

Feb. 2025

### CUPE UNITS WIN BIG! AVOID STRIKE



**These are the sleepy smiles of success!** It was 2:30 a.m., after extending the midnight strike deadline twice, when CUPE signed the last of five tentative agreements. Our tired but dedicated bargaining teams stayed at the table through the whole weekend of February 1st and 2nd to hammer out the best possible deal for workers and prevent a strike from shutting down Queen's.

**CUPE workers were ready.** A week of rallies, press interviews, student outreach, and sign making lead up to the strike deadline. Unity Council's strike headquarters at Saint Mark's Lutheran Church was bustling with preparations to make sure that if CUPE workers had to strike, everything was in place to support them. This momentum added **massive public and media pressure** on the employers.

The new CUPE contracts show what can be accomplished when workers are willing to fight for a fair deal. Workers in all five units ratified their tentative agreements with large buy-in. Approval votes ranged from 84% to 100% across the five units. See details of CUPEs' gains on the next page! **Huge thanks** are due to all the volunteers for their **hard work, long hours, and dedication to supporting workers** in preparation for a strike.

### CALL FOR QUFA SOLIDARITY

As staff across campus grapple with the challenges of bargaining, QUFA has been behind the scenes offering **support and solidarity** by engaging with their membership and students on workers' issues. In the event of a strike, QUFA members can also exercise **our hard-fought right** to refuse to cross picket lines for ethical reasons without facing discipline. Article 12 in QUFA's Collective Agreement is an incredibly important right to demonstrate solidarity and collective resolve.

As thousands of workers on campus prepare to take potential job action – putting what little we have on the line in order to fight for a better Queen's University – the best thing faculty can do in support of respect, dignity, and a fair wage, is to **exercise our Article 12 rights**. We especially call on tenured professors to recognize the power and leverage you hold to push the university to do right by your colleagues in this community.



# USW 2010 & PSAC-901 SET STRIKE DEADLINES



February has also been eventful for graduate workers in PSAC-901 and support staff in USW Local 2010. Both units held strike mandate votes over the week of February 10th and **received strong mandates from workers.** We're hoping that these mandates jump-start negotiations, which have been in conciliation since January to force progress at the table. Unless Queen's can put forward a fair deal, both units will hit the picket line on **Monday, March 10th.**

Steelworkers returned a strong strike mandate: **90% of Steelworkers turned up to vote and 96% said yes to strike, if needed.** Thanks to scheduling delays from Queen's, USW hasn't tabled monetary proposals and responses to language proposals has been minimal. **This sluggish pace harms Steelworkers,** who are looking for Bill 124 remedies, wage increases, job and

union security, and unsustainable workloads. **Support staff can't wait in limbo forever.** Academic Assistants in USW 2010-01 are waiting even longer, with their first expected bargaining date pushed back to April, despite our contract expiring 18 months ago. Progress for both units is needed NOW!

Meanwhile, **PSAC-901 recorded the strongest strike mandate in the local's history, with a record-high turnout** (due to national bylaws, PSAC-901 can't publish exact numbers). PSAC reports slow movement at the table, especially on monetary issues like poverty wages, childcare benefits, housing costs, and changes to how work contracts impact graduate funding packages. **So far, is Queen's rejecting many of PSAC's proposals outright,** and refusing to renew mental health funds and professional development funds won in prior rounds of bargaining. Armed with this historic mandate, PSAC will be pushing Queen's to **take our wage proposals seriously** and reduce the extreme financial precarity that grad workers are experiencing.

## WHAT CUPE WON IN BARGAINING

229-0	229-1 & 229-3	254	1302
Wage increase averaging 14% for all workers. Wages up to \$25/hr for Caretakers over full contract.	Wages for full-time workers up to almost \$25/hr., representing an almost 13% wage increase over the contract.	Across-the-board wage increases of 3%, 2.25%, and 2.25% over 3 years.	Across-the-board wage increases of 3%, 2.25%, and 2.25% over 3 years.
Market adjustments for trades workers	Massive increases to healthcare and life insurance benefits.	An average increase of 14.7% to all workers' take-home pay	Average increase to take-home pay of 16%, achieved by evening out wage increases across steps to 3%
Wage gap between Caretakers and Custodians closed by 46%	3 sick days/year for part-time workers	A one-time payment of \$1000 for each employee	Premium pay for work during weather events
Increases to weekend, evening, and afternoon premiums.	Emergency and compassionate leave increased from 3 to 10 days	Overhauled job evaluation process using CUPE national's job evaluation tool, meaning new job categories.	Increased severance pay
LOU on contracting out work renewed and expanded.	Increase to RRSP matching from the employer	Increased allowances for protective gear.	Lowest tier of the wage grid eliminated
		New process for resolving job evaluation disputes.	A new process for resolving workload concerns

