

# YOUR GRADUATE STUDENT WORKERS ARE PREPARING FOR A **STRIKE!**

## What is Happening?

PSAC 901, the Union representing TAs, TFs, and RAs, is bargaining their Collective Agreement this year with Queen's University. This year is unique because nearly all unions at Queen's (e.g. CUPE, USW) are bargaining simultaneously.

The 901 bargaining team presented demands to the employer (i.e., Queen's University), drawing from survey data from over 500 members. Our TOP FIVE Bargaining priorities are as follows (in no particular order):

- A Living Wage/ Stipend
- Tuition Minimization
- Affordable Housing Access
- Funding/ Labour Ratio
- Paid Hours to Learn Course Content

The employer's bargaining team has continuously approached the bargaining table with poorly considered proposals. In addition, they have been increasingly disrespectful, arriving hours late past agreed upon meeting times, and not returning after breaks without notice to our team, among other issues.

As a result, Graduate Student workers may potentially call a strike mandate vote, and even **go on strike**, in the coming weeks.

## Strike FAQ:

### What is a Strike Mandate?

A Strike Mandate is a democratic vote by union members authorizing the bargaining team to call a strike, if needed. This does not mean a strike will happen; rather, it bolsters the union's position by demonstrating collective readiness to escalate if talks fail.

### What could a strike look like?

Graduate Student workers could collectively stop their labour.

This means:

- TAs may not perform TA duties (e.g., grading)
- TFs may not continue teaching / running their courses
- RAs may not perform research duties outside of their thesis / dissertation.

Outside of a strike action, some graduate students may even choose to pause thesis research and other student related work that also contributes to the university's value and prestige.

These actions could have significant implications for Faculty, Undergraduate Students, Staff, and more. Ideally, we do not want to go on strike, but we are preparing to do so, if needed.

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## Strike FAQ Continued:

### What could happen to Graduate Funding during a strike?

Employment-related pay (TA, TF, RA) may be paused during a strike. However, scholarships (OGS, Tri-Council), Graduate Research Fellowships (GRFs), and non-contract pay are not affected. Members who complete approved strike duties are eligible for non-taxable “strike pay” up to \$84.79 per day, or up to \$423.96 per week. The union also has support systems for members who need extra financial help.

### Can I tell my Graduate Students not to strike if I do not support this action?

No! It is within members’ legal right to participate in a strike. To interrupt strike actions and deny your Graduate Student workers their rights is a violation of the Ontario Labour Relations Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Also, punishment from a supervisor or PI for participating in union activity is illegal, and something to be taken very seriously. It is in your best interest to support Graduate Student workers.

### I support Graduate Student workers! What can I do to further support their efforts?

We’re glad you asked! See the next section for a list of top 5 actionable steps you can take.

## How can I Support?

### 1. Attend a Strike Info Session

We are hosting Q & A Info Sessions specifically for Faculty members! To attend an upcoming session, click the link [HERE](#)

### 2. Talk to your Graduate Students

Some members feel uncomfortable speaking with their supervisors. International Students, especially, face unique pressures and fear of retaliation (e.g., losing work visas or study permits). It is important that Faculty initiate conversations to mitigate these pressures. We drafted some scripts you can use to help in this process: [HERE](#)

### 3. Sign our Solidarity Petition

You can further support graduate student workers by signing our Solidarity Petition [HERE](#)

### 4. (If we strike...) do not cross the Picket Line!

It is important that you DO NOT perform the employment-related duties of graduate student workers. It is within your right to decline to perform the work of employees of another bargaining unit during a legal strike. For more information see **Article 12** of the QUFA Collective Agreement [HERE](#)

### 5. (If we strike...) stand with us at the Picket Line!