

CARNET COLLÉGIAL



Fédération nationale
des enseignantes et
des enseignants
du Québec

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BARGAINING IS OVER, BUT THE JOB CONTINUES

At the CEGEP coalition meeting held last October 14, the delegations acknowledged the fact that the agreements of principle reached at the central bargaining table and the sector-based tables had been ratified by all the Common Front member organizations, who had reached such agreements. Only the *Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec* (FIQ) is still in the process of bargaining.

As far as we're concerned, the results of our meetings clearly indicate that we had, as a member of the Common Front, gone as far as we could in our negotiations, although the results did not live up to our expectations.

Negotiating a collective agreement is without a doubt one of the key moments in any Union's life. However, the pursuit of goals that we feel very strongly about doesn't stop the day a given series of discussions might end. The quality of our teaching is closely linked to the improvement of our working conditions. When we wrapped up our sector-based agreement, we clearly stated: the latter is a step in the right direction, but a lot still remains to be done in terms of CEGEP teachers and their situation.

The negotiation of our working conditions isn't finished

In line with the strategic framework that we had adopted, which involved a round of bargaining that would be targeted and expeditious, many of our demands have been referred to working committees subsequent to our discussions. In this regard, you will find an article on students with special needs in this issue. Other important issues regarding salary relativity, workloads in the nursing programs and in acute health care technician training, funding formulas for teachers, as well as the working conditions of sessional lecturers in continuing education will be examined in these pages. For us to properly do our job, we need to have the best possible understanding of the problems that you encounter

and experience as well as the outlines of workable solutions. We invite you to participate in these deliberations.

Of course, as always, general meetings are where we will debate the orientations to be defended by our representatives on these various committees stipulated in the collective agreements, and any such agreements will ultimately be submitted to these very same meetings.

Taking stock of our negotiations is an indispensable exercise

The CEGEP regroupement also elected a committee whose mandate is to take stock of our negotiations, an important exercise that will be taking place over the next few months. The political leadership of the coalition views the foregoing as an fundamental reflection exercise that takes on a particular dimension this time around and that we wish to be as constructive as possible. I cannot insist enough that your active participation in this process via your general meeting is indispensable. The process of renewing government employee collective agreements always takes on a political dimension; each round of bargaining is different, but each time we learn a little bit more about the relationship between the State and its employees. We have just gone through a rather historic Common Front; we cannot precipitate evaluating what happened as thoroughly as possible.

Finally, with the announcement of Minister Beauchamp's forum on colleges, it's more than likely that we will once again have to address the many issues related to the integrity of our CEGEP network. It's difficult to say, at this stage, exactly how we will approach this initiative, but it's also clear that this is one boat we can't and won't miss.

As you can see, we've got a lot on our plate and we'll need everyone's commitment and involvement!

Micheline Thibodeau
FNEEQ Vice-président

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CARNET COLLÉGIAL is a publication of the *Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec*. FNEEQ represents almost 27,000 members in CEGEPs, private schools and universities. It is the union federation most representative of higher education across Québec.

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Who is authorized to interpret the collective agreement?

Although it's "in the agreement" that the Union recognizes the college's right to exercise its management, administrative and supervisory authority in a fashion that is compatible with the collective agreement - what most often goes under the name of management rights - the fact remains that the one of purposes of a collective agreement is also to limit or circumscribe these rights.



*Guy Beaulieu
Union Advisor*

It should be recalled that a collective agreement is a labour contract that binds all the people who are part of the certified bargaining unit, employed by an employer. It notably limits management high-handedness and favouritism. To this effect, one can safely affirm that it is all the more important in the case of public and parapublic sector employees, since the funding for the institutions where they work, CEGEPs or hospitals, primarily comes from taxes and income taxes paid by the Province's taxpayers.

Article 2-2.06 of the collective agreement is unambiguous on this question: the Union is the **EXCLUSIVE** representative of the teachers concerning matters related to the working conditions stipulated in the collective agreement.

The term "exclusive" is very explicit and of huge importance. Indeed, the Union is the guardian of the collective agreement. Its responsibility cannot be delegated and requires proper understanding.

All the same, many school administrations try to expand their management rights by working around the spirit of the agreement or, sometimes, by simply ignoring it. They might try to reach individual agreements,

for example, with a particular department or individual teacher or, alleging that their management rights allow them to do so or by pleading that these covenants are not really covered by the collective agreement.

Think twice! Each individual agreement, even those negotiated in good faith, undermines our collective capacity to achieve better working conditions for everyone and destabilizes our solidarity. The latter is essential if we want to improve the conditions in which we exercise our profession, our consultations on various institutional policies and the defence of the college network.

It is thus imperative that members and/or departments inform the Union's executive committee of any management initiatives in this connection.

In conclusion, let's remember that the Union, in other words the representatives elected by the Union's general meeting, is the one who is authorized to intervene vis-à-vis the school administration regarding all questions related to the negotiation, application and interpretation of the collective agreement. Hence, even though other construals of the agreement are possible, the Union is the one who, as mentioned above, is the guardian of the agreement, except in the case where an arbitrator is called upon to decide between different interpretations made by the members. The latter would notably base his judgment, in such a situation, on previous practices, the coherence of the differing positions, the jurisprudence or then again on the global interests of the members of the local union and the college network. ●



The success of students who aren't quite like all the others

This dossier seeks to provide the reader with information regarding the challenge of pedagogical-related accommodations for students with learning disorders, attention deficit disorders or even mental health problems. It will also serve to prepare our dossier in terms of our work with the parity committee.

*Micheline Thibodeau
FNEEQ Vice-président*

*Éric Kirouac and Bruce Toombs
Bargaining and mobilization
committee*

The obligation to accommodate: What's the situation?

Quebec has been talking a lot about reasonable accommodations over the past few years, even more so in the context of the Advisory Commission on Accommodation Practices related to Cultural Differences, commonly called the Bouchard-Taylor Commission.

However, the origin of the notion of reasonable accommodation can be found in jurisprudence from the world of work. In 1999, the Supreme Court of Canada decided to incorporate accommodation into work standards.

According to Anne Pineau, a CSN attorney:

"The approach was totally revolutionized, as accommodation primarily became a problem for employers and not for employees."

In the current vernacular, the term is now used with regard to patients, students, users, etc.

Still according to Anne Pineau, the obligation to accommodate is a rule that applies with regard to discrimination. However, all distinctions are not necessarily discrimination. Only those related to a prohibited grounds will be so deemed.

Article 10 of the Quebec Charter is what applies here:

Every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of his human rights and freedoms, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, colour, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil status, age

except as provided by law, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, a disability or the use of any means to palliate a disability.

What is an accommodation?

According to the CSN legal department, it involves relaxing, adapting a norm – which is moreover justified – so as not to needlessly exclude certain people from the workplace. This obligation to accommodate doesn't however give rise to the creation of diminished norms.

These same broad principles will apply to the notion of reasonable accommodation in the education sphere.

Accommodation of disabled college students

For more than 20 years now, colleges have been adopting measures to assist several kinds of disabled students. The budget

A FEW DEFINITIONS

Learning disorder (LD): when a person performs poorly in school in areas such as reading, writing or arithmetic (3 Rs) with reference to standard intellectual aptitudes. This can involve dyslexia, dysorthography, dysphasia and acalculia.

Attention deficit disorder (ADD): a difficulty in harnessing the attention necessary rather than a difficulty in being attentive as such. This problem persists throughout one's life. Meanwhile, it's unclear whether this is a learning disorder or a mental health problem. This problem can notably lead to difficulty in planning and organizing one's thoughts and actions, in inhibiting a compulsive behaviour and in maintaining one's attention in order to carry out a task.

Pervasive developmental disorder (PDD): a neurological disorder category where notably one classifies young people with Asperger Syndrome. The symptoms of people with the latter disorder are usually manifested by the inadequate use of non-verbal language and the poor decoding of the emotions associated with the foregoing. There is also the manifestation of repetitive and stereotyped behaviours that disrupt the quality of social interaction.

Mental health disorders (MHD): include many types of very diverse disorders. Amongst the disorders most frequently encountered at the CEGEP level, there are young people with anxiety disorders, such as general anxiety, obsessive-compulsive and panic disorders. In addition, besides people going through difficult episodes related to depression and suicidal notions, there are also many young people with personality disorders, as well as food disorders which are the most frequent.

Finally, all the disorders presented above are associated with the existence of symptoms that can significantly disrupt the professor-student relationship, integration into the course-groups and, more generally speaking, doing well in school.

appendix S024 funds services for people with hearing, seeing, motor or organic disorders in all Québec CEGEPs.

Increasingly, the Ministry of Education, Leisure Activity and Sport (MELS) is facing pressure to include funding for students with learning, attention deficit (with or without hyperactivity) and mental health disorders. A research study commissioned by the MELS was recently released; a lot of interesting information can be gleaned in it.² The definitions of learning and attention deficit disorders presented in the following section are taken from this research report; the others come from documentation written by the Services for persons with special needs in Western and Eastern Québec colleges (Vieux Montréal and Sainte-Foy).

A few fundamental principles

In our opinion, some fundamental principles must be kept in mind when thinking about accommodation. We will mention three here. First of all, the integrity of the D.C.S. must be respected. This fundamental principle must be obeyed out of respect not only for college conventions, but also vis-à-vis all the students, whether disabled or not. The second principle is that of excessive constraint. This principle most often involves financial constraints for the institution. For we teachers, other considerations should be analyzed, for example, with regard to the time required for certain types of accommodations or even the conditions of learning for all the course groups. Finally, regardless of the solution that is identified, it must preserve equity, amongst other things in terms of achieving the goals of any given course, and this, for all the students.

Certain problems raised Need for information

In order to properly meet these students' needs, teachers have to be better acquainted with the problems experienced by these young people and the best ways to help them in their own personal development. In this regard, little information, both in terms of the overall problem as well as the problems faced by students in our classes, is available.

This is a major obstacle in terms of doing our job and in terms of ensuring the success of our young people.

Concerted action between the various actors

Teachers are often the very last people to be informed about the special situations affecting certain students. It appears to us that a concerted approach should be taken by all the actors, including the student, in



order to identify the best solutions to help each young person: individual pedagogical tutors, guidance counsellors, members of the administration, psychologists and, of course, the teachers, etc., without mentioning the reflections and exchanges necessary between department colleagues and program committees.

Access to the diagnosis

In order to have access to specialized services from the college or special pedagogical adaptations, the diagnosis is absolutely necessary. There is however, at the present time in the Province of Quebec, a lot of confusion regarding the reliability of these diagnoses. Diagnoses are being made by psychologists, physicians, guidance counsellors, etc. The multiplicity of specialists and tests creates several problems. According to Wolforth & Roberts (2010), this lack of uniformity in the methods used to identify these various

disorders does nothing to facilitate the synchronization of the means used to identify effective applicable solutions throughout the network.

In the case of college students who have never been diagnosed, an additional problem arises: namely, the cost of such tests, which can vary from \$800 to \$1,200. Is it acceptable that special services are only accessible to young people who can afford to pay for them or those people who go to a CEGEP that has adopted measures to avoid, as much as possible, such situations? The situation is rather chaotic across the network at the present time!

Disclosure

Several students also refuse to disclose their disability. This gives rise to numerous problems to the extent that the institution is aware of, but cannot communicate the information. The worst situation is one where a teacher knows that there are three disabled people in their course, but doesn't know who they are. What does one do?

The student is obliged to collaborate with the institution, which includes the teachers, in order to receive the most appropriate services to assist them. To the extent that the student decides that his dossier remains confidential, it becomes impossible to provide him or her with special services. Of course, student advisors will try to better understand the reasons deep down that are motivating these young people to keep their disability a secret, but all the same, the latter will then be treated just like everyone else.

The nature of the accommodations

Generally speaking, the measures that prove to be the most useful are those that guide the student in course-related activities (help in reading and writing, orthographic software, etc.), special provisions for examinations (for example, more time is given to do the exam), access to advisors who are familiar with their problems, tutors and finally, participation in support groups.

With regard to trainee programs, who should be providing special services? According to the Quebec Charter, as we



saw at the beginning of this text, employers are required to provide accommodations. However, employers are not obliged to accept trainees. Accordingly, as a result, there's been a tendency for the teaching institution to provide special services related to trainee programs. In the case of work-study programs, it is believed that it's the employer's responsibility.

With regard to trainee programs in the technical sector, programs that have difficulty maintaining a sufficient number of traineeships are even more concerned about the impact of integrating the emerging student population. These programs fear undermining the relationship of trust

that they have built up between themselves and the traineeship providers.

What's next

We invite you to tell your union representatives about any of the types of problems that you might experience in your work. We are planning to draft an overview of the various difficulties we experience. Of course, it would also be interesting to know what solutions were identified regarding the latter.

The mandate of the national summit committee, made up of representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Fédération des cégeps and FNEEQ, is to:

analyze the problems encountered by the special needs student population (students with pervasive developmental

disorders, behaviour disorders, learning disorders (LD), mental disorders (MD), attention deficit disorders, with or without hyperactivity (ADD/H), students with seeing or hearing disorders) and their impact upon the teaching workload;

We thus solicit your collaboration to help us prepare the work we will be doing on this committee. The foregoing should be completed one year after the collective agreement is signed, namely, we hope, in December of next year! ●

1 CSN, *Le bulletin d'informations juridiques*, by Anne Pineau, attorney from the CSN Legal Department, June 2007, p. 2.

2 Wolforth, Joan and Roberts, Elisabeth. *The situation of students with learning or attention deficit disorders (with or without hyperactivity) who attend CEGEPs in the Province of Québec: Does this group have a legitimate need for funding and services?* Research that received support from the MELS, May 2010. <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/ens-sup/handicap.asp>

30th AQPC symposium

Knowledge and practices: a winning pair!



Isabelle Bouchard
Member of the School and society
committee

A record number of participants from the world of higher education gathered together in Sherbrooke, from June 2-4, 2010, to attend the 30th edition of the Association québécoise de pédagogie collégiale (AQPC) symposium. Research on the college milieu, as well as deliberations on pedagogical practices do indeed guide, inspire and cultivate the teaching profession and this 30th symposium once again was living proof of this statement.

At first glance, the theme Knowledge and practices: a winning pair might appear to apply more to teachers who are teaching in technical programs. The invitation sent out by the organizers was intended all the same for everyone in the college community who is interested in surpassing conventional norms. The major challenge facing college teachers is to make knowledge practical while still ensuring that pedagogical practices are built upon solid foundations.

The organizers of the AQPC symposium put together a diversified programme that included nearly 200 workshops organized around 19 themes. Impossible to partake of everything on the AQPC table! However, one conference was obviously one of the high points of this three-day session, namely that of Nicole Boutin, President of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (CSE), who talked about the transition from high school to college¹. Clearly, three months prior to the arrival of pupils who were products of the reform, the level of preparation of the colleges in terms of the latter's integration was widely discussed in the conference hallways and lobbies. Should we rather be talking about a double integration, in other words, an initial integration in terms of the "pedagogical

renewal" in the high schools and a second one, directly linked to generational social transformations?

Created in 1981 by a group of college pedagogues who had agreed upon the need to bolster and inspire pedagogical activities and enhance the teaching profession, AQPC, is an association open to all personnel working in public and private colleges, universities and other educational institutions in the Province of Quebec and other regions. It seeks to assemble all the actors in the field of education in a forum that is neither management nor union-oriented.²

Recognition Awards

Another emotionally charged high point of this symposium was the presentation of the 2010 Recognition Awards. Every year, AQPC pays tribute to teachers who have distinguished themselves by the originality of their work and who have made a significant contribution to the progress of our profession.

FNEEQ's presence

FNEEQ has always been proud to participate in AQPC's activities. This year again, it set up an information booth that enabled the Federation to distribute copies of its own magazine, Carnets, and to answer various questions that were addressed to it by several participants.

The next edition

Our colleagues at the CEGEP de Lévis-Lauzon will be playing host to the next edition. The passion for knowledge is the theme that has been retained. The idea is not an entirely new one. Well before our time, Pythagoras combined the words "philos" and "sophia" for the first time and hoped that we would become lovers of knowledge! So that, between knowledge and practice, passion can be a veritable hyphen.

Between participating or not in AQPC symposiums, there's always an issue of funding. Already, college research encounters many difficulties. Still, what the researchers in our network publish must find an audience in which they can reflect the progress they are making in their line of work that, more often than not, is done on a volunteer basis! ●

¹ <http://www.aqpc.qc.ca/UserFiles/File/colloque/Programme2010V5.pdf>

² <http://www.aqpc.qc.ca/UserFiles/File/colloque/Programme2010V5.pdf> pdf1 <http://www.aqpc.qc.ca/>

Negotiation

A busy “post-bargaining” phase...



*Yves de Repentigny
Délégué à la coordination du
regroupement cégep*

However, even though the discussions as such are over and the signing of a new labour contract is not that far off, discussions between FNEEQ representatives and those from the Comité patronal de négociation des collèves (CPNC) will be continuing for a while nonetheless. Indeed, certain questions, owing to their complexity, or the considerable divergences between the positions of the two parties, could not be resolved within the framework of an expedited round of bargaining. These issues include the funding formula for teaching, the special needs student population, clinical teaching in nursing and in acute health care technician programs, as well as continuing education. Their exploration has thus been handed over to the parity committees already stipulated in the agreement. In the few lines that follow, we will summarize what these issues entail.

The funding formula for teaching

In its calculations regarding the allocation of resources for hiring teachers in each institution, the ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) uses a straight-line method based solely upon the number of course-registrations in the different programs (the “program straight line”). On the

Negotiations are coming to an end. Indeed, now that the general meetings have ratified the agreements in principle, all that remains is to incorporate the amendments contained in the text into our collective agreements, which should be completed by the end of this session. In union jargon, this process is called “clause by clause.”

other hand, the departments assign various tasks in the department basing themselves upon the individual's workload (CI), which takes into account not only the number of students under a teacher's supervision, but also the hours needed for teaching and preparation. There is thus a divergence between the method of allocating resources and calculating workloads, which very often leads to the under funding of programs that have small cohorts. The FNEEQ bargaining committee deemed the problem sufficiently important that it tabled demands regarding this issue in its very first set of bargaining proposals. However, management refused to discuss the funding formula, arguing that



the latter wasn't in the agreement as such. It was finally agreed that a committee would look into the subject and report back on its work directly to the Minister, no later than two years after the labour contract is signed. Tabling the conclusions of such an analysis with the Head of the MELS itself and not with one of its subordinates will prevent, at least we hope, that these findings get lost in Ministry red tape!

The special needs student population

The increasing presence of students who require follow-up and special guidance (learning, behaviour or mental disorders, sensory disabilities, etc.) in our classrooms has given rise to major concerns amongst CEGEP teachers. Seeing as another article in this issue of *Carnet collégial* deals specifically with this reality, suffice for us to mention here that, although both parties agree to the importance of providing support to professors who deal with such situations, they were not of the same mind in terms of how to do so. Indeed, the CPNC feels it would be enough that these “emerging clients”, as they so poetically call them, be provided with some guidance or special materials, so that the teachers can give their courses without anything really changing. Needless to say, we don't subscribe to this point of view! A parity committee will thus be analyzing the problems, as well as the phenomenon's impact upon the teaching workload so as to make recommendations to both parties, no later than 12 months after the collective agreement is signed.

Clinical teaching in nursing and in acute health care technician programs

Clinical teaching that is given in a hospital setting by nursing professors has a definite impact upon their working conditions. The latter are required to: go to the hospital the

day before the traineeship begins to select appropriate teachable situations; arrive before the trainees on the day of the course to prepare things; ensure that all the dossiers have been properly filled out before leaving the establishment; coordinate the interaction of the trainees with the other caregivers in the hospital, as well as with the patients' families; attend, often during their vacation and without any additional remuneration, career counselling days in the event of a change of hospital or health care unit; teach outside of the work schedule stipulated in the agreement, etc. Obviously, all this impacts upon coordinating such traineeships. In such a context, it's difficult to properly break down the tasks and use the Individual Workload (CI) measure for these purposes. Dealing fairly with such important difficulties is not so simple; that's why the union and management representatives decided

Meanwhile, in the acute health care technician programs, that is to say, the programs with several traineeships in a hospital setting for which the trainee/professor (Nejk) ratio is very low – which means that, in reality, the teacher is directly supervising the trainee–, problems in clinical teaching are also being encountered, notably with regard to isolated or remote traineeship sites, working outside of the work schedule stipulated in the agreement, as well as the coordination of traineeship supervisors. Accordingly, once again, once the agreement is signed, a committee will have 18 months to examine the characteristics that typify clinical teaching in these technician programs (radiodiagnosis, radiation oncology, emergency pre-hospital care, nuclear medicine, medical electrophysiology, etc.) and, where applicable, record the difficulties observed with regard to supervising traineeships, as well as their

in meetings and student guidance activities, inexistent job security, no sick leaves, no access to any of the professional development resources that are available, etc. They therefore viewed these negotiations as an excellent opportunity to improve their lot. Meanwhile, the management representatives also place a lot of importance on continuing education. The Fédération des cégeps even made it the theme of their convention this year! However, in their mind, the programs where they teach are merely ephemeral domains that appear and just as quickly disappear depending upon the ad hoc, specific and short-term needs of the job market. Seeing as meeting these needs can be achieved by hiring very specialized teaching personnel, according to them, it is necessary to bypass priority rankings in order to hire the most competent person and to sanction moonlighting in the event that said person would already be working full-time in the regular sector. In this scenario, only the “prof-pivot” in charge of organizing and putting together the programs from A to Z, one after the other, could even hope to enjoy decent working conditions. Realizing that there was an impasse, FNEEQ and CPNC agreed to mandate a committee to analyze the current practices of continuing education teachers, and a report is to be tabled with the national representatives of the parties no later than April 15, 2013. This will translate no more no less into a “Portrait of the Teacher 2 profession!”

There's thus lots to be done, all the more so given that these mandates are in addition to the examination of current practices with regard to the recognition of vested rights and skills (RAC) and that of course equivalents (REC). The issues at stake are considerable, as 53 FTE have been set aside to undertake this committee work. We shall keep you informed about progress in all the above. •



to mandate a committee to recommend one or more models for calculating individual workloads, which are adapted to the reality of teaching nursing, and to analyze the problems related to traineeships in this discipline, notably with regard to career counselling days. The members of this committee will have to deliver their recommendations to their respective mandators no later than 18 months after the agreement is signed.

impact upon the teaching workload of these professors.

Continuing education

To say that the two parties didn't share a common vision of the continuing education dossier would be an understatement. FNEEQ views the sessional lecturers in this sector as the college teaching community's poor cousins in terms of their working conditions: lower salaries, unpaid participation

Minister Beauchamp's Forum on CEGEPs

Job market and training: What kind of marriage is that



Jean Trudelle
FNEEQ President

January 2010, Lévis. The Québec Liberal government, further to a vague promise to this effect made by Jean Charest, organizes a two-day forum on the economic future of the Province of Québec, a forum where all his “partners” are invited to attend. A consensus emerges, as petty as it is incontrovertible: we must focus upon education (sic).

March 2010, Québec City. In his budget, Raymond Bachand announces that other forums will be organized, this time focused solely upon education. This hastily improvised measure arrives like a hot potato in the lap of Michelle Courchesne, who is the Minister of Education at the time. The Ministry flounders a bit, organizes an initial consultation that doesn't shed light on very much: as the people attending this get-together have the impression that they're being consulted... on what they should be consulted about!

Change of Minister: Line Beauchamp takes over and inherits the organization of these forums, while the Prime Minister's Office closely monitors what's going on. As we write these lines, a first forum has taken place (on the integration of special needs students), a second one is in the offing (on tying the funding of universities to their

performance) and two others have been announced for the spring, one on school democracy and the other on CEGEPs, whose theme will be the adequacy of job training.

Too little... very late

In an open letter published in *Le Devoir*, Jean Trudelle denounced the improvised nature of these meetings and their cramped format in view of the stakes involved. The foregoing is particularly striking in the case of the universities. Given the immense progress in human knowledge, can we question the role of universities in society today in the same way that we did yesterday? The federation believes that the various issues regarding governance, the public funding of universities, the financial situation of our students, tuition, the place that teaching should occupy in a university's mission would all require, at the very least, the organization of an Estates General on the future of universities, as has been suggested moreover by the University Partners Table, of which FNEEQ is a member. These questions can't be fully examined over two short days. A reflection on the tendency to have teaching institutions compete against one another, with all that this generates in terms of new reporting tasks and distortions in the social

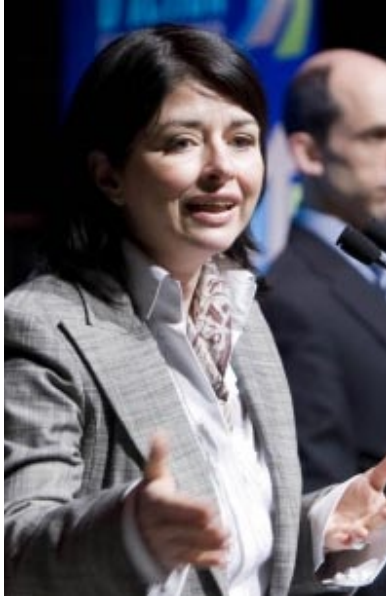


Micheline Thibodeau
FNEEQ Vice-président

values related to their mission, could take up this entire 48 hours all by itself.

What awaits these forums on CEGEPs? It's difficult to say: the Ministry, most likely not far advanced in the preparation of these forums, has been relatively tight-lipped. We do know however that sessions are being planned for outside of the metropolitan areas





and that a central forum will follow, either in Montreal or in Québec City.

What matters most to us is the angle under which we will be asked to examine the future of our CEGEPs. The adequacy of job training has been evoked; What does that mean exactly?

Quality technical training

CEGEPs have always enjoyed an excellent reputation in terms of the quality of the college education dispensed, both in the technical and pre-university sectors. Few countries in the world can boast of such a high level of satisfaction from both employers and universities regarding the quality of the technicians they hire. Under these circumstances, it would be difficult to challenge how this initial training is being put into practice.

Will one want to re-examine the course offerings? In principle, this is the work that is done by the inter-order tables, whose results have varied from one region to the next. The notion of verifying the adequacy between the needs of the job market and the programs being offered in a given region is of course an interesting one, particularly with regard to attempts to keep young people from leaving their region. However, such considerations alone cannot serve as a policy cornerstone in terms of the evolution of course

offerings. Our vision of accessibility is far broader than this and we would advocate that outside of the metropolitan areas, young people must also be offered an interesting array of courses and programs.

We can already take action on some of these issues on the national summit committee on small cohorts and, fortunately, the college administrations outside of the metropolitan areas likewise wish to maintain an offer of attractive programs.

Indeed, what should be put on the table in the forums on CEGEPs is the role that they play – or do not play – in terms of continuing education. There are significant problems to be resolved here. A continuing education culture has to be developed. Québec is dragging its feet in this area, and it's not something to be proud about. The CSN has always, and particularly since the adoption of the 1% legislation, conducted campaigns with workers designed to promote training and the acquisition of more knowledge and new skills. Unfortunately, more is still needed to change the attitudes of employers and the Ministry of Education.

To begin with, there's the funding issue, since the fixed envelope represents a very important constraint in terms of the accessibility of college courses for adults who have a job or who are unemployed. However, a clearly articulated orientation is also necessary for implementing a genuine adult training program where everybody could find a way to develop themselves as people, in a stimulating training plan, and this, throughout their career. For now, anarchy seems to be the watchword in this area.

Several of these difficulties were raised at the recent convention of the Fédération des cégéps, which dealt with continuing education. The participants' observations were almost identical to ours in terms of

the lack of funding, the lack of concerted action and the low level of interest that is too often shown by corporate executives in terms of investing in the training of their employees.

If this is effectively the angle that the Minister of Education wishes to pursue, we will attend and definitely play an active role. On the one hand, because accessibility to college studies is one of the fundamental principles that we heartily endorse, while on the other hand, because we want to underline the importance we place on associating teachers from all the CEGEPs, from every region, with the reflection on continuing education and on making it happen. For this to take place, it will be necessary to provide the necessary means and resources, in other words, working conditions to enable them to use their expertise to further develop continuing education.

What matters most to us is the angle under which we will be asked to examine the future of our CEGEPs. The adequacy of job training has been evoked; What does that mean exactly?

A constructive reflection on these issues and challenges will require a thorough preparation of the forums that will be focusing upon our

CEGEPs. Let's only hope in this regard that Ms. Beauchamp will take advantage of the experience of her two predecessors and will call upon every stakeholder category to pave the way for fruitful deliberations. Some people fear that there's a hidden agenda in the Minister's filing cabinets, which would call into question the CEGEPs... but let's not be overly pessimistic! ●

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