

JACFA General Assembly Minutes

April 1, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. — Penfield 204

John Abbott College

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01. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Lori Weber; seconded by Sandra Stephenson.

Adopted unanimously.

02. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Stephen Bryce; seconded by Jim Vanstone.

Adopted unanimously with one abstention.

03. Announcements

Michel Milot:

The Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill (AGSEM) voted 79% in favour of a strike. More than 350 (from their 2000 members) were present at this historic general assembly. At the heart of their demands are adequate space for meeting students, the number of students per teaching assistant, and salary. They are in a negotiation blitz and may be on strike next week. AGSEM is part of FNEEQ.

1. Financial Motions

VOTE

a) TELUQ

Motion:

Be it resolved that JACFA make a solidarity donation of \$300 to the Syndicat des tuteurs et des tutrices de la Télé-université Montréal - Québec (TELUQ FNEEQ-CSN) who have been on strike since January 16, 2008. - Executive Motion

Michel Milot:

They went back to work on Monday, so this is a retroactive motion. They have been in negotiations for the past two years. They got a very good settlement, close to a 20% salary increase until 2010 that is retroactive to January 2006. They finally got recognition from their employer of the work they do. The union had to make a complaint to the provincial *Commission des relations du travail* concerning TELUQ's attitude during the conflict, notably by putting a lot of pressure on the teachers to act as scabs. They still need our \$300 solidarity donation to help them rebuild a healthy financial situation. It is because of this kind of solidarity that employers finally are budging.

Stephen Bryce:

Over half make less than \$30,000. They receive \$100 per student, but 20% drop out, and they do not get paid for these. One demand was for an **unpaid** leave during the Christmas holidays. They do all of the marking in these e-learning courses. So this is a really important victory for the underclass of the post-secondary teaching world.

MOTION CARRIED, with one opposed.

2. Insurance

VOTE

Motion:

Be it resolved that the John Abbott College Faculty Association propose to the next FNEEQ Réunion des Syndicats Adhérents that the following changes be made to the health insurance plan in January 2009:

- 1. Increasing the limit on the 80% coverage for drug expenses from \$1000 of claims per year to \$2000 and using the savings in the plan to increase the “per visit” limits and annual maximums for other medical expenses (i.e. physiotherapy, osteopaths, homeopaths, etc.)*
- 2. Covering 80% of the costs of digital mammograms prescribed by a doctor up to a maximum of \$500 per year until these procedures are covered by the public health system.*
- 3. Covering 80% of the costs of MRIs performed in private clinics for those who have waited more than four months in the public system, up to a maximum of \$1000 per year.*

Stephen Bryce: This motion asks FNEEQ to shift coverage from drugs to paramedical expenses, as the limits have not changed significantly since the 1980s – on the one hand, the maximum anyone has to pay for drug expenses has not changed from \$200, while \$30 per visit or \$400 per year for physiotherapy is no longer adequate. Regarding digital mammograms, this procedure is mainly used by woman who have already been treated for breast cancer. Finally, although we are sympathetic for the need to support the public health care system, we do not feel this should be done by increasing the suffering of those waiting for MRIs. These proposals, if passed, will be sent to FNEEQ to be analyzed, discussed and voted on later this year.

Roxane Millette: Are mammograms not already covered by medicare?

Stephen Bryce: Regular mammograms are covered, not digital mammograms.

Faye Trecartin: Digital mammograms are more precise than regular mammograms.

Barbara De Lorenzi:

Would someone unable to get an appointment still have to wait for 4 months to get an MRI?

Stephen Bryce: Yes, I am pretty sure that La Capitale would make them wait.

Sandra Stephenson:

Concerning proposals 2 and 3, how much will this affect our rates? Will the hike be a lot?

Stephen Bryce: I do not think that this would cause a large rate increase, as most people do not need digital mammograms or MRIs that take more than four months. However, the FNEEQ insurance committee and La Capitale will analyze the costs, and if there is an added cost from adding to the coverage, it will be part of the consultation next fall.

Ute Beffert: I am hoping that because of proposal 1, we might be paying less for drug prescriptions.

MOTION CARRIED, with one opposed.

3. Campaign against Homophobia

VOTE

Whereas:

Homophobia is “a hatred or fear of or prejudice against homosexuals or homosexuality”;
(Concise Canadian Oxford Dictionary, Copyright © Oxford University Press 2004)

Whereas: Homophobia still exists in our society;

Whereas: JACFA supports the CSN's awareness campaign to create a homophobia-free work environment.

Motion: *Be it therefore resolved:*

1. *That JACFA promote awareness-raising activities against homophobia across campus in association with the College's Sexual Harassment Committee and the Réseau des alliés CSN.*
2. *That JACFA encourage its members to participate in a research study surveying cegep students about attitudes towards homosexuality if asked. - Executive Motion*

Stephen Bryce: While May 17 is the international day against homophobia, it is being moved up to April 17 for cegeps as colleges will be finished classes by then. We will work with the College's Sexual Harassment committee to publicize the day. The second part of the motion refers to a research survey that has been approved by the John Abbott R&D committee and Academic Council and is being administered in English classes at the moment.

Sandra Stephenson:

We had an issue with the wording last time and I have an issue with #3... I would prefer it to read "sexually tolerant" to "homophobia-free" working environment.

Stephen Bryce: This came from the CSN's wording. As we do not vote on the "Whereas" clauses, I would see this as a friendly amendment.

Michel Milot: The CSN, CSQ, FTQ, FAC, FEC, FNEEQ, the Ministry of Education and the Fédération des Cégeps are all part of the *Table nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie en milieu collégial*. We were asked to remind the college to bring a motion regarding this issue to the Board.

Marcia Kovitz: I would like to present an amendment to the motion and would like to specify that I am not satisfied with "sexually tolerant" as this is not specific enough. There is not just homosexuality that exists under this banner. Should we keep discrimination against transgenders? The CSN campaign is not comprehensive enough.

John Serrati: Is this a tempest in a teacup? This is by far the most sexually tolerant place that I have ever worked in. No one has ever told me anything about homophobia and I think that our executive works really hard, but maybe we should be fighting against something that really exists?

David Hill: This is also an aspect of sustainability and this will become a more prominent issue within the sustainability issues and I agree with Marcia that it is not comprehensive enough. I think that there is homophobia on campus. There is definitely an undercurrent that exists and the homosexuals are still the butt end of jokes and there is a need for some type of motion for this.

Michel Milot: The wording in French is clear that it is working towards an environment free of homophobia. People suffering from homophobic acts or comments often keep that for themselves. This is why such sensitizing motions are important.

Lora Hutchison: There are different versions of prejudice among our students and we can see that in some circumstances, some forms of prejudice are more acceptable than others. There is an embarrassment, but there is also a level of intolerance that they would never show if it were

race or gender.

Sharon Rutherford:

Not only does it happen in classrooms but it also happens in the halls and sometimes it is hurtful. We need to promote sensitivity towards other people.

Stephen Bryce: I agree that perhaps this motion is a bit too focused. This is an annual event, and we will certainly send the word back to the organizers that it should be broadened in the future. However, if we don't move towards less homophobia, it will not happen.

Marcia Kovitz: Homophobia is alive and well and many young gay people feel suicidal or depressed. Another thing that I would mention to the committee at the CSN is that there are a number of students who still suffer from mutilations.

Michel Milot: There is a survey going on and 26 institutions were sampled. John Abbott is participating in it.

MOTION CARRIED, with one opposed.

4. Elections Procedures VOTE

Motion: *Be it resolved that nominations for the JACFA annual elections be closed three working days before the scheduled date of the election. If there are unfilled positions remaining, nominations will reopen at the election meeting. - Executive Motion*

Jim Leeke: Up to now, for the election of the JACFA Executive, Academic Council and other positions, we have asked people to declare their nominations beforehand by submitting written nominations by a specified deadline. However, the deadline was meaningless because nominations stayed open until the General Assembly. The purpose of this motion is to make the deadline meaningful. If, by the deadline, the number of nominees is equal to or less than the number of positions available, the individuals will be acclaimed. If there are more nominees than positions, an election will take place at the general assembly. If, by the deadline, there are unfilled positions, nominations will re-open at the general assembly.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

5. The Future of Education DISCUSSION

Are you worried about the state of the education system? What would be your priorities if tomorrow you were given the power to change things? The various Quebec unions and student organizations have agreed to speak in one voice. As actors on the education scene, we must be heard. FNEEQ's school and society committee proposes a set of ten recommendations for discussions. The document can be found on the [JACFA website](#).

Michel Milot presented a document outlining ten proposals for the *Future of the Quebec Education System*.

Michel Milot: These recommendations are not new proposals. They are based on positions FNEEQ has taken over the years. We have posted the full 24-page FNEEQ document on the website and you are invited to comment on it now, by email or through our blog. Stephen, Daniel and I will be at

the *Conseil Fédéral* in May when it will be debated.

Frank Lo Vasco: If we open this discussion, it might take a while... why don't we have a round table discussion?

Marcia Kovitz: Education is not a commodity, it is a human right. I suggest a substantial change "school is a human right."

Peter Solonysznyj:

This is a FNEEQ position that I support but to say that "student selection practices based on academic achievement must be eliminated..." I really have a problem with this point. I also have a problem with "...public subsidies for private education must come to an end and these schools must be progressively integrated into the public system." I do not agree with this as some of these schools are filling in a gap that public systems do not or cannot provide... every once in awhile FNEEQ falls into this trap. Also, there is a problem with "... the education sector is excluded from all trade agreements..." Maybe that there could be some interesting trade agreements – if we can get something that is beneficial, why not consider it?

Michel Milot:

Nothing here is a blanket statement. This section refers to the selection of children in primary and secondary schools. The more we select the most motivated students, the more we deprive "normal schools" of these positive elements, slowly creating ghettos. We are creating a segregated education system. As a response to a form of competition with private schools, some schools are creating interesting projects (*écoles à vocation particulière*) and select the children for these great projects. I have nothing against these nice ideas as long as everyone can access them. Also, FNEEQ voted in favour of a motion to integrate private schools into the public system instead of eliminating them. FNEEQ includes unions from 31 private schools and colleges, so it would be in a bad situation to promote simply the elimination of these schools!

6. Board of Governors' Motion

VOTE

Motion:

Be it resolved that the JACFA General Assembly endorses the final report of the parity committee on the Teaching Profession (can be found on the website) and calls on the John Abbott College next Board of Governors of April 15 to adopt the motion below:

Whereas: Teaching is of primary importance in the mission of the cegeps;

Whereas: This mission can only be adequately fulfilled if the resources for teaching are adequate;

Whereas: Teaching resources have been cut for various reasons over the past 15 years;

Whereas: College teaching, as a profession that is part of higher education, must be recognized at its real value, particularly in the context of the renewal of the teaching staff, in order to attract and retain quality candidates;

Whereas: The report of the parity committee *Teaching at the College Level... Portrait of the Profession* amply demonstrates the complexity of current teaching practice and the effect of new responsibilities as a result of the 1994 cegep reforms; and

Whereas: Teaching activities are themselves the heart of this practice.

Be it therefore resolved that the Board of Governors of John Abbott College recognize the necessity of concretely recognizing the college teaching profession and ask the Ministry to follow up on the work of the parity committee, in order to find solutions to the most serious problems that have been identified. - Executive Motion.

Stephen Bryce: This motion is being presented to the Boards of all public cegeps where teachers are represented by FAC, FEC and FNEEQ. The work of parity's committee and its final report needs to be recognized by the colleges. The reality is that teaching has changed substantially and more resources and recognition are needed for college teaching.

Sandra Stephenson:

Could you explain the "the renewal of teaching staff"?

Stephen Bryce: It is the recognition that cegeps started 40 years ago and that many teachers are now retiring. There is a wave of new teachers who are being hired, so we must acknowledge that the teaching staff is turning over and changing.

Sandra Stephenson:

Is there a place to give more teacher resources to get smaller class sizes?

Michel Milot: This came after a meeting with the 59 college unions of the three federations. This action is a step toward the recognition of our profession. Just for comparison's sake, Ontario teachers salaries are 30% more than ours. Workloads are also extremely important. Concerning the Teaching profession document, some of your comments were incorporated. It was added that the context of teaching has really changed and it has evolved and has become more complex, therefore heavier. The reform of the cegeps with the program approach has made it more complicated to teach. The administration also recognizes that cegeps are in competition with each other. There is the changing of the guard, difficulty in recruiting good teachers, etc. The administration's side has recognized this. Also, the context part of the document has been improved. We must deal with a vast diversity of students, and we need to adapt to their learning. Finally, professional development funds gets used up for adaptation to new technologies. We need more resources to improve ourselves in other areas of teaching.

Steve Orlov: Called the question; seconded by Alain André.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

Alain André moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Frank Lo Vasco.

Adopted unanimously.

/jh – April 4, 2008

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