

# Academic freedom and professional autonomy

## A few considerations



In 2014, the issues of academic freedom and professional autonomy are at the very heart of the transformation of university, which is giving rise to many questions that are sure to be the subject of lively debate at the November 2014 forum. Laval Rioux, member of the FNEEQ Federal Bureau, has a few of his own on the relationship between academic freedom and...

### Program approval

Are the requirements being imposed by professional orders and the various national and international program accreditation bodies undermining teacher autonomy?

### Teaching status

Academic freedom is an age-old conquest of universities, one that safeguards the pluralism of ideas and the quality of debate in higher education. Some view this freedom as the exclusive reserve of tenured professors. But what about the legions of contract teachers occupying an ever growing place in our universities? Should it not be, instead, that academic freedom is an inherent part of the institution of university itself and thus a right guaranteed to all teachers?

### Professional autonomy

Academic freedom also means the exercise of professional autonomy in the choice of how to teach and transmit knowledge. Is the increasing use of standard distance learning formulas restricting the freedom and the autonomy of teachers?

### Governance

Are the new management practices in our universities having an effect on teaching, academic freedom and professional autonomy?

### Collective bargaining

Should non-permanent contract teachers be advocating for the formal protection of their professional autonomy under the larger umbrella of academic freedom? Must these guarantees be expressly laid out in our collective agreements? If not, what can we do to ensure their protection?

### Commodification

What impact are the commodification of knowledge and the standardization and quality assurance in education having on academic freedom and professional autonomy?