

The Future of French-Language Academic Work in Canada: Issues and Perspectives.

CAUT's 4th Francophones' Conference February 2-3, 2024 / Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Ottawa

Overview of the Conference

Even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, an alarming trajectory was already underway for French-language post-secondary institutions in Canada. The pandemic heightened pressure on French-language higher education in the country, especially in a minority context. From the disaster of Laurentian University to the inauguration of the Université de l'Ontario français, to the modernization of the *Official Languages Act* and the chronic underfunding of post-secondary institutions, capped off by austerity measures from many provincial governments, what future can French-language universities in Canada expect?

There is no simple answer to this question, given the diversity of contexts across Canada in which Francophone academics work. They work in French-language universities and colleges that are located either in majority or minority contexts. Some work within bilingual institutions or are English-speakers working within French-language structures. Lastly, several work within English-language institutions. Yet despite this diversity, all of them are faced with the same worrying trend as higher education in Canada continues to anglicize. Together, we will examine this issue from multiple angles and attempt to find solutions that are adapted to the needs of various post-secondary educational environments.

Since its inception over ten years ago, the Francophones' Committee was intended to represent all French-language academics within CAUT member associations. Its conferences are intended to be a meeting and exchange place in which to discuss issues and challenges.

Agenda

Friday, February 2, 2024

08:00 - 09:00 **Registration/Breakfast** (*included*)

09:00 - 09:15 **Welcome, land acknowledgement and opening address**

09:15 - 10:30 **Mobilization in the Post-Pandemic Era**

The pandemic has changed many of our approaches. This has forced union organizations to adapt. Among other lessons, they've learned to meet people in ways that suit them, understand the importance of good planning, encourage a positive atmosphere in mobilizing, ensure that people feel safe and comfortable, and use technology properly.

What challenges are ahead of us? What lessons can we learn from this? We will study two specific examples: the creation of a new union with the Université de l'Ontario français as a case study, and mobilization 2.0, the winter 2023 strike at Université Laval.

10:30 - 11:00 **Refreshment break**

- 11:00 - 12:15 **The Anglicization of Teaching and Research Practices**
The role of French as a language of instruction and scientific communication is under sustained pressure given the increasing power given to English in academic communications. This issue is particularly relevant to graduate programs, both in the field of research and in technical training. A portrait of the use and relative role of the French language in research and instruction in Quebec's colleges and universities.
- 12:15 - 13:30 **Lunch** *(included)*
- 13:30 - 14:45 **Perspectives on Linguistic Minorities**
If our universities and CEGEPs in Quebec are evolving in an academic world under pressure of anglicization, what about academic communities in minority language contexts elsewhere in Canada?
- 14:45 - 15:15 **Refreshment break**
- 15:15 - 16:30 **The Role and Responsibilities of Governments to Support French-language Post-Secondary Education in Canada**
The government of Canada is responsible for ensuring that all Canadians can study in the official language of their choice. Beyond the reforms to the Official Languages Act, how can the federal government support French-language instruction in minority settings? What about provincial governments? Case of Quebec, which developed a new policy of active engagement in promoting the French language, and Francophone cultures in the rest of Canada.
- 17:00 - 19:00 **Reception**

Saturday, February 3, 2024

- 08:30 - 09:30 **Breakfast** *(included)*
- 09:30 - 10:30 **The SARF, Service to Assist Research in French (Acfas)**
The SARF is a pan-Canadian, inter-university service created by Acfas to support French-language research. Its mission is to support the development and vitality of French-language research in minority settings. Our team provides front-line support to French-speaking researchers in minority settings.
- 10:30 - 11:00 **Refreshment break**
- 11:00 - 12:00 **Round Table on Francophone Union Experiences**
Overview of what's happening in unions across the country, with a focus on issues that especially affect Francophones.
- 12:00 - 13:30 **Lunch** *(included)*

13:30 - 15:00

How Can We Push Issues Affecting French-Language Post-Secondary Education to Centre Stage?

After some background on the evolution of the presence of French-speakers within CAUT, participants will break into groups to discuss lessons learned during previous sessions and approaches to identifying and prioritizing solutions. They will then determine demands and develop a campaign.

Workshop

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15:00 - 15:30

Refreshment break

15:30 - 16:15

Plenary Discussion: Campaign Presentations

Participants will share and examine the campaign strategies and plans they developed in workshops to guide the CAUT's Francophones' Committee work going forward.

16:15 - 16:30

Closing Address and Conclusion