



Info-Négo #11

TENTATIVE DEAL AT THE ASPPC TABLE

An agreement in principle was reached December 7th at the ASPPC sectoral bargaining table. Here are the main highlights of the 40-point contract deal.

No losses

In announcing his intention in November 2014 to “review all of the administrative parameters of the State,” Minister Martin Coiteux set the stage for violent attacks against public sector labour unions. This translated into government demands that would have seen us lose ground on virtually every aspect of our collective agreement: leave for union duties, professional autonomy, job security, minimum employee levels, salary insurance, etc. In the end, we succeeded in forcing the government to withdraw its demands in all of these areas.

It is clear that the powerful mobilization of teachers and their unions was a key factor in securing the government’s retreat on these matters as well as in obtaining the gains outlined below. The massive turnout for strike votes and wide-scale participation in the pressure tactics and rallies in the ASPPC’s action plan had a very real and definite impact on the outcome of these negotiations.

Rank 23

Under this agreement in principle, CEGEP teachers will see their job class upgraded to rank 23, a level that recognizes the complexity of the work they do as well as their partnership in the higher education sector.

A bit of background...

In reviewing the issue of pay equity in 2006, the Quebec government reclassified the jobs of primary and high school teachers—predominantly female job classes covered by the Pay Equity Act—to rank 22. The jobs of their CEGEP counterparts, which are roughly divided between men and women, are not subject to the Act and were therefore not reviewed as part of the exercise. Although a trailer clause ensured them the same salary structure as that of school board teachers, CEGEP professors began lobbying long and hard to have their job class re-evaluated and fairly ranked through the wage relativity review process.

But whereas the Pay Equity Act enforces binding obligations on government, such is not the case with wage relativity, which has to be negotiated.

Then, in 2013, the axe fell: in its initial re-assessment, the government downgraded CEGEP teachers to rank 21! The massive mobilization that arose against the decision forced the government to back down, and in February 2014, the job classification was restored to rank 22. Although the negotiations continued—in fact, even more vigorously than ever—they remained outside the boundaries of the collective bargaining process. But with the launch of the latest bargaining round, the government put the issue of wage relativity squarely on the table with its call for major restructuring in the salary structure and pay scales across the Quebec public sector. We saw this as an opportunity to settle once and for all an issue that had been dragging on for far too long, and our Regroupement CEGEP delegates voted in favour of doing just that in January 2015.

At long last!

The government dug in its heels throughout the bargaining process, refusing to budge from its position. It was only in the final stretch, in the face of the strong mobilization and dogged determination of the CSN and Common Front, that it finally backed down and agreed to raise the job class of CEGEP teachers to rank 23. This represents an \$80 million gain that will also benefit our colleagues in Continuing Education.

Students with Disabilities - SWD

During our consultation tour on the list of demands, you asked for recognition and compensation of the increased workload associated with having students with disabilities in the classroom. The Ministry responded to our demands with letters of intent accompanying the agreement in principle that promise \$10 million per year, or 125 FTEs, to that end. These additional funds are reserved exclusively for the hiring of teachers and cannot be used by college administrations for any other purpose.

Because these resources are for Type 1 and Type 2 teaching duties, they can serve to help create jobs. These funds could become available as of January in the colleges, where they will be allocated according to local needs. Any amounts remaining unused at the end of a given year will be carried over to the following year. With this new investment, the negotiating committee is able to confirm that this tentative deal provides for an overall increase of 1% in additional funds for teaching that will contribute to the creation of new jobs.

Teaching loads in Continuing Education

The agreement in principle calls for the injection of resources—freed up by reallocation—that will serve to create more than 80 teaching loads in Continuing Education, paid through the CI. These can be full-time or part-time loads. A portion of these resources can also be used to pay professors for taking part in collective activities (departmental or program). Moreover, it will now also be possible for the decision to be made locally as to the affiliation of these professors to a department or program committee in regular education, as well as to the possibility of forming a single selection committee in regular and Continuing Education.

These improvements to our colleagues' working conditions have been the subject of recurrent demands over the past 20 years. This agreement therefore makes significant inroads in terms of achieving a better integration of Continuing Education and regular education. We will have to continue the fight for departmental affiliation for Continuing Education teachers during the course of this collective agreement and in future bargaining rounds.

Individual teaching load (CI) – A lower maximum CI

The agreement in principle includes certain modifications to the individual teaching load (CI). These changes are based on two principles: they must have the same effect as the current CI (2015) and they must protect a greater number of professors from too heavy a workload.

On the one hand, changes have been made to the HP (hours of preparation) and PES (weekly student periods) factors that protect the CI from a disproportionate number of course preparations and students per class. The HP factor will be lowered from 1.9 to 1.75 and the resources provided for in the collective agreement will remain in this budget envelope to ensure the measure is adequately funded. The PES factor will go down from 0.8 to 0.7 for anything above 415 PES. This change frees up 95 FTEs for reallocation, largely from manage-

ment's built-in leeway in PES, which accounts for nearly half of the FTEs provided for in the collective agreement. On the other hand, the maximum CI value, which stood at 88, has been reduced to 85. Taken together, these measures will ensure a balance in CI and, for most of the teachers affected, will result in a slightly lower workload.

The new CI ceiling of 85 is no more of an absolute cap than it was at 88. As in the past, anything above the maximum will be paid according to the terms of the collective agreement. It should be recalled that, generally, no more than one contingent teacher should be paid for part-time work on the basis of the CI calculation; the others are to be hired on a yearly full-time basis, for a full semester load.

The agreement calls for the redistribution of 55 FTEs among the colleges to account for the lower maximum CI.

Other gains

For contingents:

- Salary insurance: salary protection for contingent teachers will now be calculated on the basis of the job contract he or she would have had if at work.
- General service offer: the agreement provides for the establishment of a general service offer (GSO) that would allow contingent teachers to register only once with a college to apply for all of the teaching positions that are to be posted. It also allows for the creation of a call-back list with no posting deadline.
- Refusal of a teaching load: the agreement recognizes the right of contingent teachers to refuse any additional course load without the risk of losing their existing contract.

Departmental life

- Under the tentative deal, the minimum guarantee for departmental coordination is increased from 5.5 to 6 FTEs. This applies to small colleges, with the exception of a few already excluded under the existing collective agreement.

The full version of the agreement in principle can be found, in French, on *Cégeps – profs en négo*. Click here to view. For questions or further details, please contact your local union.