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A Brief Summary of the Sectoral Agreement in Principle

At its June 15 meeting, the FNEEQ Regroupement cégep decided to recommend to its general assemblies the adoption of the agreement in principle reached two days earlier between FNEEQ and the CPNC (*Comité patronal de négociation des collèges)*. This agreement, while not providing solutions to all of the problems facing teachers in the cegep system, is nonetheless a step in the right direction. It will allow the addition of approximately 430 teachers, which will contribute to lightening workloads that have considerably increased over the years. These new posts will also increase the number of permanent teachers. Furthermore, these additions will help to resolve a number of serious problems, among others those of too many preparations of different courses and supporting an excessive number of students.

There are many other gains. FNEEQ obtained in this agreement that a ratio of 1/18 will apply to all of its unions for department coordination. This will help to reduce the workloads of those who fulfill these functions.

The agreement also includes a new clause that will make it possible to intervene at a college if a problem arises over the amount of required union release time.

There is also a net increase in teaching conditions for those who offer courses in underfinanced programs, especially in the regions experiencing a drop in student numbers. This is an issue that FNEEQ has been working on for a number of years.

In addition, note that the establishment of a parity committee to study the financing formula that determines the number of teachers in each cegep is an important gain. The current formula provides far less than the actual needs of each college. We expect that the recommendations of this committee will correct the distortions generated by the current financing formula.

An Accelerated Progression in the Salary Scale

We agreed with the CPNC to shorten to six months the time required to move from one level to the next in the first four levels of the salary scale. This acceleration will benefit financially those teachers affected as they move through the scale. It will affect the many people who are beginning a career in the cegep system. In addition, the upcoming work on salary relativity will allow other improvements in the salary structure.

Setting Up Committees

Some problems, due to their complexity, were too difficult to resolve in a fairly rapid negotiation timeline: clinical teaching in Nursing and other health technologies, continuing education, teaching resources for special needs students, the organization

of teaching in the regional context of the *Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue,* etc. The two parties therefore agreed to refer these issues to working committees, with 53 FTEs held in reserve to implement these committees' recommendations.

And in Return...

For our side, no agreement could have been reached without a substantial addition of teaching resources in Group 1 (*volet 1*) (actual teaching). Similarly, our employers obstinately insisted on modifying the provisions of our contract that deal with the role of department assemblies, program committees and their coordination (chairs). That's why we find in the agreement the addition of a more specific description of the responsibilities of department and program coordinators in particular.

In addition, the salary protection of MEDs who are eligible for retirement without an actuarial penalty will be reduced from 80% to 60%.

Consultating General Assemblies

As a result of the agreement in principle reached at the central table on June 25, general assemblies will be consulted on the approval of both the central table agreement as well as the sectoral agreement between now and September 17.

In order for FNEEQ to obtain a mandate to sign the collective agreement, both agreements must be approved. For each agreement, this requires a majority of all members voting as well as an absolute majority of all unions affiliated voting for its approval.