



**CREPUQ**  
CONFÉRENCE DES RECTEURS  
ET DES PRINCIPAUX  
DES UNIVERSITÉS DU QUÉBEC

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **POLITICAL PARTIES AFFIRM THAT EDUCATION IS A PRIORITY, BUT CERTAIN COMMITMENTS NEED TO BE ENHANCED AND MADE MORE SPECIFIC**

**Montreal, November 26, 2008** – The Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities (CREPUQ) is pleased to note that the five main political parties contesting the December 8 election all have made education a central priority. Each of them in their own way links university education with economic growth and to the capacity to meet the significant challenges Quebec faces in terms of health care, the environment and regional development.

In an open letter addressed to the party leaders, CREPUQ proposed that the political parties make education in general, and university teaching and research in particular, a priority. Each of them was asked to state their positions on five areas of concern to Quebec universities.

In response, the political parties have put forward a series of means to increase the number of Quebecers obtaining a university degree, support world class teaching and research, and reinforce Quebec universities as global players.

In terms of governance, the parties agree on the importance of respecting the character and values specific to each institution, as well as their institutional autonomy, while ensuring the highest levels of accountability in relation to the use of public funds and the achievement of their goals.

Finally, all parties are committed to increasing funding for post-secondary education. While CREPUQ is well aware of the significant sums allocated to university funding, universities are nonetheless concerned by the insufficient and vague nature of some of these commitments, particularly in a global context in which competing jurisdictions have made university education a priority. Under funding of Quebec universities, as measured against the average for universities in the other Canadian provinces, was estimated at \$375 million a year in 2002. Yet none of the parties has committed to closing this gap.

“We understand that, in the months to come, the focus must be on the world economic crisis,” says Heather Munroe-Blum, CREPUQ President and McGill University Principal and Vice-Chancellor. “We are committed to collaborating with the government elected on December 8 to support an economic turnaround and take up the many challenges to our society.”

“In fact, the challenges associated with providing quality university education and research are crucial to the future of Quebec society. We must also think of the longer term, and support our universities in ways that allow them to fulfill their missions, added Principal Munroe-Blum.”

CREPUQ encourages the public to read the open letter signed by the 18 university heads as well as the responses to it by the political parties. These documents are available on the CREPUQ website at [www.crepuq.qc.ca/elections-quebecoises-2008/](http://www.crepuq.qc.ca/elections-quebecoises-2008/).

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