

# A DEC IS A DEC

## EVERYWHERE IN QUÉBEC!

### RREC AMENDMENTS: FLEXIBILITY VS **cohesion**

Through its ministerial consultations on higher education, the Québec Government is proposing changes to the *Règlement sur le régime des études collégiales* (RREC) that would give colleges more “flexibility” and “autonomy” when it comes to training and certification. The government could go so far as to grant colleges the right to set competencies and, ultimately, even issue their own diplomas at the local level. This is a major institutional drift and one we must rise against to preserve the provincial nature of our programs and diplomas.

After consulting with FNEEQ delegates, the CSN, FNEEQ and FEESP submitted a joint brief to Higher Education Minister Hélène David outlining our position on the matter.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Short-sighted “flexibility”**

First of all, there is no evidence to suggest that giving colleges greater leeway in these areas would in any way improve access to college education: if anything, this quest for “flexibility” seems to be more in the immediate interests of business than of the student population. The RREC changes the Minister is considering would give more local powers to colleges by allowing them to, among other things, set additional objectives and standards for specific training in technical programs and determine the format of the report card.

Implementing these changes would open the door to worrisome initiatives like the establishment of local diplomas or local competencies in response to temporary regional demands.

#### **Unequal local diplomas**

By divesting itself of these provincial responsibilities and foisting them onto colleges, the State is running the risk of causing major disparities among same programs offered by different institutions. This could have a huge impact on the recognition of the Québec diploma based on these varying objectives, standards and evaluation formats.

Our obvious concern is that this leads to a perception of uneven value whereby employers select graduates on the basis of the CEGEP from which they received their diploma. This could also affect admission to university, since 30% of college technical program graduates continue on to the university level.

#### **Graduates more vulnerable to labour market changes**

The Minister is also proposing amendments to the RREC that would allow colleges to introduce local training modules to provincial technical programs. Rather than promoting mobility, this would have the effect of limiting graduates to

certain job functions and making them more vulnerable to changes in the labour market. We propose that, instead of creating variability in the programs, the addition of objectives and standards be done through supplementary training where particular competencies are needed to exercise a specialization in a trade, as in the case of a kitchen specialist in interior design. This additional training would be offered subsequent to a DEC through the regular program, which would ensure continuity in training since it would be supported by the departmental and program committee processes.

#### **Continuing education and RAC left to their own devices**

The Minister wants to “bring clarification” to the classification of continuing education programs and the recognition of acquired competencies (RAC). While the orientation of this ministerial proposal remains somewhat vague, we, for our part, would like to see a regulatory framework put in place to structure the attestation of collegial studies (AEC) programs currently under the control of colleges. The latitude and “flexibility” that colleges have wielded in this area have produced less than conclusive results: as things currently stand, the same classification of AEC is used to

<sup>1</sup> [www.csn.qc.ca/2016-11-01\\_-memoire\\_ceq\\_csn/](http://www.csn.qc.ca/2016-11-01_-memoire_ceq_csn/)

apply to programs whose numbers of hours range from 135 to over 2,000, depending on the institution. Such massive variance makes it imperative that we establish a common province-wide classification system for AEC programs.

Moreover, we believe the development of AECs and RACs needs to be regulated to ensure these do not become ways of bypassing programs leading to a DEC and, in the broader sense, to prevent them from being used for strictly utilitarian purposes to the detriment of the

citizen-focused humanistic approach to training that is inherent in the college education system.

The devolution of many of the ministry's powers to the colleges poses a very real threat to the coherence and strength of Québec's

For a **strong** college network  
in **all** regions of Québec

college network. Allowing such a degree of local latitude in crucial areas like the issuing of diplomas runs

the risk of fragmenting the network by fueling competition among institutions and thereby jeopardizing the very existence of some of our CEGEPs in the regions. ■

**Let's make this about cohesion  
instead!**

**No to the disengagement of the  
State!**

**Yes to the protection of our  
provincial programs and diplomas!**



**Fédération des femmes  
du Québec**

The *Fédération des femmes du Québec* (FFQ) is in the throes of a major financial crisis, a situation brought on, in large part, by the deep funding cuts that women's groups have had to endure in recent years, particularly at the hands of Stephen Harper's Conservative government. Despite the best efforts of the FFQ team, that situation has escalated into a full-blown state of emergency.

So, after only just having celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the FFQ is now in a fight for its life: cancelling activities at the last minute, paring its action plan back to the bare bones, abolishing key jobs. A mere shadow of its former self, the organization is devoting every ounce of energy it has to rebuilding its financial health while retaining a presence in coalitions and remaining active through its network of volunteers.

The FFQ is an indispensable conduit for the voice of Québec women. It is a convergence point for the wide diversity of groups and individuals who believe in social equality and solidarity. Its history is marked by vigorous debates and courageous positions that have advanced the feminist cause. For a half-century, it has defended the rights of women while waging an unyielding battle against poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination.

Now, the FFQ needs the public's support to ensure its survival and the pursuit of its mission. That is why FNEEQ is issuing an urgent appeal to you today for financial support to help this essential organization. You can help by making a donation and/or becoming a member by signing up your union, your women's committee and your individual members.

FNEEQ will continue denouncing the underfunding of rights organizations like the FFQ and encourages you to do the same! ■

To show your concrete support, go to <http://www.ffq.qc.ca/simpliquer/faire-un-don/>