

JACFA NEWS



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Syndicat des Professeurs-res du Cégep John-Abbott College Faculty Association
www.johnabbott.qc.ca/~jacfa

From Barbara's desk

While still technically winter, there is the scent of a seasonal transition in the air. Perhaps it is the spring-like quality of our winter so far, maybe it has to do with the requests for letters of recommendation for university entrance and job placement or a focus on attracting the next cohort of students to Abbott, but it could also be the sense of forboding and/or expectation at the installation of a new Academic Dean. Allister Thorne will be settling into Catherine's old office on March 11, right after the March break. Mr. Thorne is also in transition - from the Nova Scotia college system to a province quite unlike the others and its unique Cégep system complete with Byzantine Ministry guidelines to decipher. Inasmuch as Mr. Thorne was appointed by the Board over the objections of Academic Council, we can only hope his transition will be marked by a sincere commitment to nurture all that is enriching, productive, and effective in the John Abbott academic community and its collegial culture.

This edition of the JACFA News contains a number of articles

which reflect issues currently being addressed by your executive from exorcizing the SIN out of the Omnivox system, the annoying delays in the pension buy-back arrangements, the latest news on *habilitation* and the boycott, and topics of interest in the forthcoming negotiations. If you are planning a leave of absence, you will find information on the types of leave available and the required deadlines. There's a last call for RRSP contributions to Fondation and a first call for the annual Sugaring Off.

I call your attention to the re-introduction of the *Ask Stan* column. It is all in fun and the opinions expressed therein are vintage Stan Gendron, "academician, whistle blower and real 'Fizz Head'".

PENSION BUY- BACKS: DELAY...

As stated in the CSN bulletin on pensions that was recently distributed to all faculty, a new, improved pension buy-back package was negotiated by the unions and government in early December 2001. This was the result of an arrangement made during the last collective agreement negotiations to look for ways to improve eligibility requirements for pensions. What this new plan means in practice is a substantial reduction in the cost of buying back credited years of service for pension purposes, in particular, time taken off for leaves of absence.

However, we have recently learned that CARRA, the body that administers public sector pension plans in Québec, is experiencing problems in implementing the new criteria for buy-backs. This means a delay. Hopefully, the problems will be resolved in the next

few weeks. Once this temporary delay is cleared up, JACFA strongly encourages faculty who are considering retirement in the next few years to request a statement from CARRA providing the cost for buying back any eligible years of service. In this way, you can consider whether this option is of interest to you.

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FORUM SUR LA FORMATION TECHNIQUE

Ahuntsic College and the SPECA (*Syndicat du personnel enseignant du Collège Ahuntsic*) handled the logistics of this important forum, organized jointly by the FAC (*Fédération Autonome du Collégial*), the Fédération des cégeps, the FEC-CSQ (*Fédération des enseignants et enseignantes de cégep*) and the FNEEQ-CSN (*Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec*). Faculty members and representatives of the Administration at John Abbott attended the Forum held in Laval last January 10 and 11.

It was an excellent opportunity to compare our vocational/technical training with other countries (U.S.A., France, Germany, U.K.) in certain fields (nursing, electronic engineering for example). It was also an opportunity to reflect on our present situation in Quebec, almost ten years after the reform based on competencies required of our graduates in their particular work place. What is expected from our graduates is derived from an AST (*Analyse de situation au travail*), where members of the current work force and employers analyse the profession and list the competencies needed in their particular field. The program is then designed to enable the student to acquire these desired competencies.

Although far from perfect, the vocational or technical training in Quebec colleges compares well with other countries. Quebec employers are generally satisfied with our graduates. For our students, Jacques Garon from the *Conseil du patronat du Québec* (CPQ, Quebec Employers Council) reminded us that graduates from a technical field will earn approximately 28% more than their non-graduating colleagues over their work life. (income tax considerations and loss of income while attending the program at the college taken into account). Technical education pays.

A clear distinction was drawn between the general education component of the technical programs (humanities, philosophy, second language, etc.) and its specific technical training component. All agreed on the importance of the general education component of the technical programs (since the students must know how to read and write - not to mention count!)

Thursday morning started with a plenary session hosted by Bernard Morin, Ahuntsic Academic Dean, who explained the themes the discussion groups would handle Thursday afternoon and Friday morning.

The discussion groups or *ateliers* offered a variety of interesting topics like the recruiting of women in non-traditional fields such as auto mechanics, or the recurrent problem of *stages* in the work place for students (nursing for example, with *stages* during the night or weekends have supervisory problems). The three proposed themes for the discussion groups were (1) the different academic paths leading to vocational training (DEC, AEC, etc.), (2) the place of the general and scientific education in the technical programs and (3) different indicators of the success of the technical programs (diplomas being only one indicator).

A final plenary round table session dealing with the general orientations of vocational or technical training in Quebec with questions and responses from the floor occurred Friday afternoon. Michel Vacher (recently retired philosophy teacher at Ahuntsic College and author of many books), Louis Poirier (teacher in the Agriculture Department in Matane College) and Jacques Garon (director of social-economic research at the *Conseil du patronat*) made their prior presentations before questions and discussion from the floor. François Legault, then Minister of Education, had a final word at the end of the day, after the conclusion of the round table.

A harsh critique ...

The near unanimous consensus between faculty and administrators over the critics of the program approach and the decentralization of program management and revision (an essential aspect of the reform) was noteworthy. In fact, as many noted, the narrowly focused training defined by the working needs of a region at a particular time are quite contrary to a general and polyvalent training of students. One aspect of this tendency was well illustrated by G  tan Boucher (President of *F  d  ration de c  geps*) who compared the diminution of mathematics courses in technical programs to the disappearance of Greek and Latin courses of bygone years. That idea was not exactly well received! Another shared critic was that the too narrowly-focused new curricula tend to augment unneces-

sary competition between colleges.

All this raises a major question:

How can we protect and maintain the philosophy and universal values of the Cégep system given this new and evolving socio-economical context?

AEC RESEARCH PROJECT

FNEEQ is sponsoring a research project to examine the impact of AEC (*attestation d'études collégiales*) programs in FNEEQ Cégeps since 1990. The project will be directed by Prof. Colette Berubé of the Université du Québec à Montréal, and partly funded by the CSN. The phenomenal growth of AEC programs in recent years has caused concern both in terms of potential impact on regular DEC programs and also in regards to the poor working conditions for teachers in the AEC sector. This study, whose results are due in December, will help us to better understand the impact of AECs and to formulate ideas to improve the conditions of teachers in this sector. It will also provide a better view of the pedagogical implications of this growing component of Cégep education. John Abbott has been proposed as one of the colleges in the sample to be used in gathering data for this study.

BOYCOTT OF INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

As you are aware, JACFA, along with other unions in FNEEQ as well as FAC, has been participating in an ongoing boycott of the Institutional Evaluation process that is currently underway in the Cégep system. The purpose of this boycott is to exert pressure on the Minister of Education to solve a major problem: the ability of the MEQ to authorize local college administrations to give their own diplomas. According to the current regulations (RREC), this authorization can only be given to the college once it has successfully "passed" its Institutional Evaluation and received its seal of approval from the *Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial*. JAC is currently proceeding with this process, without faculty participation, as are the vast majority of Québec colleges.

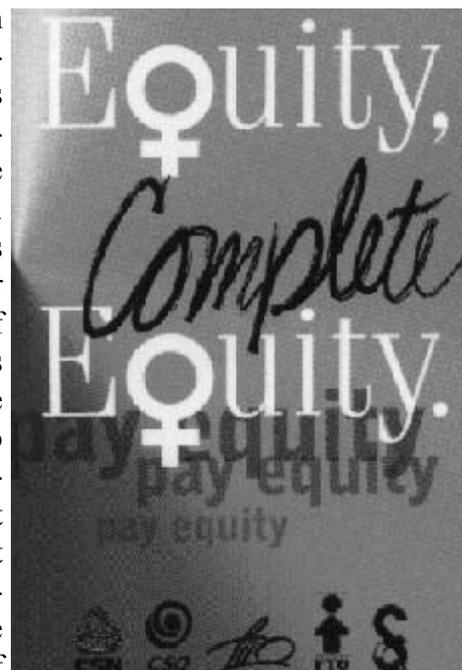
FNEEQ has always defended the existence and the value of the Cégep system, where students can easily

transfer from one institution to another and where a DEC is a DEC is a DEC, wherever it was obtained. Also, the current system provides both universities and employers with the assurance that every DEC granted in the province is issued, recognized, and approved by the Ministry of Education. This would no longer be the case if *habilitation* or the granting of local DEC were allowed. That is why the boycott was implemented - to put pressure on the government to take a clear stand in favor of the Cégep system by removing *habilitation* from the RREC.

FINANCING CEGEPs IN OUTLYING AREAS

The three union federations (FNEEQ, FAC, FEC-CSQ) are currently consulting their delegates on a joint position to be presented to the new Minister of Education, possibly in conjunction with the *Fédération des cégeps*, in a last attempt to resolve this issue. If accepted by all parties (a big "if" at this point), this would remove the *habilitation* problem, and therefore lift the faculty boycott of institutional evaluation. We should know by early March if the attempt to resolve the dispute has been successful.

The *FNEEQ regroupement cégep* has received several reports in recent months concerning the crisis situation of many Cégeps in outlying regions of Québec. The problem is dropping enrollment due to demographic changes in areas such as Lac St. Jean, Gaspé, and the Lower North Shore. In several cases, drops of 25% are predicted over the next 3-5 years. This has serious implications for the ability of these colleges to offer a range of programs to their (diminishing) student population. It also has implications on the general cost of



job security guarantees in our current collective agreement. For example, if enrollment drops in a Cégep such as Sept Îles, which is alone in its zone, the meds created have nowhere to move, meaning potentially high costs to maintain their salary guarantee.

The last meeting of the *FNEEQ regroupement cégep* passed a motion calling on the Ministry of Education to create a new fund in the teaching budget ("E" of the FABES funding formula) to help the Cégeps in difficulty to maintain their programs, and to finance the number of teachers required. This is an issue that also affects colleges in FAC and FEC-CSQ, and will be factor in the upcoming contract negotiations.

THINKING OF TAKING TIME OFF?

There are a number of leaves of absence provided for in the collective agreement which are non-parental, non-disability and non-union. Here is a short description of these leaves and a reference to the pertinent article in the collective agreement. You should review the specific clauses in the collective agreement for complete information.

Voluntary Program of Work Reduction (5-14.00)

This leave allows a full-time teacher to reduce his or her workload by between a minimum of 10% and a maximum of 60% calculated on the basis of an academic year. This reduction of workload can be taken in one or two semesters within the same academic year. For example, a teacher who takes a 50% workload reduction can teach full-time in the Fall and have no workload in the Winter term or a half teaching load throughout the academic year. The amount of workload reduction can vary from semester to semester. The major advantage of this work reduction leave is that you receive pension credits as if you were teaching full-time and you do not have to pay more than your normal full-time pension contribution. You continue to accumulate full time seniority and experience. The establishment of this leave is one of the most beneficial gains we achieved in the last round of collective bargaining.

Eligibility: Teachers with at least three years of sen-

iority who have or obtain a full-time workload during the academic year of the workload reduction.

Deadline: In writing by May 15 for the Fall term and November 15 for the Winter term.

Leave of Absence with Deferred or Anticipated Salary (5-12.00)

This leave allows a full time permanent teacher to spread out his or her salary in order to allow for a paid leave of absence. A teacher may take a reduced salary leave of absence for either six months or a year. You may take the leave first and pay for it during the following 2 to 5 years or reduce your salary for 2 to 5 years and take the leave at the end of the period with the deferred salary. Seniority, experience and pension credits are accumulated as if you had not participated in the leave of absence plan. Your pension contributions are calculated on your reduced salary but your pension credits are based on what your salary would have been before the reduction. There are provisions in article 5-12.00 that deal with the concerns of illness, maternity leave and premature end to this leave of absence plan.

Eligibility: Full-time permanent teachers who are not M.E.D. or on sick leave.

Deadline: No specific deadline. Written request to the College specifying the dates of the leave and the duration of the period of reduced salary in accordance with the chart in clause 5-12.09 of the collective agreement.

Full Time Leave of Absence (5-15.00)

A teacher may obtain a full-time leave without pay for the following academic year upon written notice to the College. You may not have paid employment during this leave without written authorization from the College after agreement at the Labour Relations Committee. For the first year, you accumulate one year of seniority. This leave can be renewed for a second year but without the accumulation of seniority. Experience credit is granted if you have relevant work experience during your leave. You receive no pension credits unless you buy them back when you return to work.

Eligibility: Permanent teachers, non-permanent tea-

chers with 3 years of seniority or who have had a full-time workload for two years.

Deadline: Written notice to the College before April 15.

Half -Time Leave (5-16.00)

This type of leave is much less desirable than the Voluntary Program of Work Reduction because of the cost of the pension credit buy back and the partial credit for experience. A full time teacher may take a half-time leave without pay either by teaching full-time one semester and taking full-time leave in the other semester of an academic year or by teaching half-time in both semesters. For the first two years of this leave, you accumulate one year of seniority for each year of half-time leave. For each supplementary year beyond the first two, you accumulate half a year of seniority. You are given half a year of experience for each year you are on leave but may be granted more if you have relevant work experience during the other half of your time. You receive half-time pension credits unless you buy back the other half.

Eligibility: Permanent teachers, non-permanent teachers with 3 years of seniority or who have had a full-time workload for two years and who have or obtain a full-time workload for the year of the leave.

Deadline: Written request to the College before April 15 or before October 15.

Professional Development Leave (7-3.00)

A teacher may take an unpaid leave of absence for professional development purposes that may last from one semester to at most two years. The teacher accumulates seniority and experience as if he or she were not on leave. You receive no pension credits unless you buy them back when you return to work. Professional development activities include studying and working in a relevant field.

Eligibility: All teachers.

Deadline: Reasonable notice to the College, before April 15 or before October 15.

A Necessary Condition for Student Success: Maintain the DEC as a Ministry Diploma. No to local DEC's!

The question of success in education is a major concern in the media and educational institutions. Being the smallest network in Quebec education, there is no escape for the Cégeps. Every time that the *réseau* is being evaluated a question mark is stamped upon it - should it stay? Some members of the JACFA executive are demonstrating to answer YES to this question.



**A CALL TO ALL FACULTY MUSICIANS,
COMEDIANS, MAGICIANS, ORATORS, THE-
SIANS, SINGERS AND OTHERS WITH
HIDDEN TALENTS -**

**JACFA WILL PRESENT AN OPEN MIKE
NIGHT ON APRIL 17TH. IF YOU WISH TO
PERFORM, CONTACT RAJ (LOCAL 5595) BY
APRIL 9TH.**

JACFA NEWS

welcomes your contributions on
any collective matters.

Contact Barbara DeLorenzi at local 5505 for submissions.
Deadline for the next issue is March 15, 2002.

Ask Stan

Professional advice for the collegially lost and the forlorn.

By Stan Gendron academician, whistle blower and real "Fizz Head"

**Dear Stan,
I understand the college has a new academic dean.
Why the change?**

signed Perplexed and concerned

Dear Perplexed and concerned,
Please don't be, because no one else is. However, the change to which you are referring has a deep and rich history.

The practice of changing academic deans is rooted in the quasi-modern principle of the Buckingham Palace "changing of the guard" and the Celtic pagan ritual of human sacrifice. This ritual is performed at regular intervals and all events must adhere to strict standards. This is how the process works:

1. Give outgoing dean enough rope to hang one's self, then let nature take its course.
2. Sell real estate assets to pay off debt accumulated during search for new sucker...whoops! I mean A. D.
3. Bored Selection Committee submits short list of candidates they find suitable for the job of A. D.
 - a. Mother Teresa
 - b. Ben Franklin
 - c. Tom Jefferson
 - d. Big Bird
4. Have Academic Council reject candidate for the following well-established criteria:
 - a. No lobster fishing experience.
 - b. No experience in the cegep system.
 - c. Too much experience in the cegep system.
 - d. Phony British accent.
 - e. Has not been beatified.
5. Hire incumbent with a mandate for as long as it takes to get a new rope.
6. Finally, do not allow incumbent to work at the job until appropriate roadblocks are in place.

I hope this answers your question. I should emphasize that this ritual is a sacred right and must not be messed with. Some have tried and they were recommended for the job.

In the meantime, "Keep your puck on the ice."

RRSP CAMPAIGN



You have until March 1 2002 for your 2001 RRSP contributions. *Fondaction, le Fond de développement de la CSN pour la Coopération et l'Emploi*, can be a good decision

for investment in your future. This is especially true when you consider the extra 30% (15% Québec, 15% Ottawa), these kind of RRSPs give you in tax credits. For example, with the standard RRSP tax breaks, \$1000 would cost you \$300! In addition, during these very difficult moments of the global-free-trade-capitalist system, the ethical and diversified investments of the fund is probably a wise, secure and enlightened decision to take.

Should you be interested to contribute to Fondaction through payroll deduction or lump sum, contact your local rep at the JACFA office (5506). Please don't wait!

SOCIAL

Ron Hayward and Mary Burke will perform an evening of jazz standards on Wednesday, February 27th (5:30 in the Faculty Lounge).

Patrick Burger will have a book launch on Thursday, February 28th (1:30-4:00 in the Faculty Lounge).

Look out for the invitations for the sugaring off on March 22nd. They'll be in your mailboxes soon.

