

To: Principal Woolf

We write to express disappointment with the approach that the University seems to have taken at the bargaining table with QUFA. Since these conversations take place behind closed doors, we strive to listen to both sides critically and with open-mindedness; however, your recently publicized letter to Mr. William Young has shaken our confidence in the goals of your administration regarding these negotiations. Further, we understand that QUFA and the University will arrive at a legal lockout or strike position by 15 August 2011, and so we write you in some urgency.

Very simply, we ask that you revise your stance, as well as the priorities of the University negotiating team, on the following points:

- Labour disruption is “a necessary step” to the University’s success at the bargaining table

In your letter dated 25 June 2011, you request that members of the Board of Trustees view any labour disruptions on campus in the coming months as “a necessary step in order to achieve success in salary restraint and pension reform” (8). The notion that the University would entertain compelling job action on the part of QUFA or push towards a legal lockout situation while negotiations were still underway is disheartening, to say the least. Our members rely on both parties to negotiate keenly and sincerely so that their time at Queen’s is productive. Yet these concerns do not appear to play a part in the perspective on the negotiations that you articulate. Instead of drawing attention to the profound impact that interruption to faculty labour will have on students—and on graduate-student research during the summer, especially—you only warn that such interruptions will be “potentially reputational-damaging” (8). We certainly agree, but we also expect that you will represent the true scope of the issue to the Board, and show as much concern for current students as you appear to show future ones.

- Negotiating faculty salaries and pensions is an opportunity to “reduce the deficit at all costs within a short time frame”

The purely cost-efficient lens through which your administration seems to approach QUFA negotiations strikes our Council as inconsistent with the

principles of quality education—and supervision—that we expect at Queen's. Your letter to Mr. Young states:

"Having established a professional labour relations team that has been assiduously strategizing and *negotiating with the unions gives us our best chance of reaching agreements that will help to reduce our financial difficulties*. I should note one warning here. *The imperative to reduce the deficit at all costs within a short time frame is a major obstacle to completion of the HR rebuild, just as it is inhibiting the completion of QUASR.*" (3)

The financial priorities disclosed here suggest the opposite of what students, and the Board, should expect. While recommending that the University try to recover its losses over the last few years by focusing on faculty salaries and pensions, your letter defends costly expenses for administrative services—possibly some of the very services that contributed to the current deficit. Such a response to the school's financial difficulties suggests that faculty compensation is not the primary issue; it seems to involve matters about allocation, about which university services are needed and which are comparatively dispensable. But we maintain, and hope you agree, that faculty are the least dispensable resources on campus. The success of SGPS members at the University is intimately tied to the quantity and the availability of QUFA members—to the labour that you compensate them for—and so we sincerely ask that you reevaluate your administration's priorities.

It is our understanding that the next meeting between the University and the QUFA negotiating teams with the appointed mediator will take place on Thursday, 11 August 2011. Certainly this leaves you little time to revise your stance on the points above, but we prevail upon you to do so to your—and your negotiating team's—best efforts.

We look forward to hearing about a mutually successful resolution to these talks soon.

Sincerely,

SGPS Council

cc: Allan Manson, Paul Young, Dan Bradshaw, William Young