



Disaffiliation vote at Lionel-Groulx and the future of FAC

The general assembly of Collège Lionel-Groulx voted on April 16 of last week in favour of holding a referendum on their possible disaffiliation from FAC. This vote follows the March *Assemblée fédérative*¹, where two important issues were addressed. As we explained in our own general assembly, these were the readjustment of the federation's financial situation as well as the progress with the ad hoc negotiations.²

On the first issue, it is important to remember that the difficulties in FAC's financial situation follow the departure of Collège de Valleyfield in 2006. One of the proposed financial solutions was to reduce the number of elected teacher representatives who take leaves to work at FAC for their term of office. Two *avis de motions* were presented at the AF on this point. In both cases, the financial savings were equivalent to one FTE (Full-Time Equivalent), which was sufficient to balance the budget in the short term. Both motions that proposed cutting of FAC positions were rejected. This left FAC with no solution to its financial problem. Another proposal "of orientation", leading to an *avis de motion* for the May AF, was adopted: That FAC suspends the election of an information officer for one year. This allows time for the ad hoc committee examining Federation statutes and syndical practices and the AF to reconsider the organigram in terms of established Federation priorities. A new mandate was also given to the Finance Committee to explore avenues for eliminating the financial deficit of the federation, excluding the systematic suspension of an FTE from FAC's elected positions. These two proposals place FAC in a very delicate situation.

In terms of the second issue of the ad hoc negotiations with the CPNC, the employer or *partie patronale* had made the negotiations contingent on DEC's in Cont Ed being on the table. Since FAC did not have the mandate to negotiate on this basis, this created an impasse in the negotiations right at the outset. The federative assembly voted to examine in an exhaustive fashion the situation of Cont Ed DEC's in order to develop an analysis of the pertinence of reopening of ad hoc negotiations at the May AF.

The decisions in relation to these two issues provoked increasing dissatisfaction amongst our colleagues at Lionel-Groulx, who had already undertaken a disaffiliation vote in 2006 which resulted in favour of maintaining their affiliation with FAC by a relatively slim majority of 11 votes.

The present uncomfortable circumstances in which FAC finds itself will continue should the Federation see the departure of a second union; another potential departure forces us to question FAC's viability financially and politically. It is in this context that the DTU Executive Council held two meetings this month in order to analyze the situation. As a first step, the Council quickly established a subcommittee whose mandate is to evaluate different options available to us, including maintaining

¹ The *Assemblée fédérative* (AF) or federative assembly is the largest meeting of the *Federation Autonome Collegiale* (FAC). The AF unites delegations, ranging from 3 to 5 persons, from all member unions of FAC and any who have a service contract with the federation. The AF meets 3 times per year.

² The ad hoc negotiations aim to eliminate the salary disparity existing between the teachers of FAC and those of the other federations. This disparity is the result of our rejection of the *entente* that followed the decree of 2005.

our affiliation with FAC, or disaffiliating from FAC and re-affiliating with another federation. The committee is mandated to report the results of their work regularly with a view to making a decision by November 2008. The question of affiliation will be on every DTU meeting agenda, whether at the Executive Council or at the general assembly, until resolved. As a second step, the DTU Executive Council decided to reiterate certain demands to FAC, the goal being to respond to the dissatisfaction expressed by our members. Other than resolving the problem of salary disparity with other college federations, the DTU Executive Council identified three important demands. These are to remedy the disproportional representation at the *Conseil Intersyndical*³, to establish permanent positions at FAC to permit the development of expertise, and finally to examine in its entirety *Règlement numéro 1*⁴ of the Federation in order to efficiently reduce operation costs. Representing this view on the circumstances, the president of the DTU presented several proposals at the *Conseil Intersyndical* held this past April 16, 17 and 18.

The situation at FAC is serious and we want to assure you that the Executive Council of the DTU is alert and determined to find the alternative which is in the best interests of our DTU members. The issue will be on the agenda of our General Assembly, April 30.

³ The CI is composed of one representative from the executive of each union affiliated with FAC. Every member union at the CI has the right to one vote no matter what the size of their membership (a union with 25 teachers has the same voting weight as a union with 800 teachers).

⁴ *Règlement numéro 1* addresses the financial management of FAC.