

# PSAC 901

## Statement and Call to Action!:

### PSAC 901 Local Stands with International Graduate Students/Migrant Workers!

**January 6, 2025:** The Social Justice/Political Action Committee of PSAC 901 Local, expresses solidarity with International students who simultaneously form a larger number of graduate workers at Queen's University and the growing section of migrant workers in Canada. International students at Queen's University (indeed, Canada), particularly, graduate students who also pair as migrant workers, are forced to deal with unfair immigration policies, restrictions to Post-Graduate Work Permit (PGWP), funding caps, and deportation. International graduate students are also forced to juggle emotional blackmail with their studies and work; as they are often witch-hunted, scapegoated and blamed by the Canadian state for the housing crisis.

One of the bravest protests under the threat of deportation and stigmatization began in Brampton on August 30, 2025, against unfair immigration policies<sup>1</sup>. These policies, including restricted Post-Graduate Work Permit (PGWP) renewals and limits on international student intake, threaten thousands of students with deportation and reinforce the racist portrayal of international students as the cause of housing and cost-of-living crises, erasing their massive role in the higher education sector and the broader Canadian economy. Since tuition income gradually replaced government funding as the major source of revenue for higher education institutions since the 1990s, international students have borne the financial burden by paying exorbitant tuitions — three to five times higher than their domestic counterparts<sup>2</sup>, supplanting the shrinking federal and provincial funding for higher education in Canada.

In addition, international/migrant students contribute significantly to Canada's economy, mostly under super-exploitative conditions. In 2022, their spending added \$37.3 billion to economic activities, with \$30.9 billion directly contributing to Canada's GDP (International Education Strategy, 2022).<sup>3</sup> Despite this, international students today constitute the first target of higher education austerity measures from the federal to local level, as seen with the federal visa cuts, provincial work permit denials, and Queen's University cutting the International Graduate Award for master's students in Kingston.

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<sup>1</sup> Socialist.ca. "International Students Fight Trudeau Deportation Plans." Published October 3, 2024. Accessed November 17, 2024. <https://socialist.ca/node/4930>.

<sup>2</sup> CIC News. "Comparing International and Domestic Student Fees in Canada." December 2023. <https://www.cicnews.com/2023/12/comparing-international-and-domestic-student-fees-in-canada-1240494.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada. "Economic Impact of International Education in Canada – 2022 Update." International Education Strategy, 2022. <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/impact-2022/index.aspx?lang=eng>.

These anti-migrant policies disproportionately affect racialized graduates who belong to multiple equity-seeking groups. By using the “international students” as a neutral denominator, the federal and provincial governments hide the fact that these students are predominantly brown and black, and their journey to Canada for higher education cannot be politicized enough given the historic injustices each community has faced for centuries. Moreover, any anti-immigrant policy inevitably fuels scapegoating and legitimizes the racist rhetoric of the far-right through an official stamp of the Canadian state.

One lie that is often presented as the pretext of the policies to limit international student intake and restrict work permit renewals is that international students are responsible for housing shortages and rising rents. This scapegoating conceals the housing shortage's real causes: inadequate housing policies and unchecked real estate speculation. Here at Queen's, we have seen a historic increase (a repeated 10 percent rise for three consecutive years) in the Community Housing rents, which has nothing to do with the international student numbers.

These policies reflect a broader system of exploitation that starts with the most marginalized and moves outward. In our refusal to tolerate any anti-migrant policy of restriction and deportation, both of which have racist implications and grave consequences for international students,

PSAC Local 901 demands that Queen's University restores the International Graduate Award and adopt policies that support, rather than exploit, international students. We demand that the Canadian state lift all bans and caps on International admissions and PGWP eligibility and duration

We urge all labour organizations in the higher education sector (all PSAC components and Locals, CUPE, OPSEU and USW locals) to stand with international students/migrant workers at Queen's University and other higher educational institutions. We demand:

- International student funding increment
- Eliminate admissions and funding caps
- Extend post-graduate work permits expiring in 2024-25.
- Create a fair, transparent pathway to permanent residency.
- Fair work conditions
- Provide five-year PGWPs for all international graduates.

We therefore call on all International graduate students-workers at Queen's to join us for an International student social to discuss and call on our employer to hearken to our demands.

Date: January 8, 2025

Time: 5:30pm - 7:30pm

Venue: Robert Sutherland Hall, Room 202.

**In Solidarity,**

**International Students-Migrant Justice Working Group (ISMJ),  
*Social Justice/Political Action Committee, PSAC 901 Local***