



## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

**Stephen Bryce-VP Internal**

Teachers often come in to the JACFA office (P-105) to talk to one of the members of the Executive about a situation in their department or something that a Program Dean or other member of the administration at the College has said to them.

We are happy to listen and provide a sounding board for many different types of problems that teachers encounter. Often we are able to inform teachers whether such situations are common or unusual, and to provide information about what your rights and responsibilities are under our collective agreement and College policies and procedures.

Sometimes when teachers come in (and, in many cases, quite understandably), they want the issues they raise to remain confidential. However, please keep in mind the following:

- The JACFA Executive and, in particular, the Labour Relations team work together as a group. We need to talk to each other to benefit and learn from each others' experience and views on the many different issues brought to us. As our Executive changes from year to year, this is an important part of maintaining an institutional memory.
- When taking action on a teacher's behalf on an issue, whether it concerns a situation within a department or with the administration, it is very difficult to do so while keeping a teacher's identity confidential. Indeed, most of the time when we speak to a department chair or to a member of the administration about an issue, they are already aware of what is going on and can often connect the dots to identify who has come to see us. (In fact, the Program Deans and HR have both shared with us that they experience this same problem.)

So, please continue to come to see us to talk about the issues that are bothering you. But understand that for us to do our job properly and well, we need to be able to share what we hear with other members of the Executive. And to get something done on your behalf usually requires identifying on whose behalf we are acting ■

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## ALLOCATION 101

**Stephen Bryce**— VP Internal

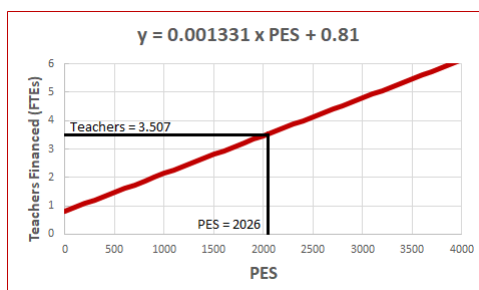
(This article has been recycled and updated from the March 2013 edition of the JACFA News)

*Each year for three weeks starting around the end of March, the Labour Relations Committee meets to project and divide up teaching resources between disciplines for the next academic year in what is known as the “allocation project”.*

Our teaching resources are divided into four “volets” (envelopes): Volet I is actual teaching (classrooms, labs, stages, etc.); Volet II is department and program release time; Volet III is an “other” category that includes research, retraining and professional development release; and finally there is “Column D” which is officially release time to support the College’s Strategic Plan.

### Where do teaching resources come from?

Volet I teaching resources (measured in “full-time teaching equivalents” or FTEs) are financed by the “PES formula” – a simple linear equation for each program which is supposed to provide enough teachers based on the total number of student-hours (the PES). For each program, the government sets a slope and y-intercept for the line, and PES value projected by the College is plugged in to determine how much allocation is generated. In the example shown, Visual Arts finances 3.507 teachers based on its projected total PES of 2026:



John Abbott also gets a “fixed” allocation in Volet I of 5.20 FTEs each year, plus more teaching resources to reduce class sizes (5.26 FTEs) next year and to reduce the number of preparations a teacher must do in small programs (0.61 FTEs). We also get an additional allocation to reduce group sizes in Nursing course’s stage component (1.51 FTEs), plus 1.76 FTEs to adjust CIs.

Volet II teaching resources are generated by dividing the total FTEs financed in Volet I divided by 18, plus a “fixed” allocation of 7.00 FTEs. For Volet III we are allotted 1.01 FTEs by the government each year, and in Column D we receive 4.7 FTEs.

In 2017-2018, we generated teaching resources as follows (based on the “actual” numbers that we now have for the PES and the fixed allocations):

**Volet I** = 387.6 FTEs (PES) + 5.20 (fixed) + 5.26 + 0.61 + 1.51 + 1.76 = 401.94 FTEs

**Volet II** =  $(400.72 / 18) + 7 = 29.26$  FTEs

**Volet III** = 1.01 FTEs

**Column D** = 4.70 FTEs

This adds up to a grand total of 436.91 FTEs to allocate.

### How do we divide these resources?

For Volet I, the administration prepares projections of how many students will be in each course based on the previous year’s enrollment and the next year’s admissions. From this, the number of sections required is determined and this is converted into FTEs.

In “Annex 2” of the project, the old “mode de calcul” formula that was part of our collective agreement until 2000 is used. In Annex 3, we adjust this based on standard teacher workloads in each discipline (usually between 12-16 teaching hours per week). During the allocation CRT meetings, these numbers are examined, debated and, where necessary, adjusted in consultation with department chairs. 3.8 FTEs are used to create full-time workloads for teachers in Cont.-Ed. Resources can be transferred from one volet to another volet.

For Volet II, there is no simple formula for how department and program release is divided. Some colleges simply use the same ratio that generates the chair resources (1:18) to allocate it. At John Abbott, factors such as the number of teachers, the number of specialized learning spaces, coordination with technicians, the complexity of the budget/purchasing, etc. have been taken into consideration to determine our current allocation of department coordination resources.

For Volet III and Column D, requests made by departments and individuals are carefully considered and divided up by a working group from JACFA and the Program Deans.

In 2017-2018, we allocated a total 400.72 FTEs in Volet I, 29.26 in Volet II, a combined 5.74 in Volet III and Column D, plus 2FTEs from our surplus, adding up to a grand total of 437.57 FTEs, or 0.66 more than we financed.

### **What happens if we do not balance?**

**F**rom one year to the next, we can “bank” a surplus or draw on our accumulated surplus if there is a deficit. John Abbott’s ac-

cumulated teaching surplus at the end of 2016-2017 was 9.5 FTEs, down from a peak of 28-29 FTEs ten years ago. If there is no accumulated surplus, the College must temporarily make up any deficit difference from its operating budget and then pay back the deficit by hiring fewer teachers (e.g. larger class and lab sizes and/or more sections per teacher) in subsequent years.

### **What happens if we don’t reach an agreement?**

**I**f by the end of the allocation process there is no agreement, the College can proceed with its project, as long as it follows the rules set out in the collective agreement. The union can file a grievance if it feels these are not being respected ■

#### ***JACFA General Assembly and Elections:***

***May 16 @ 9:00 a.m.***

***(P-204 )***

#### ***JACFA Annual BBQ:***

***May 16 @ 12:00 p.m.***

***(Casgrain Terrace )***





## A CI OF 80 ≠ 1 ETC OF TEACHER RESOURCE FINANCING

**Richard Masters**– Director

A teacher's individual teaching load (CI) is calculated using the following formula from Appendix I-1 of the Collective Agreement:

$$CI = CI_p + CI_s + CI_d + CI_L + CI_f + CI_{cp} + CI_{cp'}$$

Looks scary! However, the formula may be simplified to the following two cases:

$$\text{Case 1: } CI = CI_p \quad \text{and} \quad \text{Case 2: } CI = CI_p + CI_s + CI_d$$

Most individual teaching loads consist of classroom and or/laboratory teaching (Case 1). Case 2 includes this but adds fieldwork (*stage*) supervision and travelling between teaching locations.

When determining a teacher's workload using Case 1,  $CI_p$  has four parameters:

$$CI_p = HP * 0.9 + HC * 1.2 + PES + NES$$

HP = The hours of preparation per week for each different course number.

HC = The number of hours of course periods per week assigned to a professor.

PES = The sum of the number of students registered in each course assigned to a professor multiplied by its number of hours assigned in equals the weekly student periods (PES). For example, if a teacher's workload consisted of teaching two courses in a given semester such that, course 1 is 3 hours with 25 students and course 2 is 4 hours with 30 students then the PES would be  $3*25 + 4*30 = 195$ .

NES = The total number of different students enrolled in each and every course assigned for a professor for one week, except for courses where the weighted time– distribution is less than three (most notably, in Physical Education), in which case  $NES=0$ .

Here are some examples of possible workloads in several disciplines:

Table 1: Discipline A

No. of different Preps	No. of courses in a given semester	Hours per course	No. of Students per course	C.I for a given semester
1	4	3	38	38.09
2	4	3	38	40.79
3	4	3	38	45.29
4	4	3	38	56.39

Table 2: Discipline B

No. of different Preps	No. of courses in a given semester	Hours per course	No. of Students per course	C.I for a given semester
1	3	4	38	38.61
2	3	4	38	42.21
3	3	4	38	48.21

Table 3: Discipline C

No. of different Preps	No. of courses in a given semester	Hours per course	No. of Students per course	C.I for a given semester
1	3	5	25	38.25
2	3	5	25	42.75
3	3	5	25	50.25

Table 4: Discipline D

No. of different Preps	No. of courses in a given semester	Hours per course	No. of Students per course	C.I for a given semester
1	2	7	38	37.26
2	2	7	38	41.76

In each discipline, there are multiple scenarios that generate a full workload of at least 40. However, these do not all necessarily equate to 1 FTE (full time teacher) of government financing, since a teacher's workload may be affected by having multiple preps. Workloads which contain multiple preps change the HP (preparation) multiplying factor from 0.9 (for one or two preps) to 1.1 (for three) to 1.75 (for four or more) and ministerial financing is determined by actual number of students enrolled in a course. Therefore, since government financing depends only on the number of students, not on the number of preps, a workload consisting of one or two preps is more reflective of government financing■



## SURPLUSES OF TEACHING RESOURCES AT JOHN ABBOTT

Ethan Mombourquette – Secretary

Roy Fu – President

*Over the last several years, there has been much discussion at General Assemblies and Labour Relations Committee (CRT) meetings about teaching resource surpluses, what they mean, and how to use them. This discussion has become more difficult due to the fact that the nature of these surpluses has changed dramatically over the course of the College's history. This article aims to clear up any confusion caused by these changes.*

Until quite recently, there were two surpluses of teaching resources at John Abbott:

### **The “Teaching Resources (“E” budget) Surplus”:**

Some years, the College has received more funding for teaching resources (i.e. to pay teachers for their teaching duties) than it has actually needed to pay teachers. The extra funds have stayed at the College and accumulated inside of the College's teaching, or “E” budget lines. These funds constitute the E budget surplus.

### **The “INCA Surplus”:**

For many years, the College has invited international students (mostly from Germany, Switzerland and Mexico) to study at the College. Tuition and expenses for these students are not funded by the Quebec government, and are instead paid directly to the College by the students' families and home institutions. JACFA negotiated an agreement with the College about 15 years ago to ensure that

part of the monies generated by these students are used to generate teaching resources according to the same funding formula that is used for our regular students. We then allocate additional sections to some departments and pay teachers to teach them. Until recently, any teaching resources left over accumulated in a separate budget line, called the INCA surplus. The College also uses the monies received from international students to fund the International Office and to contribute to the general college Operations budget.

Both surpluses are usually measured in FTEs (full-time equivalents, where one FTE is the amount of money necessary to pay one full-time teacher for one year of work), rather than in dollars.

In 2015, JACFA and the College reached an agreement on how to use the INCA surplus. The INCA surplus was dissolved, with half of it added to the E budget surplus (approximately 6.7 FTEs), and the other half to the Faculty Professional Development funds (FPDC). The agreement also specified that any future surplus monies generated by the International Program would be disbursed each year in the same way: half to E budget, and the other half to FPDC. However, these newly-generated funds tend to be very small. Last year, for example, approximately 0.1 FTEs were added to the E budget surplus through this agreement. You can read the full agreement [here](#).

Thus, now only one surplus of teaching re-

sources exists: the E budget surplus. Current projections put this at about 9.5 FTEs at the end of the 2016-2017 Academic Year (down from about 17 FTEs only two years ago).

For many years we were deliberately trying to bring down the surplus, for the fear that if we didn't allocate it, the government would take it away. In 2009-2010 the surplus stood at 26 FTE's. Last year however, a sudden unexpected drop in the surplus was partially due to some unintended over-allocation. (by about 5 FTE's)

Our analysis showed that the over-allocation was caused by a host of factors, including the transition into a slightly altered financing formula introduced in the last Collective Agreement, some over-allocation, both in teaching and coordination resources in certain depart-

ments, and funding of special projects in some departments.

As for the accumulated surplus, we believe that it is in the best interest of our members to maintain the surplus at or near its current level. In the absence of a surplus, any over-allocation in a given year would have to be made up by cutting jobs in the following year. This would mean larger class sizes and fewer teachers hired across the College. We also want to maintain a surplus so that when unexpected circumstances arise, there is enough funding available to allow the College to be flexible in its allocation of teaching resources■

### Congratulations Are in Order!

*The JACFA Executive would like to welcome all of our new colleagues who joined the faculty this Winter. We look forward to spending some time with you at May 16 JACFA Annual BBQ:*

- Christine Ares- Dental Hygiene
- Nicoleta Crisan Loica- Nursing
- Melissa Cyr- Nursing
- Michelle Douglas – Nursing
- Usef Faghihi – Computer Science
- Stella Georgiou – Nursing
- Josh Gordon – Physics
- Vanessa Harrar – Psychology
- Andie Joseph – Nursing
- Abdulrahman Karouma – Mathematics
- Julie Lafitte – Dental Hygiene
- Mariann Mateo – Nursing
- Brianna Miller – Physical Education
- Aref Mourtada – Computer Science
- Oksana Nedostup – Biopharma
- Kara Ness – Dental Hygiene
- Corinne Pant – GWD
- Felix Racine – History
- Mandana Rezaee Asl – Physics
- Steven Sych – HPR

*Congratulations*



## IMPLEMENTING THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION PROTOCOL: PUTTING THE COLLEGES COMMITMENTS INTO THE LARGER STRATEGIC AIMS

**Derek Maisonville (HPR)-on behalf of the IEP Working Group**

*Since the implementation of the last JAC Strategic Plan, the social, political, and pedagogical context within which our teaching happens has transformed. Not only has the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada put out its 94 Calls to Action with many (both explicit and implicit) repercussions for education, but our own school has publicly signed onto the Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes.*

This document was signed (by our last Academic Dean) after the last Strategic Plan consultation process was already under way, but it was only brought to Academic Council in the Winter term of 2017.

Currently, John Abbott has a Working Group drafting ideas around implementation, while Academic Council has been working through these items (with Working Group feedback) as we attempt to deal with our publicly-stated commitment.

Now, with the Strategic Plan under revision, it is a time for us to ensure that John Abbott makes up ground. Without resting on our laurels, we must centre this crucial social commitment in our amended Strategic Plan as soon as possible, and also ensure it remains front and centre throughout the next Strategic Plan and beyond. We are located on unceded land and embedded in the social relations that this entails.

Both Vanier and Dawson have likewise committed to this initiative and we owe it to ourselves, our students (Indigenous and non), and the broader communities surrounding us to ensure we don't fall behind as society around us prioritizes addressing the reality of ongoing colonial relations.

What is the Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes? This commitment centres on seven key principles. More information (including exemplary practices for each commitment) can be found at:

<https://www.collegesinstitutes.ca/policyfocus/indigenous-learners/protocol/>

Signatory institutions agree to:

1. Commit to making Indigenous education a priority.
2. Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples.
3. Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.
4. Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
5. Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior ad-

(Continued from page 8)

ministrators.

6. Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learn-

er success.

7. Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research ■

## NEW COLLEGE SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY

**Stephen Bryce**— Geosciences

On December 8, the government passed [Law 151: An Act to Prevent and Fight Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions](#). This law requires each institution to adopt a separate policy on this topic by January 1, 2019. This policy must include: rules for student social or welcoming activities, safety measures, mandatory training for all staff, a complaint procedure and reception, referral, psychosocial and support services, and a code of conduct specifying the rules that a person who is in a teaching relationship with or a relationship of authority over a student must comply if the person has an intimate relationship with the student. It also requires that sexual violence-related services be grouped together.

At John Abbott, many of these requirements already exist as parts of different John Abbott College policies and procedures (e.g. [Policy 4 \(Sexual Harassment, Psychological Harassment, Abuse of power and Violence\)](#), [Policy 8 \(Conflicts of Interest for College Employees\)](#), [Policy 13 \(Student Conduct and Discipline Procedures\)](#) and [College Procedure 3](#)

[\(Support Protocol for Victims of Sexual Violence\)](#). The Harassment Awareness Committee has been given the task of bringing these elements together into one draft policy. The timeline is tight, as this will have to go to the Board of Governors next fall in order to meet the required deadline. At its most recent meeting, the committee agreed that it will try to get a draft completed for consultation by the end of this academic year.

If you have concerns or would like more information, the two faculty representatives on the Harassment Awareness Committee are Manijeh Ali (Nutrition) and Stephen Bryce (Geosciences) ■



## Letter from the Faculty Professional Development Committee

*Dear colleagues,*

*The purpose of this letter is to provide faculty with a degree of context relating to how decisions are reached on funding applications to the Faculty Professional Development Committee (FPDC), as well as to explain some of the Committee's procedures.*

According to Article 7.4 of the Collective Agreement, FPDC is a committee which is made-up of five faculty members, one Associate Dean, and a representative of the College administration. The five faculty members are elected annually via the JACFA general assembly. FPDC is a parity committee, meaning both the administration and the faculty technically have one vote, and if an issue is deadlocked, then an application is deemed unsuccessful. The faculty and the administration have traditionally had very cordial relations on the Committee, and both parties strive to work together in order to allow the maximum number of professors to access PD funds.

To avoid conflicts of interest and to allow members to speak freely in meetings, the Committee has since its inception maintained the practice of operating *in camera*, where discussions and deliberations are neither recorded nor made public. A formal appeal process is in place should applicants feel further consideration is warranted (please refer to [the FPDC Guidelines](#)). These procedures are in line with most academic funding bodies in Canada.

FPDC allows faculty to access funds for professional development activities which are directly related to their classroom experience. Over the years, the committee has funded a wide variety of projects including training, conferences, individual research trips, library memberships, as well as many other activities. Whenever the Committee assesses an application, the overriding principle is always how the activity enhances an applicant's classroom experience as well as improves their ability to relate the material in their courses to students. Therefore, the John Abbott classroom must be at the heart of any application. As a result of this principle, faculty should note that the following activities are excluded from funding:

- ♦ Activities which are unrelated or only indirectly related to what an applicant is teaching
- ♦ Activities that take place outside of Montreal, but for which there is no clear justification as to why they must take place abroad
- ♦ Activities to prepare for a course that one may teach in the future
- ♦ Projects, even if related to teaching, for which the purpose is to enhance one's activities outside the College
- ♦ Activities, even if related to teaching, where the applicant will draw a salary
- ♦ Activities where the applicant will be teaching students or teachers at another institution
- ♦ Chaperoning of student field trips
- ♦ Activities whose purpose is to establish partnerships with faculty or departments in other institutions.

*(Continued from page 10)*

Although a number of the activities listed here may indeed be worthy of funding, they are not covered by FPDC. In fact, several of these, such as the teaching of faculty from other institutions as well as the establishment of partnerships, have their own separate funding bodies to which faculty can apply.

A persistent concern of the Committee is whether there be sufficient funds to cover all applications. In 2008, the Committee noticed a drop off in applications, as a result, there was a decision to raise the percentage for which an activity is covered from 80-100%. In 2015-2016, the annual funding which can be accessed by an individual faculty member increased from \$800 to \$1000. These measures have allowed many more faculty to undertake professional development activities in recent years. Having said that, the monies allocated to the FPDC fund from the government have not increased in several years, while simultaneously there has been a significant surge in the number of applications received. As such, faculty must understand that an application is not merely a form to be completed in order to access professional development monies, but is genuinely an application which may or may not meet with success. Although the administration and the faculty work together in order to maximise the amount of professors who receive funds, the Committee nonetheless has to exercise a degree of judiciousness.

To conclude, the aim of the Faculty Profes-

sional Development Committee is to ensure that as many faculty as possible have access to funds which will enhance and improve their teaching. As such, the effect of an activity on an applicant's classroom experience is always the main concern. While not every activity is within the Committee's remit, and while funds do remain limited, applicants should understand that the Committee, both faculty as well as administration, operate from a principle of inclusivity, and consistently seek out reasons to award funding rather than deny it. In the end, the Committee's overriding mission is always to provide the funds which will help faculty become better teachers through the achievement of their professional development goals.

To understand more about the principles and rules governing FPDC and FPDC applications, please see [the Guidelines](#) on the Portal.

Sincerely,

The Faculty Professional Development Committee.<sup>1</sup>

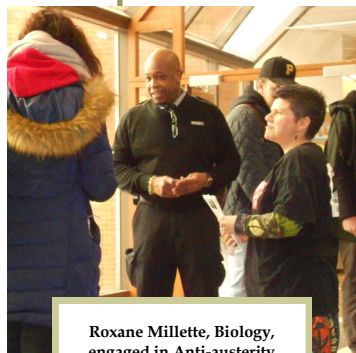
1. The faculty representatives are:

- John Serrati (Chair)- HEPS
- David Desjardins- HEPS
- Pierre Dussol- Theatre
- Richard Masters- Mathematics
- Candis Steenberg- HPR

## MOBILIZATION CORNER

Roy Fu – President

### JACFA Makes its Presence Felt at Leitão Event



Roxane Millette, Biology, engaged in Anti-austerity education at the Leitão event.

JACFA recently organized a successful mobilization event during the campus visit of Quebec Finance Minister Carlos Leitão on February 23. Eight teachers (not including JACFA Executive members) from seven different departments came out to distribute anti-austerity pamphlets prepared especially for the occasion.

Besides the strong members turnout, the event was successful as the pamphlet played a notable role in shaping students' questions. The question and answer period started with a barrage of questions from students on anti-austerity cuts to public health, education and social

programs, many citing specific information contained in pamphlet.

The event took a surreal, Orwellian/Trumpesque turn, when the minister claimed that government austerity did not really happen in Quebec; and he said that government cutbacks were not really cutbacks, but reduction in spending increases. This latter claim was particularly odd given the fact that \$500 000 was cut from operation budget of John Abbott during a particular round of austerity cuts, in 2015. When asked about the cuts, the minister did not answer■

### JACFA New Faculty Orientation Takes Off



New teachers at the JACFA office for orientation, on January 30

For the past few semesters, JACFA has been holding reformatted orientation session for new(er) teachers. Teachers come to JACFA office (P-105) for a 30-minute meet-and-greet, coffee and cookies.

Besides having the opportunity to ask questions particular to their situations, there is a short presentation focused on three themes: union participation, professional/ de-

partmental autonomy, and individual rights and responsibilities.

In the past year, we have welcomed 15 new teachers to these sessions. We encourage any interested teacher who recently (in the past five years) joined the college to sign up for a session. To do so please contact the [JACFA office](#) (local 5506). We schedule events around teachers' availability■

## FNEEQ UPDATES

Roy Fu – President

### JACFA Steers Debate on Law 62 at FNEEQ

Following the mandate from the November General Assembly (GA), JACFA representatives have successfully advanced the debate at FNEEQ on Law 62 on Religious Neutrality. At the November 30, 2017, Regroupement CEGEP meeting, we sponsored a successful motion that committed the federation to a full debate on the law at the FNEEQ Congress in May 2018. Moreover, the motion set important parameters that will ensure a rigorous and informed debate: that the debate will consider the effects of the law on the equality of men and women, as well as on other marginalized groups and that FNEEQ will engage in a thorough reflection on the meaning of secularism and reasonable accommodation. The motion also mandates the participation of groups affected and targeted by the law in the debate. On that front, we have put FNEEQ in touch with the two guest speakers from the Muslim and Feminist activist group that spoke at the JACFA general assembly, namely Eve Torres and Haroun Bouazzi.

The JACFA-sponsored FNEEQ motion played an important role in steering the debate at FNEEQ, because it displaced a separate motion that would have debated the law on very narrow terms and thereby allow FNEEQ to avoid taking an explicit position on Law 62. FNEEQ had previously maintained that its

position taken on the Charter of Values in 2013 was sufficient in representing its position on Law 62.

While convincing FNEEQ of JACFA's analysis of the law will still be an uphill battle, our representatives remain confident that the stage has been set, for a full and proper engagement on the issue. They are looking forward to the FNEEQ Congress in May.

### May 2018 FNEEQ Executive Election will usher in new faces.

At its triennial Congress this coming May, FNEEQ will be electing its Executive for the next three years. This year, there will be a significant amount of turnover in terms of new membership. Both Jean Murdock, the current president, and Nicole Lefebvre, the current Vice-President responsible for the Regroupement CEGEP, have announced that they will not seek re-election. Caroline Quesnel, the current Secretary-General/Treasurer, is vacating her position to run for President. The word on the street is that the elections this time will be hotly contested. Already, multiple names have been submitted for the position of president and Vice-President responsible for Regroupement CEGEP. The Executive also consists of the Vice-President responsible for the Regroupement Privé, and the Vice-President responsible for the Regroupement



Université. Both incumbents in those positions are seeking re-election.

### **Former JACFA Executive member elected at FNEEQ**



**M**ichel Milot, a former JACFA Executive member, was recently elected to the FNEEQ Coordination team. As the *délegué à la coordination*, Michel works with our Vice-

President to run the day-to-day business of the Regroupement CEGEP. Michel served on the JACFA Executive from 2000 to 2008 and taught in the Math department from 1998 to 2008. In 2008, he moved to Collège Lionel-Groulx, where he served on the union executive from 2012-2017. When asked about how

he finds his new job, Michel says, "My days are never the same: preparation of two-day-long meetings, discussions and meetings with other federations within the CSN, responding and working with local unions on their particular issues, preparation for the next bargaining round (on various levels) and thinking about strategies, alliance perspectives, strategies and orientation relative to various grievance issues, working on resistance to expanding managerial approaches in the network (the devil is in the details). "Now I am working on the proposed revised program in science which clearly constitutes a threat to the national DEC, professional autonomy and to many teaching jobs. I do miss my students, but I love working with a great FNEEQ team here. I always thought that FNEEQ was a great organization to promote the education we want for our society." ■

## **TÉLUQ TUTORS IN LABOUR STRIFE: COST-CUTTING UNDERMINING QUALITY EDUCATION**

**Tanya Rowell-Katzemba-VP External**

*Over the course of the last year, the online tutors of Télug have been engaged in a struggle with their employer, a struggle which has ramped up in the last seven months or so. The Syndicat des tuteurs et tutrices de la Télé-université (STTTU) argues that what is at stake is not only the jobs of their members, but the very future of quality post-secondary public education in Québec.*

**T**élug is the distance education sector of the Université du Québec network, offering university courses and programs through distance learning. The Télug was originally conceived forty years ago as a means to make university education more

accessible, allowing students with family and work obligations to pursue their studies with a schedule that is more flexible than traditional daytime university programs. An integral part of the distance learning courses and programs has been the individualised support for students (henceforth referred to by its more precise French term, *encadrement*) provided by tutors. While the courses are designed by professors, once the material has been put online, it is the tutors of the Télug who have the majority of pedagogical contact with distance students. Over the course

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of the forty years that tutors have been doing this work, they have developed a particular pedagogical expertise: providing individualised support entirely at a distance to students, a majority of whom are balancing work and family concerns with their studies, and who are often part of the first generation of their families to pursue a university education.

Over the last year, the T  luq has been making significant and alarming changes to the learning conditions of its students and to the working conditions of the online tutors who teach them. Last May, T  luq signed a collective agreement with the Syndicat des professeurs et professeurs de la T  l  -universit   (SPPTU). This new collective agreement created a new job category of “contract professor,” which encompasses most of the tasks that comprise the online tutors’ defined workload, most notably *encadrement*, which has been the primary duty of the tutors for the last forty years. The hiring criteria for these new contract professors is the same as that of the tutors and, by virtue of having been given a different job category by T  luq, the contract professors are given hiring priority over tutors who have more seniority than them. Furthermore, this past December, T  luq announced that 75 per cent of tutors’ defined workload would be assigned to employees in other job descriptions.

Another major change that T  luq has undertaken is the subcontracting of online teaching to a private company. In September, 2016, T  luq sub-contracted four of its language programs to l’Institut MATCI, a move which left 20 per cent of tutors out of a job. MATCI is a private company and does not have a

permit from the Minist  re de l’Enseignement sup  rieur. At present, 37 per cent of T  luq students are being taught by teachers who work for MATCI. When the STTTU questioned T  luq’s decision to hire a subcontractor, essentially firing 20 per cent of its employees, the union was told that tutors were welcome to apply to the company to get their old jobs back, and be paid half of what they used to earn for doing the same job (but with a higher student-teacher ratio).

The STTTU has observed these changes with growing outrage. The implications for the quality of post-secondary education are clear. Firstly, with the creation of the new “contract professor” job category, the number of hours of individualised attention per student has been diminished: while the tutors’ collective agreement guarantees three hours of individual “encadrement” per student, the contract professors’ only allows for one. (It should be noted here that student fees have not been reduced as a result of this change.) Furthermore, how do we ensure quality of education if T  luq hires a private subcontractor, operating without a permit from the Ministry, to teach university students? The wider social implications of this restructuring should be of grave concern to us all, not only as teachers, but as citizens who care about public education: T  luq is trying to save money on the backs of its students, whose education we all have a stake in.

Of equal concern here is the attack on workers that is being undertaken by T  luq through these changes. Online tutors are vulnerable workers. They do not meet each other every day in an office or a school, and they are spread out over different parts of the



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province. These particular conditions pose a challenge to mobilizing and organizing collectively. As such, it is no surprise that the first move in what could become an onslaught of “modernizing” and cost-cutting measures in education should be aimed at them. However, teachers all over the province should be vigilant in resisting this kind of restructuring, as what Télug is attempting to do could be reasonably interpreted as the “thin edge of the wedge” for wider changes across institutions. Furthermore, Télug has clearly capitalized on divisions between tutors and professors by negotiating an agreement with one group of employees—arguably the more privileged and job-secure—to the detriment of a more precarious group. The lack of solidarity demonstrated by the professors in this case is an issue which also concerns contract professors in universities across Québec.

Negotiations between the STTTU and Télug, which began in July 2017, are ongoing, but Télug has yet to unveil its first offer. At a General Assembly in January, tutors voted unanimously in favour of a strike mandate. The Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ, our union federation) has stepped in and asked to meet the Director General of Télug, who has declined the request due to the fact that the

president of STTTU, Nancy Turgeon, would be present at the meeting. Télug has been using legal intimidation to attack the union instead of negotiating. The union has received three cease-and-desist notices from Télug in the last two months. FNEEQ, Conseil central Québec-Chaudière-Appalaches and the STTTU are being sued by Télug for \$80,000, for referring to tutors as teachers/instructors (*enseignants*) and for using the term “dismissal” (*mise à pied*) when discussing the current labour strife that tutors are facing.

While online tutors face particular challenges to mobilization given the nature of their jobs, the STTTU has mustered an impressive “rapport de force” with the help of FNEEQ and CSN. They need our support to continue their struggle, and there are particular ways we have been called upon to do so:

- Sign a postcard to pressure the Director General of Télug to negotiate in good faith with the tutors (available at the JACFA office)
- Like the STTTU Facebook page. It may sound trivial, but in the age of social media, the number of “likes” and followers a union has is something that the employer pays attention to.

**Solidarity with the tutors of Télug!**

STTTU president Nancy Turgeon (second from the right), with members behind her, addresses the General Assembly of the Conseil central Montreal metropolitain.

