

# carnets 48

FALL 2025



## STANDING TOGETHER AGAINST CAQ AUSTERITY



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The Executive Committee

This fall has been a season of mobilization for the FNEEQ and its affiliated unions. The cabinet shuffle in September wasn't just a game of musical chairs of the kind governments often play when they are nearing the end of their term and want to give themselves a facelift. This was a clear shift towards a more hard-right tone (and policy) by a deeply unpopular government that is growing increasingly desperate.

The premier is bashing unions—as if they can be separated from their members and the real-life hardships faced by Québec workers. When Legault and his pro-business ministers attack unions, they are really attacking the dynamic and progressive forces in Québec society. With Bill 3, the government is trying to cut off the unions' lifeline and ultimately silence them on

all issues that fall outside the collective agreements, issues that have a direct impact on working and living conditions. Trying to muzzle your critics is always a good first line of defence. But no one is fooled by the government's diversionary tactics. They are clearly designed to distract people from its disastrous economic decisions (such as Northvolt and SAAQclic) and terrible policies (the third link, pre-election handouts, etc.).

While we await the verdict of the ballot box, which will be known in less than a year, the fightback is happening in the streets. The unions and their members mobilized energetically during the fall, particularly for the week of local action against CAQ austerity in the CEGEPs and the major inter-union demonstration on November 29 in Montréal. Your engagement is helping to push this failed government toward the exit—a heartening and motivational prospect!

François Legault and his cabinet are determined to look only at the expense column and won't consider going where the money is to increase revenues. We have a different viewpoint. The articles in this issue of Carnets show the importance and value of our struggles to build a better Québec.

The historic \$151 million cut in funding for CEGEPs, the nearly \$30 million reduction in university funding, the cap on paid hours, the unexpected and inconsistent ceiling on the number of international students and insufficient capital budgets are degrading the services offered to students at our educational institutions.

The CAQ still has an opportunity to make the legislative changes that the schools and post-secondary institutions need and to make some courageous political decisions. For example, it could explicitly recognize academic freedom in the CEGEPs by extending the law that applies to universities to the college system. We believe this is necessary to protect the CEGEPs against all forms of interference, including political interference.

Our cause is just. Let's fight the good fight together!



Inter-union mobilization against CAQ austerity measures at Collège Montmorency during the week of local action in October.

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FNEEQ-CSN represents more than 40 000 members in CEGEPs, private institutions and universities. It is the most representative higher education union federation in Québec.

## CEGEP cutbacks: Students pay for the Legault government's poor decisions



From left to right: : president of the Syndicat du personnel de soutien du Cégep de Lévis-Lauzon (FEESP–CSN), Marie-Anne Lehouillier, , President of the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels du Cégep de Lévis (FP–CSN), Patrick Bourget, president of the Syndicat des professeures et professeurs du collège d'enseignement général et professionnel de Lévis-Lauzon (FNEEQ–CSN)

By Martin Robert

**If you want to find out exactly how frustrated the presidents of the three unions at the Cégep de Lévis are, just mention the CAQ government's spin about the hiring freeze and the historic \$151 million it has slashed from the budgets of Québec's 48 CEGEPs.**

**C**AQ ministers, led by the premier, have been repeating at every opportunity that the cuts will have no impact on student services and that education is "THE" top priority. To which the three union leaders react with unconcealed disgust: "It's a bald-faced lie, not even subtle. It's as simple as that!"

Yves Hallé, president of the Syndicat du personnel de soutien du Cégep de Lévis-Lauzon (FEESP–CSN), which represents support staff, is the first to speak. His members are overworked and the result is a long list of service

disruptions. Just one example: The day before our interview, the computer network in a lab went down twice, disrupting classes. The fact is the aging college on Québec City's south shore has been short one electrician since June. The CEGEP hasn't filled the position, so staff have to work twice as hard or call in subcontractors, which is more expensive and slower, since they are not always available. Even if CEGEPs were authorized to hire staff, electricians willing to work in the public sector at salaries that are not competitive with the private sector are few and far between.

At the CEGEP's sociocultural service, students were met by a locked door, said Marie-Anne Lehouillier, president of the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels du Cégep de Lévis (FP–CSN), which represents professional staff. When people knocked, there was no answer. One student life counsellor was on maternity leave. Then her colleague left for a similar reason. That left only one technician to do the work of the entire office. That person quit and a "Fermé" sign was hung on the door. As a result, sociocultural services were closed in August.

Another unacceptable situation: at the time of writing, students with disabilities have to wait more than a month for their first appointment with an adapted services counsellor. In Lévis as elsewhere in Québec, this population is growing year after year. Students with disabilities now make up a third of the CEGEP network's student population. The adapted services team is overwhelmed, but the cap on paid hours prevents the college from hiring more staff. These specialists are responsible for the individual accommodations that are essential for educational success, such as extra time for writing tests or the use of specialized software to compensate for a disability or limitation. Adapted services counsellors often seek the support of other specialists at the college, such as psychologists, who are also short-staffed and overworked. Anyone who works in a CEGEP is aware that learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder and mental health issues are becoming increasingly prevalent among a beleaguered student population. A first meeting with an adapted services counsellor in mid-October, with midterms fast approaching, is too late to respond to the pressing needs.

### More students, less money

The Cégep de Lévis' financial reports for the current year will be released only in a few months. However, the unions know that the college's funding from the Ministry of Higher Education has been cut by \$2.4 million (not including the "E" envelope, which is earmarked for teachers' salaries). The hiring freeze on support staff and professionals has also had an impact. Finally, all CEGEPs have to stay within the cap on paid hours. Any extra hours worked by an employee must therefore be cut from the hours of other employees.

Paradoxically, these drastic cuts come at a time when the student population is growing rapidly. According to the unions, there were 2,993 students enrolled at Cégep de Lévis in September 2024. In September 2025, there were 3,374, an 11% increase. This surge should be cause for celebration throughout the college. However, there is a distinct lack of enthusiasm at the Cégep de Lévis. Unfortunately, CEGEP budgets are based on the enrolment figures for the previous year, not the current year.

For the faculty, the impact is less direct but very real. "For example, the students with disabilities who are crammed into our classrooms need space and supervision when they take their exams. Since there is a lack of space due to the funding shortage, teachers are being asked to assess the same competencies in less time, meaning extra work," said Patrick Bourget, president of the Syndicat des professeures et professeurs du collège d'enseignement général et professionnel de Lévis-Lauzon (FNEEQ–CSN), which represents teachers.

All staff are pulling together to avoid exhausting and demoralizing their colleagues. "The hardest part is the pressure it puts on us," says Lehouillier. "If you're absent, you know your colleague will have to pick up the slack."

### Martine Biron must change course

In this dire situation, with workers at the end of their rope, replacing the Minister of Higher Education without changing direction will do little good. The new minister, Martine Biron, must take a different tack than Pascale Déry without delay and truly prioritize higher education, instead of just saying so as an election slogan. This 180-degree turn must mean cancelling the \$151 million in cuts that are undermining the viability of the CEGEP network and lifting the crippling hiring freeze. Minister Biron must protect the college system from political interference by extending the Act respecting academic freedom in the university sector to the CEGEPs. Above all, she must restore the broken trust between the CEGEP system and the Ministry.

However, the three union presidents at Cégep de Lévis are under no illusions. The Minister of Higher Education is carrying out the orders of Premier Legault and his coalition, which has moved further to the hard right. "The CAQ smacks of conservatism and budget cuts. We're not getting a sense of enthusiasm, vision or renewal," says Bourget. For inspiration, he looks to the bright-eyed kids in his classes. "I'm working for them."

# Academic freedom under attack

Sylvain Larose, Ann Comtois, Stéphane Daniau, Héroïse Moysan-Lapointe  
MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE

Threats to academic freedom are nothing new. The longstanding fight to protect teaching and research from religious, governmental and corporate pressures has been important for social progress.

There are several components to academic freedom. The FNEEQ reaffirmed its commitment to all of them at the Federal Council meeting in December 2020: teachers have the right to “freedom of teaching, particularly with regard to the content taught and the teaching methods used; freedom of research and creation, particularly with regard to their independence and the protection of sources; and freedom of expression about their educational institution or any other subject.”

## The troubling example of the United States

The most direct assaults on academic freedom in the Western world are currently being seen in the United States. There, academic freedom is facing a two-pronged attack. There is a push to make federal grants conditional

on increased control, with the federal government claiming a right of oversight over research and teaching in schools, colleges and universities. At the same time, the visas of foreign professors and students are being suspended for political reasons (800 visas have reportedly been revoked since Trump took office) and [some have been detained](#)<sup>1</sup>. The U.S. federal administration is turning the definition of censorship on its head by claiming that pro-Palestinian demonstrations, and lectures and courses dealing with the situation of Palestinians, are a threat to other voices and must therefore be suppressed.

Some universities have caved. For example, Columbia agreed to place its Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies Department under federal oversight. Others, such as Harvard,

which has not only a strong reputation but also deep pockets, are resisting. Harvard informed the government that it would not give up its independence or constitutional rights, and that no private university could accept federal government control.

The U.S. government is going to outrageous lengths. Universities are simply respecting freedom of expression by allowing pro-Palestinian demonstrations on their campuses. But what can be done when dealing with a government that has no regard for such principles? Universities do have legal options. But even if the courts rule in their favour and protect their independence against the federal government’s demands for control, the government could simply ignore the courts, as it seems to be doing increasingly in other matters, such as the deportation of immigrants and the occupation of supposedly violent cities. Can we count on our judicial system to defend true academic freedom in our country? Can we rely on all political parties to commit to protecting academic freedom?

## Québec and Canada

In Canada, academic freedom is enshrined in universities’ collective agreements, and the CEGEPs have made good progress towards recognizing



Marc-Olivier Bélisle teaches at Cégep de Granby

it in recent years, but the courts tend to interpret it narrowly. In Québec, a grievance arbitrator has ruled that academic freedom is not a constitutional right ([Brunelle and Samson, 2005](#)). The courts also treat universities as private businesses and regard the education of their students as a contractual relationship. Consequently, universities have been able to invoke the duty of loyalty to muzzle teachers and block the dissemination of research.

In Québec, statements by political figures and their direct interference in teaching have also contributed to eroding academic freedom. One striking recent example was the bid by a member of the governing party—former Minister of Higher Education Pascale Déry—to interfere in the content of courses at two English-language CEGEPs. This erasure of the necessary separation line between politics and academics is unacceptable and was met with broad-based opposition.

Recent statements by the leader of the Parti Québécois should also raise concerns in the teaching community.

In an interview on the “Frenchcast” podcast, Paul St-Pierre-Plamondon said some university departments are dominated by activists, that grades have been awarded based on skin colour at a U.S. university, and that wokeism “bullies its way in and [aims] to stifle debate about the truth.” It is regrettable that a party leader takes his ideas from populist media outlets rather than experts and the people involved in schools and post-secondary institutions. When St-Pierre Plamondon says that “[as a government, we will reclaim democratic control over educational content](#)”<sup>2</sup> he is in fact proposing to make a political institution (in this case, a parliamentary committee) judge and jury.

## An essential counterweight

Academic freedom is the opposite of this. It is what makes it possible for places of learning and research such as CEGEPs and universities to act as a counterweight to government, an essential feature of any democratic system.

In higher education, teachers and professors are accountable to their peers

for their choice of content, teaching methods, and research and creative priorities. Collegiality allows educational institutions to curb excesses without being held hostage to the political views or electoral priorities of politicians—whether they belong to the CAQ, the PQ or any other party vying for power. When an elected official, citing potential abuses, wants to transfer responsibility for the choice of course content to a political body, they are depriving society as a whole of the counterweights that are essential to its vitality. Ultimately, if drawing the line between ideology and the authentic search for truth becomes a political decision, then politics will determine where truth lies.

<sup>1</sup> Radio-Canada (10 mars 2025). Un leader des manifestations propalestiniennes de l’Université Columbia est arrêté. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2147054/mahmoud-khalil-manifestations-propalestiniennes-universite-columbia-arrestation>

<sup>2</sup>(56:54) frenchcast #223

## Solidarity and resistance are more necessary than ever

MEMBERS OF THE SEXUAL DIVERSITY AND GENDER PLURALITY COMMITTEE AND THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

**The global rise of the right has quickly gone from worrying to terrifying. The signs abound: masculinism is becoming mainstream; immigration is being used as a scapegoat for all of society's ills; the right of women to control their bodies is being debated again; rape culture, homophobia and transphobia are out in the open again; and femicides continue without our government firmly addressing the problem.**

One common thread among these setbacks is the explosion of misinformation and its political weaponization to promote the spread of the “opinions” and “impressions” most likely to serve electoral goals. Against this onslaught, the FNEEQ Women’s Committee and the Sexual Diversity and Gender Plurality Committee are joining their voices to reiterate that, now more than ever, we must uphold our core values of solidarity and inclusive, intersectional feminism. Furthermore, as a Federation that represents workers in the schools and post-secondary institutions, we are particularly concerned by the way scientific evidence is being ignored in societal debates and government decision-making.

We are seeing rampant misinformation about gender diversity, which could easily be debunked by referring to the current scientific consensus. Politicians and public figures are spouting baseless certainties and making highly publicized statements that are doing severe harm to LGBTQIA2+ communities. [Levels of homophobia and transphobia have returned to levels not seen in Québec in more than 20 years](#)<sup>1</sup>.

### Divide and conquer: Pitting women against each other

We are also seeing attempts to set the rights of cisgender women against those of trans and non-binary people. Yet the

goals of both groups are often the same, such as controlling their own bodies and dismantling essentialist understandings of gender. Bogeymen are being trotted out to make people believe that trans women are a danger to cisgender women in bathrooms, locker rooms, prisons and sports. The correct response to this moral panic would be to cite the scientific evidence, but opinions and impressions continue to dominate media discussions. Meanwhile, the real issues facing women, whether cis or trans, are being neglected, because it is easier and more politically expedient to launch cowardly attacks on a vulnerable group. Courageously denouncing all forms of masculinism, raising the profile of women’s sports, supporting shelters for abused women, firmly rejecting any attempt to limit women’s control over their bodies, and prioritizing education in general and education about sexuality and consent in particular, are all approaches that would actually benefit women and should be embraced by public figures who are sincerely concerned about their welfare.

### Prioritizing the interests of trans and non-binary youth

“Parental rights” are also invoked to restrict the rights of trans and non-binary youth. In Canada, Alberta has gone the furthest down this dangerous path. Parents have responsibilities to their children, not the authority to violate their fundamental, legally protected rights. In Québec, that includes the right of young people aged 14 and over to make medical decisions (e.g. regarding contraception or termination of pregnancy) and legal decisions (e.g. officially changing their gender designation), as well as the right to confidentiality, which directly affects us as teachers. Under Québec’s Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, we are required to use the first name and pronouns indicated by a young person who is socially transitioning and we are bound to confidentiality if they don’t want to tell their parents. These rights are unambiguous and supported by the current state of scientific knowledge. Studies show that trans and non-binary youth are at disproportionate risk of rejection and violence from their parents. Certainly, most parents will respond with acceptance,

but the precautionary principle and respect for the young person’s right to proceed at their own pace must prevail.

### Prejudices remain about access to care

With respect to access to gender-affirming care (medical transition) for young people, the scientific literature is robust and clear on both its medical validity and support protocols. For prepubescent children, only social transition is available. Subsequently, the potential use of puberty blockers and, if applicable, the administration of sex hormones are subject to rigorous medical monitoring. With regard to surgery, only upper-body surgery is available before the legal age of majority, within a rigorous medical framework and with informed consent. Individuals and groups opposed to these treatments cite, in addition to their opinions, concerns and impressions, long discredited “scientific” studies. Unsurprisingly, the government’s supposedly expert committee, the “comité de sages,” which included neither actual experts nor people who are directly affected, fell into these traps at several points, as a number of analyses have shown, including the excellent [Synthèse critique–Rapport du Comité de sages by the Conseil québécois LGBT](#)<sup>2</sup>.

### The response to these challenges: Female solidarity

The Women’s Committee and the Sexual Diversity and Gender Plurality Committee want to affirm that they have shared values and common struggles. Sexism and misogyny spring from the same roots as homophobia and transphobia. It is these roots that we must attack. We also want to stress the need to be alert to the growing influence of the right within political parties, where it is tapping those same roots that normalize hatred. Resistance must be inclusive or it is nothing.

<sup>1</sup> Richard, G., A. Graindorge, A. Charbonneau, O. Vallerand et M. Houzeau. 2025. Augmentation des niveaux de malaise. Ce que les élèves du secondaire pensent de la diversité sexuelle, 2017-2024. Montréal, GRIS-Montréal. [https://www.gris.ca/app/uploads/2025/01/GRIS\\_rapport-final\\_30jan2025.pdf](https://www.gris.ca/app/uploads/2025/01/GRIS_rapport-final_30jan2025.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Crémier, L. 2025. Synthèse critique – Rapport du comité de sages sur l’identité de genre. Conseil québécois LGBT. [https://conseil-lgbt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/260625\\_CQLGBT\\_Synthese-critique-rapport-sages.pdf](https://conseil-lgbt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/260625_CQLGBT_Synthese-critique-rapport-sages.pdf)

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At a banquet held on October 16, 2025, delegates from the unions in the Regroupement privé celebrated eight tentative agreements reached through coordinated bargaining.

## Coordinated bargaining at the private schools: Let's change the rules!

By Léandre Lapointe  
VICE-PRESIDENT FOR THE REGROUPEMENT PRIVÉ

Le The FNEEQ–CSN Regroupement Privé has taken a historic step forward. For the first time, eight unions at private schools have coordinated their bargaining strategies.

This first wave of coordinated bargaining is a decisive achievement. We are leaving behind a model in which each union had to face its school administration alone and isolated, and we are entering an era of shared strategies and powerful solidarity.

Our ambitious goal was to change the rules of the game at the private schools by building a platform of common demands that we could present together to create leverage across the institutions. This first effort was a success, demonstrating that unions representing members in different private schools can work together and unite behind shared demands, while respecting the diversity of the institutions. Our future direction is now clear: coordinated bargaining will expand in the next waves.

### A transformative first step

Coordinated bargaining required significant preparatory work. Eight unions were involved in a joint planning, discussion and consultation process, coordinated by the Regroupement. Together, they defined the priorities

that would form the basis of their [common demands](#) while retaining their autonomy in local bargaining. This process created a community where the common issues faced by private schools were discussed and it strengthened the bonds between the unions. It also demonstrated the Regroupement's ability to coordinate joint action while respecting the unions' diverse workplaces and varying financial situations.

However, this first coordinated bargaining process was not without its challenges. Some school administrations were reluctant to recognize the collective scope of this new approach. Some refused to be compared with other schools, arguing that their situation was unique and that the negotiations should be strictly limited to their institution. Others even challenged the principle of coordination, saying they didn't have to "bargain with the FNEEQ or the CSN" but only with their local union.

### Union solidarity redefined

Coordinated bargaining should be

measured not only by the gains we achieved but also by the way it built our collective bargaining power. The unions learned to share their expertise, support each other in dealing with management, and coordinate their strategies at the bargaining table. This helped to level the playing field between large schools and small unions, which often lack the resources to conduct lengthy negotiations. Coordinated bargaining therefore has the effect of equalizing the unions, ensuring that every union, regardless of size or region, has a real capacity to act.

However, the success of this approach will depend on its continuation. For coordinated bargaining to fulfill its promise, more unions will have to join the next wave. What this first experience showed is that, together, we can change the rules!



## Higher education mobilizes for the social and ecological transition

By Nova Doyon  
MEMBER OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Next January, some 200 people from colleges and universities across Québec will gather at Collège Montmorency for the General Assembly on Education for Ecological and Social Transition.

This event is part of the [Ongoing Transformations: Education for the Social and Ecological Transition](#) initiative coordinated by Workers for Climate Justice (WCJ) and the FNEEQ.

Following the unprecedented citizen mobilization in support of the fight against climate change—and saving the planet—in 2019, it became clear that environmental issues must be central to the causes defended by labour unions. As a result, environmental clauses were included in the lists of demands made in coordinated bargaining with the universities in 2022 and the public sector bargaining talks in 2023.

In 2024, the WCJ expanded the scope of its advocacy for environmental education to address climate issues more effectively. This involved shifting the focus from considering climate change solely in terms of its impact on working conditions to reflecting more deeply on the role of the education system in the climate crisis and how to prepare students for the social and ecological challenges ahead. It also led to the idea of holding the General Assembly.

### Fruitful consultations

Between March and October, the WCJ held about 30 workshops at CEGEPs and universities for teachers and students interested in the challenges of preparing education for the demands of the social and ecological transition. Participants were asked to imagine what their institution—its facilities, programs, governance, etc.—would look like in a Québec that had undergone such a transition, and to reflect on the experiences, skills and knowledge developed by students.

In addition, a province-wide consultation with college and university teachers and students was undertaken this fall to identify strategic objectives and priority actions to be debated at the upcoming General Assembly in January. More than 800 people responded to the survey prepared by the project's Scientific Committee. The key findings were:

1) The main obstacles teachers encounter in greening their teaching are lack of time, lack of knowledge and eco-fatigue.

2) The vast majority of respondents (both teachers and students) said that, given the right conditions, teaching socioecological issues should be mandatory from primary school to university, as well as in teacher professional development.

3) The vast majority of students said that socioecological issues should be incorporated into existing courses using an interdisciplinary approach.

### A unifying, motivational and stimulating event

In January 2026, the General Assembly will bring teachers and students together to define the tools needed for education that truly supports the social and ecological transition. It will include panel discussions between researchers and practitioners as well as spaces for small-group debates. But Ongoing Transformations: Education for the Social and Ecological Transition won't end there; it will continue mobilizing colleges and universities to take action, beginning with the development of an action plan.

## FIGHTING THE CAQ'S CUTS AND AUTHORITARIAN TENDENCIES

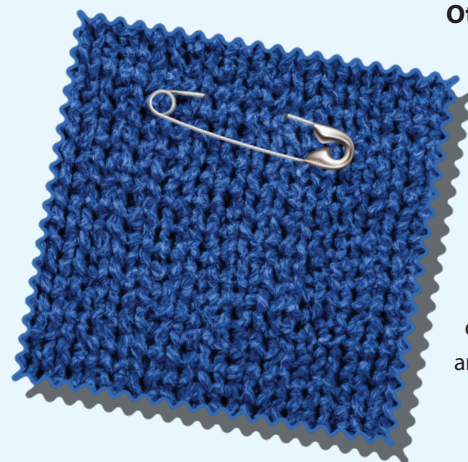
By Yves de Repentigny  
VICE-PRESIDENT FOR THE REGROUPEMENT CÉGEP



The stories keep coming, and they're not getting better. In May, the government announced \$151 million in cuts to the CEGEP network, and these cuts are still in place despite the cabinet shuffle in September that saw Martine Biron replace Pascale Déry as Minister of Higher Education.

There's Act 14 (formerly Bill 89), which unduly expands the definition of essential services in the event of a strike. It comes into effect on November 30. Then, on October 30, Labour Minister Jean Boulet introduced a second anti-union bill targeting union dues, financial transparency and strike votes.

Consequently, the action plan adopted by the Regroupement Cégep in October 2024 remains active and has been updated at each meeting. This fall saw a range of mobilization and protest actions, including back-to-school events, the mass mailing of a protest letter to Martine Biron by the unions, a petition against the CEGEP cuts on the National Assembly website, lobbying CEGEP boards of directors to put pressure on the government, a week of local actions in the institutions at the end of October, a blue ribbon campaign (symbolizing the importance of investing in the CEGEP network), and a variety of other campaigns, including the CSN's Faire Front / Stand Together campaign (with a major provincial demonstration in Montréal on November 29), and those organized by the Ensemble, unis pour l'école / Together, United for Schools coalition and the Red Hand Coalition.



### Reports on Dawson and Vanier

The results of the administrative investigation into the management of situations involving behaviours that could reasonably raise concerns for the physical or psychological safety of students at Dawson and Vanier colleges were released on June 27. The reports confirmed that these institutions' practices are effective and rigorous.

Then, since the problem they had been investigating did not in fact exist, the investigators decided they needed to find other problems to fix. So they turned their attention to academic freedom (for some, not all); the content of certain courses, including "Appartenances palestiniennes" at Dawson; the existence of prayer rooms at the schools; and student activism (including the dangerous practice of wearing of keffiyehs).

On the day the report was released, the FNEEQ voiced its criticism on multiple media platforms. In July, it published an open letter in [La Presse](#) stating that it welcomed the report's recommendation to adopt legislation governing academic freedom in CEGEPs, but on the non-negotiable condition that it guarantee academic freedom, not restrict it. Then, at its meeting on September 4 and 5, the Regroupement Cégep denounced the report's attack on academic freedom and professional autonomy, its anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim ideological bias, and its ignorance of the realities of college teaching.

### Other issues

In recent months, the Regroupement Cégep has continued to focus on the recognition of acquired competencies (RACs), artificial intelligence, and the realities and challenges facing CEGEPs in outlying regions. It also adopted its 2023 bargaining post-mortem, which led to the creation of a funding and workload committee. Other noteworthy points included a pilot project to ensure gender-balanced speaking time at Regroupement meetings and a talk on educational disparities.

## REGROUPEMENT UNIVERSITÉ: A NEW ROUND OF COORDINATED BARGAINING HAS BEGUN

By Christine Gauthier  
VICE-PRESIDENT FOR THE REGROUPEMENT UNIVERSITÉ



Under the slogan "Solidaires universitaire," the unions in the Regroupement Université are launching a new round of coordinated bargaining this fall. Supported by the CSN's Professional Defence Fund, coordinated bargaining will increase

our bargaining power to improve the conditions of employment of sessional lecturers and tutors affiliated with our Federation. The next Regroupement meetings will be held at the universities involved in the negotiations—TÉLUQ, UQO and UQAR—in order to support the mobilization efforts of our brothers and sisters at these institutions.

The provincial mobilizing committee for coordinated bargaining (CNMNC) has been working hard over the past few weeks preparing materials to publicize the main demands and promote buy-in. Five themes with five slogans were carefully chosen based on the strength of their message and their ability to resonate with sessional lecturers across Québec.

1. **"Teach with passion, not under pressure"** The universities must do more to protect the psychological health of employees with precarious status.
2. **"Our teaching conditions are your learning conditions"** As teaching conditions deteriorate, this must be a priority for university administrations.
3. **"Toward real recognition of our role at universities"** Since more than half of undergraduate courses are taught by sessional lecturers, our voice and our role matter.
4. **"Greater protection in view of transformations of the teaching profession"** Action is needed now to counter the dehumanization of our profession and our increasingly precarious conditions of employment.
5. **"Total remuneration that ensures financial security"** When it comes to salaries and benefits, we deserve better.



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The CNMNC also proudly unveiled its new permanent logo for the Regroupement Université's coordinated bargaining to celebrate more than 35 years of joint struggles. It consists of the Regroupement's initials ("RU") fused together inside a circle to represent an organic, living and evolving entity, reflecting the political and strategic power of our union actions.

Defending the rights and conditions of employment of contract teachers at universities is—and always will be—at the heart of our collective struggles.

In solidarity!

## TWO NEW UNIONS JOIN THE REGROUPEMENT PRIVÉ FAMILY

By Léandre Lapointe  
VICE-PRESIDENT FOR THE REGROUPEMENT PRIVÉ



The Regroupement Privé is pleased to welcome two new unions: the Syndicat des enseignantes et enseignants du Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie and the Syndicat des travailleuses et travailleurs de l'Atelier textile de Montréal.

Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie is a large private high school in Montréal whose 88 teachers have decided to join the FNEEQ to defend their conditions of employment and professional autonomy. The Atelier textile de Montréal, an arts and design school partnered with Cégep du Vieux Montréal, joins the cabinetmaking, jewelry and ceramics schools already affiliated with the FNEEQ. Like their counterparts at these other schools, Atelier textile workers are dealing with job insecurity and demanding better working conditions and fairer pay.

These two additions bring the total number of unions in the Regroupement Privé to 49. Their decision to join is an indication of the vibrancy and diversity of the FNEEQ, its member unions and the Regroupement Privé, which are committed to building a united and ever stronger union movement.

### Tough negotiations at Séminaire Saint-François: Stepping up the pressure

For over a year, the members of the Séminaire Saint-François teachers' union have made little headway at the bargaining table due to the administration's unreasonable demands, including an unnecessary and unjustified increase in teaching loads. Despite conciliation, the administration still refuses to consider the realities on the ground.

Faced with management's intransigence, the union stepped up its mobilization efforts and filed individual and collective complaints for bargaining in bad faith. At the recent General Assembly, members voted for a five-day strike mandate by a large majority. The message is clear: members are determined to defend their conditions of employment and maintain the quality of education at the Séminaire. The entire FNEEQ stands with you! Solidarity!



### Villa Maria: Defending the survival of a unique educational institution

Collège Villa Maria is facing an uncertain future following the sale of the vast Villa Maria estate by its owners, the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame. This is causing intense anxiety for the entire staff, who have been dealing with job losses and a climate of uncertainty for years.

The union, supported by the FNEEQ and its affiliated unions, has launched a broad appeal for solidarity to protect the high school's educational mission, its heritage value and the many jobs it supports. A large demonstration was held on November 21 to show our support for Collège Villa Maria's teachers, support staff and students. We reiterate our unwavering support for this educational community and call for a solution that respects the site's vocation. The future of this institution, which has been an important part of the Montréal community for over 170 years, deserves better than indifference.

## AN EVENTFUL FALL FOR THE STUDENT WORKER CAUCUS!

Saleha Hedaraly  
VICE-PRESIDENT FOR THE STUDENT WORKER CAUCUS



Bubbling is the word to describe the Student Worker Caucus this fall. Bubbling with ideas, initiatives and inspiration as its unions, with limited resources at their disposal, continue to assert their rights and fight for a more equitable world.

The Caucus held four meetings during the fall of 2025. As at the other Regroupements, artificial intelligence and austerity were top concerns. Student workers are among the first to be impacted by these issues; the unions in the Caucus are already witnessing real-world consequences on the ground.

On October 1, the Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill (AGSEM) held a demonstration together with other McGill unions. Hundreds of students and workers gathered on the McGill campus to protest cuts to teaching support budgets and the elimination of student support programs. Bargaining unit 3 (teaching assistants) and unit 2 (invigilators) are currently negotiating the renewal of their collective agreements, which expire in December, under these difficult conditions.

Austerity measures are exacerbating the already precarious situation of student workers. In a commendable act of



AGSEM demo at the beginning of October

solidarity, the Concordia Research and Education Workers Union—CSN (CREW) is supporting its members by running a weekly food bank. At the same time, CREW is conducting a post-mortem on its last bargaining session and preparing for the next round in spring 2026. CREW also continues to build ties with other Concordia unions.

### Victory in Québec Superior Court

Our victories demonstrate the importance of not giving in to the widespread sense of discouragement. AGSEM was one of five unions that successfully challenged McGill's request for an injunction to restrict protests on its campus. In its decision, the Superior Court stated that "an interlocutory injunction is an exceptional form of relief that may severely restrain individual liberty and lead to draconian consequences" and found that "the granting of the requested injunction is not warranted by the evidence." After the relentless attacks on freedom of expression by various governing boards and special interest groups across Québec, it is encouraging to see the courts dismissing their requests. This decision proves the importance of standing firm against such attacks. Often, it is the only way to protect our rights.

On another positive note, the Syndicat des résidentes et résidents et internes de médecine vétérinaire—CSN ratified its first tentative agreement after more than a year of intense bargaining. The union had to strike during the summer to make the employer listen and to demonstrate the importance of the work done by its members.

Lastly, the Caucus's Working Committee, composed of members of the FNEEQ and affiliated unions, is wrapping up its work and will soon make recommendations on how to continue integrating the Caucus into the FNEEQ.

It's certainly been a hectic—but never boring—fall!

NOVEMBER 22,  
2025

- A -  
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A  
Passion  
FOR Teaching.

25<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL COURSE  
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