

# Departments: From a union perspective

Heavily inspired by the FNEEQ guide entitled *A Look at Departments*,<sup>1</sup> this workshop focused on the federation's position on a variety of topics, from professional autonomy and quality assurance to teaching responsibilities, program committees, and so on. Certain issues were also discussed in relation to the collective agreement, notably the role and responsibilities of the departmental coordinator.

The department is a place for pedagogical cooperation and coordination with regard to disciplinary knowledge. It is an essential structure, and one whose operation is specific to the higher education sector. Peer management within departments is a unique model that allows for both individual and collective autonomy: individual in terms of disciplinary and pedagogical control, and collective with respect to the departmental structure and decision-making process, which together ensure the quality of the education delivered. This has been a hot-button issue ever since the *Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial (CÉEC)* took up its administrative-heavy approach to quality assurance in education. It is our position that college teaching cannot be reduced to a simple set of procedures to be followed.

When it comes to the quality of our work and to the conditions under which that work is performed, such a narrow view completely ignores a large part of the reality.

Without running through the full list of pedagogical activities associated with the teaching workload, we limited the focus of our presentation to the ones laid out in the collective agreement, even though we are well aware that teachers perform a good many duties that appear nowhere in that agreement. We also looked at the different responsibilities that fall to the teacher, to the departmental assembly and to the coordinator, with particular emphasis on the role and responsibilities of the latter.

While some might think that such a workshop has no place at the AQPC, we believe, to the contrary, that it is important to be reminded of the boundaries of our responsibilities, especially at a time when attempts are being made to heap more and more onto the shoulders of teachers. ■



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Convention Committee

1 The presentation document along with the slide show used for the workshop are available online.

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