



A hot, hot autumn!

The back-to-school period kicked off with strong mobilization across the CEGEP system as we get set to wrap up our first year of bargaining on our new collective agreement. The offers tabled by management in October 2014 were light-years away from teachers' demands, and the most recent global proposal from the college management negotiating committee (CPNC) has done nothing to calm their ire. If this wasn't immediately obvious from their powerful mobilization, it certainly was from their heavy participation in general assembly votes that led to clear and unequivocal mandates to strike. There will be no denying teachers' determination to improve working conditions, protect the quality education and strengthen the CEGEP system across Quebec. As the pace of the negotiations intensifies, so shall the pressure tactics.

In September, we sat down with policy advisors in Minister Blais' office to discuss a number of issues of concern, including our CEGEPs in the regions, continuing education, wage relativity and distance learning. We also expressed the hope that, within the context of our ongoing collective bargaining talks, Minister Blais would be available to facilitate the negotiations to help move things along. This request appears to have fallen on deaf ears, which makes us wonder about the minister's real commitment to serving as a go-between on educational matters, especially in the midst of the negotiation period...

We also further fleshed out our positions on the recommendations contained in the *Rapport du chantier sur l'offre de formation collégiale*, otherwise known as the Demers

Report. We will be presenting some of these, particularly the ones dealing with regional CEGEPs and the long-term viability of the network, in an October meeting with Nicole Rouillier, who chairs the committee set up by Minister Bolduc to implement the recommendations.

There have been a number of developments on the local level, as well, that are worthy of mention. At Alma CEGEP, where the labour climate has been strained for some time, the union is finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel with the recent departure of the DG. Lévis-Lauzon CEGEP, for its part, recently put an action plan into effect as the union continues in its efforts to preserve the academic council in its current form and to maintain the spirit of collegiality that has been a hallmark of the labour structure since the inception of the CEGEP system. As for the unions at Champlain Regional College's St. Lawrence and Saint-Lambert campuses, they are determined to ensure that their colleges become CEGEPs in their own right, and the support is mounting.

Forecasters are calling for a hot fall, and we plan to be right in the heat of the action! We'll be taking to the streets in droves on October 3rd for the province-wide demonstration and joining picketers two days later to mark International Teachers' Day.


Nicole Lefebvre
FNEEQ Vice-President

SUMMARY

- 3 A mobilized start to the school year!
- 4 Foreing student interns Welcome to Canada!
- 5 Universal design for learning
- 8 Champlain Regional College Something's gotta give!
- 9 AQPC Symposium The energy of FNEEQ!
- 10 Departments: From a union perspective
- 11 Student enrolment for the 2015 fall semester
- 11 Advisory report from the *Conseil supérieur de l'éducation*

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