there are solutions that don't rest on the backs of some the most precarious workers on campus. On that note, 901 renews our demand that rates for international tuition not exceed the rates paid by domestic students - as graduate student workers we stand together in calling for tuition parity and a continued freeze for all.

We will be hosting a townhall on **January 23<sup>rd</sup>** in **MacCory D214** and **over zoom at 5PM** to discuss the tuition freeze and graduate tuition more generally and **we would cordially like to invite Principal Deane to join us** in a productive discussion around this important issue to graduate students.

We await your response,  
PSAC 901's Executive

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<sup>1</sup> Queen's finished the 20/21 year with a surplus of \$144.8 million, "[Financial Statements: Consolidated Financial Statements, Queen's University at Kingston](#)" p. 2. April 30th, 2021.