



## **François Bédard, professor in the ESG UQAM Department of Urban Studies and Tourism, named Director General of the World Center of Excellence on Tourist Destinations**

Montreal, February 19, 2007 -- During the launch of the World Center of Excellence on Tourist Destinations (CED), held on February 19, 2007, at the Montreal Palais des congrès, the Interim Rector of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Danielle Laberge, was pleased to announce the appointment of François Bédard, Professor in the Department of Urban Studies and Tourism at the School of Business Administration (ESG UQAM), as Director General of the World Center of Excellence on Tourist Destinations. "I am very honoured that UQAM, as an affiliate member of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) since 1991, has contributed to the birth of the Center. I am delighted that the University is able to further the positioning and the development of the Center."

Attending the launch were Quebec Minister of Tourism, Françoise Gauthier; Canadian Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister Responsible for the Montreal Region, the Honourable Michael Fortier; Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization and holder of an Honorary Doctorate from UQAM, Francesco Frangialli; CEO of Tourism Montreal, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Tourism Commission, and Canadian representative to the World Tourism Organization, the Honourable Charles Lapointe; and Chairman of the Destination Council of the World Tourism Organisation, André Vallerand.

Professor François Bédard holds a doctorate in Management Sciences from the University Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne and an MBA from HEC Montréal. As well as being a professor in the Department of Urban Studies and Tourism at ESG UQAM, he is Director of the Centre international de formation et de recherche en tourisme (CIFORT), where he ensures the connection between UQAM and the UNWTO. His research and teaching activities focus mainly on strategies for adaptation to information and communication technologies in the services, particularly in the areas of tourism and higher education. In 2001, he initiated the establishment of a research and development laboratory, the LabTIC, connected with ESG UQAM, on the integration of ICTs in universities.

### **UQAM committed to the internationalization of knowledge**

The launch of the World Center of Excellence on Tourist Destinations was an opportunity for UQAM to reaffirm its commitment to the internationalization of knowledge. The University's *International Policy* sheds light on the numerous examples of internationalization in its university practices. Its objective is to foster the internationalization of education, research and creative endeavour and to ensure the coherence of its international institutional commitments. At UQAM,

the internationalization of knowledge is at work everywhere, most notably in the activities of its units with an international mission, including CIFORT. Internationalization is the sign of the maturity of an institution like UQAM, whose basic goals lead it to share its knowledge and to transfer it to an ever-widening circle of partners, such as the CED.

### **CIFORT**

Created in 1991, CIFORT is a unit with an international mission, connected with ESG UQAM. Its role is distinct from that of a chair, an institute or a research group, as its functions are concerned essentially with encouraging discussion and dialogue among its members with the aim of reinforcing their actions internationally and the influence of UQAM globally. CIFORT played a crucial role in the creation of the World Center of Excellence on Tourist Destinations as it oversaw a feasibility study, carried out by Zins Beaudesne, Groupe Secor, on the establishment of such a Center in Montreal. One of CIFORT's major partners is Bell, which donated \$90,000 to the unit under the development campaign *Prenez position pour l'UQAM 2002-2007*. These funds will enable CIFORT to pursue research relating to the Center's activities, notably for a research project on e-tourism and development. Bell recently donated an additional \$90,000 to enable the Transat Chair in Tourism, a member of CIFORT, to carry out a technology watch in response to the needs of the CED. Because of these two donations, totalling \$180,000, Bell has become a full partner of the World Center of Excellence on Tourist Destinations.

### **UQAM's School of Business Administration: a leader in tourism education and research**

UQAM's School of Business Administration (ESG UQAM) is among the world's top 13 educational institutions specialising in Tourism, according to *TedQual: The World's Leading Tourism Programmes*, a prestigious publication of the UNWTO. With its educational, research and publishing activities via the Transat Chair in Tourism and its Tourism Watch Network, CIFORT, the francophone tourism research journal (*Téoros*) and its undergraduate and graduate programs in Tourism and Hotel Management, including an undergraduate degree (concentration in Hotel Management and Hospitality), offered in association with the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec (ITHQ), and the distance learning program in Tourism Management offered with Télug, ESG UQAM is clearly a leader in Tourism education and research.

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