

BLOC-NOTES

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January 23, 2012



to all members
of affiliated unions

Third thematic meeting THE GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING OF UNIVERSITIES: SOME ALARMING STATEMENTS

What took place at the thematic meeting on the issues of governance and funding at the Université de Sherbrooke on January 17 and 18 can easily be described as worrying.

Statistics, Statistics and More Statistics!

Participants presented their views and analyses of the current situation and of the need for funding of the universities. But how can the same circumstances lead to such different conclusions?

For FNEEQ, what we take from the different positions presented is one conclusion: what's needed is to establish a common evaluation framework for university funding! In addition, a current portrait of the situation of universities is needed, for their academic as well as financial plans. We need to know how and from where funding comes, as well as where it goes... For CREPUQ and participants from the world of business, it is urgent that the government inject more funds to make up for what they professed is under-funding.; in our opinion, it may be the formula and means of funding that need to be revised.

Speaking of Governance

The issue of collegiality was at the heart of the discussion. The CSN and FNEEQ defended a collegial, democratic and representative vision for boards of directors; that is, made up of a majority of internal members, representing the whole university community. It came as no surprise that CREPUQ, both the rectors present and other administrators, recommended that both university boards and any future council of universities be made up mostly of external members. These external members would be, according to these "experts", an essential factor for the international performance of our universities.

The *Table des partenaires universitaires* (TPU) [Round Table of University Partners], which includes (among others) FNEEQ, the *Fédération québécoise des professeurs et professeurs d'université* (FQPPU) as well as all of the student associations, unanimously opposed "quality assurance" in our universities. While it may be urgent to create a council of universities with a mandate to favour cooperation at the expense of competition, it is equally fundamental that a majority of the membership of such a council come from the university community.



Denise Boucher, CSN Vice-President

You will recall that the Ministry has put in place a process seeking the broadest possible participation by setting up a Facebook page dedicated to the Higher Education Summit <https://www.facebook.com/sommet.gouv.qc.ca>.



Demonstration Outside the Meeting

For the first time in three meetings, a demonstration was held outside of this thematic meeting organized by the government. At noon on Friday, organized by the Coalition d'opposition à la tarification et à la privatisation des services publics de l'Estrie [Eastern Townships Coalition Opposed to User Fees and the Privatization of Public Services], several dozen people demonstrated to denounce the commodification of education, among other issues. When they tried to enter the building, security guards used force and dispersed the demonstrators with pepper spray...



Photo: Michel Giroux

Minister Duchesne Expresses Confidence

In a press conference, the Minister of Higher Education emphasized what he saw as areas of consensus. These included the establishment of more simple and transparent rules in order, he said, "To avoid sterile battles over figures." He concluded that the Ministry has work to do in order to arrive at this!

The next step: Rimouski on January 31 and February 1, this time to deal with the contribution of institutions to research and the development of all of Québec..



Sylvain Marois, FNEEQ Vice-President, Denise Boucher, CSN Vice-President, Julie Audet, union advisor, CSN Research department, Caroline Senneville, FNEEQ President and Michel Tremblay, FP President

FNEEQ

In conclusion, for FNEEQ it is important that the government recognize that its recent cuts, both in cegeps and universities, threaten the teaching mission of our institutions of higher learning. It may add the dangers of de-funding to those of under-funding and mis-funding...

You can read our contribution on the FNEEQ Website : <http://fneeq.qc.ca/fr/accueil/Sommet-enseignement-superieur/2013-01-14-FNEEQ-Thematique-Gouvernance-financement.pdf>.

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