



# QUFA VOICES

Your Queen's University Faculty Association Newsletter

## SPECIAL SOLIDARITY ISSUE: January 2025

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### PRESIDENT'S VOICE

## A Call for Cross-Campus Solidarity

This issue of *QUFA Voices* profiles staff unions at Queen's and their efforts to secure a fair contract

**By Mary C. (Cella) Olmstead  
President, QUFA**

This edition of *QUFA Voices* is dedicated to profiling staff unions at Queen's and their efforts to secure safe working conditions and fair compensation for their labour. Unionized staff at Queen's are represented by one of three Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) units, United Steel Workers (USW), or the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC). All five of these groups have been engaged in protracted bargaining with the administration for more than a year. The three CUPE units representing some 1,000 employees, including food-services personnel, library workers, tradespeople, classroom and laboratory technicians, and custodial and caretaking staff, filed a No Board Report with the Ontario Ministry of Labour on 10 January 2025. A No

### QUFA IMAGES

## Congratulations, Ayca!



Vanessa Thompson

**QUFA Equity Representative Ayca Tomac was the recipient of this year's Kingston and District Labour Council (KDLC) Rising Star Activist Award. Congratulations, Ayca! Find out more on p. 11 of this issue of *QUFA Voices*.**

Board report is a necessary step in pursuing job action, including a strike, which could start as early as 3 February 2025.

Unlike QUFA, staff unions had wage increases in their previous contract

restricted to 1% per year by Ontario's Bill 124. Although later ruled unconstitutional, the employer is still unwilling to discuss the negative impact of these illegal constraints. Combined with high rates of inflation, waged workers in CUPE and USW

## SOLIDARITY NEWS

### Bargaining at Queen's

A summary of the state of collective bargaining between the University and union locals at Queen's

#### By the Unity Council Queen's University

On p. 3 is a summary of the state of collective bargaining between the University (or Aramark) and the various campus union locals that are currently negotiating renewed collective agreements (CAs). Several clear patterns emerge. Chief among them is that the University who, having refused to renegotiate compensation with these employees whose wages were moderated under the unconstitutional Bill 124 wage-restraint legislation during the life of their now expired CAs, has dragged their feet to begin negotiating renewed CAs, further exploiting these employees by unfairly extending their unconstitutionally restrained wages. The Aramark employees (who for all practical purposes are Queen's employees) in CUPE 229 Unit 1 and Unit 3, like QUFA Members, managed to avoid being moderated under Bill 124.

***The Queen's University Unity Council can be reached at [unitycouncil.ca](mailto:unitycouncil.ca).***

have experienced a purchasing power decline of 11% to 15% in recent years. At the same time, these bargaining units have been devastated by layoffs and retirements that have not been replaced. The work is not disappearing with the vanishing jobs, so the remaining staff are taking on more labour for less real-time compensation. In response, 96% of CUPE workers voted to support a strike mandate, testifying to the faith these workers place in their bargaining team and their dissatisfaction with the administration's rigid stance. One of the top priorities for CUPE is to end an inequitable labour division in which workers classified as Caretakers earn \$6 to \$7 less per hour than those classified as Custodians, despite doing the same work. Not only does this two-tier system disadvantage new employees, it also undermines morale by creating division and resentment among colleagues.

I was reminded of the enormous contribution our staff make to the operations of Queen's when I attended a campus meeting of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG). Students spoke openly about the decline in academic services and supports over the last few years as staff faced increased workloads and demeaning working conditions. The situation is likely to heat up before it defuses: PSAC 901 (representing graduate teaching and research assistants) and USW unions are also preparing for job action, including a possible strike, in early

March. To emphasize the pressure placed on USW workers, this unit provided Queen's with a list of 610 positions that have disappeared from their bargaining unit since 2015.

With the first strike deadline rapidly approaching, Members have been contacting QUFA for guidance on how to navigate campus strikes or lockouts. Check the article on p. 4 of this issue by Leslie Jermyn and Karen Sisson, who dissect QUFA Member rights and responsibilities regarding job action by the administration or another union.

On a more personal note, consider reaching out to your staff colleagues to discuss their concerns and to ask how you can support their bargaining mandate. If picket lines appear on campus, think about joining these even for a short period. You may want to bring hot drinks or snacks to the picketers to boost their morale. And stay tuned to QUFA communications for additional support campaigns to which you may contribute.

Remember, staff working conditions have direct consequences for our own working conditions; they deserve our respect and support as they fight for improvements that will benefit all of us. In these tough times, we need to stand together to achieve fair outcomes across campus.

***Mary C. (Cella) Olmstead can be reached at [olmstead@queensu.ca](mailto:olmstead@queensu.ca).***

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QUFA Voices publishes QUFA-related news and information for QUFA Members and provides QUFA Members with a forum to express their QUFA-related ideas and opinions. We want to hear from you! Please send your QUFA-related story ideas, news items, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, photographs, and other submissions to the editor.

QUFA Voices is edited by Robert G. May. He can be reached at [mayr@queensu.ca](mailto:mayr@queensu.ca).

Association	Contract Expired	Notice to Bargain Issued by Union	Bargaining Started	Current Status
PSAC 901 Unit 2 (Postdoctoral Scholars)	30 Jun. 2023	29 Mar. 2023	13 Oct. 2023	After over a year at the bargaining table, Queen's requested a No Board Report on 26 Oct. 2024, potentially allowing them to lock-out Postdoctoral Scholars; ultimately, a renewed CA was reached in Nov. 2024
CUPE 229 Unit 0 (Maintenance and Custodial Employees)	30 Jun. 2024	22 May 2024	No response from University until Oct. 2024; first bargaining meeting between the parties on 31 Oct. 2024	CUPE 229 Unit 0 requested a No Board Report on 10 Jan. 2025, making job action possible as of 3 Feb. 2025; non-monetary issues are mostly agreed upon
CUPE 229 Unit 1 (Food Services Employees (Aramark))	30 Apr. 2024	22 Apr. 2024	No response from Aramark until Oct. 2024; first bargaining meeting between the parties on 5 Nov. 2024	CUPE 229 Unit 1 requested a No Board Report on 10 Jan. 2025, making job action possible as of 3 Feb. 2025
CUPE 229 Unit 3 Gordon Centre Employees (Aramark))	30 Jun. 2024	Jun. 2024	No response from Aramark until Oct. 2024; first bargaining meeting between the parties on 5 Nov. 2024	CUPE 229 Unit 3 requested a No Board Report on 10 Jan. 2025, making job action possible as of 3 Feb. 2025
CUPE 254 (Technical and Lab Support Technicians)	30 Jun. 2024	31 May 2024	No response from University until Oct. 2024; first bargaining meetings between the parties were held on 14 Nov 2024, 17-18 Dec. 2024	CUPE 254 requested a No Board Report on 10 Jan. 2025, making job action possible as of 3 Feb. 2025; non-monetary issues have been agreed upon
CUPE 1302 (Library Technicians)	30 Jun. 2024	31 May 2024	No response from University until Oct. 2024; first bargaining meetings between the parties were held on 14 Nov. 2024, 10-12 Dec. 2024, 13 Jan. 2025	CUPE 1302 requested a No Board Report on 10 Jan. 2025, making job action possible as of 3 Feb. 2025; non-monetary issues have been agreed upon
PSAC 901 Unit 1 (TAs, TFs, and RAs)	30 Apr. 2024	9 Apr. 2024	18 Nov. 2024	The parties have had 8 days of bargaining so far
USW 2010 (Support Staff)	31 Dec. 2024	12 Nov. 2024	13 Dec. 2024	The parties have bargaining dates on 5-7, 13-14 Feb. 2025; their first meeting with the Conciliator will be on 7 Feb. 2025
USW 2021 Unit 01 (Academic Assistants)	31 Aug. 2023	7 Jun. 2023	No bargaining dates have yet been set	The parties entered into a MOA to extend the expired contract to preserve the working terms and conditions of the expired contract to the sooner of 31 Aug. 2025, or until a renewal CA is ratified; the parties have committed to enter into bargaining a renewal CA no later than 30 Apr. 2025
QUFA	30 Jun. 2025	April 2025	QUFA is preparing to begin bargaining a renewed CA in late May 2025	The QUFA Bargaining Team welcomes Unit visits and will continue to meet with Units upon request throughout winter term 2025; individual Members have also been encouraged to submit their concerns to qufa@queensu.ca

## KNOW YOUR CA

# Strikes and Lockouts

## Know your rights under Article 12 of the Collective Agreement

By **Leslie Jermyn**  
Executive Director, QUFA

and **Karen Sisson**  
Grievance Officer, QUFA

With many of our unionized colleagues approaching job action deadlines, Members have raised questions about their rights under Article 12 of the Collective Agreement (CA). These queries most often arise when a QUFA Member may share duties with members of other unions, such as CUPE 1302 (Library Technicians), PSAC (teaching and grading duties), USW (unit administrative duties), and/or when a Member is uncomfortable with the prospect of crossing a picket line. In response to such queries, this article provides a broad overview of principles related to job action and the agreements enshrined at Article 12 of the Queen's and QUFA CA.

### Job Action

There are two ways unionized workers might cease to perform their normal work:

1. **Strike:** when they withhold their labour; or
2. **Lockout:** when the employer refuses to let them do their jobs.

Together, these are called *job action*, and they are permissible only as a last resort in collective bargaining. The strict prohibition against job action during the life of a collective agreement enshrined in statute is also reflected at Article 12.1 of the CA.

### Right to Decline Work of a Striking or Locked Out Employee

Article 12.2 gives QUFA Members the right to decline to perform the work

of striking or locked out workers from *another* union.

Here are some principles to use to determine if you should pick up a new duty or expand an existing one in the case of job action of another union on campus:

1. If it wasn't your regular duty before, it doesn't become so now.
2. If it was a regular duty for a given number of hours per week, it is still your duty for the same number of hours per week.
3. If you are directed to expand an existing duty to "cover" for striking workers, you may invoke Article 12.2 and identify your objection to performing the work of another bargaining unit. It is a good idea to ensure such communication is in writing so there is a clear record.
4. Any proposed change or shift respecting a faculty member's regular responsibilities should be negotiated through QUFA, not one-on-one. Recall that when the Administration wanted to shift the balance of responsibilities for QUFA faculty during the COVID-19 pandemic, they did not negotiate with individuals but came to QUFA to negotiate collective terms that protected Members at performance assessment time.
5. While the normal practice in the union world is "comply now, grieve later," the word "comply" generally means "within the context of your normal duties"; it is not a blanket protection for employers to order you to do whatever they want or otherwise substantially alter the terms of your employment.
6. All QUFA Members are protected against reprisal from exercising

their CA rights, including the right to consult with QUFA before formally responding to an unusual directive.

### The Right to Decline to Cross a Picket Line

Article 12.3 describes the right to decline to cross the picket line of a bargaining unit engaged in a legal strike or lockout.

If you are considering exercising this right, it is important to know that certain factors must first be in place, such as providing notice to a Department Head. Refusing to cross a picket line may also require a Member to forfeit some salary if the refusal means that some of the Member's assigned duties will not be carried out. A refusal to cross a picket line that meets the requirements and circumstances described in Article 12.3 is protected from the imposition of discipline and/or any other form of reprisal.

You may face a lot of pressure to ease the inconvenience caused by job action, but note that it is precisely the inconvenience that pressures both parties to return to the bargaining table to find solutions. Rather than trying to "make up" for the essential labour of striking or locked out workers, channel student (or other) complaints to the appropriate leadership to urge them to resolve their differences. We'll have more on how to do this as the need arises.

As always, if there is job action on campus and you are faced with pressure to forfeit your rights or are uncomfortable with how you are directed to work, please reach out to us immediately for context-specific advice.

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**Karen Sisson can be reached at [ks223@queensu.ca](mailto:ks223@queensu.ca).**

FYI

## Intellectual Property at Queen's

Why Some Administrators Want Some of Your IP Sometimes

By Michael Greenspan,  
Department of Electrical and  
Computer Engineering

*This is the third of a three-part series on Intellectual Property at Queen's. The first two parts can be found in the September and October 2024 issues of QUFA Voices.*

The original title for this article involved fewer qualifiers, but based on reactions to my previous articles, I decided to go with this potentially less offensive wording. It's certainly clear that during the last Collective Agreement (CA) bargaining round, *all* administration wanted *all* of our intellectual property (IP) *always*, as that was the position put forth by the University negotiating team. What's not clear is exactly *why* they wanted our IP. The back-and-forth negotiation process usually involves descriptions and explanations for each ask, but on this point Administration was stum.

This lack of explanation invites speculation, and over the past year while developing QUFA's Campus Conversations Podcast series, I heard many theories about why Administration might want our IP, seven of which I've summarized below. As far as I know, none drew from any inside information, and so they are to be considered purely speculative.

1. **Other universities do it:** IP is by default faculty-owned in Canada, but most universities have a series of clawbacks embedded in their CAs (or faculty contracts for non-unionized schools) that, in some cases, automatically transfer some IP to Administration. In contrast, our Queen's CA is as pure as fresh

### ANNOUNCEMENT

## QUFA Town Hall

on Bargaining Priorities and Preparing for Queen's Staff Strikes

As you likely know, the Collective Agreement (CA) between QUFA and Queen's University expires on 30 June 2025. In preparation for bargaining a renewal Agreement, QUFA's Bargaining Team would like to hear from QUFA Members about their priorities for this round of bargaining. Please join us for a virtual town hall style meeting on Thursday 30 January from 9.00 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. The meeting will begin with a brief overview of recent activities by the Bargaining Team, and then the virtual floor will be open for you to share your thoughts on what is working, what isn't working, and how you think it ought to be fixed.

You also likely know that many of the campus staff unions are currently at their respective bargaining tables. In the case of the five CUPE units, the Ontario Ministry of Labour issued No Board Reports recently, setting of a 17-day cooling-off period and setting the stage for a possible strike or lockout as early as midnight on 3 February 2025. This does not mean that a strike or lockout will happen, only that it could. The parties are continuing to meet to try to negotiate renewal agreements. If they have not already reached an agreement by 30 January 2025, representatives from the CUPE locals will be on hand at the QUFA Town Hall to provide an update and to share with QUFA Members how we can best support them in their efforts to negotiate a fair agreement. We will also discuss Article 12 (Strikes and Lockouts) of the QUFA-Queen's CA so that you know what your rights and responsibilities are in the event of CUPE job action.

**Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the Town Hall meeting starting at 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 30 January 2025. Please RSVP to Elizabeth Polnicky (ep43@queensu.ca) if you are planning to attend.**

snow when it comes to IP, which we faculty own outright (for research and non-online courses). Whereas in our faculty roles we place the highest value on novelty and originality, this is less so in Administration, which puts greater value on implementation and best practices (however these may be defined). Following the lead of other universities by gathering up IP into Central Administration could certainly be pitched as a useful thing to do, despite there being no actual evidence of benefit.

2. **Financial return:** A central argument for University involvement in commercialization and IP ownership is the financial rewards that may flow from the resulting increased patents and

licences, the premise being that Administration would be more successful at commercializing IP than the individual faculty members who create the IP. Unfortunately, this has not panned out anywhere: the administrative costs of University commercialization efforts have consistently and significantly outstripped any financial rewards, irrespective of the IP regime. Faculty ownership and control over IP has in many cases proven to be more successful at disseminating the research results, and more lucrative to the institution in the long term.

3. **Brownie points:** Imagine you take a role in Administration. A few years pass, and while you've learned the ropes, you haven't

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### Funding Deadlines

#### Childcare Support Plan

The deadline is 1 Feb. 2025. Please see Appendix M of the CA and here for the application form:

<https://queensuca.sharepoint.com/sites/HR-employees/SitePages/Childcare-Support-Plan.aspx>

#### Tuition Support Plan

The winter submission window is 1 Jan. 2025 to 28 Feb. 2025. See Appendix N of the CA and here for the application form:

<https://queensuca.sharepoint.com/sites/HR-employees/SitePages/Tuition-Support-Plan.aspx>

#### The Fund for Scholarly Research and Creative Work and Professional Development (Adjuncts)

The winter deadline is 3 Feb. 2025. See here for the application form and more details:

<https://www.queensu.ca/faculty-relations/qufa/research-fund>

had much tangible success that you can point to. Meanwhile, your research (such that it was) is falling further and further behind, and time's ticking. Unless you chalk up a high-profile win pronto, there's a good chance you'll end up back in the pool of rank-and-file faculty (horror of horrors!). Then, opportunity knocks: you land a spot on the Administration CA bargaining team, and they're eager for ideas! *Is everyone aware that, under the current rules, faculty*

*actually get to own the IP that they get paid to create?*

4. **Program reliability:** Let's say something happens midway through the term—an instructor gets sick or has a family emergency—and is no longer able to deliver their course. To make matters worse, the instructor is so indisposed that their remaining course material is unavailable. The concept here is that the potential for such an occurrence presents a risk to the completion of the course, and therefore to the students' progress, and that University ownership of course IP would eliminate this risk by allowing Administration to seamlessly reassign the remaining course material to another instructor. Having served as a Department Head for over a decade, I can say from experience that occasionally faculty are unable to complete their courses, and that this is not a real problem. In my experience, there were always faculty colleagues willing to pitch in and help out, often at short notice and for no personal gain. We faculty tend to be collegial and cooperative, and have the best interests of our students at heart. This argument is not only specious, but is also somewhat tone-deaf to the cooperative and collegial culture among our faculty.
  5. **The Board told them to:** It's true that Administration is ultimately responsible to the Board of Trustees, and occasionally get direction at fairly coarse granularity. This argument, though, is not so much of an explanation as a deflection, if the Board's intention remains unexplained.
  6. **The government told them to:** The Ford government had an early focus on IP in Ontario, stemming from the Balsillie report in 2019 that resulted in the formation of IP Ontario (IPON). Higher education was painted as underperforming in their calculus, as was the entire province, although University ownership of IP was not put specifically put forward as a remedy. Nevertheless, we've had recent examples of Queen's faculty transition to portfolios with the province (Professors Moore and Philpott), so maybe there's a leadership position about to open up at IPON (see *Brownie points*, above).
  7. **It was a bargaining ploy:** Certainly the process of bargaining involves starting with a big bag of asks, some dear and some fluff that's expected to be bargained away. It's unusual for an item that's expected to be sacrificed to target such a core element of the CA, unless there was another foundational element that was being countered (which in the case of our bargaining, there was not). It's also unusual for a throw-away item to end up being a sticking point, which it was. This is therefore not so much an explanation as an admission that there is no explanation.
- If you come across any other theories (e.g., during the upcoming CA bargaining round), please let me know and we can update this list as needed. Or, if you're in Administration, how about ducking under the cone of silence and letting us know exactly why you think it's a good idea for us to relinquish this most fundamental of our faculty rights?
- For more details about IP at Queen's, please check out Series 1 of QUFA's Campus Conversation Podcast, available via the QUFA Web site.
- Michael Greenspan can be reached at [greenspan.michael@queensu.ca](mailto:greenspan.michael@queensu.ca).***

## QUFA EVENTS

### QUFA Lecture Series

*Unveiling Austerity: Impact, Resistance, and Narratives*

**By Vanessa Thompson  
Chair, Political Action and  
Communication Committee (PACC),  
QUFA**

On 4 December 2024, QUFA launched its new Lecture Series *Unveiling Austerity: Impact, Resistance, and Narratives*, organized by the Political Action and Communications Committee (PACC). The series aims to explore and discuss the various implications of austerity politics within and beyond the university. It analyzes the politics of austerity and financialization of higher education, and looks at how austerity exacerbates existing inequalities within the university. It also addresses how forms of invisible labour and care work, already heavily unequally distributed alongside intersectional dimensions, are further exacerbated. With this focus, the series challenges the division of equity issues and labour struggles, and engages struggles and resistances against austerity from a perspective of intersectional justice.

The first panel conversation was entitled “Divesting from Austerity: Solidarity and Equity in Labour Struggles” and was organized by Pinar Tuzcu and Melissa Houghtaling, on behalf of PACC. The panel brought together four fierce and inspiring comrades and collectives—Students vs Cuts, Sailaja Krishnamurti, Winnie Ng, and Ayca Tomac—and was moderated by Melissa Houghtaling. At the centre of this conversation was the multiple and creative ways that students, faculty, and staff engage in various but related labour struggles in the university, and how they are connected to equity issues and global dimensions of injustice. All panellists stressed the importance and power of labour resistance in forging

connections across diverse communities and that equity issues are part of the way to mobilize all workers instead of just a few.

In her input, Sailaja Krishnamurti explained that solidarity is a contingent and ongoing process, and that it sometimes requires different forms of mobilization to foster cross-cultural solidarity. In this respect, she explained that possibilities of working together also require us to reflect upon how specific choices impact other university workers and members of our communities.

Claire Genest represented Students vs Cuts and talked about current student organizing against austerity on campus, and how the movement connects the struggle against austerity and cuts to the struggle for divestment of war-driven technologies, such as in Israel/Palestine, as well as in other regions, such as Sudan, and towards a politics of life for everyone. She also discussed the global dimensions of the current anti-war student movement and how this is related to struggles for education and justice.

Winnie Ng stressed how resources are further unequally distributed through austerity, as resources and power of the administration are ballooning while staff, faculty, and students are bleeding. She stressed the importance of building mass movements and cross-sector campaigns, as austerity in one sector seldom comes alone, and is linked to broader struggles against poverty and for public services and safety. Ng made very clear that struggles against austerity and cuts are struggles for justice, and that they need to attend to racial and gender justice.

Ayca Tomac stressed that austerity is part of authoritarian politics, and inherently anti-union. She delved into various examples of how austerity politics seek to divide university workers and extend precarious labour

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### Join PACC!

We are currently looking for new members for the Political Action and Communications Committee (PACC). In PACC, we plan Member events and workshops (such as the annual QUFA Lecture), support the various member Caucuses (such as the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour Caucus), and engage in further activities related to Member mobilization, political action, and communication.

We meet monthly, and our work is attentive to equity, feminist, and anti-racist politics. Please contact PACC Chair Vanessa Thompson ([vt25@queensu.ca](mailto:vt25@queensu.ca)) if you are interested in joining.

conditions (such as the “gigification” of work). She further emphasized that austerity is one component of militarization, and that divestment means divesting from destruction and death, and is further a labour issue, as the long history of the workers’ movement in the struggle against wars also shows.

The panel fostered an engaged and enthusiastic conversation in which the more than fifty-people audience brought in related issues such as fostering cross-community solidarity between unions in a time of possible job action. Participants further discussed strategies to build broader solidarities so that, as Winnie Ng said, our “hopes overcome our fear.”

The next panel discussion of the QUFA mini-series will focus on the relation between austerity and digital surveillance. Dates and speakers will soon be announced.

**Vanessa Thompson can be reached at [vt25@queensu.ca](mailto:vt25@queensu.ca).**

FYI

## Endpoint Protection

Queen's ITS will soon be implementing stricter controls over your devices connected to university services

By James Stotz  
JCAA Co-Chair, QUFA

In the next couple of months, Queen's will be implementing stricter control over devices connected to university services, such as Microsoft M365 (which includes e-mail, calendar, and Teams) and Peoplesoft. To access these services, you will be required to install and register your device using Endpoint Protection, and this access and restrictions may be expanded over time. The University surveyed stakeholders (it is not clear that QUFA Members were consulted) and determined that mid-term would be the best time to implement a major change of connectivity.

While some Members, such as those on leave, will not be part of this phase of the rollout, most Members have been or will be notified shortly depending on which faculty they are in. Please look for an e-mail from Queen's ITS with the subject "Upcoming Changes: New Endpoint Protection Requirements for Your Devices," which contains information about the University's plan. Included in this e-mail are links to University resources providing additional information on the changes and requirements:

- Endpoint Protection Web site<sup>1</sup>
- Endpoint Protection FAQs<sup>2</sup>

It should be noted that there are two levels of "Device Health"<sup>3</sup> with varying degrees of access. "Silver level" is required for "Queen's-Funded Devices" (QFDs, such as those purchased with research or professional expense funds) and requires onboarding your device to the Microsoft Defender for Endpoint

(MDE). For a personal device that you would like to use to access Microsoft 365 applications, they do not require MDE but still require Microsoft Intune for device monitoring.

The Intune app will be used for Windows, MacOS, iOS, iPad, and Android devices. It is not yet available for Linux devices, but according to the FAQ, an exception can be requested. At the time of writing, the link on the FAQ to the form does not work, so please contact Queen's ITS for support.

The FAQ also has a table that describes what Queen's can see or change on a personal device. Note that the University has the ability, upon "Authorization or User Request," to wipe devices. In discussions with the University, the option to wipe devices is to protect against issues with theft. If your computer is stolen, the service enables Queen's to delete the information on the computer so that sensitive information can be protected. It could also delete information from a computer if, for instance, somebody left the University and was no longer employed. These need high-level approvals, and ITS has assured me there are checks and balances.

The University was, however, unable to answer how such an action is limited as a result of human error in ITS or HR. Further, the FAQs do not provide any similar chart for QFDs that are enrolled in the Microsoft Defender for Endpoint. So, as the deadlines come that require Members to register devices, the University has not yet similarly communicated what it can or cannot see or do to Members' devices registered on MDE. For instance, one restriction that was communicated to me by ITS was that the University will disable biometric unlocking of a Windows computer. So, if you have a fingerprint sensor to unlock your computer, it could be disabled.

## QUFA VOICES Voice Your Views!

If you have an opinion about anything you read in *QUFA Voices*, send us a letter to the editor!

mayr@queensu.ca



If you are concerned about data loss, consider employing a secure backup strategy. However, using your university OneDrive account may be more restrictive in the future, as the University has also signalled that they plan on significantly reducing available OneDrive storage to Members later this year.

Please refer to the relevant links, as the University has pages with support and support sessions for those needing help and would like answers to any questions. Members may also find support within their Unit, as staff were transitioned to this system last year, and experiences within or between Units could be shared.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup><https://queensu.ca.sharepoint.com/sites/ITS-Cybersecurity/SitePages/Endpoint-Protection-Project-2023.aspx>

<sup>2</sup>[https://queensu.servicenow.com/esm?id=kb\\_article&sysparm\\_article=KB0012801](https://queensu.servicenow.com/esm?id=kb_article&sysparm_article=KB0012801)

<sup>3</sup>[https://queensu.servicenow.com/esm?id=kb\\_article&sysparm\\_article=KB0012800](https://queensu.servicenow.com/esm?id=kb_article&sysparm_article=KB0012800)

**James Stotz can be reached at [jstotz@queensu.ca](mailto:jstotz@queensu.ca).**



## MEMBER SERVICES

### UPP Levels of Service

QUFA Members are reporting difficulties receiving timely responses to their queries to the University Pension Plan

**By Leslie Jermyn  
Executive Director, QUFA**

Members have reported having trouble getting timely responses to their queries about future pension values and other matters. We engaged with the University Pension Plan (UPP) service folks and are able to provide some further clarity about current service challenges.

Because of the voluntary retirement program offered by Queen's last year, there has been an unusually high number of prospective retirees to manage in late 2024. About thirty QUFA Members opted to retire in December 2024, and more than forty more QUFA Members will retire in May 2025. The numbers are much higher when all staff categories are counted. The UPP has prioritized all inquiries related to these commitments over those about possible retirement scenarios in the future.

To add complexity, the UPP has not yet made the self-serve calculator available to Queen's employees, which means that anyone thinking about future financial planning has to submit an inquiry rather than run their own scenarios.

Given the higher priority for impending retirements, the UPP has put inquiries about near-future retirement (within the next three years) ahead of far-future inquiries. They commit to responding to these in sixty days. Far-future inquiries are the last priority, and can expect either delays or limitations (being given only two scenarios, for example).

Our advice is as follows:

- Put all inquiries through the secure Web portal. E-mails sent outside this system will not be answered, as they will not reach the right people. You can expect an acknowledgement within two days, though any answer can take longer.
- If your retirement is imminent, know that you are prioritized, and will get your package or answer as soon as possible.
- If you are planning a bit further out, you can submit your queries now, but know that there will be a wait time. Alternatively, you can wait for spring when the online calculator should launch, or summer when this rush of retirements will have passed. If there is an urgent reason you need to know far-future values, make sure to include it in your request so that your inquiry can be triaged properly.
- Reach out to me if, despite all of this, you are not getting answers you need.

It should also be mentioned that the UPP will not provide commuted value estimates at a future time. We have asked that they provide us with a memo explaining why they can't do this and what Members can do instead. We will publish that in the February issue of *QUFA Voices*.

***Leslie Jermyn can be reached at  
qufaed@queensu.ca.***

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### Nominations Are Now Open!

This year's Nominations Committee comprises:

- **Kayll Lake** (Chair and Past President)
- **Lorena Jessop** (Executive Committee Member and Continuing Adjunct)
- **Dan Cohen** (Council Member)
- **Trisha Lawson** (Council Member)
- **Diane Beauchemin** (General Member)
- **Susan Lord** (General Member)

The Executive positions up for nomination or election this year, per the cycle outlined in the QUFA Constitution (Article 9.2.vi) are:

- Vice President
- President
- Chair of the Political Action and Communications Committee (PACC)
- Term Adjunct Representative
- Member at Large (one of two positions)
- Chair of Council (to be elected by Council in March or April)
- The Past President is appointed in this round.

In addition, there is an off-cycle vacancy for a Continuing Adjunct Representative.

If you are interested in standing for election or you know of people interested to serve, please get in touch with Kayll Lake (lakek@queensu.ca) or Leslie Jermyn (qufaed@queensu.ca).

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Access QUFA Online

QUFA Members can interact online with QUFA in many different ways!

QUFA's online and social-media resources contain a wealth of information about your faculty association, including upcoming events, information about the collective agreement, news items of interest, and more. Follow us!

#### QUFA Web Site



[www.qufa.ca](http://www.qufa.ca)

#### QUFA on Facebook



[www.facebook.com/qufapage](http://www.facebook.com/qufapage)

#### QUFA on Instagram



[www.instagram.com/qufagram](http://www.instagram.com/qufagram)

## GET INVOLVED

### Join the OCUFA Election Network

Volunteer to support OCUFA's advocacy for stronger public education in Ontario

**By Jenny Ahn**  
**Executive Director, OCUFA**

OCUFA is seeking to form an Ontario election organizing network of its members who are interested in mobilizing locally around the anticipated 2025 provincial election. Members of the network, along with support from OCUFA staff, will coordinate local events such as town halls and candidate visits, as well as act as a sounding board for OCUFA's elections advocacy planning.

Much like in the lead-up to the 2022 election, OCUFA is looking for Members of faculty associations who are interested in non-partisan political work, who have a passion for outreach, and who can work with OCUFA's broader network of like-minded members. The election organizing network member would report back to their association Executive, and receive resources and support from OCUFA staff.

If you're interested in helping champion OCUFA's election priorities of stronger provincial funding for universities, fairness for contract faculty, removing the domestic-student funding cap, and funding our Northern Universities, please reach out to me.

#### Criteria

- Be a Member of an OCUFA faculty or librarian association.
- Be an engaged campus activist with connections to campus and local community (e.g., has mobilized a large number of people to take an action like signing a petition, is a respected member of their religious

community and/or labour council representative).

- Be a rank-and-file faculty-association Member or a Member of an association Executive responsible for member mobilization and/or community relations.
- Recommended: Have a colleague to organize with who can act as an alternate at meetings.

#### Roles

- Mobilize local campus community around OCUFA election priorities.
- Provide guidance to other network members on approaches to engaging association members on OCUFA's election advocacy priorities.
- With support from OCUFA and other network members, coordinate local events such as candidate visits, town halls, coffee hours, etc.

#### Responsibilities

- Report to local association Executive on actions and organizing efforts.
- Update OCUFA elections staff on events and organizing efforts, and flag any communications needs or organizing support.
- Mobilize members to engage in actions.

#### Time Commitment

- From January 2025 to writ drop: 1-hour meeting bi-weekly; from writ drop to election day: 30-minute meeting weekly.
- Any additional time you feel is required to organize on campus and in the community.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Jordyn Perreault-Laird ([jordynpl@ocufa.on.ca](mailto:jordynpl@ocufa.on.ca)) if you have any questions.

**Jenny Ahn can be reached at [jahn@ocufa.on.ca](mailto:jahn@ocufa.on.ca).**

## QUFA PEOPLE

# Congratulations, Ayca!

Spotlighting our QUFA Equity Representative at a time in which equity-related work is under attack

**By Vanessa Thompson  
Chair, Political Action and  
Communications Committee (PACC),  
QUFA**

We are thrilled to highlight the accomplishments of our colleague Ayca Tomac, who has been the QUFA Equity Representative since 2024. Recently, Ayca received the Kingston and District Labour Council Rising Star Activist Award for her contributions to the labour movement and her dedicated commitment to social justice.

Ayca is an Assistant Professor and Continuing Adjunct in the Department of Global Development Studies. She has been an active Member of QUFA for the last five years, representing Term Adjuncts on the Executive committee between 2021 and 2024; serving on the previous and current bargaining teams; and co-chairing the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPoC) Caucus. Her work on the Adjunct Advocacy Committee (2022) led to an extensive report that formed a critical part of the last bargaining mandate. In her current capacity as Equity Representative, Ayca provides crucial insight into personnel and policy issues, rigorously defending the interests of all QUFA Members.

Ayca's co-workers and comrades continue to be inspired by her commitment, support, and thoughtfulness. Pre-tenured faculty and adjuncts regularly turn to Ayca for advice, knowing they can trust her to advocate on behalf of marginalized and precarious workers. Ayca further connects anti-oppressive and equity-related issues with labour organizing, demonstrating a strong commitment to social justice within and beyond

## FAQ

# Endpoint Protection

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on Queen's New Endpoint Protection Tools and Queen's Cybersecurity Program

QUFA is aware of the new endpoint protection protocol that the employer's Cybersecurity Program will require for all devices (Queen's-funded and personally funded) used to connect to Queen's systems and to perform Queen's-related work. This matter has been discussed at the Executive Committee, Council of Representatives, and the 2024 Fall General Meeting, and we want to respond to a few important questions:

**Is this mandatory?** Yes. There is a level of management rights involved in this program. The university can make decisions about cybersecurity and require QUFA Members, as employees, to adhere to the protocols for devices used for Queen's-related work.

**Are personal devices exempt?** It depends. Members have expressed concerns about enrolling personal devices in this program. QUFA Members can choose not to use personal devices for work-related business, thereby avoiding the order to subject those devices to the new cybersecurity protocols. Obviously, that is not ideal for everyone, but Members must either choose to enrol their personal devices or not use them for Queen's work-related activities. If you choose to use Queen's-funded devices for work activities only, and you face any resistance or complaints, please let QUFA know.

**What's next?** QUFA is still discussing the matter with Queen's administration, so stay tuned for more information.

For additional information and context, please also see James Stotz's article in this issue of *QUFA Voices*, on p. 8

our union. Recently, Ayca, along with Norma Möllers, co-founded the first QUFA BIPoC Caucus. The initial events were very well attended, providing racialized faculty an opportunity to share their experiences of workplace discrimination in a safe and supportive environment.

The caucus is currently surveying QUFA BIPoC Members on their experiences so that racist discrimination can be addressed and dismantled at Queen's. Ayca has further helped to reframe policies and procedures in a way that is committed to equity, anti-oppression, and anti-racism. Thus, her sensitivity to inequities represents a true commitment to organizing for labour in a non-divisive way.

On a broader level, Ayca fosters cross-union solidarity through her work at Unity Council and by attending to the needs of graduate workers and academic staff across the university. Ayca's influence extends beyond the Queen's campus as she interacts with Kingston community members, organizers, activists, and newcomers while engaging in community-aid work and anti-war organizing.

Ayca's dedicated and passionate advocacy for equity issues is an inspiration to workers in QUFA, at Queen's, and in the wider community. Congratulations again, Ayca!

**Vanessa Thompson can be reached at vt25@queensu.ca.**

## GRIEVANCE CORNER

### Ain't No Power

(Like the Power of the People)

By Karen Sisson  
Grievance Officer, QUFA

Happy New Year!

Most QUFA Members will be aware that the Ontario Labour Relations Board has issued No Board Reports respecting collective agreement negotiations for five CUPE bargaining units at Queen's. The affected workers provide a broad range of essential support services on campus, including food services, library work, custodial and caretaking work, trades, and classroom and library technical services.

This has caused some worry on behalf of QUFA Members about the impact of such job action on the work environment. Members have expressed concern that the workplace will become unsafe, that they will be provided with directives to complete work that is outside of the purview of their usual responsibilities, or that they will be forced to cross a picket line.

We have included an article in this edition of *QUFA Voices* about Collective Agreement rights pertaining to strikes and lockouts (p. 4), and I encourage anyone with these concerns to review that article carefully. When it comes to concerns about the health and safety of the physical work environment, there are specific protocols to be followed, and anyone with questions about that process should reach out to their Unit

Health and Safety Representative for more information.

I encourage Members to also consider how they can show support for fellow Queen's employees in the event of a strike or lockout, and I have prepared a short list of a few ideas for faculty who may wish to do so without fear of putting personal interests at stake:

- Seek out information from the bargaining unit about the specific issues faced by the workers and the unit's efforts to reach fair resolutions. Such information is usually easily accessible on a bargaining agent's Web site. Taking the time to learn about the issues can assist the striking workers by ensuring discussions with friends and family members about the job action are not characterized by misinformation.
- Consider attending any solidarity rallies outside of your regular working hours. Physically showing up to such events contributes to the energy in the room and may assist striking workers to maintain vigour in the face of perceived threats to their job security.
- Consider providing donations of snacks, coffee, or warm clothing to picketing workers. Even a quick tap of the horn when passing picketing workers can provide a meaningful demonstration of support that may go a long way towards boosting morale.
- Consider signing petitions or sending letters to the Board of Trustees expressing support for striking employees.

Any Member with additional questions or concerns is welcomed to reach out to schedule a consult call.

**Karen Sisson can be reached at [ks233@queensu.ca](mailto:ks233@queensu.ca).**

**Support the workers  
who support campus life**

**Thursday, January 30  
11:45 a.m.  
Outside Richardson Hall**

**Tell Queen's and  
Aramark you want a fair  
deal for workers to  
support a clean, safe  
campus and quality  
services for everyone!**

# YOUR GRADUATE STUDENT WORKERS ARE PREPARING FOR A STRIKE!

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## 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.

# YOUR GRADUATE STUDENT WORKERS ARE PREPARING FOR A STRIKE!

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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!