



# Preliminary reflection on 2020 bargaining issues

## *Regroupement cégep*

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February 2019

To identify prospects for the upcoming round of negotiations and to provide the bargaining and mobilization committee with material from which to begin its work, the delegates of the *Regroupement cégep* on November 22 and 23, 2018 divided themselves into working groups for a set of lively discussions.

At a subsequent meeting on January 24 and 25, 2019, we presented the *Regroupement* with a summary of these discussions, in which certain issues for the upcoming round of bargaining were clearly communicated. Moreover, a set of common concerns emerged from the various working groups. From this first exercise, we were able to identify five major themes related to the sectoral table. In what follows, we lay out some preliminary thoughts concerning these themes, as well as issues traditionally addressed at the central table.

This document is intended as a springboard for discussion above all—it is in no way final. We feel it is essential to consult with local unions about these themes and their specificities so that we may better grasp the nuances associated with the different realities of each of the CEGEPs. Moreover, our consultation can and should deal with elements not necessarily discussed by the working groups, but which nevertheless are of great importance to you or otherwise enrich the identified themes.

This document can be used as you see fit. Consider it part of a tool kit at your disposal to prepare for our visit.

## 1. Matters negotiated at the central table

Traditionally, the matters negotiated at the central table are salaries, parental rights, and retirement. The working groups identified several desired improvements on each of these fronts. The *Comité de coordination des secteurs public et parapublic de la CSN (CCSPP)* also sent out a questionnaire and tools for consultation which help to trace the contours of afferent concerns.

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| <b>Matters negotiated at the central table</b> |          |                 |
| Retirement                                     | Salaries | Parental rights |

The first thing to note is that, in contrast to the previous round of bargaining, salaries are no longer the sole priority. Discussions between the four public- and parapublic-sector federations of the CSN have led us to believe that conditions of work and practice will also have their place, as will concerns related to job insecurity and overwork.

The working groups highlighted that salary concerns should remain at the forefront. But while there may be a desire to obtain substantial salary increases, there was an obvious concern for salary adjustments. What solutions might be available? A few suggested that the first steps of our salary scale be removed, while others stressed the urgent need for equity for Continuing Education teachers.

Regarding retirement, the working groups identified a generalized desire for pension indexing and improved parameters to permit both fuller pensions for those whose careers started later, as well as a longer horizon for contributing.

Several unions highlighted parental rights and work-family balance with a view to clarifying and improving the related provisions.

### SUMMARY

- ✓ **Salaries: adjustments to the first steps of the scale**
- ✓ **Retirement: indexation and better contribution parameters**
- ✓ **Parental rights**
- ✓ **Should we prioritize salaries, working conditions, or both?**

## 2. Matters negotiated at the sectoral table

### Job insecurity (*Précarité*)

During the next round of bargaining, working conditions for teachers with precarious jobs will likely be a major issue. It is estimated that in the Regular sector, nearly 45% of the teaching community is precariously employed. This percentage is higher still in Continuing Education, where job insecurity is practically the norm.

Before acquiring tenure, non-permanent teachers may experience a great deal of insecurity and instability—some for many years. They are regularly hired at the last minute, and their workloads could be modified without prior notice. They may teach at more than one CEGEP; often, it is impossible for them to withdraw from a part-time workload to take on full-time work elsewhere without resigning and thereby losing their hiring priority and seniority. These teachers often must make heartrending choices to preserve their priority and earn a decent income.

The insecurity of precarious employment also leads to a great deal of psychological distress at a time when new teachers must prepare materials for (often multiple) courses they are teaching for the first time.

Possible solutions to the problem of job insecurity were identified by the working groups. Which should be favoured? Facilitating access to tenure; allowing positions (*postes*) to be created based on multidisciplinary courses (if not already the case); improving precarious teachers' recourse against sometimes arbitrary administrative decisions; integrating provisions adapted to the reality of teaching in multiple CEGEPs; or permitting the opening of part-time positions?

Could these changes reduce the harmful effects of job insecurity while increasing the attractiveness of our profession and facilitating the recruitment and retention of faculty? We believe these possibilities deserve consideration.

### SUMMARY

- ✓ 45 % of teachers are precariously employed
- ✓ Job insecurity and financial instability
- ✓ Psychological distress
- ✓ Difficult working conditions

What solutions are available?

## Continuing Education

Continuing Education has been rapidly expanding for some time. However, its reality is still misunderstood in the network. According to a report prepared by the *Comité national de rencontre*<sup>1</sup>, Continuing Education teachers perform similar teaching activities to those in the Regular sector (including *encadrement*, or student support), but with a different student population<sup>2</sup>. They also carry out so-called ‘related tasks,’ often without compensation or with a paltry ersatz.

Most Continuing Education teachers in the CEGEP network are employed solely on an hourly-paid basis<sup>3</sup>. Their reality is in many respects distinct from the Regular sector, starting with a wage differential of up to 50% in comparison to their Regular counterparts. In addition, Continuing Education teachers do not benefit from experience-related wage increases. The calculation of their workload is based only on course hours and not, as in the Regular sector, on their *charge individuelle* (CI). Moreover, Continuing Education teachers do not have access to paid sick leave and are faced with a degree of professional isolation, often due to the scheduling of their courses. In this context, how might we broach the concept of fair and equitable working conditions?

In the follow-up to the post-mortem of the 2015 negotiations, an ad hoc committee was established with the mandate “to analyze the work done during and the results of the last four (4) rounds of bargaining, with the goal of developing a strategy to yield significant gains in the working conditions of hourly-paid teachers in Continuing Education during the next negotiations.”<sup>4</sup> According to this committee’s analysis,<sup>5</sup> paying Continuing Education teachers on the same basis as those in the Regular sector would have cost less than \$33 million in 2016–2017. Is this a feasible solution to address the inequities between Continuing Education and Regular sector teachers? Or should the emphasis be on integrating Continuing Education into Regular teaching, as it has been during past rounds of bargaining?

Beyond the growing preoccupation for the inequalities between the sectors, another finding gains sway: Continuing Education has few guidelines constraining its rapid growth. This results in disparities across the CEGEP network, particularly regarding attestations of college studies (AECs). What are the impacts of this growth on the way teaching duties should be considered in a broader sense? What

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<sup>1</sup> A joint union-management committee set forth in clause 2-2.05 of the collective agreement

<sup>2</sup> *Rapport sur la formation continue*. 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See recommendation 2.3.6 of the 2015-2020 Bargaining and Mobilization Post-Mortem

<sup>5</sup> « À travail égal, salaire égal » : *parité salariale à la formation continue*. 2019.

consequences could it have on competition between the CEGEPs and on the vitality of the network? Does the very fact of tolerating that a growing number of teachers should be underpaid for duties comparable to those carried out in the Regular sector contribute to the devaluing of our profession?

**SUMMARY**

- ✓ **Inequitable salaries and working conditions**
- ✓ **Competition between the CEGEPs**
- ✓ **Impact on the vitality of the network is difficult to evaluate**
- ✓ **Devaluing of the teaching profession**

**What solutions are available?**

## **Workload and resources**

At the FNEEQ, a mismatch between the resources allocated to the CEGEPs and the resources required to meet teaching needs has already been acknowledged. This situation is particularly difficult in areas experiencing a decrease in student populations and in programs with low enrolment. It is equally the case in CEGEPs with more than one campus, whose teachers often must commute between them.

The lack of resources leads to a heavier teaching workload, which in turn is compounded by the latter's bureaucratization. Part of this increased workload stems from the accommodation measures implemented for students with disabilities. To the extent that the resources allotted to this end for the duration of the current collective agreement are allocated to special projects instead of being infused into teaching workloads, the considerable work required to accommodate these students remains unrecognized.

This accumulated burden pushes some teachers to take leaves to prevent burnout.

In addition to heavier workloads, issues related to teaching in specific disciplines or CEGEPs were identified in connection with the new upper limit of 85 CI units. It was also noted that *volet 2* resources and minimum union release should be increased.

Is this round of bargaining the time to address these issues? In the context of your local union, which solutions should be privileged?

**SUMMARY**

- ✓ **Mismatch between resource allocation and needs**
- ✓ **Urgent issue in the regions and in programs with low enrolment**
- ✓ **Heavier workloads generated in part by accommodation measures for students with disabilities (EESH)**
- ✓ **Burnout**

**What solutions are available?**

## Work organization and the evolution of the network

The collective agreement is practically silent regarding online courses and distance learning. This has permitted their uneven development between the CEGEPs and on the network level; it has also led to unhealthy competition and a multitude of issues in applying the collective agreement. Nevertheless, both might trigger a management offensive during the next round of bargaining: on more than one occasion, the *Fédération des cégeps* has communicated its intention “to adapt working conditions to the digital era.”<sup>6</sup> In the fall of 2018, the *Regroupement cégep* established an ad hoc committee with the “mandate of developing, in collaboration with the *comité école et société* and local unions, a province-wide position on inter-institutional partnerships for teaching and distance learning which will be proposed to the *Regroupement*.”<sup>7</sup> This committee’s work should be complete in May 2019.

On a different note, the concept of partial disability does not exist in the collective agreement. This compels some people who might need a lighter workload during re-adaptation to take full-time leave instead. Introducing the concept of partial disability could allow for more flexibility to accommodate teachers in these situations. Additionally, might the replacement procedure for Regular teaching set out in the collective agreement need improvement?

The collective agreement could provide more guidelines regarding the composition of program committees. As it stands, there is a latitude enabling a variable representation of teachers at different CEGEPs, thereby throwing open the question of their essential role as participants in institutional activities. Various working groups raised the question of integrating clarifications into our collective agreement regarding teacher participation, both in committees and in other activities.

Finally, some working group participants expressed that in certain disciplines, teachers must be members of a professional order to be hired or to maintain their employment status. As the related membership fees are not reimbursed by the employer, is this requirement an inequitable hiring condition for some teachers?

### SUMMARY

- ✓ Uneven and rapid development of online teaching and distance learning
- ✓ Consolidation of the role of teachers in various college bodies (program committees, *commission des études*, etc.)
- ✓ Partial disability status a possibility

What solutions are available?

## Professional autonomy

In recent years, attacks on our professional autonomy have multiplied, particularly with the implementation of quality assurance audits carried out by the *Commission d'évaluation de*

<sup>6</sup> *Fédération des cégeps*. ‘Stratégie numérique en éducation et en enseignement supérieur : Le réseau collégial, une vision à l’ère du numérique.’ 2016.

[http://www.fedecegeps.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Memoire\\_Strategie\\_numerique\\_dec2016.pdf](http://www.fedecegeps.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Memoire_Strategie_numerique_dec2016.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Motion adopted at the meeting of the *Regroupement cégep* on 13-14 September 2018.

*l'enseignement collégial* (CEEC) and the Demers Report. Enthusiasm for the Toyota Way<sup>8</sup>, or lean management, developed in parallel and led to a paradigm shift in the understanding of teaching.

To wit, teaching is seen less and less as a general task guided by the principles of knowledge transfer and collegiality—requiring engagement at all levels of the CEGEP community—and increasingly as a fragmentable task, both qualifiable and quantifiable. The effects of this gradual change in perspective are concrete and have threatened the professional autonomy of CEGEP teachers. Regarding fragmentation, increased “efficiency,” and quality assurance, the first notable transformation has been an increase in bureaucracy and accountability reporting: forms of every kind, to be completed by teachers and funneled through the minutiae of college organizational charts. The overall burden on teachers has increased at the expense of potential time spent with students.

Along with these administrative constraints, the role played by teachers in various institutional bodies has been challenged and must be reinforced. Reflecting the perennial desire to improve the “efficiency” of processes, these structures are being reorganized to leave less room for teachers’ voices, thereby corroding the guiding principle of collegiality. Now more than ever, we believe we must defend our subject and pedagogical expertise—not only as it pertains to the acknowledgement of our key role in various institutional bodies, but also as a matter of urgency related to the recognition of acquired competencies (RAC).

The rampant growth of the latter in parallel with Continuing Education generates the illusion that our expertise can be dissociated from our work. However, for teachers, subject and pedagogical knowledge are inextricably linked and are both essential to maintaining the quality of knowledge transfer. That is why we must resist these attacks, which could ultimately alter the very nature of CEGEP teaching.

#### SUMMARY

- ✓ Fragmentation of teaching
- ✓ Less than favorable context: CEEC, Demers Report, lean management
- ✓ Bureaucratization and accountability reporting
- ✓ Defense of our subject and pedagogical expertise (notably in the RAC)

What solutions are available?

## What's next?

The foregoing sums up the state of your bargaining and mobilization committee’s reflections. What’s next?

It’s crucial that we hear from you. What did we forget in our analysis? Where should we focus our efforts? Which positions should we defend?

In the coming weeks and months, your assemblies will fuel our work along with that of the *Regroupement cégep*. You will provide us with the inspiration to improve working conditions for all CEGEP teachers.

**The floor is yours.**

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<sup>8</sup> «Le Lean provient du Taylorisme et du Fordisme, et plus récemment du Toyotisme. En fait, de toute méthode qui met de l'avant des logiques de production industrielle standardisée, de processus d'amélioration continue, de réduction des inventaires et d'élimination de tous les types possibles de gaspillages. Lean, c'est littéralement « production maigre ». On aspire à faire plus avec moins, à allier efficacité - et non efficacité! - avec flexibilité.»

[https://quebec.huffingtonpost.ca/etienne-boudou-laforce/methode-lean-sante\\_b\\_3761879.html](https://quebec.huffingtonpost.ca/etienne-boudou-laforce/methode-lean-sante_b_3761879.html)