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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **More cuts to higher education**

## **The CSQ denounces a government blinded by austerity fever**

Montreal, November 13, 2014. – The Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) in agreement with its higher education federations, the Fédération du personnel de soutien de l'enseignement supérieur (FPSES-CSQ), the Fédération du personnel professionnel des collèges (FPPC-CSQ) and the Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de cégep (FEC-CSQ) says that new cuts being imposed on colleges and universities by the Couillard government are unrealistic and absurd.

CSQ Vice President Marc Nantel, FPSES President Anne Dionne, FPPC President Carol LaVack and FEC President Mario Beauchemin are all wondering if the government and Education Minister Yves Bolduc have lost touch with reality, blinded by austerity fever.

"We're talking about hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts in recent years, at both the university and college levels. It's totally insane. Any government that claims the least bit of responsibility would not take such grave measures, jeopardizing the education missions of our institutions and then washing their hands. But this is the educational policy Philippe Couillard seems to want for Quebec." says Marc Nantel.

### **Budgetary miracles in our universities???**

The CSQ spokesperson is convinced that direct services to students will be affected by the announced cuts.

"In 2012, the Liberals wanted to raise university tuition fees, claiming that the universities lacked funds. And now they want to cut 31.6 million dollars from their budgets as if the universities have all of a sudden miraculously accumulated budget surpluses, when in fact the opposite is true. Unfortunately, this government seems to be able to ignore reality when making such decisions," says Marc Nantel.

### **Fewer resources for more needs in the Cégeps**

“The additional 19 million dollars of cuts in the college sector make no sense. The situation in our colleges is already difficult and it seems that this government is on a mission to make things even worse. We actually anticipate a significant increase in needs in the coming years, including requests for additional manpower in the technical sectors, but colleges have fewer and fewer resources to cope with these new demands. The same applies to special needs students, whose number has rapidly increased by 400%, with fewer resources to help them succeed; which will inevitably lead to excessive workloads,” said the Vice President of the CSQ.

### **Widespread impacts**

Nantel warns that the impact of the cuts will be felt in every area of the colleges: libraries, support services, admissions, access to programs, training, organization, athletics, culture and services for special needs students. “Everything is interconnected and all categories of personnel will be affected. No one will be spared and our students will sadly be the biggest losers. Budget cuts also result in lower rates of academic success. This is the choice that Yves Bolduc and Philippe Couillard, and all members of their government, are making,” says Marc Nantel.

### **An invitation to college director generals**

On the other hand, reacting to a public statement made by Fédération des cégeps President Jean Beauchesne, predicting that the new cuts will reduce frontline services to students, Marc Nantel is asking the Federation, especially the 48 college director generals, to seriously consider running deficits in order to maintain services.

### **A government acting without a mandate**

In closing, the CSQ Vice President accuses Philippe Couillard of not having played fair with Quebecers during the last election campaign.

“Philippe Couillard should have been honest enough to admit that he did not want to become Prime Minister in order to direct the destiny of Quebec in the interest of the common good, but rather to run down Quebec public services and prepare them to be sold off, which seems to be what he has been doing since the election. The problem is, he was never given a mandate to do this,” concludes Nantel.

### **Profile of the CSQ college federations**

The Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de cégep (FEC-CSQ), the Fédération du personnel de soutien de l'enseignement supérieur (FPSES-CSQ) and the Fédération du personnel professionnel des collèges (FPPC-CSQ) represent unions of workers in all three categories of personnel in the college sector. The CSQ represents more than 200,000 members, 130,000 of whom work in the education sector. It is the most significant labour organization in the field of education in Quebec.

### **Information**

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