



The OWL HOOTS

Issue 515, September 26th 2013

GENERAL ASSEMBLY NEXT TUESDAY OCTOBER 1 AT 11:30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM

The issues:

The fight against declassification:

An update of our current struggle with the Treasury Board and possible suggestions of how to force the Treasury Board to step back. Things are happening quickly.

Priorities for the coming negotiations:

What should be our priority? Should it be salaries? This would make harmonization with other unions easier. Or is it the workload? Then the focus would be on increasing teacher numbers to reduce our tasks or to possibly maintain current teacher numbers as student numbers decline. Or is it job security? Do we protect the teachers, programs, and the departments as the student numbers are predicted to decline? Is it Continuing Education? Do we improve salaries and working conditions for Conted and AEC teachers? Bring us your ideas.

The Charter of Values

A burning issue for many, we will decide if the DTU should take a position and what this position should be, if any.

JOIN US FOR LUNCH AND TO PARTAKE IN SOME CRUCIAL DECISIONS

IS DECLASSIFICATION A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT?

Some argue that declassification will never happen: The Treasury Board Committee doesn't have political support; The PQ will never do it because of electoral costs; It is only a way for the DTU to mobilize its members; We just have to wait and it will go away; etc.

At the DTU we do not agree. If we do not object, we are likely to get what is offered. Without our pressure it looks to the Treasury Board and the Government that we accept reluctantly as we have our feathers plucked. As the committee was created by the Treasury Board to negotiate with us, its positions are those of the Treasury Board unless they are changed. Further it is unlikely they would do this without consulting. Will this position be changed if there is no squeaky wheel?

THERE IS PROGRESS. WE ARE GAINING, BUT WE HAVE NOT WON

FNEEQ had a meeting with Pierre Duchesne, the Minister of Higher Education, Research Science and Technology. He is aware of the problems and receptive without an immediate commitment. However, the Treasury Board committee we love to hate has been expanded to include some who are known to be more positive toward cegep teachers. This is a good sign. FNEEQ is having ongoing meetings with this enlarged committee which is now ready to evaluate college teaching in terms of classification 22 instead of 21. However, this does not mean they have accepted 22. Just they are ready to examine if we fit in 22. However, their earlier evaluation had us on the low end of 21 i.e. almost 20. So we have a distance to go to move to 22. Furthermore, we believe that cegep teaching, as part of higher education, deserves to be classified at a level above 22.

We have been asked not to accelerate our pressure tactics during the declassification negotiations. We have agreed to do so for the moment. However, if this is not settled by the October 17 Regroupement, we can expect proposals for more intense actions. FNEEQ's next step is to meet Premier Pauline Marois. More on this when it happens.

A CLARIFICATION OF WHAT IS AT STAKE

Declassification from 22 to 21 means approximately a 5% decrease between the two echelon 17s. For a Masters this means a salary freeze until echelon 18 in our current salary scale falls close to \$5,000 below echelon 17 for elementary and high school teachers.

Con't A clarification of what is at stake

This loss will be the result of salary increases for others while cegep teachers' salary echelons are frozen. Similarly, a teacher with a Doctorate and salary echelon 20 would see their salary frozen until it is \$7500 below echelon 17 for high school and elementary school teachers. For anyone at echelon 17, the drop would be over \$3700. It is not clear yet how this would translate for teachers below echelon 17. What is certain is that they would also lose. Everyone would be declassified. To add to this, the declassified salaries would be the starting salary base for the next contract negotiation affecting our income for the rest of our working lives.

This is not just a question of money. It boils down to respect of our efforts and abilities. Our studies were not always easy or simple. To deny us the recognition of these efforts and the achievement of years of work is to deny part of who we are. Moreover what does this mean for the future of the cegep system? Is it to become a factory pumping out widgets or will it create the possibility for our students to soar and achieve even greater possibilities? This, to us, is the real question.

NEW EMAILS FOR THE TREASURY BOARD

The new email address is cabinet@sct.gouv.qc.ca

When you pass a motion against the declassification or perform work which is not directly tied to the preparation of a course, the teaching of a course or grading send your email to the above address.

Examples of this would be research or upgrading in an area not covered in your current classes, any other research not directly connected to your current classes, meeting with students outside of class, writing letters of recommendation, curriculum meetings or development, selection committees and any other committees, department and program meetings, grade reviews, helping a new colleague, helping a student chose a university, the setup for labs, work involving safety for students. All of these are either undervalued or not considered.

The original committee decided that the majority of our classes were theory courses. As a result they ignored labs and stage-internship work. These too can be mentioned in your emails.

DAWSON BOARD OF GOVERNORS

FNEEQ has asked all unions to request that their Board of Governors take a position against the Treasury Board declassification. The DTU brought a proposal to the Dawson Board of Governors on Monday night September 23. The immediate response of the Board Chairman was to question the urgency. Ultimately, the motion was tabled until the next meeting. The DTU executive is disappointed. We do not see any reason for a delay. The motion is attached in an annex.

A HISTORY OF QUEBEC COURSE IN GENERAL EDUCATION

The Quebec government has decided to change the cegep course structure before the next election in order to create a Quebec History course as part of general education. The aim is to begin with the 2014 cohort of cegep students who would take this course at some yet-to-be-determined semester.

Will a new government reverse this if there is a change in government? It depends. The education system is like a massive cruise ship and takes enormous efforts to reverse its momentum. Furthermore, a new government may have other priorities.

Does this mean an additional course for students? Perhaps. However, this would be the costliest option and might be opposed by the student movement, something to avoid with an election in the offing. Another possibility, the replacement of another course, will threaten existing general education courses and consequently place some teachers at risk. The Minister has made it clear that the course will not be multidisciplinary. However, there are suggestions that more than one discipline might be allowed to teach the course. As far as we know there has been no public discussion by the Minister as to whether the existing discipline, History, will be responsible for the course or if a new discipline and, therefore, new department will be created.

The debate at FNEEQ was sharp. The initial FNEEQ press communiqué was seen as too positive by most, including the DTU. The Vice President who issued the communiqué recognized the error and said it would not happen again. The Regroupement decided to do an impact analysis of the various options on staffing. The motion was amended so that the committee would also examine the relevance of such a change in general education. This study will form the basis for the FNEEQ intervention in the winter term and will be distributed to the local union members as rapidly as possible.