

# carnets 32

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Fédération nationale  
des enseignantes et  
des enseignants  
du Québec

Fall 2015



## IN THIS ISSUE

- World March of Women
- The internationalization of higher education – Much to consider
- Fighting bullying, homophobia and transphobia – A matter of basic human rights
- Update from the *Regroupements*

## Committing to education



If there is one thing that marked the start of this fall semester, it is the mobilization of citizens in defence of education. Initiated last spring, the “Protect my Public School” campaign has gathered steam and now includes institutions of higher learning.

In the face of the austerity bulldozers, parents joined with workers from the world of education to loudly denounce the devastating impact of our government’s penny-pinching and short-sighted policies.

It has been quite some time since the champions of quality education have occupied so much space in the public forum. Editorialists, who have long lamented the deficiencies of the health care system, are now turning their focus to our schools, colleges and universities and are finally starting to see the havoc that decades of cuts have been wreaking on the education of our children, of our youth and, more particularly, of the most vulnerable among them.

As a federation of teaching labour, we can only rejoice at this public mobilization. But we also have a duty to join in and to involve our members.

That is why we are pleased to announce that we will be launching a campaign of our own for the valorization of education, which will be rolled out under the theme “Commit to education.”

In all of our publications, on social networks, within our unions and eventually in partnerships with others from the world of education, we will see to getting the most exposure possible in order to get our important message across. Our federation’s plan is also to carry out all of our actions and visibility activities under this theme between now and the Estates General on Higher Education scheduled for spring 2017.

Yes, we want our elected officials to commit to supporting our education system and to giving it the means it needs to develop. Yes, our government can and must make the choice to invest in education and higher learning. No, austerity is not the only option available, but it is, without question, the most harmful and destructive one. No, reinvesting in education is not impolitic; it is, in fact, essential. It needs to be understood that cuts to education are cuts to our future—to the future of our young people, our regions and our society.

Committing to education means choosing progression over stagnation, choosing light and hope over doom and gloom!



## Summary

- 3 World March of Women
- 6 The internationalization of higher education – Much to consider
- 17 Fighting bullying, homophobia and transphobia – A matter of basic human rights
- 18 Update from the *Regroupements*  
*Regroupement cégep*  
*Regroupement privé*  
*Regroupement université*

CARNETS is published by the *Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec*. FNEEQ-CSN represents close to 34,000 members from CEGEPs, private institutions and universities. It is the most representative union organisation for higher education in Quebec.

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**Photography:** France Désaulniers, Joanne McDermott

**Illustration:** Alain Reno

**Layout:** Sylvie Patenaude

**Printing:** Accent Impression

**Print run:** 500 copies

**Legal Deposit:** Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Bibliothèque et Archives du Canada. ISSN 2291-3343.

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## World March of Women Heart of Quebec beats to the step of thousands

First, the buses rolled up by the hundreds. Then, by the tens of thousands we marched. In Quebec, some 12,000 people took to the streets of Trois-Rivières on October 17, 2015, for the 4th International World March of Women.

Many FNEEQ members took part in the march, including the representatives of the federation's Women's Committee, who were not about to miss the event for anything. Capping off the Caravan of Resistance and Feminist Solidarity that had been crisscrossing the province since March—building stronger ties and support with every passing meeting and kilometre—the Trois-Rivières gathering proved to be rich in emotion.

It will be recalled that the Bread and Roses March organized in Quebec in 1995 culminated in the tabling of nine demands, among them pay equity, higher minimum

wage and measures to counter poverty. It soon became clear that a more globalized fight for women's rights was needed, and this led, in 2000, to the creation of the World March of Women by the *Fédération des femmes du Québec* (FFQ). The first three editions—held in 2000, 2005 and 2010—focused on poverty and violence against women.

For this 2015 edition, “Freedom for our bodies, our Land and our territories” was the slogan that galvanized women from all over the world into action and had them taking centre stage in the public arena.



From left to right: Raymonde Simard - SCCCUQAR, Julie Mayrand - SCCCUQAT, Virginie L'Hérault - *Syndicat des enseignantes et enseignants du Cégep Montmorency*, France Desaulniers - FNEEQ, Caroline Quesnel - FNEEQ, Ariane Bilodeau - FNEEQ and Violaine Dampousse - *Syndicat des enseignantes et des enseignants du Collège Shawinigan*.



The thing that struck me most was a sense of hopefulness that the fight will continue in the hands of a new generation of engaged and inspiring women. The work of the organizing committee was done by women of all ages and from all walks of life: the fact that its head is a woman in her 30s definitely influenced the pace of the action! All of the basic elements that are essential to life were there: air, with the voice, charisma and grit of Fabiola Toupin; earth, with the seeds for planting; and fire, with the Die-in in memory of the 1,186 missing Aboriginal women.

Why fire, do you ask? Because while that political statement was being made, I saw a woman standing apart from the group of thousand suddenly lay down on the ground. Having not seen what the others were doing, and not grasping what was going on, I bent down to ask if she was alright and was told by another not to disturb her—that everything was fine. What this woman did made me realize the magnitude of my powerlessness. These women all vanished or were killed, alone and abandoned, without anyone noticing. That is the real tragedy! If a thousand women had died at once, we would have acted immediately, in solidarity. But how can we act in solidarity on something we don't know? And now that we do know, what can we do? These women don't want our pity; they don't want our mothering... They want Justice! But what can I do to help them get the justice they deserve when the government refuses to listen? What more can we do, as a community, than we are doing now? I saw a flame of anger smouldering in that woman's eyes and I felt so totally powerless! I will continue the march, with all its ups and downs, because to stop would be to give up. I hope to be there at the next rendezvous in 2020!

**Raymonde Simard**

Course lecturer at *Université du Québec à Rimouski*

During the first World March of Women in 1995, I had the opportunity—while still in my first year of high school!—to join the marchers on the streets of Trois-Rivières and walk a few hundred metres by their side under the theme of Bread and Roses. In 2005, as a master's student, I was there to see the Women's Global Charter for Humanity come into effect. And this year, in 2015, still as a woman but now also as a teacher and union representative, I was able to take part in the March for a third time.

It is clear that we still have a long way to come. Just think of all the murdered, missing or vulnerable Aboriginal women in Canada. The feeble response from our governments shows us how little our politicians care. And what of all the women living day after day in a state of economic precarity or those from every social class who are victims of sexual, psychological or physical abuse?

On October 17, 2015, thousands of women, men and children came out in support of symbolic and artistic actions that bore a distinct flavour of feminism, humanism, community, environmentalism and unionism. Our contribution was a collective one: drawing public, popular and media attention to the fact that half of humanity is still fighting to be equal with the other half—not only in rights, but also in their day-to-day living conditions!

**Violaine Dampousse**

Teacher at *Collège Shawinigan*





Who? Why? The World March of Women is something that concerns all of us as a society. These are our daughters, our mothers, our sisters, our partners who are suffering inequality. It is a reality that touches every family in Quebec, as well as those all over the world. So the “why” should be abundantly obvious. What’s the purpose of marching? To denounce the poverty that is particularly prevalent among women, to condemn violence against women and to decry the many forms of social inequality that women face. What happens when the march is over? We pull together, stand shoulder to shoulder and continue fighting loud and clear for equality!

**Julie Mayrand**

Course lecturer at Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue

<http://pauvrete.qc.ca/IMG/pdf/151015-femmespauvreteontage.pdf>



On October 17, 2015, Trois-Rivières had to be the most beautiful place in Quebec. Truly. The season’s first snow, which had fallen just the evening before, did nothing to cool the fervour of the 12,000 marchers making their way down Des Forges Street from the hippodrome to the harbour. All along the route, huge multi-coloured quilts crafted by women from all regions of Quebec hung everywhere—from balconies, from fences, from lampposts—as the chant “Freedom for our bodies, our land and our territories” filled the air. I have to say that I didn’t fully understand that slogan until I stretched out on the damp ground of the harbour park after the drums signalled the start of the *Die-in*. There we were, 1,186 women lying flat out on the ground to denounce the disappearance and murder of 1,186 Aboriginal women. I kept my eyes tightly closed during the long moment of silence—a silence pregnant with meaning. The symbolic crowding of our bodies evoked the harrowing image of the all-too-real violence committed against these and other Aboriginal women. This *Die-in* protest was also an appeal to the federal government to finally take action and establish a national commission of inquiry. On October 17, 2015, I was there, in that most beautiful place in Quebec, for the World March of Women. It was my first, but it certainly won’t be my last.

**Caroline Quesnel**

FNEEQ Vice-President and responsible for the Women’s Committee

# THE INTERNATIONALIZATION

## Much to consider

The 30th FNEEQ Congress took place in May 2012, in the midst of a social upheaval that was seeing unprecedented mobilization to safeguard access to university and protect the broader democratic principles that many feared were under siege. It was during this congress that the federation, cognizant of the increasing volume of international activities taking place in Quebec's institutions of higher learning, mandated the School and Society Committee to carry out an in-depth study on the internationalization practices and trends at play in our CEGEPs and universities.

The purpose of this study was to identify the key issues surrounding the internationalization of higher education in order to fuel a reflection process that would help guide FNEEQ in its future decision- and policy-making. While it was unanimously felt that this matter required our immediate attention, it was equally evident that this would be but the first step in our reflection. At issue was not the principle of internationalization itself—insofar as knowledge has always circulated freely beyond borders—but with ensuring it be oriented toward “cooperation and scientific and cultural exchange and not commodification and competition,” as stated in the first resolution of the committee's report. Committee members therefore looked first at the internationalization policies of various international institutions and governments, at the effects these policies are having on colleges and universities, and at the different institutional options available. They then examined working conditions and the need for collective agreement improvements. Finally, they turned their focus to such issues as online courses, the predominance of English in higher education and the brain drain. The School and Society Committee is pleased to present the following synthesis of its wide-scale study and invites readers to consult the full report on the FNEEQ Website.<sup>1</sup>

This study was conducted to reflect—to the greatest extent possible—the values shared by FNEEQ members: that internationalization be carried out in the full respect of teachers' autonomy and acceptable working conditions, with a view to fostering dialogue, cooperation and solidarity.

### Internationalization at the service of economic development

Internationalization is generally accepted as “the process of integrating international, intercultural and global dimensions and perspectives into the purpose, functions and delivery of education.”<sup>2</sup> It has always been part of the reality in higher education. But since the 1990s, this international dimension has taken on a new complexion with the rise of globalization, the knowledge economy

and neoliberalism—one that is based far more heavily on a utilitarian and mercantile approach. Sophie Morin, researcher with the *École nationale d'administration publique* (ÉNAP), notes that, today, the internationalization of higher education can be seen as a tool for leveraging support for economies, regional development and international outreach:

*Initially, the internationalization of higher education was more or less a voluntary process that essentially*

*addressed various political, cultural and geostrategic considerations. Today, globalization is prompting governments and institutions to use their universities as tools for economic development and strategic positioning, both locally as well as globally<sup>3</sup>.*

Called upon to play a part in economic growth, this international market of higher learning has also aligned itself with the New Public Management (NPM) approach, which

1 The full report is available, in French, at [http://www.fneeq.qc.ca/fr/comites/ecole\\_societe/Dossiers-importants/2015-08-24-Internationalisation.pdf](http://www.fneeq.qc.ca/fr/comites/ecole_societe/Dossiers-importants/2015-08-24-Internationalisation.pdf).

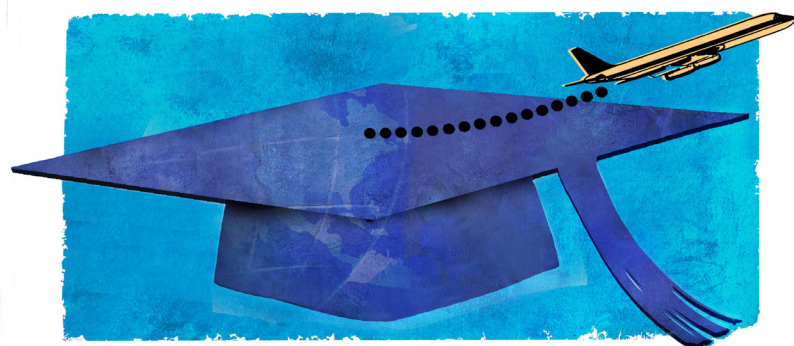
2 Peter Ricketts and Jennifer Humphries, *Taking an ethical approach to internationalization*, University Affairs, February 2015.

3 Sophie Morin, *Mondialisation et internationalisation en éducation supérieure*, Policy Options, Institute for Research on Public Policy, March 2008, p.76.

is further reinforcing the trend to adapt its purposes to the international dimension. This trend toward commodification is radically altering the mission of institutions of higher education, moving them further away from the values of cooperation and closer to the values of competition. All this is being accompanied by new rules of “governance” that are more along socioeconomic lines and by various “accountability” mechanisms, such as quality assurance. In this

## Under the diktats of international organizations

On the national level, it is the major international organizations—in which teachers have negligible influence—that are steering the internationalization movement. There is a form of international diplomacy in education that needs to be well understood in order to fully appreciate some of the trends that underpin many of the policies



sense, it might be more accurate to call the phenomenon the *globalization* of higher education, which, according to Enders and Musselin, refers to the trend toward global standardization, along with a corresponding loss of national identities and traditions<sup>4</sup>. Lastly, information and communications technologies (ICTs) are increasing and accelerating the mobility of training, references, innovations and research networks and promoting the intangibility of educational institutions, in other words, the possibility that they can operate exclusively in virtual environments.

adopted by the administrations of Quebec’s institutions of higher learning.

These organizations are very often proponents of the mercantile approach to education. They bow to corporate lobbies that want to capitalize on a highly-lucrative market and get their hands on a customer base that is apt to consume a wide range of products and services. This vision is the antithesis of the concept of education as a right and has consequently come under sharp attack. Strong tensions

## The brain drain

Behind all the good things that international exchanges in education can bring lays a much less appealing reality. Far too often, these “exchanges” run in only one direction: from poor countries to rich countries. This results in poorer countries being deprived of well-trained professionals and dynamic social forces as many of these exchange students choose to remain abroad to pursue their career once they’ve finished their studies, allowing rich countries to fill their labour gaps when these resources are far more critically needed elsewhere. Moreover, the exodus of students—often the brightest and most promising—discourages the development of local institutions of higher learning already struggling to gain a foothold in a highly competitive world. Some maintain that this problem is largely counterbalanced by the fact that these expats tend to send significant sums of money home to their families. However, these financial resources are unevenly distributed and cannot compensate for the wider problems associated with the loss of highly-skilled labour. Little research has been done on the consequences of this brain drain, but it is an important issue whose impact must be taken into consideration in the planning of the internationalization of education.

4 Jürgen Enders and Christine Musselin, *Back to the Future? The Academic Professions in the 21st Century*, Higher Education to 2030, Volume 1, Paris, OECD, 2008, p. 151-152.

# THE INTERNATIONALIZATION

separate these two fundamentally irreconcilable schools of thought.

By the turn of the 21st century, it looked as though the push to bring education under the laws of supply and demand was gaining the upper hand. The World Trade Organization (WTO) was seeking to negotiate a General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) to liberalize the whole of the services sector, and education was at the heart of the negotiations. Heavy pressure was being exerted, particularly by Anglo-Saxon countries, to have the education sector opened up to broad commercialization. The failure of the first major round of negotiations at the WTO—the Doha Round—put an end to any such aspirations. For some, this meant having to find new avenues for the import and export of education products and services. A softening of the higher education sector to the idea of an eventual opening up of the market had already begun clearing the way for this. The Bologna Process seemed to be the best way to get there. The aim of the process, it will be recalled, was to harmonize university diplomas in order to facilitate student mobility. Designed for European countries, this harmonization went well beyond its original framework to include periphery countries like Turkey and Russia. And as it was the model of Anglo-Saxon universities that was adopted, the resulting accords cover a massive zone and have become an example for the rest of the world to follow. While such standardization offers numerous advantages and facilitates exchange, it also has the

effect of hindering the diversity of learning and the expression of differences—in both scientific content and cultural approach—that should be at the very core of higher education.

## UNESCO and the OECD

UNESCO has studied the effects of globalization on education and finds both positive and negative impacts. In its view, internationalization permits a broader course offering and wider access to education. Standardized diplomas facilitate comparability among institutions. Globalization produces major economic benefits for institutions. It fosters the creation of new university environments and promotes greater diversity. This last effect, as we have seen, is subject to debate, and even UNESCO itself acknowledges that globalization also encourages a higher degree of cultural homogenization.

On the flip side, liberalization of the sector, spurred by globalization, causes a decline in the quality of education and promotes the creation of a two-tier system. Skilled labour thus has a tendency to concentrate itself in more favoured nations and away from less developed countries. The State holds less sway in the structuring of the sector, which limits its ability to set national policy. Liberalization encourages the development of those programs that are more market driven and profit generating, which has a profoundly negative effect on such disciplines as humanities, literature, philosophy and pure sciences, for example.

UNESCO and the OECD are among the most active and influential international organizations in the education sector. This seems natural for the former, which has a specific mandate from the United Nations to deal with all aspects of education. But the involvement in the sector of the OECD, an organization representing only the richest countries, is far more questionable and should be much narrower. Yet it is this organization that has produced the largest volume of material on education and that appears to be dictating the policies adopted in the sector.

Both UNESCO and the OECD are concerned about the proliferation of education products and services and the difficulty this causes in trying to distinguish the good from the bad. Such a substantial and uncontrolled offering can greatly affect the quality of education, and students need to be protected from “unscrupulous” providers and “mediocre” educational programs. Both organizations view quality assurance as a necessity for the effective evaluation of cross-border education.

UNESCO and the OECD appear resigned to the globalization fact in education. They seem only to be looking for ways to adjust to the changes, and see the evaluation of products and services as the answer. Yet such evaluation causes perverse effects that are not being addressed. Subjecting education to technocratic and quantifiable standards gives it a market value, which facilitates its commercialization. The evaluation

# ON OF HIGHER EDUCATION

criteria are also highly questionable: they do not take into account those things that are less tangible and less verifiable yet still fundamental to education, like the transmission of knowledge, development of critical thinking or professional autonomy. Moreover, teachers are entirely excluded from the evaluation process, which is a clear indicator of its limitations.

## A growing phenomenon

The OECD cast itself into the future to draw a portrait of higher education in the year 2030. It predicts significant growth in student mobility and the number of international exchanges. Universities in the United States will retain their high-prestige status but will face heavy competition from European universities, bolstered by the Bologna Process. Emerging powers like China will play a bigger role in higher education but are going to first have to deal with the issues of quality and adequate funding. Public education does not seem to be in danger of extinction, but the private sector will be booming, especially outside the OECD zone. According to the organization, it will be necessary to promote excellence while preserving access to education, which many may see as contrary goals. It also appears that the spirit of competition globalization is cultivating among universities is not about to wane either.

The Canadian government believes it can leverage the internationalization of higher education, particularly with regard to the resulting economic benefits. International students are “profitable,” not only in terms

of tuition but also because they are consumers in the national economy. Competition for international students is fierce, especially among Anglo-Saxon countries. Their contribution to the economy, it is said—using an odd analogy—could potentially be greater than the total value of Canada’s exports in helicopters, airplanes and spacecraft.

Overall, the major international organizations support the phenomenon of globalization in education. In fact, they are actively contributing to its growth and increased commodification by encouraging measures like the standardization of diplomas and quality assurance. Supporting diversity, encouraging the integration of teachers in the decision-making process and safeguarding fair and equal access to quality education are not among the issues they are promoting. These organizations are shackled by their not-so-democratic structures and susceptibility to the

influences of major pressure groups. It is therefore essential that their activities be closely monitored, along with the ensuing policies and recommendations, in order to protect against potential deviations while continuing to advocate in favour of education based on the values of humanism and greater social justice.

## A shift in course in universities

Quebec universities have seen a 62% jump in internationalization activities on their campuses over the last decade or so. Under Quebec’s *International Policy*, knowledge, innovation and education are now the key priorities of the province’s international agenda. It is the rectors of the different universities who are responsible for implementing internationalization, a.k.a. Quebec’s strategic development plan. Objectives on such things as promoting an institution’s reputation, raising international student mobility or developing



# THE INTERNATIONALIZATION

research partnerships and sharing research outputs can thus vary substantially from one university to the next.

## Policy issues for universities

Many Quebec universities, such as *Université de Sherbrooke* and *Université de Montréal*, for example, have policies governing internationalization and a department dedicated to applying them. *Université Laval*, for its part, operates *Université Laval International*, a centre of excellence that develops projects involving study programs, extracurricular activities and international relations, as well as an international office that manages such things as student mobility, partnerships and the university's international promotion strategies. *Université du Québec à Chicoutimi* (UQAC), like other universities, has established institutional objectives that are essentially in line with the internationalization goals set by the *Conseil supérieur de l'éducation*<sup>5</sup> for Quebec: cross-border teaching abroad, international research and development, international recruitment and bilateral mobility of teaching faculty and students. But what sets UQAC apart is its innovative use of social media to support and supervise international students in the regions. It goes without saying that every university now offers specific international programs, especially since the growing awareness of the globalization phenomenon in the 1990s.

## The impact of mobility on working conditions

Higher student mobility raises the spectre of a heavier workload for teaching staff: bringing students up to spec, managing cultural differences, adapting instruction to an intercultural environment, and the list goes on. An increase in mobility could also demand new ways of framing or even designing programs. Whatever the case, it is essential that teachers be given adequate resources to compensate for these new duties.

When it comes to teacher mobility, social security is a matter of key concern. In the case of out-of-province employment, the level of social security coverage is determined by two main factors: the teacher's job contract and the length of his or her work-stay. Collective agreements have to take these factors into account to ensure social security protection to teaching staff, whether they are working in Quebec or overseas. The *Quebec Health Insurance Act*, for example, grants six months extendable coverage to residents working abroad only if their employer is based in Quebec, barring which they are not covered. Moreover, claim amounts are established according to the Quebec health care system rate scale, which means supplemental health insurance is a necessity. Should this additional coverage not be paid by the employer?

The *Act respecting occupational health and safety*, for its part, ensures coverage only when an individual has a residence in Quebec, his or her employee is based in Quebec and the length of the work-stay was no more than five years at the time the accident occurred or the illness began. Given this, it would be important to limit foreign teaching assignments to a maximum of five years. The employment contracts themselves should also be signed with a Quebec institution and any special working conditions specific to the posting should be negotiated.

## Toward commodification?

There is a major stir going on in many universities that are currently talking about adapting their programs to international demand. *Université du Québec à Montréal's* Policy 43, for example, states that the institution may review its courses

and programs in accordance with the aims of internationalization. Will it be international demand that determines which of our university programs stay and which ones go?

We are also seeing more and more internationalization reflecting the dictates of the globalized market.

5 <https://www.cse.gouv.qc.ca/fichiers/documents/publications/50-0449F.pdf>

# ON OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Over the past 15 years, this has translated into a definite bias toward a more commercial and strategic approach. Priority is now being given to distance education, to second-language training and to the introduction of international dimensions into programs, some of which have already been relocated to Peru, Mexico, Algeria, China or Morocco. Quebec university has a critical vocation and should not be forced to *adapt* to realities that could ultimately jeopardize its mission and, further still, its language of instruction; its role must instead be to enlighten societies and their transformations.

## Two-tier research

For university faculty, the benefits of internationalization come from the possibility of being able to study broader and more complex issues with the creation of research networks, information sharing and tools and the recruitment of talented young researchers. But does international research—promoted and advocated as a global orientation—apply to all faculty members? The recruitment of world-renowned professors, or of eminent course lecturers in the case of *Université du Québec à Montréal*, is an international goal for universities, as is ensuring the outreach of research

and creation centres and disseminating their outputs. For *Université de Montréal*, it is a way of improving its standing in the university rankings. As for McGill University, its focus is on promoting research excellence, which means making international partnerships a priority.

The link among New Public Management, innovation policies and funding is also bringing about other forms of internationalization that are already beginning to transform the nature of universities and the research they do. Some of these trends are more worrisome than others, such as



# THE INTERNATIONALIZATION

seeing institutions thrown into competition based on certain quantitative factors or too much importance being put—in university rankings, for example (see box below)—on a school's reputation and the linkages between its academic functions and economic spinoffs.

## The pros and cons of internationalization

There are some positive things about the international movement in education. Quebec students are able to get funding to carry out internships abroad. The higher influx of international students is a major asset for Quebec because, when properly managed, these situations can serve as an opportunity for rich intercultural exchange and the learning of new languages through immersion. New partnerships between institutions are now also making it easier for teaching faculty—and we hope this to include

contingent staff—to travel overseas and teach or conduct research abroad.

But because Canadian universities have made internationalization a key priority of their development and university rectors are in charge of implementing it, we have to keep an eye out for commercial drift. Should we care if the university system and its programs are modified to meet the needs of the international market? There are well-known risks involved in changing the vocation of university into an entrepreneurial mission

## University rankings

Universities are ranked using a classification system that is meant, in principle, to determine which ones are the best in order to help guide student “clients” in their choice of school. University administrations often put too much stock in these rankings and invest considerable effort in securing an enviable position. Yet, on close examination, these standings are dubious at best: they are clearly biased in favour of Anglo-Saxon universities, which systematically glean top spots in the rankings right across the board. The evaluation criteria, seemingly designed to perpetuate this dominance, are highly problematic and in no way assure real quality.

Based on these rankings, a good university is one that has a high number of Nobel Prize winners on faculty. These Nobelists have published numerous articles in handpicked Anglo-Saxon publications and are often cited by their colleagues. As a result, their universities draw a large volume of international students and, as surveys confirm, enjoy an excellent reputation. The focus is therefore on essentially quantifiable criteria that concern only a very limited part of what it is that defines a university as “good.” These rankings create a hierarchy among universities that serves their marketing purposes. But the undue emphasis placed on them and the narrowness of their scope are detrimental to higher education as a whole, which must contend with realities far more complex and nuanced than the ones covered by the rankings.

that would have a major economic impact on institutions. Many scholars here and around the world have been sounding the alarm about the major transformations already going on in universities due to the powerful lobby that has been pushing to have higher education brought into the service of industry. This movement, along with the withdrawal of state funding, pose very real dangers to our universities.

## The college system caught up in the wake

In its approach to internationalization, the college network has not been immune to the trends more widely at play across the higher education sector as a whole. While CEGEP teachers remain committed to the educational and social aspects of international projects, it is clear that the humanistic approach to education

has been giving way, little by little, to a more managerial- and market-based approach within our CEGEPs.

Two main players have influenced the development of the internationalization framework in Quebec's college system: *Cégep International*, which was incorporated into the *Fédération des cégeps* as an international affairs branch in July 2014, and the *Conseil supérieur de l'éducation*. To these must be added the Demers Report, which believes that internationalization can play a key role in balancing education with the needs of the labour market.

## Major orientations

In recent years, *Cégep International* has centred its activities on forging partnerships in new regions of the world, building alliances with other Quebec partners on international projects and developing frameworks

for carrying out activities abroad and welcoming in international students. The objectives of its 2011-2015 strategic plan include establishing strategies for the export of know-how, increasing the number of incoming international students by 20%, developing AEC (*Attestation d'études collégiales*) programs to attract even more international students and increasing CEGEPs' share of tuition fees.

The *Conseil supérieur de l'éducation*, for its part, in a report entitled "The Internationalization of Québec Colleges: A World of Possibilities" (2013), draws a link between internationalization, on the one hand, and program quality, quality assurance and international recruitment on the other. The *Conseil* appears to be the only organization

## English, the lingua franca

Internationalization raises a pressing issue concerning language of use. English has become the international medium of instruction in higher education, and this is causing three main problems: first, it is giving a major edge to native English speakers; second, it is curbing intellectual diversity and encouraging uniformity; and third, it is imposing Anglo-Saxon culture as the international benchmark at the expense of all others. Anglo-Saxon countries are therefore reaping the full benefits of this!

In Quebec, major controversy arose when it became known that certain French-speaking universities were offering courses in English. Yet in *Higher Education to 2030, Volume 2, Globalisation*, the OECD does not foresee complete hegemony of the English language in higher education. Few seem overly alarmed by the uniformity this English predominance is causing in the sector. But linguist Claude Hagège, one of the most knowledgeable critics on the subject, believes the widespread use of English in universities is motivated by purely commercial reasons, a logic that is imposing a certain sameness of thinking that strikes at the very core of higher education. This monopoly of the English language has a negative effect not only on course selection, but also on research and publishing. Even though many Quebec universities are making themselves known by promoting their French face, there still seems to be a growing temptation to deliver courses and to publish in English. Should there not be some safeguards put in place to protect the French linguistic and cultural ecosystem in our universities?

# THE INTERNATIONALIZATION

concerned with ensuring the socioeconomic accessibility of foreign travel for students, which is significant. Moreover, while recognizing the important part international students can play in countering lower enrolment levels in regional colleges affected by demographic decline, the *Conseil* maintains that the strategy for attracting international students to Quebec has to be based on program excellence.

The Demers Report, which came out of the work of the task force on college training created in the wake of the Parti Québécois government's 2013 Summit on Higher Education, also makes a specific recommendation regarding international students: that provincial standards be applied in hosting them and that financial incentives be put in place to direct them toward colleges where demographic decline is putting study programs at risk. As well, this report calls for a review of the legislative and regulatory obstacles that may be impeding their access to the college system and, to that end, recommends a redefinition of the *Règlement sur les études collégiales* (RREC), even going so far as to call into question the standard French exam and general education requirements.

## How is this playing out in our CEGEPs?

Internationalization is putting heavy pressure on CEGEPs, yet, as with universities, the responsibility and initiatives for implementing it have been left in their hands. Generally, the institutions are responding favourably

to this indirect edict, especially given the increasingly popular view that internationalization is an essential element of institutional development.

In light of this, few CEGEPs today are without a strategic plan for international development. By 2010, half of the colleges had an internationalization policy in place—in very few cases negotiated with staff, it should be added—and nearly as many had an international office. Over the years, CEGEPs have invested considerable resources and person-hours in international activities. These usually come under the responsibility of the department of studies, except in the case of the export of know-how, which normally falls to continuing education and the business sector.

Most strategic frameworks for internationalization revolve around the same basic elements. The first has to do with the sharing and exchange of knowledge in accordance—in theory, at least—with the humanist tradition. This has led institutions to set up increasingly tight controls on international activities and to forge partnerships in the field with governments and other establishments.

The second element concerns institutional outreach and involves developing a brand image to attract international students or help sell an educational program. It goes without saying that this component has the direct effect of creating greater competition among institutions. Third is the idea of internationalizing

education by incorporating an international dimension into each study program. It is important to note here that international standards, once they make their way into a strategic plan, are subject to the quality assurance mechanisms that the *Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial* (CEEC) is looking to impose on colleges. The final element is the recruitment of international staff, which, for financial and other reasons, has become a key priority in most of these development plans.

## International activities in CEGEPs

With respect to student mobility, foreign exchange and travel projects have traditionally been initiated and carried out by teaching staff. As things now stand, project requests significantly outweigh available funding and students are already required to cover most of the financing. Over the years, government grants have largely been redirected toward the sale of knowledge, and research and innovation programs. But even here, these grants have been cut and institutions are increasingly having to seek out private funding sources... most of whom have little concern for humanitarian considerations or for enhancing the educational experience for students.

Internationalization is also compounding pressures to target courses and programs to international demand and standardize educational pathways—pressures that are also being exerted on teaching practices.

## Distance education

Distance learning is a key issue in the internationalization of education. Presented in its best light, it is seen as a revolution in learning that opens up access to education and offers a flexible approach that allows students to learn at their own pace. But distance learning also has its drawbacks, and developing the sector requires certain social, economic, ethical and pedagogical considerations. Distance education is fully in line with the “market” of education and has the potential to generate huge profits. But is it really meeting the needs of the countries where it is in use? Could it become an obstacle to the development of a better-adapted public system? How does it support school retention? Can it guarantee quality?

Distance education also raises a number of issues concerning teachers’ working conditions, starting with their status and the fragmented workloads associated with these new teaching practices: course development, online deployment and updating; number of students being taught, supervised, graded; remuneration; copyright protection, and so on. These are all collective issues that need to be better defined in order to ensure satisfactory working conditions for teachers and safeguard the quality of the courses being given.

## Framing the internationalization of education

FNEEQ recognizes the fundamental importance of cooperation and the free and unhindered circulation of knowledge and opposes the commodification of education and the promotion of competition among institutions of higher learning. It believes that diversity of education must be preserved in order to protect against uniformity and cultural or linguistic hegemony. The internationalization of education must therefore be developed in collaboration with labour representatives and teachers and in the full respect of union recognition, academic freedom and professional autonomy.

Moreover, FNEEQ firmly rejects, and has for many years, any recourse to quality assurance mechanisms. It sees it as essential that the welcoming and integration of international students be appropriately designed and adequately funded in accordance with the demographic variations among the regions.

While teachers have no issue with the idea of introducing an international component into the curriculum—and, to the contrary, see it as essential—they do object to having constraints imposed that are ill-adapted to the specific needs of the different programs and to violations of their professional and departmental autonomy that will only lead to greater uniformity at the expense of quality.

Let us conclude by noting that for many institutions, particularly the ones in regions with declining student populations, the intensive recruitment of international students has become not just another competition plank but a matter of survival; this is a very real problem that requires urgent attention.

# THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In May 2015, the FNEEQ Congress gave the School and Society Committee the mandate to pursue its work on the internationalization of education and to call for an immediate moratorium on the unfreezing of tuition rates<sup>6</sup>, based on the belief that international student tuition should never become a source of financing that allows the state to disengage from funding higher education. Solutions were proposed to promote a more humanistic, cooperation-based approach to internationalization through policies aimed at counterbalancing the demographic decline, notably with

incentives benefiting the regions. It was also seen as crucial that bilateral mobility be supported and promoted in such a way as to ensure that individual socioeconomic status is never a discriminating factor.

Tabled, presented and discussed at FNEEQ's 31st Congress, the study on internationalization was very well received by those in attendance. Yet despite the huge volume of work already accomplished, the committee felt further study and analysis were required on the subject, in part because it is in full expansion but also because points of convergence

need to be found between the studies on internationalization and quality assurance, and the hierarchy and competition among institutions have to be documented. Moreover, the positive elements of internationalization still need to be identified and analyzed in order to fully understand the consequences of such diametrically opposed approaches as cooperation and commodification. It will also be important to give thought to how the free sharing of knowledge can be fostered while still respecting the delicate balance between accessibility and copyright or intellectual property protection. ■

6 In February 2015, the Couillard government tripled tuition fees for international students from France. An increase of this magnitude raises numerous issues that will need to be addressed by the committee.



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# Fighting bullying, homophobia and transphobia

## A matter of basic human rights

The 31st FNEEQ Congress held in May 2015 brought about the creation of a new federal body: the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee. This committee's mandate is to make recommendations to the Executive Committee as to its objectives and work plan, monitor the federation's actions respecting sexual orientation and gender identity and raise awareness among member unions about sexual orientation- and gender identity-related issues. We spoke with Dominique Dubuc, biology teacher at Cégep de Sherbrooke and a member of this newly-formed committee.

France Désaulniers  
Communications Advisor

Dominique Dubuc has unquestionable expertise in the area. A member of CSN's LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender)<sup>1</sup> confederal committee, she is also active in the *Table nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie et la transphobie des réseaux de l'éducation*—a provincial discussion table on homophobia and transphobia in our schools—and sits on the executive board of the North American chapter of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association<sup>2</sup> (ILGA), an organization that has consultative status at the United Nations (UN).

Is the education system immune from homophobia? Dominique's answer: An unequivocal and resounding “no”! Many young people are victims of bullying and homophobic actions in our schools, CEGEPs, and even universities. It still happens in this day and age that some young people find themselves kicked out and shunned by their families. “I don't want to paint too dire a picture, but the journey can be a painful one. The suicide rate is frighteningly high and there are an inordinate number of LGBT youths on the streets,” she explains.

To Dominique Dubuc, school administrations should be the ones to take the matter in hand. “At the moment, it's still too often up to teachers, on their own initiative, to take action. This has to become an institutional matter. At Cégep de Sherbrooke, we have an institutional committee and the board of governors has passed a declaration<sup>3</sup>,” she says.

Then there's the issue of transphobia: “A decade ago, we rarely ever heard talk of trans students, although, of course, they were there. The fact that some well-known personalities have now come out is making self-affirmation easier and is challenging many of the prejudices. But how do we accommodate for the needs of a trans youth? What can we do to be attentive to the needs of trans students? What concrete steps can we take? Giving unions and teachers the tools they need is paramount. Many



Dominique Dubuc  
Teacher at Cégep de Sherbrooke

have no idea how to respond to certain requests from students or even where to go for advice.

“Even though the situation here in Quebec is clear and we've achieved equality, the legal issues facing trans and intersex individuals are far from settled.” And when we look elsewhere in the world, the situation is extremely complex. “Above and beyond legislation, there are cultural realities. We can have a perfect law, but if its application is deficient or awareness is lacking, it will never be sufficient.”

And while our discussion centred on students, Dominique makes no bones about the fact that many FNEEQ members still opt to keep their own sexual orientation and gender identity quiet...

### Acting against homophobia and transphobia

The 3rd Symposium of the *Table nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie et la transphobie des réseaux de l'éducation* will be on January 21st and 22nd at Cégep Garneau.



For more information or to register:  
<http://www.colloquehomophobie.org/2016/>.

1 <http://www.csn.qc.ca/web/lgbt>

2 <http://ilga.org/>

3 [http://www.cegepsherbrooke.qc.ca/sites/default/files/stories/communic/publications/dec\\_homophobie12.pdf](http://www.cegepsherbrooke.qc.ca/sites/default/files/stories/communic/publications/dec_homophobie12.pdf)

# Update from the *Regroupements*



## *Regroupement université*

Sylvain Marois, FNEEQ Vice-President

### A lot of work ahead

The 2015 academic year kicked off with the signing of an agreement in principle between McGill University and the McGill Course Lecturers and Instructors Union (MCLIU). Adopted by an overwhelming majority (96%) of members at the September 8th general assembly of the MCLIU, this collective agreement—the first for the union—contains a number of important gains for professors and brings the long fight for recognition to a successful close. It took nearly four years to arrive at an acceptable agreement, a period during which the MCLIU was able to count on the support and solidarity of the other *Regroupement université* member unions, emerging from these difficult negotiations stronger and more united than ever. McGill's teaching assistants, for their part, also voted to accept management's offer during a general assembly held September 30th.

That good news aside, UQAM, *Université de Montréal* (UdeM), *École de technologie supérieure* (ÉTS) and Concordia University still have their collective agreements to negotiate. University budget cuts, which tally over \$737 million since 2012, are putting huge pressure on teaching and student support while creating a climate that is hardly conducive to bargaining. A little political will would go a long way in advancing the talks that have been dragging on unnecessarily at UdeM, while the climate of "austerity" being imposed by the UQAM administration is not promising a much speedier or easier resolution on that front. We wish better luck to the course

lecturers at ÉTS, who will soon be initiating negotiations on their first collective agreement.

The *Regroupement* will be focusing its activities in four main areas: studying the matter of yearly contract teachers, mounting a data base of the articles of our various collective agreements, launching a reflection process on distance learning and, of course, pursuing our mobilization efforts against the budget cuts.

We know that many university administrations are looking to create new job statuses for teaching faculty and senior lecturers. Already in use at *Université de Sherbrooke*, *Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières*, Concordia and *Université Laval*, this model might offer clear advantages for the universities (savings, longer-term planning, higher workload/number of courses and students per class, flexibility in teaching duties, maintenance of contract status, etc.), but this is less the case for the course lecturers. Although these statuses may help stabilize employment and provide certain financial benefits, automatically renewed contracts, greater job security, etc., they are also all too frequently associated with overwork and job burnout. Our goal is to provide the unions with the tools for reflection they need to each make the best decision based on their own local reality.

Lastly, the 15th edition of National Course Lecturers' Day will be observed in Quebec this coming November 22nd. We will be highlighting this event at the federal council scheduled for November 18th and 19th in Québec City. ■



## *Regroupement cégep*

Nicole Lefebvre, FNEEQ Vice-President

### Another year off to a running start!

A negotiation period is never an easy time, and this one is no exception. As the Couillard government continues to hack away at public services and make our working conditions even more difficult with its tight-fisted economic policies, we find ourselves having to sit down to renegotiate our collective agreements.

The start of the academic year was marked by demonstrations and disruptions across the CEGEP system. The summer period, which many feared would cause the mobilization movement to wane, allowed us instead to take a well-deserved rest and recharge our batteries, with teachers coming back more engaged and determined than ever. Disappointment over the lack of progress made at the bargaining table, even though the negotiating committee continued to meet throughout the summer, undoubtedly played a part in that.

Record-breaking strike votes—unprecedented in both turnout and results—were obtained across all of the *Regroupement cégep* unions. Moreover, the four federations in the *Comité de coordination des secteurs public et parapublic* (CCSPP), as well as the CSN, have launched a reflection process to consider what we might do should a special law be passed to put an end to the negotiations. The other organizations within the Common Front have all been asked to do the same.



## Regroupement privé

Caroline Quesnel, FNEEQ Vice-President

### Autumn under the solidarity banner

The 31st FNEEQ Congress held last May will likely remain etched in the memories of the *Regroupement privé* union members—an unprecedented 39 delegates from 17 unions—who were in attendance. Not only were these members able to contribute to discussions on the sharpening of FNEEQ’s position, they had the opportunity to take part, and in most cases for the very first time, in all of the larger debates of the Federation. That collective experience last spring clearly had an impact on raising their interest in the public-sector bargaining talks that resumed this fall.

Since the *Regroupement*’s first meeting in September, private-sector members unions have intensified their efforts to support their colleagues in the public sector by discussing the negotiations in their union assemblies, passing resolutions of support and carrying out visibility activities and taking part in large number in the Common Front demonstrations on October 3, 2015.

The most recent show of solidarity from the *Regroupement privé* came in the form of a news release and letter of support published on social networks this past October 25th, the eve of the launch of the Common Front strike.

#### Letter of support to our primary, secondary and college colleagues in the public sector

*This week, tens of thousands of you will be exercising your right to strike in the public-sector negotiations with the government.*

*We, the private-sector teachers and support staff of the Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ-CSN), wish to publicly express our support for your fight [...].*

*We believe you are being subjected to underhanded and brutal attacks in this collective bargaining process: ludicrous salary offers, increased workload, greater job precarity, cuts to pension plans, and the list goes on. Your working conditions are our working conditions and we, like you, are deeply committed to providing quality education and support to the young people who are to become the enlightened, critical-thinking and engaged citizens of tomorrow.*

*We stand with you in the defence of our education system, which, for too many years, has been the victim of unmitigated pillaging: budget cutbacks, erosion of services, destructive austerity.*

*We share in your outrage!*

In just three days, this letter was signed by over 750 members of 24 labour unions—again, unprecedented! What better proof could there possibly be of the powerful solidarity that exists within the Federation? ■

### A victory underscored

Good news! The Supreme Court has thrown out management’s request for an appeal in the grievance case involving the recovery of strike days at *Collège Shawinigan*. This refusal means that the ruling of the Quebec Court of Appeal, which came down in favour of the union, is final. It will be recalled that an arbitrator upheld a union grievance claiming that because the work required by the college was already to be made up in planned overtime once classes resumed, the teachers should have been paid for picking up the cancelled classes. The 10-year fight is over!

### The battle wages on at Champlain Regional College

All of the unions at the two campuses concerned by the push for independent CEGEPs have been given clear recommendations by their general assemblies: the structure of Champlain Regional College is outdated and is no longer able to meet the current-day needs of the communities these colleges serve. What remains to be done now is to convince Minister Blais of the validity of granting autonomous status to the Saint-Lambert and St.Lawrence campuses and of the benefits this would bring to students of these institutions.

A number of other matters with potentially heavy consequences will require our attention over the coming months. These include the recent report from the *Conseil supérieur de l’éducation* on new college diplomas, the redefined role of the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail* (CPMT) and the Couillard government’s priority of aligning college training with the labour market. ■



**choi  
sir**

# L'ÉDUCATION

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des enseignantes et  
des enseignants  
du Québec