

November 4, 2024

Emma Bell, Ph.D.
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To the Queen's University Administration:

Principal Patrick Deane (principal@queensu.ca)
Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) Matthew Evans (provost@queensu.ca, matthew.evans@queensu.ca)
Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration) Donna Janiec (janiecd@queensu.ca)
Vice-Principal (Research) Nancy Ross (nancy.ross@queensu.ca, vpresearch@queensu.ca)
Associate Vice-Principal (Faculty Relations) Dan McKeown (dan.mckeown@queensu.ca)
Faculty Relations Office Director Michael Villeneuve (michael.villeneuve@queensu.ca)
CC: PSAC 901 (vppd_psac901@gmail.com, president.psac901@gmail.com)

Dear Principal Deane, Provost Evans, and Queen's Administration,

I am writing to express my support for postdoctoral researchers at Queen's University, as well as my shock and disappointment at the University's behaviour during collective bargaining.

Postdocs form the backbone of academic research. They are the most qualified and experienced academics dedicated to hands-on research. Moreover, postdocs publish manuscripts, supervise students and apply for grants. Universities like Queen's use the work of postdocs to showcase their research profile on an international stage, raise millions of dollars in grant funding and educate the next generation.

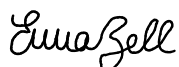
Without postdocs, we severely limit the productivity and innovation of Canadian academic research. Without postdocs we undermine our ability through research to explore the world around us, improve patient outcomes and better society. Without postdocs, the world cannot take Canada seriously as a centre of research.

Thus, I am alarmed to hear of the how appallingly Queen's University treats its postdocs. Queen's University appear - in the most generous interpretation - disinterested in negotiating a collective agreement with the postdoc union. You made your intentions perfectly clear on the first day of negotiation when you cancelled the scheme giving postdocs and their families access to healthcare without replacement. After this inauspicious start, the bargaining team's schedule was so limited you would think they were avoiding a socially unaware distant relative, not attempting to engage in good faith negotiations. On the few occasions that their schedule would allow meeting, Queen's may as well have responded to the union's proposals with a whoopee cushion. And now, Queen's are preparing to lock postdocs out of their workplaces. A world-class university like Queen's should be removing hurdles to their research, not literally creating them.

Postdoctoral researchers have spent over a decade accumulating their knowledge, skill and experience. All they want is a safe and supportive work environment that values their labour. Queen's offers postdocs a minimum salary of \$35,958, roughly equivalent to Ontario minimum wage. Furthermore, Queen's refuses postdocs access to healthcare and childcare benefits available to graduate student workers. How can Queen's attract and retain highly-skilled researchers when it offers them so little?

It is self-mutilation for Queen's University treat postdoctoral researchers with such disrespect. I can only conclude that the bargaining team comprises a troupe of immersive performance artists commenting on the destructive power of false economy. I look forward to your proving me wrong.

Yours expectantly,



Emma Bell, Ph.D.

Recovering postdoc

Former member of the UHN Postdoc Unionization Campaign