



Ontario
College of
Teachers
Annual Review of
French-Language
Services
2007

Introduction

In 2004, the Ontario College of Teachers took on as a priority the review of services provided to the francophone community, with the goal of improving their quality and scope. As part of that exercise, many interviews, focus groups and meetings were held with members of the College and members of Council and College staff to clarify the various priorities in French-language services and devise strategies for short- and long-term improvements.

The French-Language Services Department then developed a plan that contained an exhaustive list of recommendations in eight key areas: the College's mandate, French-language services, bilingual staff, the official magazine *Professionally Speaking/Pour parler profession*, communications, professional development, external relations, and ethical standards and standards of practice for the teaching profession.

These recommendations were then the subject of comments, assessment and prioritization by key players in the College to properly reflect the challenges and priorities of everyone the College serves. The Co-ordinator, French-Language Services, in conjunction with her colleagues in other departments, then drew up a three-year French-Language Services Review Plan with specific strategies and realistic timelines over three years.

In the past year, the first of the plan, staff in the various departments, led by French-Language Services, co-operated closely with the Registrar and the Senior Leadership Team to implement the plan. This report covers the progress achieved in the past 12 months and presents very promising results.

The commitment of members of the College, the francophone school boards and members of the Senior Leadership Team has been exemplary. Their contributions are encouraging for the future and quality of French-language services within the College.

We have achieved only a third of the plan's objectives, yet we are more confident than ever that we will meet, and even exceed, our targets.

Human Resources

The College is committed to providing all prescribed regulatory services in French and English. Several initiatives central to the French-Language Services Review Plan affect the College's human resources. These initiatives include reviewing the positions designated bilingual, developing language profiles setting standards for the French required for certain positions, and upgrading the recruiting process to take into account the increased need for bilingual staff.

Through our ongoing collective efforts, we will meet the three-year targets for bilingual staffing.

This year, the College achieved several key results:

- We updated the census of bilingual staff and posted on the College web site the names of people in bilingual positions, as well as the names of those fluent in French. In this way, we encourage francophone clients to communicate with staff fluent in French in each of the areas covered by the College's statutory mandate.
- Some positions continue to be designated bilingual, especially key positions in areas that serve the public, applicants, members and education workers in French-speaking communities in Ontario.
- The Co-ordinator, French Language Services, the Manager, Human Resources manager and department co-ordinators developed a three-year bilingual staffing plan that entails increasing the number of bilingual positions from 26 to 55 by 2009. The College will expand recruitment activities, including advertising in more French-language publications and continuing to post job opportunities on the College's web site in both French and English, specifying French-language oral and written fluency as required, and develop French-language assessment and training opportunities for current staff.
- By the end of the first year, 2006, the number of positions designated and filled by bilingual staff had increased to 36. These bilingual staff members are identified on the College's web site so that French-language clients may speak with them directly about College business matters.
- To recruit bilingual staff, we continue to ensure simultaneous publication of ads in French and English on the College web site. We also continue to publish ads in French-language newspapers, following the College's feminization policy.

- We have reviewed the statement on language requirements based on Canadian language benchmarks. With help from our education partners, the Co-ordinator, French-Language Services has identified francophone recruiting consultants established in Ontario.
- We have developed protocols to assess the spoken French communication benchmarks required to deliver College services.
- We have developed formal definitions and assessments for bilingual staffing. Policies and practices governing hiring, appraisal, training and distribution of bilingual staff reflect both technical knowledge of the language and cultural knowledge of appropriate usage.

We have made several improvements to the human resources management plan:

- Two new positions, human resources assistant and executive secretary, in the Executive Department will be designated bilingual by 2008.
- The position of library assistant, designated bilingual in 2006, has been converted from a contract into a full-time position.
- In the Communications Unit, two positions – one new and the other converted from a contract – will now be designated bilingual. The bilingual production officer position will be staffed in 2007 and the translator position by 2008.
- The Information Technology Unit position of computer troubleshooting specialist will be designated bilingual by 2008.
- The Executive Department currently has seven management positions: the Registrar, the Deputy Registrar, the Executive Co-ordinator and four managers. The group must set a goal of recruiting a bilingual member in one of these positions as quickly as possible.

To provide additional depth, the College wants enough French presence throughout the College to ensure that work can continue without interruption despite absences. We have started a few initiatives to meet this objective, for example, reclassifying through attrition the position of external relations assistant as bilingual, adding an executive secretary position with French-language skills in the French-Language Services Department, restructuring the department after the co-ordinator was hired to meet external relations needs with the francophone community, and changing the visual identity of the External Relations Unit to reflect its linguistic duality.

The Human Resources Unit is committed to recruiting staff and providing training as part of a three-year plan. This will usually be carried out through attrition and with respect for current unilingual staff.

Liaison with the Francophone Community

The College has taken several steps to raise awareness and establish a presence in the francophone community.

Many people have stressed the importance of encouraging francophone students to choose a career in teaching. To this end:

- we continue to participate in career fairs in Ontario as well as Quebec to remedy the shortage of French-speaking teachers
- through the annual Transition to Teaching study, we have raised the level of awareness of the need for more teachers who teach in French and more teachers of French as a second language
- we are currently developing strategies with the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO) to establish a provincial project to raise awareness of the profession at career fairs
- we have validated the video *Je choisis l'enseignement* and contacted several post-secondary institutions to inquire about their job fairs
- we have begun research on organizations that assist francophone students from other countries pursuing a career in teaching. In 2007, we will create a focus group with Parents partenaires en éducation to develop recruiting strategies.

The College has adjusted its presentations to francophone members, school boards, faculties and the general public. A feasibility study on creating a database of French terms in the field of education is now underway in conjunction with several partners. If this database becomes a reality, we will validate it with the liaison network of French-language school boards and partners by 2008.

It was also recommended that we clarify the College's mandate with francophone members and the public. The Co-ordinator, French-Language Services contacted the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario and the Assemblée des communautés franco-ontariennes at the regional and provincial levels to present the College mandate. The co-ordinator will also promote the College to francophone educators.

Given the importance of communicating the positive aspects of teaching more effectively to the francophone community – including parents and the community as a whole – College staff continue to meet regularly with French-language school boards and French-speaking faculties of education. To consolidate these efforts, the College plans to expand its contacts and hold regular meetings with these groups.

Each year since September 2005, the Registrar and the Co-ordinator, French-Language Services have met with the Conseil ontarien des directions d'éducation de langue française (CODELF) to discuss the French-language services.

In future, when the College hosts meetings that include the Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE) it will continue to ensure that the invitation goes to both English- and French-speaking deans and that supporting materials are available in both languages.

We must continue to encourage the francophone community to attend College meetings and activities and to promote the teaching profession to all members of the College. To this end, we have created a network of liaison officers with each of the 12 French-language school boards. The College also plans to explore new forums for potential meetings, for example, with francophone parents' associations and community groups.

French-Language Publications

During the review of the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession and Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession, the francophone community voiced a number of concerns about consistency between the English and French versions of these documents. The francophone community was concerned that it might not be subject to the same standards as the anglophone members of the College. The Standards of Practice and Education Unit instituted a consultation process to ensure that the French and English versions were consistent.

More detailed consultations were then conducted to improve the francophone character of College publications. The latest edition of *Professionally Speaking/Pour parler profession* (December 2006) clearly reflects the improvements introduced. The Communications Unit has identified the publications that merit special attention and introduced a process to ensure that,

from the outset, the publishing of a document integrates the issues that the francophone teaching community faces.

Moreover, in the area of content and appearance, *Pour parler profession*, the College's flagship vehicle for reaching its members, has been revamped to integrate aspects specific to the francophone dynamic: specific coverage for the French-language version of the magazine (as required), enhanced content, references and activities specific to the francophone community. Future considerations include the creation of a specific section on the teaching profession of French speaking members.

The College has a longstanding corporate policy of ensuring simultaneous release in English and French of all its print and web-based publications. This policy is strictly enforced.

In 2007, the College will form a group, solely of members of the francophone community, to serve as an external, ad hoc advisory committee on including concerns specific to the francophone community in College publications.

The College has drawn up a mini communications plan to inform francophone members of all the efforts the College is making to improve the content specific to the francophone community.

Services to Members

The Membership Services Department, with the Communications Unit, has launched an ongoing review of documents intended for the francophone community to ensure that the terms used are accurate and appropriate. The department will continue to play an active role in the annual review of College documents and registration guides.

Currently, one-third of staff in Membership Services have French-language skills. As the French-Language Services Review Plan sets out to provide equal service to francophone members throughout the College, Membership Services is committed to increasing, through attrition, the proportion of staff with French-language skills. Thus, the proportion of bilingual employees for the following services under the three-year plan will be:

- 75 per cent for Client Services

- 33 per cent for Membership Records
- 50 per cent for Evaluation Services.

The Membership Services Department is also implementing a strategy to transfer learning among its three units to ensure continuity of French-language services. It is encouraging to note that 13 members of the department are currently attending French language courses.

The Membership Services Department recently drafted a report reviewing all entries on the public register in which training in education was indicated in French and in which the name of the university (Laurentian University) appeared in English. This demonstrates the importance for the College of continuing to provide its members with an opportunity to notify it of errors on certificates. An insert to encourage this practice will soon be published in *Professionally Speaking/Pour parler profession*. The Membership Services Department also continues to notify the Communications Unit of comments from members and applicants on the language used in College documents and provide advice on improving texts.

The Executive Department has made a special effort to increase French-language resources and reference materials at the College. Thus, with the understanding that the resources in our library are of prime importance, the College has decided to increase the budget for French-language acquisitions by 50 per cent over the next three years.

The Executive Department has forged links with the University of Ottawa for additional resources and research and will establish similar links with Laurentian University in 2007.

Professional Affairs

To ensure that publications for members and partners are available simultaneously in both languages, the Professional Affairs Department has established a translation protocol with the Communications Unit. The protocol fosters meetings with translators to review suggested changes and recommend changes in the terms used.

The department continues to call on the expertise of bilingual staff and bilingual members of relevant committees to assist with reviews of key documents.

The Professional Affairs Department set a goal of ensuring that the ethical standards and standards of practice reflect the francophone perspectives of all College members including those working in a French-language setting. Following consultations with education partners, including members of the francophone community, these standards were revised to more fully reflect the educational roles of all members and the settings in which they work. The Council approved these revised standards in June 2006.

In a spirit of collaboration, the Professional Affairs Department continues to consult with representatives of associations of teachers, principals, supervisory officers, school boards and deans about pre-service and in-service education as well as on the professional learning of members.

Investigations and Hearings

The Investigations and Hearings Department ensures that its publications are released simultaneously in French and English. All standard documents used in external communication are available in both languages. In 2007, the department will begin to provide training materials to its committee members in French and English.

Hearings may be conducted in French or English. When a hearing is conducted in French all documents relevant to the hearing are available in French. The law firm representing the College hired a bilingual attorney in 2006 to represent the College at French-language hearings.

The department has several bilingual staff. It has recently acquired the services of a bilingual resolution officer who provides assistance at the intake and hearings stage. This officer is also available to conduct workshops in French to stakeholder groups.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Department has undertaken several initiatives that have produced tangible results:

- The electronic address @oeeo.ca is active and on all French-language documents.
- A new testing procedure, developed with the Communications Unit, entails a full cycle of French-language tests.
- The College has purchased a new videoconferencing system to connect with Contact Nord and the system of French-language school boards.
- The College has retained the services of a consultant in quality assurance analysis to implement information technology procedures for all programming developments.
- Additional bilingual keyboards are expected in 2007.

Conclusion: Focus on the Future

Although the College has reached many milestones in recent months, we must remember that this is a three-year plan. Many challenges must still be tackled.

In February 2007, the report containing the research and recommendations on the linguistic skills requirements, operational definitions of bilingual positions and the recruitment plan will go to senior management and the Human Resources Committee for approval.

Starting in 2007, the Co-ordinator, French-Language Services will focus on developing a three-year plan to ensure that the College's bilingual staff attend meetings with key partners, for example, the Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française, the Alliance canadienne des responsables des enseignants et des enseignantes en français langue maternelle, the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones and the Association des conseil scolaire hors Québec.

The latest edition of *Professionally Speaking/Pour parler profession* (December 2006) is fairly indicative of the work the College has completed. Francophones will see themselves reflected in this publication. This work clearly demonstrates the quality of the staff's collective effort to implement the French-Language Services Review Plan.

The College and its staff can take great pride in the results. It is now up to the francophone community in Ontario to continue pooling its resources with the College to achieve the next objectives of the French-Language Services Review Plan.



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de l'Ontario