

PSAC 901

Dear Queen's Grad Students, PSAC 901 Members, Colleagues, Community Partners, Allies, and Friends,

Following [the tremendous success of last Monday's lively Tuition Town Hall](#) PSAC 901 is hosting a mass-participation rally **calling on Queen's University to Abolish Graduate Tuition Fees and commit to Ending Graduate Worker Poverty!**

The rally will take place Tuesday February 7th at 11am outside Richardson Hall! All are welcome to attend!

The anger, frustration, and hurt you expressed at the Town Hall was palpable, with overwhelming support coming for calls to build affordable housing, provide minimum funding packages that reflect the true cost of living, and to end the practice of charging Graduate Student Workers tuition.

In case you missed it: Monday's Town Hall and the coming rally are direct responses to [Patrick Deane and the Queen's Senate actively lobbying Doug Ford to end Ontario's Tuition Freeze](#). This lobbying comes amidst Queen's ongoing refusal to meaningfully address its part in the housing and cost of living crises facing Graduate Student Workers and the Queen's and Kingston community at large.*

[Patrick Deane was invited by PSAC 901 to the Town Hall to hear your concerns, but he declined to attend](#). Neither Deane nor Queen's University offered to send an alternate in his place nor engage the graduate student community in any way on the issues.** As a result, **we will be bringing our message directly to Principal Deane on Tuesday!**

Looking to get involved? **Start by sharing this message and the event poster with your networks so that your friends and colleagues can participate and have their voice heard** (*follow us on twitter and Instagram @psac901, forward this message to your listservs and share it to your department and community FB groups, drop it in your group chats, and be sure to bring the rally up in conversations with colleagues and friends!*).

But beyond simply getting the word out, having as many folks as possible take part in prepping will make the rally all the more successful and effective!

Leading up to the 7th, *volunteers and community partners are needed to help wherever you are able with things like poster, tabling, sign-making and chant-writing*. Any further support you may be able to offer with regards to planning and execution is also welcome! Our success as a union and as a community is a collective effort. If you have just an hour or two where you can help out in the coming days (or after the rally itself), that participation can make a huge difference.

For more info on getting involved, please reach out to Jake Morrow at chiefsteward2.psic901@gmail.com and Justyna Szewczyk at vpc.psic901@gmail.com

In Solidarity,
PSAC 901

*For more context: [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 workers for Queen's Community Housing exhausted the supply in a matter of minutes. [The housing office received over 300 applications for 60 available 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).

While Queen's makes record-setting profits, [having brought in \\$144 Million surplus this year alone](#), [Graduate Funding Packages](#) fall far below the legal [minimum wage](#) or even [Queen's own cost of living estimate for grad students](#) (If you are a graduate student and have the stomach for it, we encourage you to do the math on how much a full time worker makes annually at the provincial minimum wage of \$15.50/hour.... compare in abject horror to your own take home and the reality of how much time you put into your graduate, research, and teaching work each week... Don't forget to subtract tuition! Yikes!)