



Proposed law largely ignores English minority realities

Anglophone colleges call on government to withdraw Bill 44 on CEGEP governance

Montreal / August 31, 2009 – The Directors General and Chairpersons of the Board of four Montreal-area anglophone CEGEPs will present a brief tomorrow in Quebec City to the parliamentary commission on education, asking legislators to withdraw Bill 44, which proposes to change the way CEGEPs are governed.

The anglophone colleges are urging the government to engage in a consultation process that will lead to a model of college governance that enables the colleges to better address the challenges Quebec society is currently facing.

“These institutions are entrenched in the landscape of Quebec life and represent a rich tapestry of Quebec society as they bring together students of every origin, contributing to the expansion of their horizons, and enhancing an intercultural experience that is harmonious and respectful of the differences that exist between them,” say the authors of the brief.

Paramount among the concerns in the brief is that Bill 44 proposes a model of governance for CEGEPs based on the provisions of Bill 38, which was formulated to redress elements of university governance in reaction to recent financial scandals in that sector.

In the 40 years of the CEGEPs’ existence, colleges have developed effective administrative measures for accountability that have spared them major financial crises. Bill 44 will hinder the colleges’ ability to further develop their responsibility and autonomy in the achievement of their educational missions by placing restraints that act as a “lead apron” to weigh them down with additional bureaucracy.

Of particular concern to the anglophone colleges is the provision that delegates to the Ministry of Education the task of appointing eight of the 11 independent Board members. This would essentially close the door on the anglophone colleges’ ability to appoint members who share the same value systems, a common vision and understanding of the English-minority experience in Quebec.

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The brief states: “The links forged between our institutions and the communities they have served over the years are at risk if Board members are selected through some random process, or based on factors that do not include competence, cultural and institutional affinity.”

Other concerns include the elimination of the Academic Dean from a seat at the Board table. “The Colleges Act entrusts the Academic Dean with the mandate to ensure respect for and implementation of the mission (of the college) [...] (he or she embodies) the academic integrity of the college. When he or she stands before the Board, he or she represents the *raison-d’être* of the college.”

Champlain Regional College, Dawson College, John Abbott College and Vanier College together have more than 25,000 students enrolled in full- and part-time studies, a large majority of them in the pre-university stream, and employ nearly 3,000 people.

The brief can be viewed in its entirety at:

www.champlaincollege.qc.ca
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