

# BLOC-NOTES

# 6

December 6, 2011



for cegep teachers

## THE DEC IN NURSING AN INDISPENSABLE DIPLOMA

Delegates who participated in the Ordre des infirmières et des infirmiers du Québec (OIIQ) convention passed a motion from the Integrated University Health Networks (RUIS) National Sector-based Table directing the Order to promote the Bachelor's Degree, as a prerequisite for exercising the profession, in the DEC-Bachelors continuum. The OIIQ's mandate is to make submissions to the government in this regard.

Such a proposal, in addition to having a significant impact upon the college system, runs the risk of aggravating the shortage of nurses. Let's point out that amongst the various groups who are working to improve our health care system, no one felt it was worthwhile to invite college teachers to speak up and explain their point of view, either by contacting the Quebec Association of College Nursing Teachers (ASEESICQ) or by communicating with the FNEEQ.

Why have these organizations not been informed, indeed, consulted regarding these future orientations? Does the OIIQ or the RUIS fear that avenues other than imposing an obligation to have a Bachelors degree for getting into the profession could be conceived in an attempt to resolve, at least partially, the numerous problems being experienced by our health care system?

### Why FNEEQ doesn't share such a position?

The obligation of having a Bachelors degree make the situation even more difficult: we believe that this would aggravate manpower shortage problems. Today, 70% of nurses in the health care system have a DEC.

Amongst the 10,000 students registered in college nursing programs, 30% hope to continue their studies for a Bachelors degree, thus taking the college-to-university path. However, only 20% actually do so, either because they change their minds, or because they aren't admitted to the university with which their college is associated.

The AEESICQ representatives with whom we have met rightfully fear that students in the program do not want to register for a five-year program. Such an itinerary will discourage several people, all the more so given that many young people register for the DEC after deciding to change their vocational career goals. The obligation for universities to admit all the students who are accepted by the colleges would likewise run the risk of creating problems.

We do however share the goal of enhancing and improving the profession, and we do encourage students who are registered in the DEC to continue their studies at the university level.



But, a serious problem arises from the fact that the downgrading of the DEC is an OIIQ initiative, rather than one coming from the employers.

Let's examine a few details on how technical training programs are developed. They are elaborated based upon analyses of the work environment. These analyses come under the Ministry of Education's jurisdiction and they must ensure the collaboration of various partners from the work and education milieus, and, where applicable, from other Ministries<sup>1</sup>. In addition, monitoring the sector, in line with certain determined criteria, provides a means for regularly updating these technical training programs. We invite you to take a look at the guides that explain these processes<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, program development and updating occur via an exacting process for which the Ministry of Education is responsible.

In addition, other criteria also enable the MELS to categorize different programs, depending upon the complexity of the skills being taught, in either one of the two teaching levels.

Calling into question this whole process of developing technical training programs, updating them and finally dividing them into one or the other

of the teaching levels, appears to us as either a failure to truly grasp these processes, or else fundamentally calling the very college system itself into question.

To the extent that health care system employers express satisfaction with the work being performed by nurses and haven't made any recommendations regarding the college training program, we wonder what's going on with the OIIQ's recommendations. After all, the program is elaborated taking the needs of the job market into consideration and furthermore, the employers are satisfied. What's wrong with this picture? Meanwhile, far from us to take the position that we want to minimize the problems experienced in our health care system. We would like to see a comprehensive approach to improvements, rather than piecemeal solutions that are likely to be unrelated one to the next.

It should come as no surprise that an orientation elaborated in isolation from other stakeholders can elicit so much passion; and singularly complicates a collaborative approach that should however seem indispensable between the job market and the world of education.

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  2. The state of affairs in vocational and technical studies programs. Reference document, Government of Quebec, draft, 2007.  
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