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Concerned Kingstonite

1 message

Riley Jones <riley.jones.b@gmail.com>

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To: provost@queensu.ca, "principal@queensu.ca" <principal@queensu.ca>, matthew.evans@queensu.ca, janiecd@queensu.ca, nancy.ross@queensu.ca, dan.mckeown@queensu.ca, michael.villeneuve@queensu.ca, "rector@queensu.ca" <rector@queensu.ca>

Cc: info.officer.psac901@gmail.com, president.psac901@gmail.com

March 24th, 2025

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

My name is Riley Jones. I am neither a student nor worker at Queen's University. I am a resident of Kingston, a prospective graduate student, an independent scholar, a unionized worker, and extremely concerned with how your public ---**tax funded**--- post-secondary educational institution is being rampantly corporatized to the detriment of its workers and students.

PSAC 901's demands are public record; we, the public, are taking note of your lackluster responses to these demands. It is frankly shocking to see items on that list being denied to Queen's graduate workers that are the expectation in any other workplace such as: paid training including sexual violence/harassment/anti-racism training, comprehensive anti-discrimination policy that includes caste, an equitable labour/funding ratio, leave of absence concerning non-familial relations, basic transparency, no pay clawbacks, appropriate workplace accomodation policy, accountability to external legislation, subsidized parking, and ratification payment for unconstitutional wage caps, to name a few.

At no other workplaces are workers expected to pay their employers exorbitant sums whether or not they are getting an appropriate service in return (tuition with no coursework? seriously?). If a worker spends their own time labouring hard to get external funding, nowhere else is their employer allowed to expropriate that funding to supplement their own costs. If a landlord wants to hike up the rent, nowhere else are they allowed to do so in excess of 2.5%. If Queen's admin believes that any of this is acceptable, they need a reality check.

Myself and all other unionized workers know that strikes are the last option to advocate for ourselves after all other means of advocacy are dismissed by the employer. We know that union representation, collective bargaining, and strike mandates are democratically determined. We know that nobody goes on strike unless they have legitimate reasons to do so. To see that CUPE and USW have also had to level strike mandates at your institution this year belies the fact that underpayment and mistreatment are endemic to Queen's University.

The excessive amount of money that Queen's senior administration lines their own pockets with, wastes paying private security to intimidate a lawful strike, paying untrained strikebreakers to do the work of striking employees, paying your bargaining team's Sunshine List wages to stall negotiations and fight your own staff all could be used to address the legitimate demands that PSAC 901 advocates for.

I consider the research and education that public learning institutions such as Queen's are meant to provide an overwhelming public good ---the work that your graduate student workers do is integral to this--- which is why it is such a monumental shame when profit seeking gets prioritized by those who should be fighting the hardest for it. It's rotten that the quality of education that you promised to students is suffering because you refuse to negotiate in good faith. Even worse is that so many students who need a GPA rating this semester for program requirements and scholarships may be denied these options if their final grades are pro-rated. In what world could I ever recommend a university that disrespects their staff and students to such an extent to any prospective employees, students, or donors? Kingston knows that it is Queen's University's senior administration who are perpetuating this strike by refusing to return to the bargaining table in good faith; if you really care about public education, public research, and upholding a good name for yourselves as a public institution, I suggest you start with upholding the rights and dignity of **your** public service workers.

Sincerely,