

AQPC Symposium

The energy of FNEEQ!

It was under the theme "Energy and Synergy...for Higher Education" that the 35th annual symposium of the *Association québécoise de pédagogie collégiale* (AQPC) took place this past June in Saguenay. Hosted by Chicoutimi and Jonquière CEGEPs, this year's edition delved into the various forms of cooperation in teaching and learning. FNEEQ, a partner of the symposium, set up a booth as a contact point to meet and chat with delegates and delivered two workshops to capacity crowds, one by the School and Society Committee and the other by the *Comité de convention du regroupement cégep*.

Internationalization of higher education: Issues and challenges for Quebec

Isabelle Bouchard, former member of the School and Society Committee

Madeleine Ferland and I, representing FNEEQ's School and Society Committee, led a workshop on the findings of the committee's latest study on the internationalization of higher education and the issues and challenges it is posing for Quebec.¹

We began by outlining the mandate behind this publication: "To produce a study on CEGEP and university institutional policies on internationalization and their effects." For the purposes of the AQPC workshop, our presentation focused exclusively on the college sector.

We then ran through the main orientations currently steering this trend toward the globalization of education. The WTO, UNESCO and OECD are all advancing major international projects for education that are influencing decision-making. The Bologna Process, particularly in its aim to harmonize university degree standards, is also shaping this trend.

The frame of reference for internationalization in the college system, for its part, has been largely determined by the work of *Cégep International* and the positions of the *Conseil supérieur de l'éducation*. Various policies and strategic frameworks lay out the parameters for internationalization. While foreign internships may be the most common form of international activity, the committee examined the many forms these activities can take at the college level. Without listing them all, these can be categorized into five main areas: training, student mobility, international cooperation and export of knowledge, teacher mobility and student recruitment.

Lastly, the presentation allowed us to discuss FNEEQ's stand on student mobility and tuition rates, the kind of model we would like to see developed and the adjustments that need to be made to working conditions. The federation is opposed to the liberalization of tuition fees because we believe international students must not become a source of funding. We believe that the government should be supporting bilateral mobility and that economic status should never be a discriminatory factor. We are against the commercial model of internationalization that sees knowledge as a commodity and that would have the effect of standardizing both content and language of instruction and of imposing a quality assurance process that curbs autonomy. Instead, FNEEQ is committed to promoting a model of internationalization based on cooperation, exchange and the free and unhindered sharing of knowledge.

This workshop was also an opportunity to reiterate the federation's conviction that the internationalization of education must be developed in collaboration with the labour unions and teachers and in the fullest respect of union recognition, academic freedom and professional autonomy. ■

¹ *L'internationalisation de l'enseignement supérieur : Enjeux et défis pour le Québec* is available in full (in French only) on the FNEEQ Website.