

Our mobilization is gaining momentum

Takeaway

lobby your local college administrators on sectoral issues!

Read

[the Teachers United's declaration "Pas d'entente en négo sans le secto!"](#)

To do

[the video of the ASPPC unions on strike!](#)

When the November 21-23 strike period ended, we wondered if the Legault government had fully grasped the significance of this unprecedented action: across Quebec, more than 570,000 public sector workers went on strike at the same time! Even though the government stuck to its positions throughout this period, our mobilization clearly succeeded in gaining ground, as shown by both our political interventions in the media and the scheduling of additional dates for talks at the central table. To keep up the pressure, the Front commun has announced a third set of strike days before the holiday season begins: from December 8th to 14th. With other union organizations also planning to strike, pressure on the Legault government will be at an all-time high!.

The state of discussions on key issues at the sectoral table

At the CÉGEP professors' sectoral table, despite fears of a stalemate, the parties have engaged in substantive talks on some important issues. Even though management continues to refuse to budge on many of our demands, in some of management's responses to our numerous proposals of solutions, the ASPPC's Negotiating Committee (NC) has noted a willingness to move forward, which suggests that there is some room for compromise.

Teaching load

In relation to the teaching load, both parties recognize that there is a need for resources for certain areas, such as internships (stages) and clinical teaching in Nursing, provincial program revisions, and updating teaching expertise in rapidly evolving or high-tech disciplines. We still have to consolidate these advances and agree on the amount of resources to be injected in our workplaces, which means there is still a risk of setbacks.

Distance learning (DL)

Management and the unions' views on the college network's needs in the area of DL are fundamentally different. That said, our counterparts do acknowledge the importance

of securing professors' interest in this area. In our view, the ability to do so will depend on the attention paid to factors such as the pedagogical value of DL projects, their relevance to the coherent development of the network, the teaching conditions offered, and the recognition of the additional workload generated by these projects. Provisions on DL must be included in our collective agreement to ensure that the colleges exercise their management rights in accordance with guidelines that both parties have agreed on.

Recognition of prior learning and competencies (RAC) and research

The issues of RAC and research both clearly fall under the remit of the teaching load and teaching expertise, even though our professors share some of these tasks with other CÉGEP staff. We must include in our work contracts the terms and conditions for performing teaching activities related to these areas. Thus, we need to rapidly convince the Comité patronal de négociation des collèges (CPNC) that it is to the CÉGEPs' advantage to agree to the inclusion of such provisions. This will be no easy task.

Precariousness

While earlier discussions had led us to believe that management was open to the issue of long-term job insecurity, they finally informed us of their refusal to grant tenure to teachers who have accumulated a certain number of years of seniority and consecutive full-time contracts. However, the union proposal offers a way forward that meets the colleges' concrete needs with regard to retaining teaching staff. Significant gains in the area of job insecurity are essential in order to reach an agreement in principle.

Salaries

Pay is still a major issue in the current negotiations. In addition to the extremely important parametric salary demands submitted to the central table, expectations are high in relation to adjustments to the regular sector's pay structure to ensure consistency with other salary scales in the public sector and significant improvements to working conditions in the Continuing Education sector to ensure equity. These demands will contribute to the government's objectives of attracting and retaining workers in our sector. Although the talks have permitted us to explore certain parameters with our counterparts, management must bring much more substantial offers to the table in this area.

Time is running out: take action to obtain a satisfactory sectoral agreement!

Talks at the sectoral table have enabled us to identify a number of potential 'landing spots' for the key demands on our negotiating agenda. However, it is clear that our counterparts still do not have the necessary mandates to adequately respond to our needs. To bring these mandates to our table, we must exert pressure on two targets: the Treasury Board and the colleges. Our strike actions and lobbying of local college administrators will remind them of the CÉGEPs' vital importance in the Quebecois societal project and the urgent need to improve working conditions and, consequently, the study conditions offered to students. Join us in this already historic mobilization that is fueling a much needed debate on the future of our public services!