

**BARGAINING 2020**

**DRAFT  
UNION SUBMISSION**

# **SECTORAL TABLE BARGAINING PROJECT**



**REGROUPEMENT CEGEP**

MAY 2019



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# SECTORAL BARGAINING: THEMES

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## PREAMBLE: REASSERTING THE VALUE OF THE PROFESSION

This document will serve as the *Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec's* (FNEEQ–CSN) project for the renewal of the CEGEP teachers' collective agreement. This project presents certain issues and considerations aimed at facilitating discussions centered on seeking solutions to the problems identified by the federation's members.

The issues presented herein are the result of extensive consultation with local unions and their assemblies. Work carried out by the province-wide committees provided for in the collective agreements, as well as by the federation's syndical advisors, also informed the drafting of this document.

The lack of investment in the network—thoroughly denounced for years—has had a profound impact, and the consultation has confirmed teachers' concern for the current state of working conditions. There is an urgent need to reflect on reasserting the value of the profession, particularly in the context of attraction and retention difficulties.

This round of bargaining arrives in the midst of a provincial budget surplus, with a government claiming education as one of its priorities. It is time for the *Comité patronal de négociation des collèges* (CPNC) to recognize the need to provide teachers with the means of offering a high-quality education in a fully functional CEGEP network, in accordance with the Quebec public's right to education. This will benefit all Quebecers, as CEGEPs are major hubs of social, cultural, and economic development across Quebec.

The surest way for CEGEPs to ensure a quality higher education to the largest possible number of students across Quebec is to focus on the principle of collegiality, which is the very foundation of how CEGEPs operate. In fact, the best measure of success of institutional development, in line with the needs of CEGEPs and with the attainment of the objectives related to their mission, still lies in recognizing the disciplinary and pedagogical expertise of teachers in the field. It is in this context that the CEGEPs will be able to develop a pedagogical and organizational approach to best meet the increasingly varied needs of the student population and to foster its success.

In the following pages, the union will present the topics it wishes to discuss with the employer with a view to renewing the collective agreement for FNEEQ–CSN teachers. In addition to taking concrete action to better the working conditions of thousands of teachers, this work is intended to reassert the value of the CEGEP system and the teachers who work within it.

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## JOB INSECURITY

Nearly 40% of the teaching community is precariously employed. In Continuing Education, job insecurity is practically universal. Before acquiring tenure, teachers may experience a great deal of job insecurity and instability for years. They often must work multiple part-time jobs to meet their needs. Departments struggle to retain their precariously-employed teachers, who become discouraged and leave the profession.

The union submits that it is critical to find the means to concretely ease the uncertainty experienced by these teachers concerning their employment status. We believe a greater flexibility on the part of administrations, particularly regarding scheduling, the possibility to withdraw from certain contracts, and payment schedules, could be an interesting solution. The union invites the employer to participate in a reflection leading to solutions that could help precariously-employed teachers offset the difficulties associated with maintaining their positions on the hiring priority lists in their disciplines.

Some practices in the CEGEPs result in work overload for non-permanent teachers. Teachers beginning their careers are more likely to inherit particularly varied tasks while they are integrating and being introduced to the profession, which creates additional and unrecognized pressure. It will be important to examine this issue with a view to identifying its causes and finding solutions.

In addition, the union wishes to explore measures with the employer that could provide precariously-employed teachers with a degree of salary security under certain conditions. The procedure for opening positions needs to be improved, and access to tenure must be eased. The union also proposes to discuss access to certain types of leave for precariously-employed teachers.

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## CONTINUING EDUCATION

According to a report prepared by the *Comité national de rencontre* in 2014, Continuing Education teachers carry out teaching activities like those in the Regular sector, including student support (*l'encadrement*) and related tasks (*les tâches connexes*), but with a different population. These activities are often carried out without or with little remuneration.

Moreover, despite a wage differential between Continuing Education teachers and their Regular sector peers that could be upwards of 50%, Continuing Education teachers do not benefit from experience-related salary increases, and the calculation of their workload is based solely on course hours and not on the individual teaching

load (CI), as is the case in the Regular sector. Continuing Education teachers also do not have access to the same working conditions and benefits as their colleagues in the Regular sector, and they are sometimes unable to exercise their hiring priority, e.g. due to avoidable scheduling conflicts. These inequities are further compounded by a professional isolation often associated with a lack of departmental support, appropriate services, and material resources. The union also wishes to highlight that Continuing Education teachers do not benefit from any job security measures.

It is imperative to seek the financial sums required to implement fair wage and working conditions for Continuing Education teachers in the CEGEPs. In addition, the union wishes to discuss arrangements related to hiring and work organization in Continuing Education.

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## THE TEACHING LOAD AND ITS DISTRIBUTION

The chronic lack of resources in the CEGEP network contributes to heavier teaching loads. These loads are also subject to an ever-increasing bureaucratic pressure, particularly with the pervasiveness of technological tools and the medley of imposed external requirements.

Furthermore, the individual teaching load (CI) does not fully reflect the work carried out by teachers, and its application must be revisited with a view to better recognizing the load associated with, e.g., multiple preparations, the number of teaching hours, the number of students, and the characteristics inherent to certain teaching activities. Heavy loads lead to stress for teachers, and burnout and a high rate of leaves are becoming increasingly common. Some teachers feel pressured to work when they are ill. A fair recognition and adequate distribution of work would at once reassert the value of the profession and guarantee a higher quality of teaching.

The increasing presence of students with disabilities or special needs (EESH/EBP) also leads to a heavier load for teachers. The number of these students has grown considerably in recent years. The union highlights the need to further specify the essential role and responsibilities of teachers in connection with this student population, while reflecting on the best ways to identify and meet their needs.

The creation of workloads for staffing purposes is becoming more complex, due in part to the volatility in the number of student registrations. The union considers that the tasks related to teaching, such as participation in departmental activities and on various committees, reach to the core of the CEGEP mission and are not fully recognized for the work they represent. In addition, there is a lack of support for teachers who conduct research or participate in activities in Quebec or internationally, even though their work contributes to framing the CEGEP network as an integral part of higher education.

Finally, the union also wishes to sort out difficulties arising from certain provisions related to availability.

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## RESOURCES AND FUNDING

The CEGEP network is underfunded. The fact that the funding of teaching resources is tied neither to the parameters of the method for calculating the allocation nor to local realities greatly contributes to the heaviness of teachers' workloads, and threatens the operations of establishments. In addition, the determination of certain budgets are relegated to specific appendices, the application of which generates numerous problems. For example, the appendix pertaining to resources for low enrolment programs or programs with difficulties does not provide enough funding, and its eligibility criteria are too restrictive. These provisions negatively affect the functioning of the CEGEP network.

The union would like to underline the specific case of underfunding of clinical teaching, stages, and laboratories. Other resources crucial to teaching are either insufficient or lacking, for example in the areas of professional development, material resources, and technical support.

During the previous round of bargaining, the *Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur* (MEES) allocated teaching resources for students with disabilities. These have generally been allocated to projects instead of to recognizing the considerable work required to support this student population. They should be fully implemented with a view to improving teaching and learning conditions in a sustainable, concrete way. The union therefore wishes to reflect with the employer on finding the means to ensure and to sustain them at an adequate level.

On another note, it will be important to reflect on ways to adequately fund all tasks carried out in the context of department, program, and stage coordination. The union also considers that additional resources are needed to ensure support for programs.

At the local level, it would be beneficial for all parties if the management of teaching resources were carried out collegially by administrations and unions, for the sake of both transparency and rigour. In this regard, it is imperative to bring an end to the practices of attributing expenses to teaching resources that should be attributed elsewhere.

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## EMPLOYMENT, WORK ORGANIZATION, AND LABOUR RELATIONS

The collective agreement is mature and must constantly reflect the reality of CEGEP teaching and the needs of those who carry it out. It will be important to improve working conditions and work organization with a view to fostering a well-balanced professional life.

Among other topics, the union wishes to discuss family-work-school balance. Caregivers and parents face significant challenges, and the current provisions of the collective agreement do not sufficiently support them. This is also the case for teachers beginning their careers: the early stages of the profession are difficult, and measures designed to support new teachers are needed.

Furthermore, the union would like affirm the need to proceed with a review of the collective agreement from the standpoint of respect for sexual and gender diversity. Some clauses are not inclusive and are potentially discriminatory in their current form.

The union would also like to reiterate the importance it places on the issue of equal access to employment, i.e. affirmative action. The reluctance of certain administrations and their provincial counterparts to diligently carry out these shared responsibilities is incomprehensible in a context of diversity and profound social transformation.

Adjustments should also be made to the provisions concerning disability, short-term substitutions, and replacements, particularly with a view to reducing the pressure they place on teachers. In addition, the union estimates that a collective agreement which allows for partial disability would be better adapted to the needs of teachers with certain types of health conditions.

The union wishes to discuss certain articles for the purposes of clarification, especially those related to hiring, job security, and disciplinary measures. In some respects, our collective agreement provides inferior protections to those set out in the *Act respecting labour standards*, and this situation must be rectified. Improvements must also be made to the arbitration procedure for grievances, and the list of arbitrators must be reviewed.

We highlight here that union leave is indispensable in view of the responsibilities of local union executive committees and of the FNEEQ's province-wide activities. Furthermore, the leave for local unions provided for in the collective agreement, which is essential to high-quality collaborative work, is far from adequate.

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## PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY

Ranking 23 was granted to CEGEP teachers as part of the work on salary relativity, thus recognizing their professional autonomy and their place in higher education. However, their disciplinary and pedagogical expertise has repeatedly come under attack, particularly through interference by the administrative apparatus and a gradual change in perspective which views teaching as a divisible and quantifiable task. The union highlights the increase in accountability reporting as an example of this trend. Furthermore, teachers have had to withstand attacks on their roles within different CEGEP bodies, a contradiction to the principle of collegiality with which the network's mission is imbued.

In this context, the union esteems the importance of a collective agreement which reflects the professional autonomy inherent to the CEGEP teaching profession. It is essential for teachers to be able to fulfill the role they have been tasked with as members of the higher education community, within their institution and the public sphere, through a recognition of their freedom of expression and academic freedom.

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## REMUNERATION

First, we reiterate the union's wish to establish fair wage and working conditions in Continuing Education. Second, in a context in which attraction and retention are major concerns, particularly in certain disciplines and outlying areas, the current salary structure sometimes represents an additional barrier to the stability of the teaching workforce.

The union notes that out of all public service salary scales, the scale for CEGEP teachers has the most steps, and the starting salary is too low. The union also submits that master's and doctoral degrees are not valued highly enough by the salary scale. There are problems associated with the current procedures for evaluating years of schooling and recognizing degrees. In addition, some teachers must pay to teach, particularly in the case of professional order membership fees. Finally, the current terms for the payment of wages lead to problems when the pay schedule includes 27 Thursdays.

The question concerning the aeronautics teachers at the *Centre québécois de formation en aéronautique* (CQFA) must be addressed, as they work in a specific context recognized by the employer in the previous round of bargaining and requiring wage adjustments.

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## CONSOLIDATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE NETWORK

According to the Parent Report, the creation of the CEGEPs had the goal of democratizing access to higher education by training highly qualified technicians and charting a course to university, while also equipping citizens with a solid base in general education. However, the CEGEP network has since undergone many transformations which have sought to turn it into a tool at the service of private companies by setting aside its humanism.

CEGEPs place themselves in competition with one another, which threatens the network's cohesion. The disappearance of province-wide discipline or program coordination also negatively affects this cohesion. Furthermore, the regional structures of certain CEGEPs hamper a development coherent with their communities and negatively affect both their operations and their institutional autonomies.

The uncoordinated multiplication of Centres for Collegial Studies (*Centres d'études collégiales* or CECs), sub-centres, and service points negatively affects the vitality of the CEGEP network and leads to a decline in working conditions for teachers and in learning conditions for students. Furthermore, these establishments are not always allocated the resources they need to operate effectively. CECs should address the need for access to education in remote areas, but some are created as a response to political imperatives or organizational growth objectives, which do not issue from extensive thinking about the network's economy.

In addition to the multiplication of CECs, we are witnessing the haphazard rollout of distance education without a coordinated provincial strategy, which further contributes to competition between the CEGEPs and negatively affects the network's health, especially in CEGEPs in outlying areas. The collective agreement does not set out any prescriptions regarding distance education. It is imperative that the various CEGEP bodies, including departments, academic councils, labour relations committees, and program committees, be more involved in decision-making related to distance education activities. Furthermore, this type of teaching raises questions related to intellectual property rights, as well as to technical and pedagogical difficulties faced by teachers. Some of these problems also arise in the context of inter-institutional partnerships.

The union would like to underline the essential role of Continuing Education teachers in relation to the educational needs of an adult population with family and professional obligations who have often immigrated to Quebec. However, the development of the Continuing Education sector within the CEGEP network is disorganized and often aimed at meeting the ad hoc needs of companies, to the detriment of a multi-purpose education. Similarly, the recognition of acquired competencies (RAC), which is mainly aimed at providing workers who are already on the job market with diplomas, constitutes teaching, but is not always recognized as such by administrations.

Several CEGEPs are experiencing a decline in enrolment, particularly those in outlying areas. Quite often, teachers face a part of the pressure to find solutions to these attraction difficulties.

It is high time to collectively reflect on education and to reassert the value of the CEGEP project. CEGEPs can become truly healthy living and working environments respectful of environmental, social, and humanistic concerns. The development of the CEGEP network must be part of a province-wide, structured vision—not the sum of uncoordinated local and regional initiatives.

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