

# PSAC 901

## AGENDA Annual General Meeting April 3, 2024

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### Location: Robert Sutherland Hall, Room 202

- Wheelchair accessible. Gender-neutral bathrooms on 1<sup>st</sup> floor of building.

### Time:

- **4:30-5pm:** Registration/Food service
- **5-7pm:** Meeting will begin promptly at 5pm

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

First, please be advised that there will be no scheduled break in the meeting, to ensure that it does not run over time. Members are invited to come and go from the room as needed. Second, please note that **all discussion, motions, and other information shared within the AGM are considered proprietary and should be kept confidential within our membership.** Meeting minutes will be available within a week following the meeting, reviewable on request (this is to maintain confidentiality within the membership). Any questions or requests to review the AGM minutes can be directed to [info.officer.psic901@gmail.com](mailto:info.officer.psic901@gmail.com) or [staff.psic901@gmail.com](mailto:staff.psic901@gmail.com).

### Please see APPENDICES:

- **Appendix A – Announcements (p. 8)**
- **Appendix B – Bylaws Addendum (Strike Fund Model) (p. 9)**
- **Appendix C – 2023-24 Executive Committee Member Reports (p. 10)**
- **Appendix D – 2023-24 Committee Reports (p. 25)**
- **Appendix E – 2024-25 Executive Committee Member Nominations (p. 28)**

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### **4:30-5pm – REGISTRATION AND DINNER**

**Doors open at 4:30pm for members to register at the door**

- Once members check in and verify membership, they are invited to help themselves to food and informally gather. *Limited halal, vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free choices provided.*
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## **5pm – SECTION 1: WELCOME**

**10'**

**A) The PSAC 901 Information Officer will open the meeting by reading the [PSAC Statement on harassment](#) [including [language around caste, as unanimously approved by Steward's Council](#)] and the [PSAC 901 land acknowledgement](#).**

**B) Quorum Check: the PSAC Information Officer notes the number of Composite Unit 1 and Unit 2 members in attendance.**

**C) Welcome remarks from the PSAC 901 Information Officer; hand-off to the Moderator**

**D) Rules of Order: The Moderator familiarizes attendees with the PSAC Rules of Order.**

### **E) Election of meeting secretary**

**Motion:** Elizabeth Cameron motioned that Christina Pilgrim be elected as secretary for this meeting (as recommended by Steward's Council at the March 19, 2024 meeting).

**Second:**

**Discussion:**

**Vote:**

### **F) Approval of AGM Agenda**

**Motion:** Elizabeth Cameron motioned that the AGM agenda be approved as circulated.

**Second:**

**Discussion:**

**Vote:**

### **G) Approval of 2023 SGM minutes**

**Motion:** Elizabeth Cameron motioned that the Minutes of the 2023 Special General Meeting on October 25, 2023 be approved.

**Second:**

**Discussion:**

**Vote:**

## **5:10pm – SECTION 2: FINANCES**

**30' (5:10-5:40pm)**

### **A) Approval of audited 2022/23 fiscal financial statements**

**Motion:** Mia Akbar motioned that the Audited Financial Statements for fiscal 2022/23 be approved.

**Second:**

**Discussion: Treasurer to open with comments.**

**Vote:**

### **B) Approval of 2024-25 Budget**

**Motion:** Mia Akbar motioned that the 2024-25 Budget be approved.

**Second:**

**Discussion:** Treasurer to open with comments.

**Vote:**

## **5:40pm – SECTION 3: BYLAWS AND REPORTS**

**20' (5:40-6:00pm)**

**A) Motion: Mia Akbar motioned that the Strike Fund Model addendum to the PSAC 901 Bylaws be approved (see Appendix B)**

**Second:** Elizabeth Cameron

**Discussion:**

**Vote:**

### **B) Approval of Executive Reports (see Appendix C)**

1. President
2. Vice President Community Relations
3. Vice President Postdoctoral Scholars
4. Vice President Research Assistants
5. Information Officer
6. Treasurer
7. Co-Chief Stewards
8. Equity Officer
9. Health and Safety Officer

**Motion:** Elizabeth Cameron motions that the 2023-24 executive reports be accepted, as a slate, as circulated.

**Second:**

**Discussion: Question Period (5 minutes)**

**Vote:**

### **C) Approval of 2023-24 Committee Reports (see Appendix D)**

1. Bylaws Committee Report
2. Occupational Health and Safety Committee Report
3. Political Action Committee Report
4. Social Justice Committee Report
5. Unit 1 Bargaining Committee Report
6. Unit 2 Bargaining Committee Report

**Motion:** Elizabeth Cameron motions that the 2023-24 committee reports be accepted, as a slate, as circulated.

**Second:**

**Discussion: Question Period (5 minutes)**

**Vote:**

## **6:00pm – SECTION 4: Elections**

**50' (6:00-6:50pm)**

### **A) Moderator explains Elections Procedures**

- See **Appendix E** for Nomination letters from candidates who were nominated prior to the meeting. Nominations from the floor will be accepted: please wait for the Moderator to call for nominations from the floor to proceed.

<b>President</b>	
<b>Nominees:</b>	
Agrees to stand:	
2 min remarks	
<b>5 minute question period</b>	
<b>Vote by ballot:</b>	

<b>Vice President Community Relations</b>	
<b>Nominees:</b>	
Agrees to stand:	
1 min remarks	
<b>5 minute question period</b>	
<b>Vote by ballot:</b>	

<b>Information Officer</b>	
<b>Nominees:</b>	Christina Pilgrim
Agrees to stand:	
1 min remarks	
<b>5 minute question period</b>	
<b>Vote by ballot:</b>	

<b>Treasurer</b>	
<b>Nominees:</b>	Iveta Steblevska
Agrees to stand:	
1 min remarks	
<b>5 minute question period</b>	
<b>Vote by ballot:</b>	

<b>Co-Chief Steward (1)</b>	
<b>Nominees:</b>	Akomaye Undie
Agrees to stand:	
1 min remarks	
<b>5 minute question period</b>	
<b>Vote by ballot:</b>	

<b>Co-Chief Steward (2)</b>	
<b>Nominees:</b>	Kavya Harshitha Jidugu
Agrees to stand:	
1 min remarks	
<b>5 minute question period</b>	
<b>Vote by ballot:</b>	

<b>Equity Officer</b>	
<b>Nominees:</b>	Idorenyin Williams

Agrees to stand:	
1 min remarks	
<b>5 minute question period</b>	
<b>Vote by ballot:</b>	

<b>Health and Safety Officer</b>	
<b>Nominees:</b>	
Agrees to stand:	
1 min remarks	
<b>5 minute question period</b>	
<b>Vote by ballot:</b>	

<b>Vice President Postdoctoral Scholars</b>	
<b>Nominees:</b>	Armineh Azizi
Agrees to stand:	
1 min remarks	
<b>5 minute question period</b>	
<b>Vote by ballot:</b>	

<b>Vice President Research Assistants</b>	
<b>Nominees:</b>	
Agrees to stand:	

1 min remarks	
5 minute question period	
Vote by ballot:	

**B) Swearing in of new executive by MaryAnne Laurico, PSAC Regional Representative, (or next-highest ranking officer present)**  
**5' (end by 6:50pm)**

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## **SECTION 5 – NEW BUSINESS & WRAP UP**

**10'**

### **A) Unity Council Motion**

**Motion:** Justyna Szewczyk-El Jassem motioned that the Unity Council Motion be approved (as presented at the 2024 AGM).

**Second:**

**Discussion:** Outgoing President to open with comments.

**Vote:**

### **B) Adjournment**

**Motion:** Elizabeth Cameron motioned to end the meeting.

**Second:**

**Vote:**

**Adjournment (time):**

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## **Appendix A – ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**A) Complete [Unit 1 Bargaining Survey](#) today! We need as many TAs, TFs, and RAs to fill out as possible. Two winners will be drawn, and each will receive either **rent for a month up to \$2000**, or a **tuition payment up to \$2,000**.**

**B) PSAC 901 invites all members to the 2024 Kingston Steps for Life walk on Saturday, April 27th (10:00 am) at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area, 1641 Perth Rd., Glenburnie, ON. Threads for Life is in charge of organizing the event. It is aimed at educating the community about the devastating ripple effects of a workplace tragedy and suggesting preventive measures to prevent those on the job from being injured or killed. Family and friends are welcome! **For more information and to register in advance, visit our team page.** PSAC901 is coordinating rides to the event. If you need a ride or could offer a ride to the event, **please complete [this form by noon on April 26th](#)**. Kindly reach out to [ikeoluwapobaruwa@gmail.com](mailto:ikeoluwapobaruwa@gmail.com) or [safety.psac901@gmail.com](mailto:safety.psac901@gmail.com) should you have any questions.**

**C) Don't miss an important assembly organized by Unity Council – see you April 4, 2024, 12pm, at the ARC Gym (Athletics & Recreation Centre)**

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## **Appendix B: ARTICLE 13.8 BYLAW ADDENDUM (Strike Fund Model)**

Article 13.8 in Bylaws (addition in red)

13.8 Expenditures from the Local Defence Fund shall be in accordance with the Local Strike Policy and shall only be made as follows.

(1) Beginning six (6) months prior to the date of termination of a Collective Agreement, the Executive Committee, in consultation with the Bargaining Committee, shall be authorized to spend up to \$10,000 from the Local Defence Fund to prepare for a possible strike.

(2) At any time the Executive Committee may authorize the payment of expenses directly related to any grievance or arbitration to an amount not to exceed \$15,000. In the event that additional funds are required in order to fulfill our legal duty to represent a member, the Executive Committee shall bring a motion to Stewards' Council requesting additional funds to an amount not to exceed \$50,000. In the event that additional funds are still required in order to fulfill our legal duty to represent a member, the Executive Committee shall call a SGM in order to request additional funds.

(3) to contribute to strike pay top-ups in accordance with the Local Strike Fund Model (Appendix A).

### Appendix A - Strike Fund Model

The qualifying period for benefits takes effect the first day of the strike. Using attendance lists provided by the Locals and Branches, strike pay will be paid retroactively for the full period to each member participating in the strike by PSAC National.

Only members on the active payroll of the Employer with whom the bargaining agent is in dispute shall be eligible for benefits.

Members are expected to carry out duties as assigned by duly—recognized officers for a minimum of four hours per day.

The amount of strike pay each member is entitled to by PSAC National is \$75 for each day to a maximum of \$375 per calendar week.



For a member who normally works fewer than twenty (20) hours per week, PSAC National contributes \$53 for each day to a maximum of \$265 per calendar week. The Local Strike Fund will top this amount up to \$75 for each day to a maximum of \$375 per calendar week. These top ups will be distributed to members every two weeks in accordance with the payroll schedule of Queen's University.

Where members are requested to and scheduled to picket seven (7) days per week they will be entitled to \$75 per day to a maximum of \$525 per calendar week.

Expenditures from the Local Defence Fund should first prioritize member strike pay top-ups before any other strike-related expenditures.

## **Appendix C:**

### **WRITTEN REPORTS FROM 2023-24 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

#### **President**

What a rollercoaster of a year it's been! Just as the new executive committee took office, we were hit with news of a budget deficit and a hiring freeze from the Employer, almost as if they anticipated the uncertain fate of Doug Ford's appeal regarding the constitutionality of Bill 124. For us, alongside other employee groups on campus, it felt like yet another setback after years of enduring wage suppression and relentless inflation. You, like other employee groups on campus, were already pretty beaten up by years of wage suppression and inflation spiraling out of control.

Heading into summer, we were inundated with applications for the Emergency Food Support Program, reflecting the stark reality of food insecurity among our members. Running until November, the program not only provided crucial aid but also raised awareness about this pressing issue both within our community and beyond. We even reached out to Stephen JR Smith, urging him to contribute to our cause, although Queen's remained unmoved by PSAC 901's appeals.

The widespread cost-of-living crisis hit our community hard, exacerbating the precarious situation of PSAC 901 members, graduate workers, who are among the most vulnerable on campus. Despite the hurdles, solidarity prevailed. The SGPS stepped up with their Food Insecurity Relief Program, highlighting the power of collective support among workers and students. Financial strains also saw our Mental Health and Hardship Bursaries depleted, underscoring the immense challenges faced by our members and the glaring gaps in support from Queen's.

But amidst adversity, solidarity blossomed again. We have worked with other unions on campus: USW2010 and CUPE 229, CUPE 254 and CUPE 1302 and QUFA to pressure the employer to revise our wages after Bill 124 was ruled unconstitutional. The employer responded with the manufactured budget deficit to fend off our just demands for better wages. Neither Unions nor students, however, believe the Employer's narrative and the immense organizing done by Students Vs Cuts and Queen's Coalition Against Austerity show that the campus community is united in demands of transparency and accountability of the higher administration. Accountability and transparency are non-negotiable.

Bargaining - this was and continues to be a number one priority for Unit 2 and Unit 1. Unit 2, which is composed of postdocs, is currently in bargaining with the employer. It has been a tough round of negotiations which started in October and are yet to conclude. Non-monetary gains made at the table were hard-won but we are yet to hear a fair monetary offer. The bargaining team believes that not only minimum wage needs to reflect the actual cost of living in Kingston but also the level of training and expertise postdoctoral scholars bring to the university. We demand across-the-board retroactive wage increases for current and former employees. We demand that the employer restores access to healthcare for postdocs on campus, relieving them of the hardship of accessing healthcare and also relieving the overburdened Kingston healthcare system.

For Unit 1, the bargaining effort has already begun, even if the Collective Agreement (CA) hasn't expired yet. The Bargaining Committee that was struck in the Fall, facilitated a number of outreach campaigns to connect with members and get your feedback on the current CA. To that end, we ran Information Sessions, Focus Groups, and are now collecting input through a large survey. If you haven't yet had the chance to fill it out, please do! With the survey prizes we wanted once again to draw attention to two main challenges that we face as grad workers: the cost of tuition and the cost of living. That's why we are offering a summer tuition and a one-month rent rebate. With your answers, we will have a strong mandate at the table to fight for what matters to you.

We also conclude this year with a new website, lots of recommendations on how to restructure the executive committee moving forward, complete and stellar audit reports for the last two years.

As we end this year, I am confident that the Union is stronger and ready to take the challenge of facing the Employer at the bargaining table. I hope to see you all in September when we have our traditional Fall PSAC 901 BBQ!

- Justyna Szewczyk-El Jassem, President PSAC 901

### **Vice President Community Relations**

During my term as Vice President Community Relations (VPC), I have had the pleasure to represent PSAC901 at the Kingston and District Labour Council (KDLC), PSAC Kingston Area Council, Queen's Unity Council (a coalition of Queen's employee union locals and faculty association), and other labour and community groups. I have chaired monthly meetings of the Political Action Committee (PAC), where active rank and file members have engaged in event planning, organizing and outreach on behalf of our union. With the help of the PAC and executive committee, I organized our participation in the Kingston Pride Parade and Labour Day Festival, as well as another event called "Respect our Research." I also attended the tri-annual convention of the Canadian Labour Congress as a delegate of the KDLC. Additionally, I oversaw two research assistantships which reported to the PSAC 901 executive committee on Queen's financial health and alternative models (to the tuition-based system) of graduate education funding. I also actively participated in the Union Structure, Budget, and Bylaws Committees. Throughout all of these activities I reported on my experiences to the executive committee and departmental stewards on a regular basis.

In solidarity,

- Levi Duhaime, Vice President Community Relations PSAC 901

### **Vice President Postdoctoral Scholars**

As the Vice President of Postdoctoral Scholars, I started my role in April 2023, following a series of transitional meetings with previous executive members. My job also began with several critical meetings with our bargaining team and the negotiator. During April and May, our dedicated bargaining team and I, as one of the team members, arranged numerous meetings to review our existing collective agreement and draft a proposal for negotiations with the employer.

In order to support the bargaining team, we embarked on a hiring process to assemble a mobilization team. After interviewing ten highly qualified candidates, we welcomed five outstanding members into our team on Sep. 1. We hired the campaign coordinator, Astrid Hobil, to collaborate closely with our mobilizers. Also, we hired Megan Ingram for the postdoc social media coordinator.

In addition to building a strong team for negotiations, my team and I recognized the importance of being present and involved in the postdoctoral scholar community. To this end, I organized several events from April 2023 onward, including social gatherings, a BBQ event, a Unit 2 general meeting, and postdoc lunch events. These events have enhanced our understanding of the challenges and concerns postdocs face while facilitating improved networking and sharing ideas. The unit 2 general meeting on Sep. 1 was a great success in bringing together our members, mobilizers, and our negotiator.

We had a discussion about the seven most important postdocs' demands, including Fair wages, Housing affordability, Access to health services, Career and Professional Development, Mental health and hardship, Child care, and Relocation support with our members and then had a voting process to prioritize the demands. Postdocs had a table at the BBQ event on Sep. 14. We also had an event Grad Club held on Dec. 6 called Pomodoro Day for postdocs. At the postdoc event on Jan. 10, our members filled out the postcards sent to Patrick Dean. I talked more about the bargaining process with our members at the postdocs event at Thai House on Jan. 29 after the bargaining day.

I attended two rallies on Jun. 20 and Mar. 8. I had a talk regarding healthcare problems at Queen's University for the postdocs. I also had an interview with Megan regarding postdoc concerns and situations and my experience as a postdoc since June 2021 at Queen's University. During my VP position, I presented at the postdoc orientation sessions on Sep. 18 and Feb. 20. I talked about the PSAC role, postdoc involvement, their rights at the workplace, and the bargaining process. Our official bargaining meetings with the employer started on Oct. 13. On the first day, the employer representative started negotiations, announcing that Queen's University faced a deficit situation and a hiring freeze. Also, they mentioned that they cancelled the Queen's Family Health Team Pilot Project for postdocs. In 5 months, we have met with the Employer 20 times and have only signed off some articles and letters of understanding, none of which are substantive issues. At each session, we faced an employer who was disinterested in finding solutions to postdocs' challenges, refusing to commit to writing about basic principles. On Feb. 22, the Union presented monetary demands to the employer. While the Union hoped for a productive conversation to move us closer to a tentative deal, we were met with a terribly low proposal insulting postdocs' valuable work.

As the VP and one of the bargaining team members, I will continue my negotiations with the employer to do better and meet their commitments as the leader university.

- Armineh Azizi, Vice President Postdoctoral Scholars PSAC 901

### **Vice President Research Assistants**

*No report submitted.*

- Milka Njoroge, Vice President Research Assistants PSAC 901

### **Information Officer**

It's been a privilege to serve the membership as the Information Officer while completing my MA in Sociology, during the 2023-24 academic year. I will not be

standing for re-election as I will be moving on to another degree program at a different institution, but I am excited to hear how the next year unfolds.

This role, [in the lettering of the \(by\)law](#), focuses on stewarding membership information, editing newsletters, circulating AGM reports, and chairing the Bylaws Committee. My interpretation of this role also included sharing information and various resources with members through social media posting (follow @psac901 on IG, X, and FB), overseeing a branding and communications development contract, and [working closely with my fellow Executives to write statements](#), and other projects like the website information, [orientation presentations](#), and more. None of the year's accomplishments would have been possible without the support of our office manager, Tracie Dixon. The local is extremely lucky to have a full time staff member (period), let alone one who so deeply cares about her colleagues, community, and everything she does for the membership.

The 2023-24 Executive was an ambitious one. We started off by revamping the website, and used the summer months to overhaul [the Unit 1 orientation presentation](#) that gets delivered across all departments and programs our Unit 1 members (TAs, RAs, and TFs) are working at Queen's University. We also started Union Structure Committee work. Each month kept me busy with [newsletter\(s\)](#), social media posts (we gained more than 270 Instagram followers this year - hi, if you're reading this!), and overseeing a contract for a part-time Communications Specialist. We hired Maha, a former member who is also now affiliated with [OPIRG Kingston](#), to create a Branding Kit (mostly instructions for how to get information across effectively to our audience AKA our members – we are not trying to be a fancy brand!) and Communications Strategy (processes and guides to do communications stuff on time/in an organized way) which will be retained by the Local, and useful for years to come. This contract, which was budgeted for by the 2022-23 Executive, allowed me to delegate these longer-term projects and focus my efforts on running the day-to-day communications of the Local. Shoutout to them for that foresight and set-up!

During the Winter 2024 term, I chaired three Bylaws Committee meetings, which you can read more about in the Bylaws Committee Report (available somewhere in this agenda). We also put out [several statements as an Executive](#) during the year. The most recent one – [regarding Queen's disturbing response to the raising of the Palestinian flag during a day of demonstrations against austerity and genocide](#) – quickly became our most-liked post on Instagram. The 2023-24 Executive, with help from some of our friends and department Stewards, also purchased a projector [which we quickly put to use](#) in light of [announcements that more of the university was bought up by Stephen JR Smith](#) – which we [wrote him a letter about](#), in case you missed it. We challenged this institution on paper and on pavement, consistently. We also worked hard to serve our members, directly. Part of this, for me, included work to organize a Special General Meeting

(SGM) in October 2023 to elect two additional Co-chief Stewards to the Executive Committee, who have spent the last six months working with us, meaning we were able to operate at an expanded capacity.

When I ran for election into this role, I wanted to help make a tangible difference, no matter how small in the grand scheme of things. No, Smith didn't [give us \\$500k](#) to [revive the food fund](#), but we did make [graduate worker food insecurity](#) (and food insecurity generally) a central topic of conversation in a lot of important conversations (see [HERE](#), [HERE](#), [HERE](#), [HERE](#), and [HERE](#)). We did [distribute thousands of dollars in direct aid through the Emergency Food Support program](#) (also see: [THIS](#) and [THIS](#)). We did build solidarity across campus groups and in the community, on this issue and many more. We did [connect a lot of members with financial, professional, and community supports and resources](#). I hope the next Executive Committee will continue to build on this momentum, and continue to center these issues in all conversations. Food, housing, rest – without these things, [we cannot do our academic work to any kind of exceptional degree](#).

I would like to thank the colleagues who I have learned so much from this year, many of them on the Executive Committee during my term, and many who I won't get the chance to thank individually. I am grateful we were brought together for this year, and proud of what we did, and the ways we did it. Exiting this role, my hope is that momentum continues in our ongoing projects of solidarity-building and community-making, without ever losing sight of the overarching goal of collective liberation. As our outgoing president [has asked recently](#), better academia is possible – why not at Queen's? Why not now? Why not for us?

- Elizabeth Cameron, Information Officer PSAC 901

### **Treasurer**

I am so grateful to have served the local in this role alongside my fellow executive committee members. I am proud of not only how productive we were but also how much support and compassion we showed to each other during our term. We (especially I) would not have accomplished nearly as much without the dedication of our full-time staff member, Tracie Dixon. Tracie has been instrumental in allowing this local to scale up our organizing and empower our membership.

### 2023-24 Overview

#### Income

Income from Membership Dues did exceed our budgeted expectations. We also began receiving income for the new Special Levy. We also recorded interest income for our GIC.

### Expenditures

All expenditures of this local remained within the budgeted line items for this fiscal year. The previous budget committee saw increases to the Steward's Council and Rank and File line items that allowed us to build our organizing capacity and demonstrate solidarity to other groups on campus fighting austerity measures at Queen's.

### Bursaries

- The Mental Health and Hardship Fund funded 55 applications for mental health support, 3 applications for emergency hardship and supported the Food Support Program until its conclusion in November.
- The Professional Development Fund was administered as a bursary that funded members professional development endeavors.
- The Childcare Bursary served members over three application periods and was maxed out every time.
- The Gender Affirmation Bursary was underutilized during this fiscal year despite being maxed out within a few months during the previous fiscal year.

### Accounting

During this fiscal year, we caught up on our audits and are hoping to pass the 2022/23 financial statements at this meeting. Scheduling for our next audit is already underway and will hopefully begin in the early summer.

### 2023-24 Budget Committee

The Budget Committee met four times this year. The summer and fall semester meetings proposed administrative budget amendments as well as the introduction of a special levy that were both passed by membership at the October 2023 SGM. We also put together a model for spending the Professional Development Fund won in the last round of collective bargaining. In the winter meetings, we worked on a spending model for our Defence Fund in the event of a strike that will be voted on by membership at the AGM. We also made a draft Budget for the 24/25 fiscal year. Major topics of discussion included Unit 1 Bargaining as well as consolidating committee budget line items to improve effective spending.

### 2024-25 Draft Budget

Based on the budget committee's proposals, the following draft budget has been proposed for approval. Income for this budget has been projected through extrapolation of numbers from the last several years, erring on a conservative estimate to reflect that the employer's austerity measures will likely hurt recruitment. This does include income through interest, despite the fact those funds do not reach maturity for a period of 2 more years. Similar to last year, this budget allows the local to carry out deficit spending, allowing expenditure for 2024-25 to exceed income for 2024-25 if

necessary. Spending over income will be on the basis of reserve funds, accumulated over the past years.

- Mia Akbar, Treasurer PSAC 901

### **Co-Chief Stewards**

In the last year, we have had the privilege of working together to serve 901 Local as Co-Chief Stewards. We have had the opportunity to work together to better represent members through organizing stewards' council meetings, supporting members through grievance procedures and keeping updated list of Stewards to better facilitate communication between the Local executives and members, through respective department's Steward, mobilizing for better wages and work conditions, campaigning against budget cuts and austerity in Queen's University, etc. Below, is a brief summary of issues we have worked together to address as well as achievements and challenges we have encountered in the past year and advisory note to incoming Co-Chief Stewards.

#### Stewards Council Meeting

Teamwork has been at the heart of our position as Co-Chief Stewards. Together, we work collaboratively to put together the regular monthly Stewards Council, to check in with stewards on the challenges that members are facing in individual departments and discuss efforts to support and engage the membership. Inherited from the previous Co-Chief Stewards' agenda setting convention, we included a departmental update session in the agenda. Stewards' Council has been attended by almost 30 stewards on average each month. This year, we also used the stewards' network to run "info-sessions" about the Collective Agreement, which expires on April 30, 2024. The stewards organized around sixteen sessions with collaboration among two or more departments to reach out to the members and prepare our rank-file membership base for the upcoming bargaining period. Stewards Council meetings this past year have been conducted both in person and virtually, a hybrid option which has increased access and attendance.

#### Grievances

In the past year, we have had the opportunity to meet regularly with the employer to advocate better work and living conditions for members. We have handled grievances and represented members on issues related to disability rights and duty to accommodate, workplace safety and inclusion, that recognizes the intersectional and multiple positionalities that each member has to deal or negotiate life with. We have supported members in requesting for their rights to timely TAF contract release for



proper understanding and negotiation. We have also had prior (inconclusive) work about issues regarding the right to leave, mental health and supervisory negotiation; with the understanding that, exhaustion and burning out, is a life issue. Hence, it must be recognised as part of social injustice.

One grievance category that we repeatedly handled has been concerned with contract hours and the requirement for a new contract for the work to be completed. We are witnessing bigger class sizes in tutorial or lab sections and more work with either the same or reduced contract hours across departments. In most cases, we managed to protect the rights of our members by gaining compensation for the extra hours they have expended.

Another grievance category that Co-Chief Stewards have dealt with is related with the contract timeline and employment supervisor-employee meetings that are supposed to happen before contract signing and in mid-semester. The number of individual grievances in this category also prompted the Local to file a policy grievance regarding the issue.

In terms of policy grievances, we have filed four policy grievances this semester (Winter 2024). One of the policy grievances stems from the failure of the employer to inform the postdoctoral scholars about their eligibility for the UPP Pension Plan in a timely manner. Another policy grievance was about the timeline and naming convention of contract forms that the Employer emails to the Local. We are noticing a high number of contracts with missing information, and irregular naming conventions. We are currently in negotiation of Best Practice Guidelines with the employer. We have recently filed two discrimination related policy grievances - one about the March 9 statement by the University about Palestinian flag and the other one is about the discriminatory final exam questions in the Department of Civil Engineering towards queer community. We have also seen a growing initiative by the departmental stewards to start grievance processes by becoming the first representative for the grieving members in their respective departments.

### Recruitment of Stewards

We have had the opportunity of recruiting more stewards to enhance member representation. We have also maintained a more-structured Stewards mail-list that allows for effective and timely communication between the Local executives and the Stewards. Currently, thirty-five departments have a steward or, in some instances two, in the Stewards' network. Going forward, we should be moving more proactively to recruit stewards for some departments in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty of Engineering, and Smith School of Business. This is because of a recognition of long standing underrepresentation of members from these departments/faculties. This is with

the intention of creating further awareness of PSAC's activities as well as graduate-workers' rights within the Collective Agreement.

#### Committee-Membership and Advocacy

Stewards' Council has also been the venue for recruiting new members to the active committees and working groups. The Community Housing Tenant Association, Political Action Committee, Budget Committee, and Bylaws Committee have actively shared their updates and invited stewards to their meetings using the Stewards' Council and Stewards' network.

#### Members Info-Session

In collaboration with the Executive Council and the Bargaining Committee, the Stewards' Council organized info sessions that aimed to increase members' knowledge of their current Collective Agreements and rights. These sessions have also served as a preliminary outreach instrument, giving the Local a more accurate idea about our rank-and-file members' concerns and priorities.

#### Organizing and Mobilization

Co-Chief Stewards tried to mobilize the stewards and the membership for events and actions organized by other initiatives and organizations on campus and in the broader labor community. We tried to increase attendance at the anti-austerity rally, pro-Palestinian demonstration and strike solidarity events. We also passed a motion this year to recognize Caste as a ground for discrimination, revising our anti-harassment statement at the Local level, with an intention to take the motion to the National PSAC Convention.

#### Challenges and Advisory Note to Incoming Co-Chief Stewards

Co-Chief Stewards constitute the link between the membership and the Employer by virtue of their direct involvement in the grievance filing and grievance resolution. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for the upcoming Chief-Stewards to be vigilant about the areas where we observe the highest CA violation practices. Also, 2024/25 being a bargaining year will make the grievance processes an even more significant tool in our efforts to win a better CA, since they constitute the evidence for the majority of our demands. Therefore, Chief-Stewards should be able to work in close coordination with the Bargaining Team and the rest of the Executive officers.

As for the stewards' network, increasing representation from Health Sciences, Engineering and Smith Business School will make our outreach and mobilization more effective. Collaboration of Chief-Stewards with the Equity Officer, the VP RA and other executive members to recruit new members and to discuss strategies against the employer within a grievance committee would benefit the local immensely.

The level of work required of the Co-Chief Stewards has previously proven to be too great of a burden for two Chief Stewards, as evidenced by the early departure of one Chief Steward in this past year. With that understanding, and the knowledge that the bylaws and budget do not currently allow for a permanent increase in the number of Co Chief Stewards, it is absolutely essential that the work of the incoming Co Chief Stewards be supported by other Executive officers as well as department Stewards. This past year, we have found hybrid Stewards Council meetings to be an effective way to increase access and turnout of the Council and recommend that the incoming Co-Chiefs continue this model. In addition, we have found it to be beneficial to have one Chair for each meeting venue - that is, one chair to run the in-person session and one chair to facilitate the Zoom room, concurrently. Prior to implementing this structure, we received feedback from members that attended over Zoom that they were being overlooked - this structure has successfully remedied this issue. We believe that the incoming Chief Stewards will benefit from our experiences and labour as well as improve upon where we experienced challenges.

- Abigail Harrison, Nashita Syed, Idorenyin Williams, Canan Sahin, Co-Chief Stewards PSAC 901

### **Equity Officer**

*No report submitted.*

- Qazi Mustabeen Noor, Equity Officer PSAC 901

### **Health and Safety Officer**

On April 29, 2023, I had the privilege of participating in the Kingston Steps for Life Walk event. The purpose of this event was to raise awareness about the importance of workplace safety and to encourage preventative measures. I was honoured to represent PSAC 901 alongside our Office Manager, Tracie. The event was held at Little Cataraqui Conservation Area, located at 1641 Perth Road in Glenburnie, Ontario. This was a significant milestone for me, as it marked my first transitional assignment as a PSAC 901 executive member.

In the fall of 2023, after extensive planning and collaboration with fellow JHSC members throughout the summer, PSAC 901 Health and Safety launched a feedback form to assess the health and safety conditions of graduate teaching fellows, teaching assistants, research assistants, and postdoctoral scholars at Queen's University. The goal of this initiative is to improve workplace conditions and advocate for better policies. The feedback form is available on all PSAC 901 social media handles and website. I worked closely with Elizabeth Cameron, the information officer, to ensure that our PSAC 901 Health and Safety feedback was widely disseminated. The motivation behind the feedback form was to gain insight into the challenges faced by our members in light of

the current campus situation. The responses received so far have highlighted issues such as discrimination, psychological/mental health issues, unhelpful principal investigators (PIs)/supervisors, and payment issues. Addressing these concerns will require collaborative efforts from JHSC members and the emerging OH&S Officer. As a token of appreciation, my office distributed 15 Amazon gift cards worth \$25 each to randomly selected participants. It is my sincere hope that my successor will continue this practice.

In my dedication to being involved in union activities and health and safety concerns, I participated in the 2023 Fall Eastern Ontario Health and Safety Labour Education Workshop at Isaiah Tubbs Resort in November. Accompanying me was Noushin Rajabalinia, a postdoc representing the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science (FEAS) and a Joint Health and Safety Committee member. The event was proudly sponsored by PSAC Ontario and PSAC 901. Additionally, Noushin and I attended the Occupational Health and Safety for Supervisors workshop hosted at the Department of Cultural Studies. As an executive member, I joined the Joint Union and Management Committee meeting in November with President Justyna to address health and safety concerns and other issues affecting our members' well-being. I also provided a briefing on PSAC 901's efforts to address members' health and safety concerns at the Unity Council meeting in January. Furthermore, I was actively involved in several committees, including the bylaw committee, Kingston District Labour Council, political action committee, and bargaining committee, among others. Due to limited time and a focus on campus health and safety issues, I regret that I was unable to attend all meetings.

As the Occupational Health and Safety Officer, I had the pleasure of overseeing Natalie and Gui's full certification as JHSC members. My responsibilities included ensuring that health and safety resources were readily available on our organization's website for all members to access. In addition, I diligently maintained up-to-date information on the JHSC representatives and their reports on our website. I also worked closely with all representatives to ensure the timely completion of JHSC timesheets and to address any concerns or issues that arose. No detail was left unattended to ensure the safety and well-being of all members.

I have had the privilege of leading multiple Occupational Health and Safety Committee and Joint Health and Safety Committee meetings. As part of my duties, I spearheaded the recruitment of new members to the Joint Health and Safety Committee. Working closely with other executive members and the office manager, I ensured that the process was fair and transparent. Thanks to our efforts, we were able to welcome seven new members from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Health Sciences, Family Medicine, and the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science. For some time now, we have had a dedicated Unit 2 member representing the Faculty of

Health Sciences, but unfortunately, I was unable to fill the Unit 2 positions for Administrative and Family Medicine. I am hopeful that my successor will be able to achieve this goal. Additionally, I suggested important revisions in the bylaws as they concern the role of Occupational Health and Safety and communicated through Sandra Jeffers to the Department of Environment Health and Safety at Queen's University. I was also actively involved in several PSAC 901 events on campus, both in person and virtually. One of my main priorities was to provide support and assistance to members who came forward with concerns related to workplace injuries, hazards, campus cleanliness and maintenance, discrimination, accessibility, and more.

I am honoured to lead the JHSC and general members in participating in the 2024 Kingston Steps for Life Walk event. Our goal is to raise awareness about workplace tragedies and suggest preventive measures. I am proud to announce that with the support of PSAC 901, we surpassed our online fundraising goal cap by 333%, proving our dedication to supporting workers and families affected by workplace tragedy. The event will be held at Little Cataraqui Conservation Area, 1641 Perth Road, Kingston (Glenburnie), ON, and I am eager to collaborate with my successor and other members. Moving forward, I am excited to announce my attendance at the inaugural "Building Leadership Knowledge (B.L.K.)" Summit, taking place from March 21-23, 2024, at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel. This 3-day leadership Summit is designed for PSAC Ontario members who identify as Black, with the theme of "Inspire and Empower to Provoke Change," aiming to challenge colonial structures in the workplace, union, and labour movement.

It has been my pleasure to collaborate with the OHS and JHSC members, and I am grateful for the support of my fellow PSAC 901 executive members in prioritizing the health and safety of our members.

- Ikeoluwapo B. Baruwa, Health and Safety Officer PSAC 901

## **Appendix D: Written Reports from 2023-24 Committees**

### **Bylaws Committee**

Three meetings were held in the Winter 2024 term; on January 25, February 29, and March 21. Thanks to all who attended and contributed in various ways. Minutes are available, ask Tracie Dixon if you want to review them ([staff.psac901@gmail.com](mailto:staff.psac901@gmail.com)).

The committee's initial focus was to prepare for an AGM where there would potentially be necessary changes to [the bylaws](#) to allow for two co-chief steward executive committee positions to be added, including adjusting for 14 votes instead of 12. However, plans changed in this regard in light of new information and gained experience regarding what is suitable and best for the Local, so the Bylaws Committee pivoted as well. The committee focused on preparing a package of formal recommended changes to the bylaws for the incoming executive to add to, and prepare to adopt at an SGM in the Fall 2024 as relevant to the Local's needs. This aligned with the work the committee was already doing, which was to draft revisions to executive officer role descriptions in the Bylaws to better reflect the needs of the Local and realities of these portfolios, particularly in a world post-onset of COVID 19, et cetera.

The committee has assembled recommended changes and proposed revised versions of the Local's Objectives, the Treasurer, the Information Officer, Vice President Research Assistants (VP RA), and Equity Officer (EO) portfolios. These updates will be formally recommended to the incoming executive to adopt, and I am confident the proposed changes will make things work better overall both for the membership and executives in those roles.

Further, this committee has discussed, deliberated, followed up on, and ultimately recommended a structure for the 2024-25 executive committee with two co-chief stewards; one who primarily organizes stewards council and one who is more focused on grievances (as we have had in the past, with the past six months being an exception due to a temporary motion passed at the October 2023 SGM). We recommend the VP RA and the EO roles be functionally supportive as additional co-chief steward roles, in that the VPRA and EO would work on grievances supporting the Co-chief stewards, but also be more member facing towards Research Assistants and the Social Justice Committee, respectively. As well, and importantly, the overall goal is for all the executive positions to be able to jump in to support grievances relevant to their portfolio. Same with equity; rather than the EO being the person for all things equity, everyone must take an equity lens to their portfolio, and the EO will focus on equity organizing and grievances. A special thanks to the outgoing VP RA and EO, Milka and Mustabeen, for your input, perspective, and dedication to the membership over the past year.

The Treasurer (shoutout to Mia, evergreen) has done excellent work to write an addendum to the Bylaws to include a Strike Fund Model. It is the Bylaws Committee's position that it is incredibly important that we have this in place. In addition to the Budget Committee, the Bylaws Committee formally recommended this to be on the agenda for membership to vote to adopt at the 2024 AGM.

In addition, this Committee has prepared an omnibus list of recommendations regarding Bylaw revisions, updates, and addendums for the incoming Executive, and in doing so has identified priorities for continuing the project of updating and improving the PSAC 901 Bylaws' functionality in service of the membership. Most of these recommendations come from the Union Structure Committee's work in 2023, which was another successful endeavor we are grateful to have had a former member and executive committee member, Harsha, chair. Thanks to all who participated in that committee's work as well. To build on this momentum, which started in the Summer 2023 and carried on in the Winter 2024, the Bylaws Committee has initiated the process to hire an RA (contract over Summer 2024) to do a myriad of work on this, including conducting a comparative analysis of PSAC 901's structure and compensation models in comparison to other, similar Locals. Look out for more details regarding this contract and application deadlines in the coming months.

Thanks to Tracie Dixon, our incredible Office Manager, who stayed late on Thursdays to take minutes at these meetings, coordinated food for the hungry attendees, and contributed to the discussions as well as our day to day operations.

In solidarity, and the radical hope of collective liberation,  
- Elizabeth Cameron, Chair (Bylaws Committee), Information Officer

### **Occupational Health and Safety Committee Report**

Please [see the Health & Safety Officer's Executive Committee Report](#) for the report about the OH&S Committee activities **(Appendix C)**.

### **Political Action Committee**

The Political Action Committee (PAC) is one of the standing committees laid out in PSAC 901's bylaws. The committee met semi-regularly over the past year (6 times in total). Committee participation was quite variable, with much more engagement in the fall term than the winter term. I think that this was due in part to a concomitant increases in rank and file organizing, the emergence of other groups (e.g. Students vs Cuts, Queen's Coalition Against Austerity, Queen's Community Housing Residents Association), and a shift in focus of the membership/leadership to bargaining and anti-austerity organizing.

In the fall term, PAC was involved in organizing our members to turn out for the Principal's staff appreciation BBQ. We had good turnout for the event and used it as an opportunity to fundraise for the Food Support Fund (currently on hiatus due to depletion of funds) and raise awareness of the financial precarity and food insecurity faced by our members. [This received media coverage in the Queen's Journal](#) and local news

stations. PAC also organized another event "Respect our Research." The goals of the event were to demystify academic research to the general public, re-frame graduate students as workers producing research for the public good, (rather than just students/trainees), and advocate for more funding/better working conditions from our employer and the provincial government. We had pretty low turnout compared to what we had hoped for (~25 people), but had good engagement with those that attended.

Going forward into 2024-2025 I think it is important to be realistic about the capacity of the members and the executive being diluted by the presence of too many committees/groups at the expense of focusing on bargaining. The idea of combining the Social Justice and Political Action Committees continues to be a point of discussion to address this issue as they are very similar in scope but can inadvertently compete with one another for engagement from the membership/attention of the executive. Hopefully, whichever committee(s) continue to exist going forward will be better able to support our collective bargaining goals.

In solidarity,  
- Levi Duhaime, PAC Chair

### **Social Justice Committee**

*No report submitted.*

### **Unit 1 Bargaining Committee**

*No report submitted.*

### **Unit 2 Bargaining Committee**

*No report submitted.*

## **Appendix E: 2024-25 Executive Committee Member Nomination Letters\***

Please see the [Call for nominations](#) for more information.

**\*List not final, as nominations can be submitted to the Chief Returning Officer in writing until 4:30pm on April 2, 2024. This appendix will be updated as necessary and re-posted to the website with additional nomination letters up until April 2. On April 3, 2024 (the day of the AGM), nominations can only be accepted from the floor/verbally during the AGM. If no nominations are listed, no written nominations have been received for the role.**

### **President - Nominations**



## **Vice President Community Relations - Nominations**

## **Vice President Postdoctoral Scholars - Nominations**

Armineh Azizi (She/Her), Ph.D., EIT, LEED GA, Chemical Engineering Department, Postdoctoral Fellow

I am the Vice President of Postdoctoral Scholars at PSAC 901 Local, Unit 2, and have been an active bargaining team member since April 2023. My journey at Queen's University began in June 2021 as a postdoctoral fellow, where I am now managing the WWBL laboratory and research group in the Chemical Engineering Department. I am always passionate about supporting and advocating for postdoctoral scholars facing many challenges during the postdoc period. Therefore, I joined the bargaining committee of PSAC 901 in October 2022 to help the postdocs and make Queen's University a better workplace. As the Vice President of Postdoctoral Scholars, I started my role following a series of transitional meetings with previous executive members. My job also began with several critical meetings with the bargaining team and the negotiator.

During this position, I organized many postdoc events, such as social gatherings, a BBQ event, a Unit 2 general meeting, and postdoc lunch events. I collaborated closely with the mobilization team to organize the events and support better postdocs. I recognized the importance of the presence and involvement of postdocs in the community. These events have enhanced my understanding of postdoc challenges and concerns while facilitating improved networking and sharing of ideas. I have had the privilege of collaborating with people from different positions and negotiating about some postdoc issues. Recognizing the significance of data-driven advocacy, I initiated studies on postdoc salaries across Canadian universities and healthcare issues specific to postdocs at Queen's University. I reported the collected data at the bargaining committee meetings via a professional presentation. I prepared and analyzed some surveys conducted on salary, healthcare, University Pension Plan, and childcare based on a summary of responses to have strong resources for supporting the postdocs.

Besides, I attended two rallies and had a talk regarding healthcare problems at Queen's University for the postdocs. I also had an interview to discuss postdoc concerns and situations and my experience as a postdoc at Queen's University. During my VP position, I presented at the postdoc orientation sessions to talk about the PSAC role, postdoc involvement, their rights at the workplace, and the bargaining process. Since October 2023, as a union bargaining team member, my team and I have negotiated 20 times with the employer to do better and meet their commitments as a university leader.

If re-elected, I am committed to tirelessly addressing the unique challenges faced by postdocs, including advocating for improved housing support, raising minimum salaries, and enhancing healthcare services. Drawing upon my experience and skills, I aim to foster a deeper understanding of postdoc issues and work collaboratively toward

meaningful solutions. Once again, I am deeply passionate about serving in this capacity and humbly seek your support for my candidacy. Together, let us continue championing the rights and well-being of postdoctoral scholars at Queen's University.

### **Vice President Research Assistants - Nominations**

Ephraim Nukpetsi, Faculty of Education, Research Assistant & Teaching Assistant

I am excited to indicate my desire to contest for the position of Vice President, Research Assistant category. As an enthusiastic and committed member of our union, I have dedicated myself to advocating for the rights and welfare of our community since I first joined the union.

In the course of my strong interest in the affairs of the union, I was nominated and elected to serve on the bargaining committee of the union during one of our general meetings. Through this role, I have actively participated in numerous meetings, contributing insights and ideas to shape our collective future. This experience has not only deepened my understanding of our union's values but has also honed my skills in negotiation and consensus-building.

Currently, I proudly represent our esteemed union as the Education Graduate Student Society (EGSS) representative on the Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS). In this capacity, I have had the privilege of advocating for our interests in SGPS meetings, ensuring our voices are heard and our concerns addressed.

Before my tenure here, I served as the local chairperson of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), the leading teacher body in Ghana. Working collaboratively with my fellow executives, we tirelessly championed the rights and welfare of our members, demonstrating my dedication to collective action and solidarity.

Furthermore, my leadership journey started way back, as evidenced by my roles as a senate member and vice president of the student union during my graduate and undergraduate studies in Ghana. These experiences have equipped me with a diverse skill set and a profound understanding of the dynamics of student and labor movements.

With all these experiences, I am confident in my ability to effectively serve as your Vice President, Research Assistant. If entrusted with this responsibility, I pledge to continue advocating tirelessly for the interests of our members, fostering inclusivity, and driving positive change within our union.

From the moment I joined, my mission has been clear: to advocate fiercely for students' entitlements and ensure that they are not only recognized but upheld. Standing

shoulder to shoulder with every member of the union, I promise to be an unwavering advocate for the rights and dignity of workers. Together, we will push back against injustice, fight for fair wages, and safer working conditions, and secure the rights of every student worker. Let us forge ahead, fueled by solidarity and determination, to build a future where the voice of the union is heard and respected.

Through collaboration, education, and advocacy, we will build a resilient network that amplifies student voices and protects their interests. Together, we will establish a culture of rights awareness, solidarity, and action within the union, ensuring that every student's rights are respected and upheld.

Join me in this noble cause as we strive to create a more just and equitable environment for all students.

### **Information Officer - Nominations**

Christina Pilgrim, Sociology, Teaching Assistant

I believe that I am a strong candidate for the position of "information officer" with PSAC 901 because I am organized, can collaborate efficiently with my colleagues, and take the initiative to help bring about change within the institution. During the past year as the PSAC 901 steward for the sociology department, I've made an effort to have informal conversations with colleagues about their working conditions and the austerity measures at Queen's. I've also been extremely outspoken when teaching tutorials about the current state of the university to showcase how important critical thinking is when it comes to the institutions we learn and operate in (thank you, Queen's, for being so messy that now all of the second-year sociology students understand neoliberalism, the shock doctrine and actor-network theory). I've also had the opportunity to take the meeting notes during the monthly steward's council meetings and get to know all of the stewards a bit more. With the help of PSAC 901, I've been able to start a BIPOC mentorship program for existing and incoming students in the sociology department to connect them with professors and graduate students in the department for support. Thank you all for your time and consideration and I hope to continue to be a part of this amazing community of people.

### **Treasurer - Nominations**

Iveta Steblevska, Mechanical and Materials Engineering, Teaching Assistant

I am a PhD student and TA in the MME department. For the last seven months my main involvement with the Union has been through working as a mobilizer for Unit 2 members, assisting the bargaining team to get a fair contract for postdoctoral fellows at Queen's.

One of the main initiatives carried out by our team was the creation of an extended guide to the situation Queen's postdocs are placed in. Based on the guide, we created a petition in support of fair compensation for Queen's postdocs. I personally researched and carried out widespread analysis to support the seven main demands presented to the employer by the bargaining team. I analysed and compared wages across departments and supervisors, gender, and residency status in Canada. I also reviewed housing affordability, the cost of living, and childcare accessibility (in five childcare centres around Kingston) for postdocs earning the minimum base and average salaries at Queen's. Through these activities, I demonstrated comprehensive research and analytical skills.

Based on my own experience as an underpaid international student and graduate worker here at Queen's, I have learnt to budget meticulously, track expenses, and identify areas for savings. These skills have enabled me to navigate through various financial challenges and achieve my goals effectively. As treasurer, I would utilize my analytical abilities to scrutinize financial data, identify trends, and make informed decisions to ensure the prudent management of resources. By doing so I would hope to contribute to achieving the goals of the Union and improve all of our employment conditions and lives here in Kingston. My attention to detail would help in maintaining accurate records and detecting any discrepancies or irregularities. Additionally, my perseverance would drive me to pursue financial stability and efficiency, even in the face of obstacles or setbacks. Overall, my personal experience has equipped me with the essential qualities to excel as treasurer and contribute positively to the Union's financial well-being.

I would also like to continue to build the Union's network of people connected by the same values and goals, fostering collaboration and exchange of ideas. The past few months and the ongoing events at the university have proved that we are strong when we are together, but also that we need to remain united to achieve real and lasting change. There are many people who dedicate their time and efforts voluntarily to make our lives a bit easier, but often they lack support. I want to bring together all the groups who are officially supported by the Union or just share the same values. I believe together we can achieve more!

### **Co-Chief Stewards - Nominations**

#### **Akomaye Undie, Education, Research Fellow & Research Assistant**

I am writing to nominate myself, Akomaye Undie, for the esteemed position of Co-Chief Steward 1 at PSAC 901. Through my extensive involvement with PSAC 901 and my unwavering commitment to the principles of equity, fairness, and advocacy, I am confident in my ability to effectively represent the interests of our members in this capacity.

As a Research Fellow and Research Assistant in the Department of Education, I have gained valuable experience and developed essential skills in leadership, communication, and conflict resolution. My dedication to supporting my peers and ensuring their rights are upheld has been a driving force in my work within our union.

Furthermore, my passion for equity and social justice has been a guiding principle throughout my academic and professional journey. I am deeply committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment within our university community, and I believe that serving as Co-Chief Steward 1 would provide me with an opportunity to further advance these important values.

Considering this, I would like to inform the committee that, after careful consideration and due consultation, I have decided to withdraw my application for the position of Vice President-Research Assistants (VP-RA). I believe that my nomination for Co-Chief Steward 1 aligns more closely with the needs and priorities of our union currently, and I am fully committed to serving in this capacity.

I strongly nominate myself, Akomaye Undie, for the position of Co-Chief Steward 1, and I am confident that I will serve with integrity, dedication, and a steadfast commitment to advancing the rights and interests of our members.

Thank you for considering my nomination, and I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the continued success and growth of PSAC 901 in this role.

Kavya Harshitha Jidugu, Faculty of Education, Research Assistant

I believe in transparency and responsiveness as a person who has worked in handling the grievances of postgraduate students as a student affairs council member for 2 years (2021-2023) at IIT Gandhinagar. I am dedicated to ensuring that every grievance is addressed promptly and fairly. Transparency and responsiveness are paramount in building trust within our union community, and hence, I base these as my guiding ethics. In recognizing that steward empowerment and training are key for the connectedness across departments and the function of the union, I believe in empowering stewards with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively represent their departments. Coordinating comprehensive training programs and providing ongoing support will be a priority to ensure that every steward understands their duties and responsibilities.

I will maintain a thorough understanding of the Collective Agreement, ensuring that our members' rights are upheld and that agreements are implemented correctly. Handling grievances also means recognizing the areas of conflict and strategizing collaboratively with other executive members for conflict resolution. I plan to work closely with the incoming president and other executive members, especially the equity officer, to

address the grievances. I believe in working collaboratively with fellow Co-Chief Steward and union executive members to achieve our collective goals. By fostering a culture of collaboration and solidarity, we can strengthen our union and better serve the needs of our members. As a Co-Chief steward, a researcher working on social justice education and a caste-oppressed woman of colour from India, I am committed to advocating for the rights and well-being of our members at every stage of the grievance process. From initial receipt to resolution, I will provide unwavering support and guidance to ensure that grievances are handled appropriately.

My six-plus years (2017-2023) of working experience as a member of "All India Students Association" (AISA), 2 years of experience as a Student affairs council member at IITGN (2021-2023), Ganga Hostel Council President at RIEM NCERT (2018-2019) will support my journey as a Co-Chief steward in addressing the grievances of the union members. Other than my formal union experience, I am also a board member of the South Asian Dalit Adivasi Network (SADAN) in Canada, addressing the issues and complaints of the Caste oppressed communities in Canada. This experience will not only be an add-on but also help me to see the patterns of grievances at Queen's, which can further impact policies and collective agreements.

"JAI BHIM, JAI SAVITRI, HUL JOHAR"

### **Equity Officer - Nominations**

Idorenyin Williams, Cultural Studies, Teaching Assistant

I am a second year PhD student in Cultural Studies. My life (academic and career) interest and focus lies at the intersection of gender, sexuality, indigeneity, coloniality and social and environmental justice. In the last five months, starting from November 2023, I have had the privilege of serving 901 Local as a Co-Chief Steward. I have had the opportunity to work alongside three other Co-Chief Stewards to better represent members through organizing stewards' council meetings, supporting members through grievance procedures and keeping an updated list of Stewards to better facilitate communication between the Local executives and members, through respective department's Steward.

Being mostly grounded on social justice and equity, I have handled grievances and represented members on issues related to disability rights and duty to accommodate, workplace safety and inclusion, that recognizes the intersectional and multiple positionalities that each member has to deal or negotiate life with. I have supported members in requesting for their rights to timely TAF contract release for proper understanding and negotiation. I have also had prior (inconclusive) work about issues regarding the right to leave, mental health and supervisory negotiation; with the understanding that, exhaustion and burning out, is a life issue. Hence, must be recognised as part of social injustice.

Teamwork has always been the cornerstone of my career. In the past months, I have worked together with an amazing set of Co-Chief Stewards; Canan, Abby and Nashita, to plan and execute our monthly Stewards council meeting. I have had the opportunity to welcome one Steward into the fold. I have also, joined in mobilizing in solidarity with the SPHR, for a cease fire in Gaza and a call to Queens to stop funding genocide and apartheid committed against the Palestinians. I have also benefited from the few check-in chats with Tracie, who have had to explain a lot to me on the operations of the Local. I have also had few opportunities to engage and mobilize with other executive members during executive meetings, Bargaining committee meetings, as well as irregular chats on WhatsApp. These have all given me the right tool, language, experiences, needed to further serve members better.

I would love to nominate myself for the role of Equity Officer, with tailored interest towards grievances. In the past months, I have understood how multiple positionalities, shapes members lives differently and also determines how members are treated at the workplace. My role as an Equity Officer with the Local, will be to handle grievances with a lens of equity. As an Equity Officer, I will foreground and advocate justice for issues related to gender, Sexual identity and orientation, name change/sex transitioning leave and accommodations, disability rights and different forms of social justice for the benefit of 901 Local members. Thank you...in solidarity.

#### **Health and Safety Officer - Nominations**