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The GDI Communicator is an internal newsletter intended to increase communication between management and staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

GDI T&E Proposes Scholarship Program

Gabriel Dumont Institute Training & Employment (GDI T&E) has submitted a proposal to Service Canada to establish a scholarship/bursary program under the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA). The goal of this fund would be to provide Métis clients with eligible action plans with AHRDA funding. The ability to establish such a program currently exists within the AHRD Agreement. The agreement states that "costs for the organization's contribution to an endowment for a bursary program for post-secondary programs are eligible program assistance costs for the organization." Following this section of the AHRDA, the Institute proposes to establish a *Training & Employment Scholarship and Bursary program*.

To establish a scholarship and bursary program, the Institute proposes to secure an endowment fund of \$1.3 million in a secure interest bearing investment. All

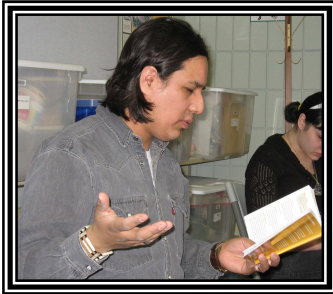
investments will be government-backed secure investments. Interest accrued would be allocated as scholarships/bursaries, and would be available for eligible applicants.

The Institute has the infrastructure and policies in place to effectively run such a program. For example, the Institute has been administering scholarships for Saskatchewan's Métis since the early 1980s through the *Gabriel Dumont Institute Scholarship Foundation*. The *Napoleon LaFontaine Scholarship Fund* is based on a similar strategy as the one proposed for GDI T&E. The *Napoleon LaFontaine Scholarship* is based on a 1.24 million dollar capital investment, and scholarships are awarded on the interest earned on the fund's principal. The Institute also administers the *SaskEnergy Métis Scholarship Program*, which was implemented in 1998 when SaskEnergy made a five-year commitment to the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the

Dumont Technical Institute to fund scholarships for a total of \$5,000 per Institute, annually. SaskEnergy continues to provide these scholarship funds on an annual basis. More recently, the Institute has added the *Gabriel Dumont College Graduate Student Bursary Program*, administering \$50,000 per year for a three-year pilot phase, and has administered over half a million dollars in scholarship and bursary funds for the *Métis Health and Wellness Scholarship Program*. A Scholarship Trustees and Selection Committee awards scholarships twice per year.

Given the Institute's successful history of administering scholarships and bursaries, and our strong organizational structure and policies and procedures, we are confident in our ability to efficiently and effectively run a GDI T&E scholarship and bursary program. The Institute is now waiting for a response from Service Canada regarding its proposal.





Writer, performer, poet, playwright, and amateur comedian Simon Moccasin

GDI Library Celebrates Aboriginal Storytelling Month

By Marilyn Belhumeur

As part of the fifth annual *Aboriginal Storytelling Month*, the Gabriel Dumont Institute Library in Regina hosted writer, performer, poet, playwright, and amateur comedian Simon Moccasin. Simon is from the Sauteaux First Nation in northwestern Saskatchewan. He has performed with the Bionic Bannock Boys, has appeared on shows such as *Moccasin Flats* and *Untamed Weather*, and has had stand-in parts on CTV's *Corner Gas*. He has a Bachelor of Education degree from the First Nations University of Canada.

Simon began his storytelling session by

telling the audience who he was, and where he came from. He also introduced his partner, Tracy, and their seven-week-old daughter Sage. Tracy and Sage joined Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education (SUNTEP) students and faculty in listening raptly as Simon led them through a series of stories that alternated between reflective and thought-provoking reminiscences of his personal history, and laugh-out-loud-funny stories of Wisahkecahk. Simon's flair for physical humour was evident as he acted out an amusing story about Raven that had his audience laughing from beginning to end. After about an hour of

stories, Simon, Tracy, and little Sage joined SUNTEP students and faculty for some light refreshments and more talk. (Sage in particular was very patient with all of her admirers, some of whom were threatening to take her home with them!) In the end, Mom, Dad, and Sage went home together, leaving SUNTEP students and staff with smiles on their faces, and few new stories to ponder.




Detail photograph of companion piece to Christi Belcourt's "Medicines to Help Us." This item is part of the Gabriel Dumont Institute Museum Collection.

GDI Hosts Successful Michif Conference

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) was pleased to host the 2008 National Michif Language Conference in Saskatoon on March 14, 15, 2008. The conference, themed *Michif is a Beautiful Language*, was an opportunity for Michif speakers from across the Métis Homeland to come together to speak the Michif languages, and share strategies for their preservation and promotion.

Support from the Department of Canadian Heritage's *Aboriginal Languages Initiative* (ALI) and Métis provincial organizations, whose Michif initiatives are funded by Canadian Heritage, made the conference possible. With ALI funding, GDI was pleased to support many delegates, which ensured that Saskatchewan Michif speakers were well represented at the conference.

The conference was also an opportunity for the Institute to launch three Michif resources.

The GDI Publishing Department made sure the event was a great success. Thank you to Karon Shmon, David Morin, Morin, Christa Nicholat, Amy Sokol, Amy Gallagher, Lori Perkins, and Darren Préfontaine for all your hard work. 



SUNTEP Prince Albert Update

By Michael Relland

The school year at the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education program Prince Albert (SUNTEP PA) is more than half over. First-term classes ended on November 30, 2007 with final examinations taking place from December 10 to 14, 2007. Term two classes began on January 3, 2008 for all students including the fourth-year students who returned from their internships.

As of February 15, 2008, SUNTEP PA has a total enrolment of 84 students, enrolled as follows:

Year One	23
Year Two	22
Year Three	23
Year Four	16

SUNTEP's staff ensures that students are exposed to a wide variety of learning opportunities, including professional development. SUNTEP PA

hosted a number of professional development opportunities for their students. On February 18, 2008, it hosted a Project Wild/Below Zero workshop for interested third and fourth-year students. On February 15, 2008, it hosted a presentation on youth gangs in which a number of youth from WonSka Cultural School shared their experiences with the students.

On Monday, January 14, 2008, Thelma, Bonnie and Diane Musqua presented on the impact of the Residential School experience. In this presentation, they discussed the intergenerational impact of Residential Schools, and how their effects can still be felt today on the Aboriginal community. SUNTEP PA made a presentation to the University of

Saskatchewan's College of Education faculty on January 19, 2008. The presentation provided an overview and update of the SUNTEP PA program, and the new initiative that it was implementing. The Internship Pilot Project concluded at the end of December, 2007. To date, the evaluations that have been received have been very positive, and SUNTEP PA looks forward to further refining the materials for next fall's internship cycle.

SUNTEP PA staff includes: Michael Relland, Coordinator; Donna Biggins, Clerk-Steno; Sandy Sherwin-Shields, Faculty; Bente Huntley, Faculty; Leah Dorion, Faculty; Corey Teeter, Faculty; and Liza Brown, Faculty. 🌐



Students and Staff at SUNTEP Prince Albert 2004-2005

Collective Bargaining Results in Tentative Deal

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) and the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees Union (SGEU), have reached a tentative three-year agreement for amendments to the Institute's Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) which expired on March 31, 2007. The agreement is subject to the ratification of the parties.

The GDI-SGEU agreement is unique since it is a Métis-specific agreement. The Institute is recognized as a significant Métis employer in the province. Even before its recent expansion to include GDI Training & Employment, the Institute was the largest Métis employer in the province.

GDI operates with an exemption from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission that

allows for the specific recruitment, hiring, and retention of Métis individuals. The CBA also reflects this organizational objective by providing job security for in-scope Métis employees. The Institute has experienced good labour relations over the course of its history.

Further details of the amendments will be forthcoming in a future edition of this newsletter pending ratification of the deal. 🌐

"The collective agreement...reflects [GDI's] organizational objective[s] by providing job security for in-scope Métis employees."



Accounting Restructuring Proposed

"It is not surprising that so many changes over a short period of time have also brought with them a number of challenges."



Photograph of one of hundreds of GDI Training & Employment clients assisted with their Action Plans.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) Department of Finance and Operations has witnessed many changes over the past few years. It has had three Directors of Finance, it has changed its accounting system software, it has moved from Regina to Saskatoon, and it has managed the financial aspects relating to creation of GDI Training & Employment. It is not surprising that so many changes over a short period of time have also brought with them a number of challenges, including human resource, facility, and control issues.

GDI's senior management has proposed a restructuring of the Department in order to address some identified challenges. The proposed

plan includes developing a second Accountant position, moving the Department to the Dumont Technical Institute building, implementing monitor controls policy, developing a procedures process, adding new staff positions, and recruiting and retaining staff.

It is anticipated that a second Accountant will have many benefits, including a shared workload and greater depth of expertise. The plan to move the Department ensures that the Institute's management and the Department have the opportunity to communicate, and it will allow the Department to be part of a larger work unit. New staff positions

will allow the Institute to function at its capacity, and be more effective given the Institute's increased size. Finally, developing and implementing a recruitment and retention strategy will ensure that the Institute has qualified employees who want to build their careers within the organization.

Further updates on this proposed plan will be made in future newsletters.



DTI Plans Several New Programs

The Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) program year runs from July 1 to June 30 with programs starting at variable times all year. For the most part, the Basic Education courses operate on the traditional ten-month school year (September to June). However, the same is not true for DTI's Skills Training programs. Because DTI strives to meet a great deal of criteria, such as being responsive to labour market demands as well

as the needs of the Métis community, Skills Training programs must have flexible start dates, and the ability to operate at any time during the year.

For the 2007-2008 program year, DTI has already offered education and training programs to over 600 students, and has programming plans for another 54 students before the end of June, 2008. Upcoming programs include Diamond Driller Helper/Oilfield training for

Nipawin; Heavy Equipment Operator for ten students in Saskatoon and ten in Ile-à-la-Crosse; Heavy Truck Transport Mechanic program in Moose Jaw, Truck Driver Training in La Ronge; and a Welding Job Preparation program in La Loche. All programs are subject to adequate student enrolment.



Northern Campus Update

Early this year, the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) made an offer to purchase the Community Development Corporation (CDC) building in La Loche in order to provide the Institute with classroom and office space, and a stronger northern presence. La Loche was selected as a prime location for a more visible GDI presence in the North because of the area's tar sands activity, its general exploration activity particularly for uranium, and the fact that it is a Métis community without a large post-secondary presence.

The offer to purchase the building was conditional

on a building inspection and an environmental report. The Provincial Métis Housing completed a thorough inspection in early February, bringing in a plumbing and heating specialist to assist. The environmental report has been postponed until the spring. GDI will be partnering with the town of La Loche for the environmental report.

The town will hire Machibroda Engineering to provide an environmental assessment on an adjacent lot. Partnering in the environmental assessment will help to reduce costs for both parties. GDI's offer on the property has been

extended until the condition of the environmental report can be satisfied.

GDI is a member of the La Loche Post-Secondary Steering Committee, which has applied for resources for a feasibility study for the development of a post-secondary centre with laboratory and research capabilities.

If GDI is successful in its offer to purchase the CDC building, it is anticipated that the Institute will operate from the CDC building for approximately five years before becoming a tenant in the proposed new post-secondary centre.



CDC building in LaLoche

Métis Health and Wellness Scholarship Program

Awards for the *Métis Health and Wellness Scholarship Program* were made on March 25, 2008. Sixty-eight students in health-related training programs received scholarships and bursaries to help support their studies. In total, \$151,000 in scholarship and bursary awards were made during this round. All awards were granted based on established criteria.

The *Métis Health and Wellness Scholarship Program* was established in December 2006, when GDI, the Métis Nation—Saskatchewan, and the Métis National Council

(MNC) signed an agreement for the provision of scholarship and bursary funds for Saskatchewan Métis involved in health-related training.

The *Métis Health and Wellness Scholarship Program* offers both scholarship and bursary support to encourage Saskatchewan Métis to enter into health-related careers associated with the advancement of Métis people.

Funding for the program has been provided under a multi-year (2007-2010)

contribution agreement from Health Canada to the MNC. Recent political turmoil at the MNC has resulted in uncertainty for the *Métis Health and Wellness Scholarship Program*. The program's future is unclear as it has been put on hold by Health Canada. It is expected that some sort of indication about its future may be available later in May. The Institute is hopeful that the issues will be resolved, and this valuable program will continue in the future.



"The future of the program is unclear as it has been put on hold by Health Canada."



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