

Dear Queen's Administration, Faculty, Staff, and Students,

We are writing to you today to share feedback that has been collected from the undergraduate student body in regards to PSAC 901 Unit 1's current labour action. As you are aware, our unit is currently on strike due to Queen's University's refusal to provide graduate students with a fair new contract that [addresses key concerns](#)—such as childcare benefits, access to affordable housing, tuition minimization, manageable Teaching Assistant to student ratios, and an equitable funding to labour ratio.

The upper administration's insistence on conveying a “business as usual” approach while refusing to return to the bargaining table reflects a lack of commitment to providing a fair education to their undergraduate students. Undergrads' successes rely on the invaluable support they receive from their Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Teaching Fellows (TFs), and as our strike has shown, when TAs and TFs do not go to work undergraduate students do not receive the same quality of education.

In response to Queen's repeated assertion that [“classes are expected to continue as scheduled.”](#) we have surveyed the undergraduate student body to assess how our strike action has impacted their education. Our **“Fair Education Form”** engages directly with the lived experiences of undergraduate students who are currently facing uncertainty. The findings of this survey, gathered from 205 undergraduate responses, demonstrate that **the University's refusal to offer a fair contract has resulted in severe learning disruptions.**

These disruptions include, but are not limited to:

1. A lack of feedback on important assignments
2. The cancellation of assignments and exams
3. The re-weighting of existing grades
4. The elimination of proper grading in favour of a “CR” model
5. Missed learning hours due to cancelled labs and tutorials
6. Missed class hours due to classes taught by TFs being cancelled entirely
7. **Unsafe lab practices in high-risk laboratories**

These disruptions deprive students of their education by removing their opportunity to grow from feedback and improve themselves by practicing their skills, and by severely reducing the amount of course content they paid to learn. Additionally, many undergraduates reported that these disruptions caused increased stress; some of this stress was related to concern for the future of their education should they lose opportunities to improve their grades through pro-rating or receiving a “CR.”

More concretely, the statistics coming out of this form are particularly alarming:

- **183 unique courses** were reported as being disrupted
- 44.8% of submissions mentioned labs and tutorials being cancelled; 38.3% mentioned classes being cancelled altogether

- 67.8% of responses said they were missing grades, and 55.7% specifically mentioned missing feedback
- 32.2% of students reported increased stress
- 45.4% of responses said their quality of education has been reduced, and **15.8% specifically and unprompted said they felt they are not getting what they paid for**

If students feel they are not getting what they paid for, then how much money are they missing out on?

- The 183 disrupted courses total to **over 36,000 individual class enrollments**
- Averaging out tuition costs – including factoring in the increased tuition of international students – dividing by five to get the cost of one course, then multiplying this by the amount of disrupted course enrollments brings the total lost cost of disrupted tuition to: **over 39 million dollars**

The form clearly shows that **students, collectively, are not receiving the education that they paid over \$39 million for.** Queen’s claims to be a world-class research institution, yet fails to provide its students with said education because of its refusal to come back to the table, [even when PSAC 901 has invited them.](#)

If Queen’s University is as committed to research and academic excellence as it claims to be, the upper administration will return to the bargaining table in good faith to ensure the intellectual and professional well-being of their community stakeholders. Queen’s asserts that [“with \\$1.6 billion in total assets, we’re in a strong position to deliver on our mission of research and academic excellence.”](#) **How can this be if graduate student workers, who enact this mission, cannot afford to obtain a reasonable quality of life?**

A fair and equitable contract would allow graduate student workers to provide their students with the teaching and research support undergrads deserve — support we all **pay exorbitant tuition prices for.** Every day the university refuses to bargain, these tuition dollars become more and more of a waste. For many PSAC 901 members, teaching undergraduate students is the very reason we continue to work in academia.

We call on Queen’s to come back to the table and negotiate a fair contract while the term is still salvageable. We call on undergraduate students and their families to demand the education Queen’s promises. We call on all members of the Queen’s community to support our strike by asking administration to return to the bargaining table, refusing to cross our picket lines where feasible, and by joining us on the picket line when possible.

Sincerely,

PSAC 901.