



Public Service Alliance of Canada
Local 901

PSAC Local 901 - Unit 1 Bargaining Communique #5

Subject: The Employer's Continued Inaction Before Strike Deadline

Despite two days of conciliation on February 25th and 26th, the Employer failed to engage meaningfully, making little to no progress toward a fair agreement. The bargaining team will not negotiate against itself—our proposals remain firm. We are awaiting genuine negotiations on March 9th.

The Employer is disregarding key issues that affect your financial stability, physical and mental well-being, and overall quality of life as graduate student-workers. They have demonstrated a critical lack of respect for fundamental concerns that directly impact your livelihood.

Key Issues that the Employer refuses to address:

1. Wages and Funding

- The Employer's wage proposal is both inadequate and disrespectful. While you deserve more, they have offered only 2.25% per year, which fails to keep up with inflation and rising costs and doesn't address the need for the market adjustment of your wages.
- They have outright rejected the \$1,500 lump sum owed to you due to financial losses incurred under the unconstitutional Bill 124.
- They refuse to establish an annual emergency support fund, which would allow your union to assist members facing financial hardship.
- Other universities have a proper labour-to-funding ratio in place—Queen's does not. Instead of ensuring fair funding, they expect you to work for the money you're owed.
- They refuse to establish a professional development fund, yet continue to advertise this institution as a place that supports student and worker development.

It is important to note that our proposals are on par with recent bargaining wins of our colleagues at Western University, Ontario Tech, and the University of Toronto. We seek to ensure that your standard of living matches those of the wider academic sector in Ontario.

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2. Disrespect for Your Work and Contributions

- The Employer refuses to recognize equal pay for equal work. While adjuncts are compensated for course design, Teaching Fellows (TFs) are expected to do this work without any compensation.
- TFs design, teach, and manage courses—yet the Employer insists they should do this without proper compensation.
- The Employer continues to insist on creating a two-tier system for RAs. While they argue that they want to honour the greater expertise of PhD RAs, we know that they simply want to divide you. We have seen the negative impacts of two-tiering on our CUPE siblings in custodial and groundskeeping work on campus, and we refuse to allow this corrosive tactic to spread to more sectors of work.

3. Attacks on Sick Leave and Workplace Rights

- The Employer wants to prorate sick leave, meaning workers with short contracts would be denied adequate leave. Some may not receive sick leave at all.
- They propose an expiry date on their letter of understanding regarding sexual harassment prevention and anti-racism training, signaling an intent to stop updating these crucial resources. This is unacceptable.
- They refuse to recognize the University's role and responsibility as an Employer, landlord, and educational institution in shaping the Kingston housing market and the housing affordability crisis. We're asking for a commitment to build more graduate housing, so the Kingston community can enjoy living in Kingston alongside students and graduate workers. We know and recognize that graduate student-workers cannot work unhoused, and we understand the intrinsic connections between housing and work.

4. Disregard for Graduate Student Parents

- The Employer refuses to include graduate student-workers in the Queen's Childcare Support Plan, even though better-paid employees have access to this subsidy. They similarly refused our proposals for a variety of support funds—your union intended to use this money to, among other needs, boost our existing and well-used childcare bursary, but the employer's point-blank refusal indicates a complete lack of regard for the needs of children and families in our Unit.



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The Time for Action Is Now

The Employer is forcing you to choose between rent, groceries, self-care, mental and physical well-being, and your degree. This is unacceptable. We have one last opportunity to meet with them on March 9th—it is up to them to take your concerns seriously.

Your work keeps Queen's University running. Your expertise and contributions are essential. The Employer must recognize your worth and stop undervaluing, disrespecting, and overexploiting you.

Together, We Will Win!

This is our moment to secure a historic contract for graduate student workers—not just at Queen's, but across the province. Do not let the Employer push you around. The time to stand up is NOW. The team is committed to reaching the deal at the table on the 9th, but it will also be our honour to meet with you at the picket lines on Monday, March 10th.

The workers, united, will never be defeated!

Solidarity forever!

PSAC 901 Bargaining Team