Casualization and excessive workloads

SOLUTIONS?
SPECIAL REPORT

Where is retirement headed?

Sexual violence
on campus
From taught to action
YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION

... TO SAVINGS UP TO 30%* ON YOUR HOME AND AUTO INSURANCE

EXCLUSIVE GROUP RATES + SAVINGS

We care about you, and it shows, thanks to our best-in-class service, fast hassle-free claims processing and exclusive group rates not available to the general public.

Savings, flexible options, plus a time-tested commitment to your satisfaction—what could be easier?

Get a quote today and save!

1-888-476-8737

csq.thepersonal.com

The Personal refers to The Personal General Insurance Inc. Certain conditions, limitations and exclusions may apply.

* Savings amounts are not guaranteed and will vary depending upon your underwriting information.
From the whirlwind that propelled us down the road of union competition, one thing stands out: the CSQ and its unions led an honest, respectful campaign rooted in solidarity with current and future battles. Thank you to our members and to everyone we encountered, for the welcome you gave us, your openness and, it must be said, your tremendous patience throughout this disruption of the daily reality of your professional activities.

The daily reality is far from rosy in the public sector. The problems tied to work organization, precarious employment and overwork are growing – indeed pathogenic – and have invaded all workplaces. Yet solutions do exist. I offer as proof the Forum sur l’organisation du travail, organized by the CSQ in February 2017, where over 200 individuals gathered to put forward several courses of action.

Quality of life in the workplace is essential, so much so that this issue has to form the centrepiece of government strategy to ensure Québec’s economic development and prosperity for the entire population. That was the message we delivered yet again to the government, together with the FTQ, the CSD and the CSN, during the Rendez-vous national sur la main-d’œuvre, an event aimed at mobilizing all the actors involved in rising to the challenge of filling one million jobs in Québec in the near future.

Putting in place conditions conducive to creating good jobs and ensuring quality of life is the goal we should be collectively striving for.

In solidarity!

LOUISE CHABOT PRESIDENT
Together, at the heart of the solution.

Following the CSQ forum held this past February, the magazine presents a special report on the key issue of work organization.
STRESS, BURNOUT, SUFFERING IN THE WORKPLACE

SYMPTOMS THAT CALL FOR ACTION

Considerable stress. Persistent fatigue. Insomnia. Feeling that demands keep increasing, the pace of work is unbearable, and your competencies no longer count.

Without consultation, work methods and efficiency standards that don’t correspond with your job, and even less with how you value your work, are imposed on you.

Surreptitiously, despair sets in, questions arise… “Am I the problem? Am I morally or physically weak? Perhaps I can no longer do my job? Did I choose the wrong career?”

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

To all of these questions, industrial sociologist Daniel Mercure¹ categorically responds that it is in no way a question of moral or physical weakness on the part of workers, and even less of their ability to achieve expected standards of efficiency, such as success rates in schools or the number of patients seen and cared for in a period of one hour.

Rather, these problems are the result of forms of work organization drawn from the private sector and insidiously implemented in our work environments in recent decades. With the government’s help, he adds, these changes have promoted management models that contradict the very essence of public service, i.e. service to others.

According to Daniel Mercure, these processes have transformed the public sector into an assembly line of continuous and standardized services: job cuts, increased workloads, implementation of efficiency standards to monitor the performance of workers, etc. In addition, to further cut costs, employers have turned to subcontracting or placement agencies to establish a large pool of temporary workers.

Casualization sets in: insufficient work hours to earn a decent living, split hours and temporary contracts, making future plans for ourselves and our families difficult…

CASUALIZATION, AN INSIDIOUS EVIL

Daniel Mercure goes further, stating that casualization also carries a subjective dimension. Less known, but more widespread, subjective casualization of work can be experienced even when an individual holds a stable, full-time and well-paid job.

This casualization notably occurs when there is an imbalance between tasks and available resources; when heavy workloads are handed down with no consideration for the work accomplished; or when the work must be conducted in a manner that violates professional ethics.

COLLECTIVE ACTION IS THE SOLUTION

The issues you are experiencing at work are not the result of personal weakness. They are collective issues, experienced by all public sector workers, stemming from dehumanized management methods and organization of work. What can we do? To create change, we must organize in our places of work, find solutions together and present a common front. CSQ unions have taken steps with their members and it works!

1 Daniel Mercure is a professor of sociology at Université Laval. In February 2017, he was a speaker at the Prevent and cure through organization of work forum, organized by the CSQ.
“No, nothing is absolute”, says Angelo Soares. However, the fight must be shared and must target the core of the problem: the organization of work. Otherwise, it’s just a band-aid solution.

GETTING TO THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

For 40 years, the casualization of labour has increased, while social services have become monetized: students and patients are now customers...

“No neoliberal newspeak appears: lean management, optimization, flexibility, rationalization, new public management... And when one of these nice words takes on a negative connotation? It gets replaced. This type of rhetoric, which promotes the image of an efficient organization, is very important, because the words it uses are words that make us think,” explains the researcher.

TRYING TO SURVIVE

Angelo Soares explains that the casualization of labour makes work more intense and condensed, resulting in a lack of time. “And since fewer employees are replaced, everyone pays the price, creating resentment. Tensions and competition between workers increase, breaking up work teams.”

Every minute is also quantified to produce the data necessary to evaluate how efficiently work is completed. “These
industry performance indicators don’t take real work nor its emotional impact into consideration. If I need to control a student in crisis, the situation will likely affect me!"

WHEN YOUR HEALTH IS AT RISK
All this has consequences on health and leads to a deterioration in the services offered to the population. “We can’t do everything. So we end up working until we get sick because our students and patients come first. This results in anxiety, suffering and distress.”

When a mental health problem occurs at work, various solutions are offered to the worker: relaxation, exercise, psychotherapy, etc. But these solutions only relieve the symptoms. The individual is stigmatized, feeling that he is the source of the problem, when in reality it’s the organization of work.

COLLECTIVE ACTION AS SELF-DEFENSE
Angelo Soares believes that collective action is the best means to counter strategies that divide us and make us sick. “It’s important that we get together and talk. It’s how we come to realize that our pain is shared with others. There are solutions. Let’s combine them and avoid individual fixes that act like Tylenol does on pain. It might relieve it temporarily, but it doesn’t eliminate the source of the problem.”

“Employers want to overwork us? Let’s say no. They want to create part-time positions? Let’s demand full-time ones. We need to show real work, make managers accountable for the amount of work, and communicate in their language by quantifying the cost of their strategies. It’s been proven: organizations that respect their workers are much more profitable!”

SUPPORT WORKERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION
Research study to counter excessive workloads

A research study on the working conditions of support workers in cégeps and universities is underway.

MARIE-EVE IMONTI CSQ ADVISOR
The data collected will be used to document the situation for upcoming negotiations in 2020.

“We will focus notably on the evolution of resources, as well as excessive workloads and subjective casualization. We believe that these are the result of a poor organization of work based on a purely financial logic. Add to this a flagrant lack of recognition. It’s not surprising to experience a lack of meaning at work,” explains Anne Dionne.

Some of the steps included in the study will be to compile data on absences due to sickness and other holidays, and document the work of support workers.

“This study will help define the resources necessary to significantly improve the working conditions of our members,” she says.

1 Anne Dionne is president of the Fédération du personnel de soutien de l’enseignement supérieur (FPSES-CSQ).
UNION ACTION, MORE RELEVANT THAN EVER

Studies show that being unionized is good for your health.

CLAUDE GIRARD CSQ ADVISOR

But it’s even better when unions take significant action on conditions of employment and work that affect health and safety, including mental health, in the workplace.

NECESSARY UNION ACTION

Geneviève Baril-Gingras\(^1\) explains that increasing workloads and casualization are pushing individuals inwards in an attempt to save themselves, making it difficult to engage in the union. To counter this tendency, we must act collectively on the work overload and the psychosocial environment.

NUMEROUS MEANS OF ACTION

She adds that the means are abundant and can be grouped into two categories: decreasing quantitative requirements and establishing measures to facilitate accomplishing tasks.

Some more traditional interventions invoke an Act Respecting Occupational Health and Safety: complaints, refusal to work, joint actions, etc. Others rely on local, sectoral or national negotiations, demanding minimum employment, ratios, safeguards against performance monitoring, etc.

Independent means may also be chosen, such as filing a complaint with the Québec Ombudsman, creating an alliance with community organizations, collaborating with researchers or undertaking a media campaign.

A FUNDAMENTAL SOLIDARITY

Regardless of the means chosen, solidarity is fundamental. Members must mobilize around demands that affect their daily realities. In the same spirit, Marie-Noëlle Albert\(^2\) calls for the creation of communities of people in the various sectors.

She recalls that working in a vacuum and workplace monitoring demoralize workers and lead to health and safety issues in the workplace, as well as psychological distress.

Allowing people to collaborate and enter into a dialogue makes solidarity, mutual support, confidence and recognition possible, radically improving the work climate and health and safety in the workplace.

---

1 Geneviève Baril-Gingras, full professor in the department of industrial relations at Université Laval, was a guest-speaker at the CSQ forum on the organization of work.
2 Marie-Noëlle Albert, professor of management sciences at Université du Québec à Rimouski, was also a speaker at the forum.
PARTNERSHIPS IN SCHOOLS

Respect for the roles of everyone

Several organizations wish to support public schools in fostering educational success. What can be done to ensure that these partnerships are successful?

MARIE-EVE QUIRION FPPE-CSQ ADVISOR

To be effective, they must be a complement to the services already offered by the school network, and projects must not replace the services provided by unionized personnel. The fact that the roles, mandates and responsibilities of each are distinct ensures respect for the autonomy of community organizations and the protection of the public services.

THE ROOTS OF A CONFLICT

However, years of austerity and attempts to transform the role of the State have dealt a blow to this principle. Project-based funding of community organizations forces them to diversify their services. School administrations are partial to such initiatives, deemed to be cost neutral.

Although in the short term, such projects alleviate work overload, it has been observed that everything must start again from scratch the following year, that only a small number of students benefit and that the interventions of partners conflict with the role of professional support staff.

VERY REAL ABUSES

The confusion of roles has grown, as indicated by the measures proposed in the Youth Action Strategy 2016-2017. In addition, the decentralization of budgets to schools encourages reliance on staff from the partners to perform the tasks of school personnel.

In some school boards, for instance, Carrefours jeunesse-emploi workers take charge of guidance counselling meetings, psychosocial follow-up or coaching students in difficulty, while professional positions have been eliminated. These workers are even provided with an office while school staff often have difficulty securing such a “privilege”.

A SITUATION OF CONCERN TO EVERYONE

The CSQ, its school network federations and its community organization unions are currently working on formulating a strategy to defend the rights of unionized personnel and access to quality services for all students, while respecting the mission and the autonomy of community organizations. The matter will be discussed at an upcoming meeting of the CSQ General Council.

In addition to participating in the work on this strategy, the Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels de l’éducation du Québec (FPPE-CSQ) has adopted its own action plan to defend public professional services and to recommend conditions ensuring that partnerships respect the roles of everyone. Stay tuned…
“WE PUT FIRES OUT EVERY DAY!”

When entering École Polyvalente des Îles, you can’t miss Agathe Arseneau1. There are always young people whirling around her.

The special education technician compares her day to that of a firefighter’s. “We never know what’s going to happen. We spend a lot of time resolving conflicts because everything that affects the students, whether in or out of school, can have an impact on the atmosphere at school.”

A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF MOTIVATION

Agathe Arseneau knows that to complete her tasks she needs to be resourceful and autonomous, and listen to her students and clientele. Passionate about her work, she enjoys watching the students grow.

“On Îles-de-la-Madeleine, we have fantastic young people. Our young people get involved and want to succeed. I find it important to guide them, help them take their place in society. That’s what motivates me,” she says.

“Mainly because we live in a place where everyone knows each other, but sometimes it’s not easy because we’re far from everything. Our young people wonder what’s waiting for them when they leave the islands after high school to continue their studies or for work. Since I’ve done it, I can share my experience with them. They enjoy hearing our stories. They want to be reassured,” she says.

BEING THERE FOR OUR YOUTH

In this institution, special education technicians work in specialized classrooms, some with specific students and others with groups. Agathe shares the floor with another technician and together they ensure the atmosphere remains cooperative. To achieve this, they adjust their schedules to the students’ schedules.

Agathe Arseneau explains her relationship with other staff members. “We work as a team. We accompany students and direct them to the right service, whether it be the guidance counsellor, the psychologist or the social worker.”

She explains the sensitive nature of her interactions: “We hold a position of authority, but if we want to gain the trust of our teenagers and be able to continue with them, they really need to feel that we are fully present, that we are listening, and that we understand them when we talk to them.”

---

1 Agathe Arseneau is a member of the Syndicat des travailleurs de l’éducation de l’Est du Québec (STEEQ-CSQ).
ABOLITION OF ACCESSORY COSTS

NEW EXCEPTIONS AND CONFUSION...

The new regulation abolishing accessory costs, which went into effect this past January, was supposed to put an end to years of abuse and ambiguities. However, the new instructions regarding what costs and services may be charged or not reveal new regulations and exceptions that are already raising questions and being subjected to diverse interpretations. Twice the number of reimbursements is being claimed daily at the Régie de l’assurance maladie du Québec. Negotiations with medical federations continue: new adjustments are anticipated. We will be keeping a close eye on the evolution of this matter.

CENTRALIZED MEDICAL LABS

OPTILAB: OPPOSITION IS GROWING

The consequences of centralizing medical laboratories are being decried by a growing number of players. Among others, there are the potential risks for the safety, stability and traceability of samples, increased delays for results and diagnoses, and the economic repercussions on the regions. The economic impact study on the regions of Lanaudière and the Laurentians produced by the CSQ is creating great political interest and actively contributing to the debate.

Several MNAs and mayors are adding their voices to the hundred or so municipalities and RCMs having already expressed their opposition.

YOUR BUSINESS CONNECTION

TO INSURANCE FOR YOUR APARTMENT BUILDING

COMMITTED TO PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS!

We offer coverage tailored to your needs and developed specifically for your line of business at exclusive group rates.

We also offer the same advantages for your spouse’s business!

Get a quote that’s tailored to your business!

- 1-800-268-3063
- csq.thepersonal.com/business
SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS

FROM TOUGHT TO ACTION

The events that took place at Université Laval have led to significant reflection on the issue of sexual violence on university and cégeps campuses.

CHRISTINE MARCEAU CSQ ADVISOR

Isabelle Bisson-Carpentier\(^1\) is categorical: it is urgent that we find ways of documenting sexual assaults on college campuses. “We are poorly informed. To fight against this type of violence, we need to know where, when and how it happens.”

According to the history professor, teachers are ill-equipped to help victims. “To effectively fight against sexual violence, we need to reflect on the steps to take and how to adequately support victims.”

PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

At the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles, only one complaint has been made in 10 years, according to the academic advising department. But the union and management are not fooled. It is possible that there have been other victims, knowing how difficult disclosure can be.

We have student residences. It’s a particular context that needs to be considered when planning prevention and the fight against sexual violence.”

In the meantime, campaigns such as “Sans oui, c’est non!” and “Ni viande ni objet” are taking place to raise awareness in the college community. For Isabelle Bisson-Carpentier, prevention and awareness must be conducted continually and consistently.

ACTIONS IN SIGHT

“The work has begun. Some things are starting to move. Our management ensures us that training and tools will be available by 2018. At the government level, minister David held a consultation at which time the FEC-CSQ filed a notice.\(^2\) We’ve also heard that a framework law will be drafted in June in preparation for the introduction of a bill in September. This is all good and encouraging news,” she concluded.

---

\(^1\) Isabelle Bisson-Carpentier is a member of the Syndicat du personnel enseignant du Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles à Gaspé (CSQ).

\(^2\) The notice is available for consultation on the Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de cégep (FEC-CSQ) website: fec.lacsq.org.
SPOTLIGHT ON THE SEMAINE DE LA RELÈVE CSQ

The Semaine de la relève CSQ will take place on April 24–28. An array of local and regional events is planned. Here are just a few of them!

MARIE-JOSÉE ROUSSE CSQ ADVISOR

SOLIDARITY, FUN AND FOOD TRUCK

On April 25, 2017, members of the some 50 CSQ unions in the Montréal region are invited to take part in a major rally in support of the new generation of union activists at the CSQ head office. The initiative is spearheaded by the regional coordination service in Montréal.

“We are planning a family-friendly, festive and educational event,” says Geneviève Caron.1 “Elected officials of the CSQ and the federations will be there. We’ll be able to learn more about our confederation and its history. A food truck will be on site, in addition to a musical duo, inflatable games and much more!”

WINE AND CHEESE FOR THE NEW GENERATION

As for the Syndicat de Champlain (CSQ), Sébastien Potvin2 explains that many events are held every year for the new generation. “We regularly offer training on hiring conditions, RRSPs, TFSAs and home ownership, in collaboration with Desjardins. This year, we are also holding a wine and cheese gathering to celebrate our new generation of union activists. A wonderful networking opportunity!”

OPEN HOUSE AT THE SSÉPÎ-CSQ

On April 24, 2017, the Syndicat du soutien en éducation de la Pointe-de-l’Île (SSÉPÎ-CSQ) will hold a happy hour (4:00 to 8:00 p.m.) at the union office. “The members are invited to stop by the office to meet the union executive and the youth committee. We’ll be taking advantage of the occasion to launch our guide for new members,” explains Marie-Claude Tremblay3.

1 Geneviève Caron is Secretary-Treasurer of the SSÉPÎ-CSQ, and responsible for regional coordination in Montréal.
2 Sébastien Potvin is a member of the Comité des jeunes du Syndicat de Champlain (CSQ).
3 Marie-Claude Tremblay is a member of the CSQ Youth Committee and Vice President of the SSÉPÎ-CSQ.
COMMUNICATION, CULTURE AND TERRITORIES

THE CHALLENGES OF ABORIGINAL UNIONISM

Nunavik¹ and Eeyou Istchee² are practically at the end of the world. How is union life conducted over the sheer vastness of these territories?

NICOLE DE SÈVE COLLABORATION

The challenges and successes of the Association of employees of Northern Québec, which represents more than 1600 members of the school and CPE networks in these communities, as well as in Montréal, Gatineau, Saint-Jérôme, Opitciwan, Wemotaci, and Matimekush-Lac John.

Larry Imbeault³ is categorical: one of the problems is communication. “Many don’t have phones or computers at home, and the internet is not always dependable. Furthermore, some only speak Inuktitut.”

The Inuk unionist adds that the immensity of the territories and the high cost of travelling represent another major challenge, making a tour of the different areas virtually impossible in less than two months’ time…

A PARTICULAR DYNAMIC

A general assembly of all members is inconceivable. “We hold assemblies in separate locations. Local delegates organize and preside over the meetings,” explains François Beauchemin⁴.

He adds that aboriginal teaching personnel, who represent 40% of the membership, participate very little as delegates.

“During assemblies, they tend to stay quiet and withdraw. However, during the triennial congress, which brings together some one hundred representatives from all communities, it’s different. They are more comfortable expressing themselves thanks to simultaneous English, Inuktituk and Cree translations.”

As for support staff workers, the situation varies. “At the Kativik School Board, for example, recruitment is difficult. A sense of belonging is tough to instil because the union is still viewed by many as a white-man’s thing. Despite our efforts, many don’t see the need for it and would rather solve their problems without us or simply choose to resign,” adds Larry Imbeault.

INITIATIVES THAT BEAR FRUIT

Encouraging union life is an important objective. An aboriginal committee has been created to increase participation and to support the executive committee on certain issues, such as the teaching of aboriginal languages and culture.

Several strategies and tools that aim to improve consultation and reinforce a sense of belonging have also been developed. Larry Imbeault and François Beauchemin have noticed a change in participation, as evidenced by the unprecedented mobilization of members during the last negotiations.

¹ Nunavik : 14 Inuit communities over 507 000 km².
² James Bay Cree Territory : 9 Cree communities over 340 000 km².
³ Larry Imbeault is president of the Association des employés du Nord québécois (AENQ-CSQ).
⁴ François Beauchemin is union advisor at the AENQ-CSQ.
Public sector workers are fortunate to be able to count on the RREGOP¹, a defined benefit pension plan, which has once again been judged financially sound.

**A POSITIVE REVIEW**

Every three years, Retraite Québec² publishes an actuarial valuation of the RREGOP. Last December, the results of the assessment for the period ending December 2014 were made public. They revealed that:

✅ the deficit of the member’s fund decreased from $2.65 to $0.87 billion between 2011 and 2014;

✅ the capitalization rate reached 98.4%, meaning that the RREGOP has nearly all of the funds necessary to meet its long-term commitments;

✅ the contribution rate declined slightly from 11.12% in 2016 to 11.05% in 2017. It will continue to decline, reaching 10.97% in 2018 and 10.88% in 2019.

**A QUESTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS**

Did you know that the RREGOP contribution rate carries an exemption? Contributions are calculated only on the portion of our salary that exceeds the exemption. In 2016, the latter rose to $13,725, which is equal to 25% of the Year’s Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE) under the Québec Pension Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year’s Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE)</th>
<th>Contribution rate</th>
<th>Contributory earnings Salary - (YMPE x 25%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$54,900</td>
<td>11.12%</td>
<td>Salary – $13,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$55,300</td>
<td>11.05%</td>
<td>Salary – $13,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>10.97%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>10.88%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IN GOOD HEALTH**

The RREGOP is healthy. We can collectively congratulate ourselves for its sound financial situation, which is enviable when compared to other pension plans that have struggled in recent years.

However, the RREGOP is not completely safe from potential storms. Low interest rates, the volatility of financial markets and the increase in life expectancy are all situations to watch. The CSQ will continue to be vigilant to ensure its sustainability.

To learn more, go to: securitesociale.lacsq.org.

---

¹ Government and Public Employees Retirement Plan.
² Formerly CARRA, which has merged with the Régie des rentes du Québec.
CSQ, PROUD PARTNER OF THE FONDS DE SOLIDARITÉ FTQ.

For more information on the protocol CSQ-Fonds, contact the local representative (LR) in your workplace, your local union or Langis Beaulieu, coordinator – CSQ at 1 800 361-5017.