



PSAC Local 901 – Unit 2 - Postdocs – Queen’s University

Bargaining Communiqué #5

Subject: Employer’s Disinterest and Resistance: Mobilize for Change!

In 4 months, we have met with the Employer 15 times and have only signed off on 9 articles and 3 letters of understanding, none of which are substantive issues. At each session, we have faced an Employer who is disinterested in finding solutions to the challenges that postdocs are facing, refusing to commit in writing to basic principles like psychological health and safety in the workplace.

The Employer has indicated that they prefer to deal with such issues through existing policies at Queen’s and are not interested in enshrining commitments in our collective agreement. Relying on policy alone ensures that the Employer has full control over our working conditions, with the ability to alter or remove policies at any time. We expect the Employer to take their obligations and responsibilities seriously and to treat unionized postdocs as equal partners in the negotiating process. If the Employer is truly committed to improving our working conditions, those commitments must be enshrined in our collective agreement.

Over the past three bargaining sessions (February 14th, 15th, and 16th), we discussed basic principles around remote/hybrid work, digital privacy, and psychological health and safety. We continued to raise issues related to the pension plan, specifically that members have not been properly informed by the Employer of their eligibility to enroll in the plan. This lack of notification directly harms members who are potentially losing a valuable source of future income. We expect the Employer to take this issue seriously and to fix the problem so that members are receiving what is rightfully owed to them.

While the Union is ready to present monetary demands, the Employer’s unwillingness to resolve non-monetary issues will make the next stage of negotiations difficult.

We will be back at the bargaining table for the following dates in February: the 22nd, 23rd, 28th, and 29th.

We expect the Employer to come to the table ready to treat the Union as equal members in this process. “Not interested” is not an acceptable position. The Employer does not get to unilaterally decide what is interesting or not interesting, or what is worth including or not including in the collective agreement. Solving the serious problems that postdocs are facing requires a collaborative approach, something that we do not feel that we have received from the Employer thus far.

As we get closer to presenting monetary demands, we need your support more than ever. The Employer has made it clear that our demands are not worth their interest or their consideration. We need to mobilize as a unit to show the Employer that we are serious about improving our working conditions.



Sign our [petition](#) for fair compensation for postdocs, use our [email signatures](#) to show your support for postdocs on campus, send an [email](#) to the head of your department and/or to senior administration, hang up a [poster](#) supporting postdocs, and talk to other members of your department about postdoc bargaining.

As a postdoc we are also hoping that you will fill out a [postcard to Patrick Deane](#), if you have not already done so, and we will send a physical copy to the Principal.

Please stay informed, support your bargaining team, and do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions through the bargaining mobilization coordinator, Astrid Hobill at: astridhobill@hotmail.com.

Your Bargaining Team:

Armineh Azizi, PDF at Chemical Engineering Department
Andrea Reid, PDF at School of Kinesiology & Health
Shideh Ahmadi, PDF at Chemistry Department
MaryAnne Laurico, PSAC Regional Representative
Darren Pacione, PSAC Research Officer
Justyna Szewczyk-El Jassem, PSAC 901 Local President
Laneydi Martinez Alfonso, PSAC Negotiator

What is collective bargaining?

Collective bargaining empowers Postdocs to negotiate with the employer as equals to reach a legally binding contract protecting the rights of their members. As a strong, collective voice PSAC Local 901 advocates for employment security, improved working conditions, fair compensation, standardized grievance procedures, health and dental benefits and more.

The current collective agreement, which outlined the terms and conditions of employment for postdocs at Queen's University, expired on June 30, 2023.

If you are an employee covered by the expired collective agreement and wish to be involved in the negotiation process for the new agreement, or if you have any questions or concerns regarding the collective bargaining process, please contact VP Postdoctoral Scholars: vppd.psac901@gmail.com