

PSAC 901

April 3, 2025

Dear QUFA Members,

We write to express our appreciation for not only extending your solidarity with striking PSAC 901 members, but also to acknowledge the difficult situation that Queen's University senior administration has placed you in by asking you to choose between awarding Credit Received (CR) or Grade Deferred (GD) grades. In addition to forcing you to make life-changing decisions for undergraduate students, Queen's University is effectively compelling you to choose between strikebreaking and solidarity with striking graduate student workers.

It is clear that the University is avoiding the consequences of its choices—of not returning to the table—by sacrificing undergraduate education. It is neither GD grades nor 901 members stretching out the negotiations process and keeping students from graduating, rather it is the Employer who is spectacularly mismanaging a labour dispute.

This is a historic moment for all of us at Queen's. When those at the helm, the senior administration, are willing to sacrifice academic integrity and the university's mission in order to break PSAC 901's historic strike, we must all engage in serious soul-searching and ask ourselves hard questions about the objectives of higher education. As the PSAC 901 bargaining team, we remain steadfast in our commitment to our members, and in our knowledge that the strike is a comprehensive response to the university's insulting March 9 offer. We have done our utmost to bring the Employer back to the table. Instead of negotiating with us, they ask you to do the dirty work, not only strikebreaking but also undermining the academic mission and integrity of this institution, in the process.

Queen's University is asking you, unionized workers—who, as an employee group, have historically been at the forefront of demanding justice—to commit an injustice against your students, your graduate

PSAC 901

colleagues, and yourselves as academics and individuals. On the surface, the administration's request to assign grades seems innocuous. In reality, the administration is testing how far they can go in dismantling Queen's as an academic and pedagogical institution, one meant to serve the public. They are asking you to betray the very values that likely brought many of you and us to academia in the first place: the belief that knowledge and education are a public good that must be valued, disseminated, and protected against the encroachment of privatization and corporatization.

At its core, CR grades jeopardize the academic and professional futures of many undergraduate students. Moreover, CR grades render the work of undergraduates throughout the term inconsequential and thereby undermine graduate labour. Queen's has asked you to decide on two futures: that of your undergraduate students and that of your graduate colleagues who are on strike. By emphasizing the fact that both CR and GD grades can later be changed to letter grades upon 901 members' return to work, the administration is deliberately hiding the negative impacts of CR grades on undergraduate students, 901 graduate student-workers, and USW administrative staff.

As part of their solidarity action, Queen's Coalition Against Austerity, a faculty-led movement across campus, authored a [comprehensive guide](#) on the devastating effects of CR grades, and on the importance of GD grades in sustaining the PSAC 901 labour action. We invite you to consult this guide, written by your peers, as we approach a crucial time in the semester.

If Queen's succeeds in breaking our strike and jeopardizing the future of many undergraduate students, they will come for you next. Make no mistake: this is the moment when you must decide what your legacy at Queen's will be as faculty members. We do not envy you in this predicament. One of the driving forces behind our strike is the demand for working conditions that allow us to thrive as educators and researchers. Our working conditions are yours as well. In addition to

PSAC 901

being our mentors and supervisors, you are also workers—just like us—at this university. We are all subjected to the whims of our Employer when it comes to our working conditions. We are all affected when the administration imposes austerity measures that harm everyone who works and studies at Queen's. We are all impacted—in different ways, but impacted nonetheless—when decisions that infringe upon our ability to educate, to conduct research, and to disseminate knowledge are made behind closed doors.

Therefore, we urge all QUFA members not to be complicit in breaking the PSAC 901 strike. We encourage you to award GD in all your classes. Let us conclude the strike and do the work. We want to work. Think about the university you want to be a part of and help us make it a reality: a university that values education as a public good and respects all its workers.

As unionized workers and leaders in your academic field, it is your responsibility to make this university an equitable workplace, one where every worker is treated with respect and dignity.

Join us in our fight for a better Queen's because a better Queen's benefits everyone: students, faculty, graduate workers, and the staff who make our work possible.

In solidarity,

PSAC 901 Bargaining Team