



## **PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate distribution

### **FALL SEMESTER IN PERSON: AN ANNOUNCEMENT STUDENTS HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR**

**QUÉBEC, August 6, 2021** – The Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ) and Quebec Student Union (QSU) were pleased to learn that the fall semester will once again see students returning to their campuses; an announcement they had long been awaiting. However, several important measures remain vague and both organizations fear a repeat of last year's mistakes.

#### **Aim for an in-person semester, not just an in-person orientation**

It's important to remember that the 2020-2021 academic year was marred for many students by constant changes from in-person to online courses and back again. Students were left reeling as they sought to advance their educations under ever-changing and anxiety-inducing conditions. "Students want more than the start of their school year to be in person. More than anything, they want the stability of an entire semester in person," said Samuel Poitras, President of the Quebec Student Union.

Yet, for both the FECQ and QSU, numerous questions about how the entire semester will be maintained in person continue to go unanswered. "We question the government's decision to start off the school year in person without masks or physical distancing at a time when cases are continuing to rise. These decisions could put in-person classes at risk," added Samuel Vaillancourt, President of the Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec.

The FECQ and QSU have joined their voices to demand vaccination clinics on campuses, with a priority given to those with the lowest vaccination rates in order to increase vaccine coverage among students and reduce the risks of outbreaks on university and college campuses.

#### **Vague answers to important questions**

With less than 20 days until the start of a new school year, students are still in the dark about many aspects of the return to classes. While they know courses will be held in person, many other student questions have gone unanswered by Minister McCann, who has so far refused to provide clear and direct responses:

- What accommodations will be put in place for students whose health condition doesn't allow them to return to campus (immunosuppressed, symptoms of COVID-19, etc.)?
- What measures will be in place to guarantee that 100% of the semester can take place in person at schools that accepted more students than they have the capacity to welcome?
- How will the vaccine passports work for extracurricular activities?

Once again, the specific measures to be put in place for the start of the school are unknown to students, leaving them in a position of insecurity. The same is true of measures developed to respond to outbreaks, which must be laid out in the contingency plans prepared by both colleges and universities, but which still haven't been shared with student representatives. The national associations wish to see these contingency plans distributed widely among students and for Minister McCann to provide clear guidelines to accommodate any individual whose health precludes them from returning to in-person education.

#### **ABOUT THE FECQ**

The Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ) represents nearly 78,000 students from 27 CEGEPs across the province. For over 30 years, it has contributed to improving living conditions and academic life for college students in Quebec as the only organization to exclusively represent their interests.

#### **ABOUT THE QSU**

The Quebec Student Union's (QSU) mission is to defend the rights and interests of all university students, its member associations and their members by promoting, protecting and improving the conditions of students and those of local and international communities. It represents more than 91,000 university students from across Quebec.

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#### **SOURCE**

Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ)

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