October 20, 2023

Dear students,

You have probably heard about the strike movement currently being orchestrated in our CÉGEPs and Quebec’s public sector. The 420,000 members of the inter-union Front commun, which we are part of, were recently consulted on the possibility of calling an unlimited general strike, preceded by a series of shorter strikes that are to serve as a warning. Our goal is to put pressure on the government in the current negotiations for the renewal of our collective agreements. The teachers of John Abbott College Faculty Association (JACFA) have joined this major mobilization, by voting 99.4% in favour of the strike action to be carried out together with other members of the Front commun, when the time is right.

We know that resorting to this type of action has consequences for both us and yourselves: our salaries will be cut during strike periods and your classes will be cancelled on those days. However, if we have chosen to go on strike, it is because we are convinced that we need to strengthen our bargaining position with the government. At this stage, we realize that only a balance of power in our favour will enable us to achieve the necessary gains to truly meet the needs of our CÉGEPs and public services. We believe that this union battle also concerns you, as many students intend to work in the public sector, but also because many of our demands aim to respond to students’ needs.

Teachers’ working conditions, such as their workload, level of pay, and access to job security and family-work-life balance measures, directly influence the quality of the teaching environment. Well-supported teachers are much more likely to stay and get involved in their workplace. When the opposite is true, teachers must cope with demanding working conditions that lead them to being overworked, which has an impact, on student success, or to choose to pursue their careers in other work sectors. We believe that improving the quality of the education services you receive is not only beneficial to your personal future, but also to the generation of economic and social wealth in Quebec in general.

This is why we believe that just as working conditions and study conditions are interdependent, the bonds of solidarity forged between CÉGEP workers and the student population mutually strengthen our struggles. In the context of the current negotiations and the strike of the Front Commun, we warmly invite you to express your support in whatever way you feel is best:

* By wearing or displaying a symbol associated with the negotiations (a sticker, for example);
* By discussing the issues of the negotiations, your views on CÉGEPs and public services, and the strike with the people around you;
* By greeting the staff on the picket lines;
* By discussing the negotiations at your Student Union in a general assembly, and even proposing the adoption of a resolution of support for the staff on strike[[1]](#footnote-0);
* By finding out more about the issues at stake in the negotiations through the media or web sites
  + Faculty website: <https://www.jacfa.ca/>
  + Common front website: <https://www.frontcommun.org/>

We thank you in advance for your interest in our negotiations and your show of solidarity! We are available to answer your questions and discuss the situation with you, because our passion for education is always in our hearts.

In solidarity and with warm regards,

<Teacher name>

1. For example, l’Association étudiante du Cégep de St-Jérôme adopted the following resolution (*our translation*):

   *Considering that workers who are members of the Front commun are the social safety net in Quebec;*

   *Considering the tremendous increase in the cost of living in recent years;*

   *Considering the salary increases for members of parliament while they offer nothing but crumbs to others;*

   *Considering the government’s obvious contempt for the Front commun in the negotiations of the collective agreements;*

   *Considering the proximity of members of the [association] with some Front Commun members, namely the teachers, support staff, and professionals at our CÉGEP.*

   *It is agreed that:*

   *The [association] shall stand in solidarity with and show support for the Front commun;*

   *The [association] shall support the Front Commun’s pressure tactics, including the strike, and their demands;*

   *The [association] shall show support for the actions of the Syndicat des professeurs du Cégep de Saint-Jérôme* *in particular in this negotiating process and in the future when these actions are consistent with our mandates.* [↑](#footnote-ref-0)