

## Aren't We in Negotiations?

Those who have been closely following the public sector negotiations may have missed seeing a new Info-Négo in the past few weeks (the last one came out on March 26)! This long gap occurred because we have been waiting for the often-promised proposal from our employers concerning an increase in teaching resources to reduce our workloads. This may occur this week... perhaps!

FNEEQ members participated in large numbers in the Common Front demonstration on March 20 calling for better working conditions that translate into better public services. Two weeks later, a demonstration on April 1 against increased fees for public services, budget cuts and the privatization of public services brought out over 12,000 citizens, members of community groups, artists, students, union members, etc. These two large demonstrations sent a clear message to the government: Quebecers do not want a society where the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen! The participants reaffirmed their commitment to the values of social justice and a more equal division of wealth, in part by defending public services that are accessible to each and every one of us.

### A Negotiation Blitz

On March 19, Ms. Monique Gagnon-Tremblay, President of the Treasury Board, invited the Common Front to join in a negotiations blitz for the second time. The union representatives accepted the invitation. Theoretically

**"Demonstrating is good,  
negotiating is better."**

Monique Gagnon-Tremblay  
commenting on the March 20  
demonstration, in *Le Devoir*,  
March 22, 2010,  
FNEEQ translation.

in negotiations, each side agreed to focus on a few priority issues in order to reach an agreement by March 31.



### On Stand-by...

#### With No Real Negotiations

As a result, delegates from all FNEEQ unions were put on stand-by in Montreal from March 29 to April 1. Mandates were given to the negotiation committee to respond to our employers' demands to update the collective agreement regarding the roles and functions of departments and program committees. On the union side, there is no question of changing the collegial organization of our work.

The *Regroupement Cégep* also agreed to refer certain issues to committees with clearly worded mandates specified, guaranteeing reasonable results and timelines. FNEEQ representatives met with Ms. Courchesne and obtained a formal ministerial commitment to set up a committee that will work on re-establishing a link between the financing of programs and the parameters of the individual workload formula (the CI). This is excellent news! We are currently negotiating the formation of other committees on: the resolution of workload problems in Nursing and other health-related professional programs, the appendix on Cégep d'Abitibi-

Témiscamingue, and the workload of hourly-paid teachers in Continuing Education.

Despite this progress, no discussions have taken place at the table on the issue at the heart of the negotiations: teacher workloads. Given this and following the presentation of the government's budget, the Regroupement Cégep mandated its representatives to advise the other public sector federations of the CSN that FNEEQ is ready to consider a new negotiating strategy.

The stand-by allowed many delegates to take part in an evening social event organized by the union at Cégep du Vieux Montréal to celebrate the end of the decree. We would like to thank them for the warm welcome received by our delegates. The April 1 demonstration against increased fees for public services, budget cuts and privatization of public services was also a notable event during this period. The *Regroupement Cégep* adopted a unanimous motion congratulating Jean Trudelle, the FNEEQ President, for his vigorous speech at this demonstration.

### **An Official Meeting for an Unofficial Offer**

On April 2, the day after the *Regroupement Cégep* ended its stand-by, FNEEQ's political representatives were called to a meeting with their counterparts from our employers. During this meeting, we were informally informed of their intent to offer up to a maximum of 300 FTEs across the



cegep system, spread over five years and implemented progressively. No other details were given. In addition, we were informed that our employers' position on adjustments to our salary structure were not in the direction that we might have hoped! Finally, we were informed that an official proposal would be made at the negotiation table, without specifying when this might be.

As of April 13, we still have no word. For over a week, negotiations at our table have been "suspended".



### **Joint Meeting of the CSN's Public Sector Unions**

On April 8, delegates from all CSN public and parapublic sector unions met in Montreal. We were informed that in the health sector, the employers' negotiation committees have maintained demands that would represent significant steps backward in their collective agreements.

In this context where a settlement seems to be more and more unlikely in the short term even with the addition of a few extra days, the federations present adopted an information and mobilization action plan for the period from April to October 2010. It was agreed that this plan will begin on April 20, to allow one last attempt to try to come to an agreement at both the sectoral and central tables. An agreement on salary increases remains unlikely, particularly given the context of the regressive budget proposed by Finance Minister Bachand.

A CSN public sector Info-Nego will be published soon to inform you of the main elements of the information and action plan.