

CSQ/COLLEGES

Ready to negotiate!

This fall, after a year of consultations during which our three federations met with the unions and their members across Québec, we have finally tabled our demands in anticipation of negotiations for the renewal of our collective agreements, set to expire on March 31, 2015.



Anne Dionne, president of the Fédération du personnel de soutien de l'enseignement supérieur (FPSES-CSQ),

Mario Beauchemin, president of the Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de cégeps (FEC-CSQ),

Carol LaVack, president of the Fédération du personnel professionnel des collèges (FPPC-CSQ)

For support personnel, our demands focus on reducing precarity and increasing recognition. For example, the Fédération du personnel de soutien de l'enseignement supérieur (FPSES-CSQ) is proposing solutions that aim to make it easier to increase the number of hours worked by those in part-time positions and promote access to full-time positions. We also want to address the organization of work, notably everything that relates to sub-contracting.

As for the Fédération du personnel professionnel des collèges (FPPC-CSQ), sectoral demands are divided into four categories: workload and work conditions, work-family balance, education, and job security. With competition between Cégeps, new managerial styles were adopted leading to a veritable change of perspective and values. In this context, our demands focus on modernizing work conditions to attract and retain personnel.

Finally, we must point out that the 60 Cégep teacher unions affiliated with the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) and the Confédération

des syndicats nationaux (CSN) have decided to join together for sectoral negotiations. A new negotiating entity was created: the Alliance des syndicats des professeures et des professeurs de cégep (ASPPC). It will represent the 21,000 teachers in the college network. At the core of our demands is recognition for the teaching profession and the implementation of concrete solutions to address the increasing complexity and mounting workload of teachers.

A government on a mission

It seems increasingly clear that the Couillard government, which was vague about its true intentions during the electoral campaign, wants to completely transform Québec's model of public services. Its mad rush to a balanced budget at any cost is doing a poor job at concealing its true intentions. Beyond a prudent style of management, it's an ideological attack that recalls the reengineering attempted by Jean Charest approximately 10 years ago. By trying to blindly enforce austerity in its mission to repair the situation, the government risks worsening it. The presence of a

notorious libertarian, Martin Coiteux, at the head of the Treasury Board, is not unusual for this type of unproductive action. And yet, the recent situation in Europe (Greece and Portugal), where austerity measures made the situation worse, should encourage us to stay away from this path.

Defending the college network

Who can predict the outcome of negotiations between the Common Front and the Couillard government? One thing is certain, the size and intensity of our mobilization are key. And, as the government slowly unveils its plan to dismantle the Québec model, negotiations for the renewal of our collective agreements are an important area of defence, not only for our working conditions, but for public services in general and the college network in particular.

We are ready to negotiate more than ever.

Solidarity!



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collegial.csq.qc.net

A report that ends badly?

Tabling of final Demers report on college education

Last October 20, Minister Bolduc made public the final report on college education. Prepared by Guy Demers, the document wrapped up the work begun by the previous government following the Summit on Higher Education. Though the Fédération des cégeps seems to welcome the recommendations, our union organizations perceive them with some apprehension and many reservations.



Pierre Avignon
FEC-CSQ Advisor



Réjean Montpetit
FPPC-CSQ Negotiation Committee

Tabled in January 2014, the progress report (as thick as the final report) made recommendations to increase enrolment in troubled vocational programs, without directly questioning the current framework of public college education. Guy Demers proposed implementing a plan for outward student mobility to the regions, increasing enrolment of foreign students or improving the structure of the network.

With the same objective in mind, the recommendations in the final report focus directly on the fundamental characteristics of the Cégep network, notably offering a common general education to both pre-university and vocational students. The principal theme for Mr. Demers is on better recognition of the Attestation of Collegial Studies (ACS), which does not require the following elements: a completed general academic training, a standardized examination for the related program, and a standardized English fluency examination. To facilitate obtaining a diploma, several solutions are also proposed, such as obtaining a Diploma of Collegial Studies (DCS) built from existing ACS programs, going straight from a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS) to an Attestation of Collegial Studies (ACS), or

the creation of a college vocational certificate program that includes only specific program-related training.

Several changes have been recommended to the College Education Regulations. Besides those mentioned above, decentralization of one or two competencies has also been proposed to accelerate modernization of programs. However, the final report provoked the most reaction and forced Minister Bolduc to speak out against abolishing the standardized English fluency examination. Beginning with the fact that more than one thousand young people fail the exam every year, Guy Demers suggests restructuring the exam, or even removing it from the certificate of studies, as well as reviewing the current model of general education. An article in *Le Devoir* reaffirms the strong feeling of devaluation for the Diploma of Collegial Studies, which leads many to the conclusion that the report ended badly.

Strengthening the college network without challenging the value of the diploma

Several of the elements presented above could impact the duties of the college workforce, especially since these changes have been

announced, once again at no cost, which is completely unrealistic. In addition, with cutbacks and a freeze on resources, notably for professional and support staff, these changes need to be made with fewer funds and less personnel. Local development of programs of study will only increase competition among and within institutions, whereas the proposed merger of regular and continued education can't lead to a downward harmonization of work conditions for teachers. We must therefore be very vigilant when it comes to adding clauses to the collective agreements whose objectives will be to change our work conditions to facilitate the application of recommendations in the Demers report.

These criticisms and concerns should not overshadow our need to support troubled programs and regional Cégeps. Diminished resources and issues affecting success in several vocational programs do remain challenging for the network. Yet, some observations and the implementation of several recommendations contained in the report would increase both the enrolment and success of new students. National promotion of our vocational programs by all stakeholders, implementation of a mobility program, a better framework at the private level, and new requirements for DCSs and ACSs should be put forward. We therefore need to find the means, financial and human, to boost access and success of young people and adults across Québec, without decreasing the requirements to obtain a diploma.

All of the documents produced by the Chantier de travail sur l'offre de formation collégiale are available online at: www.mesrs.gouv.qc.ca/le-sommet/les-chantiers-de-travail/loffre-de-formation-collegiale/

A few recommendations in the Demers report

- National promotion of vocational programs
- Changes to the College Education Regulations¹
- Pilot project for outward student mobility to regions
- Transparency for new authorizations
- Reinforced collaboration between Cégeps
- Development of distance education
- Recruitment of foreign students
- Reconciling regular and continuing education

1. Among the changes proposed are the following: college vocational certificate program, bridging DVS-ACS, DCS by accumulation of ACS, decentralization of one or two competencies

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