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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

Learning Partnership Helps Meet Demand for Skilled Labour

The Government of Saskatchewan and the Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) are partnering to ensure Métis have training opportunities to help meet the high demand for skilled labour. Through this partnership, DTI has established a mobile classroom at a Ministry of Highways infrastructure facility in Prince Albert. Space inside the facility's shop is used for demonstrations, and as a lab for hands-on experience. Students also get additional learning opportunities by seeing how their skills will be used in a real-world setting when ministry staff repair or maintain fleet equipment.

"This is an example of how a ministry can be innovative to help meet the current economic demands for skilled labour, and have even more people benefit from our robust economy through partnership opportunities," Darryl Hickie, MLA for Prince Albert Carlton said on behalf of Highways and Infrastructure Minister Wayne Elhard.

There are currently eleven students who initially enrolled in the pilot Heavy Equipment, Truck and Transport Applied Certificate program in February.

"We approached the Ministry because we wanted to offer this course, but didn't have all the necessary resources to offer a full learning experience," said Geordy McCaffrey, Gabriel Dumont Institute Executive Director. "Thanks to this partnership with the ministry, we can now do that, and give Métis students the knowledge they need to compete in today's labour market."

When students finish the program in June they will have completed their first year of training to become apprentice heavy-duty mechanics. They will have the skills necessary to seek apprenticeship opportunities, while the Ministry will have an opportunity to recruit new employees.

The program originated

after discussions with Brett Vandale, DTI Director, and the Department of Highways' Tim Earing. Brett and Tim talked about training needs, and during the discussion the idea of using the Ministry of Highways Repair Depot in Prince Albert came up. Over the spring and fall of 2007, several meetings took place in order to flesh out this concept, and to work towards a training agreement. In the fall of 2007, a training plan was approved and DTI had a partnership arrangement with the Ministry of Highways to use the Repair Depot as a training site.

As for the program's future, DTI and the Department of Highways are negotiating to offer this program again. There is also a plan to bring back the students who have completed level 1 of their apprenticeship, and continue their training for level 2.

For more information on the program please contact Brett Vandale at brett.vandale@dti.gdins.org.



Strategic Planning Discussion Paper Released

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) Board of Governors is developing a strategic plan for 2008-2011. Two planning sessions were held in early 2008. From these, a discussion document was developed that delineates key points from the planning sessions as well as broad statements relating to the Institute's strategic direction.



Geordy McCaffrey, GDI Executive Director at the January 2008 Strategic Planning session

The strategic planning discussion document is being made available to all Métis Nation—Saskatchewan Regions and Locals, and other provincial stakeholders for feedback. The GDI Board of Governors will collect and review input from these consultations in order to finalize the Institute's strategic plan for the next three years.

The broad strategic directions that are the most important considerations for the next three years are as follows:

1. **Governance Roles and Relationships**—GDI will strengthen and stabilize its governance and legal status;
2. **Internal capacity and stabilization**—GDI will stabilize and affirm its internal structure, processes and operations;
3. **Métis Centre of Excellence**—GDI will plan to develop a permanent Saskatoon-based facility for its central operations;
4. **The Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA)** — GDI will seek to renew its partnership with the federal government to deliver labour market programs and services in Saskatchewan;
5. **GDI Cultural Strategy**—Métis culture is a cornerstone of the Institute's mandate; amassing and disseminating a strong Métis cultural legacy will remain a priority.
6. **Communications**—GDI will systematically maintain open lines of communication with its

stakeholders and partners.

Other goals and objectives that did not achieve a priority level at this time but will remain important considerations include carry-over goals from the previous strategic plan—a northern campus; trades training; graduate studies; and Gabriel Dumont College core funding. Other areas of interest include the right mix of programs, training and employment services; labour market strategy; partnerships with industry and employers; environmental policies; and student recruitment and retention planning.

GDI's Board of Governors, senior management and staff are committed to setting priority goals that are realistic, achievable and supported by the community and stakeholders. The document is available on the GDI website. 

Centre of Excellence Business Plan Complete

A business proposal for the **Métis Centre of Excellence** project has been completed. The proposal makes the case for a **Métis Centre of Excellence** for the province, and illustrates the feasibility of such a project. Presently, the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) serves over 1,300 students and clients in Métis communities throughout Saskatchewan. GDI also has significant cultural assets and Métis-

specific projects. For instance, GDI's museum has over 700 artifacts representing Métis history and culture.

GDI has outgrown its current facilities and is finding it difficult to administer programs and funds from four different locations in Saskatoon. In order to increase capacity, and to more efficiently administer programs, GDI's Board of Governors envisions the development

of a centralized facility: a **Métis Centre of Excellence**.

The facility is projected to be approximately 36,000 ft² and will include six classrooms, two computer labs, a 2,000 ft² trades training area, a daycare, a museum and archives, a library, and office spaces. The Centre, to be located in Saskatoon, is projected to cost \$21 million.



Apshishiwak Dancers—SUNTEP Regina



GDI Updates

Welcome New Staff

Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) is pleased to welcome three new staff members to the Department of Finance and Operations. Effective July 1, Jim Edmondson will be the Institute's Director of Human Resources. Jim has a Bachelor of Commerce degree (University of Saskatchewan/U of S) and has owned and operated a Loomis Courier business in Saskatoon among other experiences.

Also effective July 1, Gisele Boyer will become the GDI Director of Finance. Gisele is a CMA and holds an MBA (U of S). Gisele has several years experience working as the Director of Finance for the Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan, Inc.

GDI All-Staff Meeting

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) All-Staff Meeting is an opportunity for Institute staff to meet, share ideas, exchange information, and build collegial relationships. This year, GDI is planning for an All-Staff Meeting to be held September 24 and 25, 2008.

A planning committee has been formed to work out the details of the meeting, such as location, venue, agenda, and etc. Planning committee members are Jessica Rorison, Donna

Finally, effective June 23, Cory McDougall will lead several projects for GDI's Department of Finance and Operations including the Policies and Procedures project, website update, and winding up the Community Training Residence program. Cory has a Bachelor of Commerce degree (U of S), has worked with SaskNative Economic Development Corporation in the past, and is a Saskatoon entrepreneur. We are pleased to have these individuals join GDI and extend a warm welcome.

Mileage Rates Increase

Please note that effective May 23, 2008 mileage rates have increased. The new rates are .44 cents per kilometre (South) and .46 cents per kilometre (North).

Ross, Amy Gallagher, and Rhonda Pilon. Tentative plans include Saskatoon as the possible location and the Saskatoon Inn as the venue. This year's All-Staff meeting will include presentations of the Institute's Strategic Plan and the Policies and Procedures project to all Institute staff.

This year's meeting will be significantly larger than it has been in previous years due to the Institute's recent growth. In 2007, GDI incorporated the Training

Christmas Break

The GDI Board of Governors has set the dates for the 2008 Christmas break. The Christmas break will begin December 24, 2008 with staff returning to work on January 5, 2009.

GDI Offices Moving

Over the early part of the summer, the GDI offices currently located at 219 Robin Crescent will be moved to 917—22nd Street West. The move includes relocating the Department of Finance and Operations and GDI Training and Training and Employment's head office. The coordinator assigned to oversee the move is Jason Johnson. As part of the move, the classrooms currently located at 917—22nd Street West (DTI) will be moved across the street to 1005 22nd Street West. It is anticipated that the majority of the move will be complete by July 1, 2008. 🌐

and Employment entity into its holdings, significantly increasing its staff complement. Other departments, such as the Dumont Technical Institute, have grown as well. The All-Staff Meeting will bring staff together from across the province for two days of meetings. Other departments may also meet in the days leading up to the All-Staff Meeting in order to accomplish department-specific business. 🌐



GDI/DTI Building Saskatoon

Mark your calendars for the GDI All-Staff meeting September 24 and 25, 2008 in Saskatoon.



Evaluation of GDI Complete

“the cultural mandate of the Institute [is] a key distinctive feature of GDI, which is deemed critical to the success of students, and their sense of belonging and cultural pride.”



SUNTEP Regina students visit Louis Riel statue at the Manitoba Legislature Building in Winnipeg. October, 2006.

In the fall of 2007, the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) and Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour (AEEL) commissioned EKOS Research Associates Inc. to conduct an evaluation of Institute programs—Dumont Technical Institute (DTI), the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) and the Publishing Department. The evaluation's purpose was to assess the rationale, design and delivery, effectiveness and impacts for the period between September 1, 2004 and June 30, 2007.

The GDI Evaluation Final Report is now complete. On the whole, the evaluation is positive with respect to GDI—its existence as a unique institution and model for Métis-specific education in Canada. The strongest perceived benefit identified is the Institute's cultural mandate. This is described as GDI's key distinctive feature, which is deemed critical to the students' success, and to their sense of belonging and to their cultural pride. The GDI Board of Governors, faculty and staff are described as being of high quality, and are considered very dedicated to the Institute's success. Participants themselves most frequently identified their instructors as the “best thing about their program.” The majority of the

Institute's staff is Métis, and this was viewed as being important to understanding DTI/SUNTEP students, and contributing to the Institute's culturally-affirming environment.

By far, the most-mentioned challenges facing GDI related to its funding and limitations placed on both GDI's operations and programming. It was noted in the evaluation that funding limitations impact the extent and array of student support services; program diversity, such as other degree programs; and enhancements to cultural programming such as language promotion and education.

After funding, a second challenge noted by key informants is the Institute's governance. As noted previously, key informants were generally pleased with the Institute's direction in the area of governance and accountability. Policy development and professional development in these areas has been quite significant in the last two years. However, many key informants suggested that these areas require continued vigilance and ongoing attention.

Overall, evaluation study participants expressed confidence in GDI management and, as mentioned previously, the

current Board and staff are well perceived. There were, however, some comments by key informants within GDI about challenges related to the Institute's internal operations, including internal communications; rapid growth and GDI Saskatoon's physically disparate office locations; an identified need for additional management and human resources capacity at GDI; the disparity of DTI's operational funding; and staffing in a tight labour market and for remote locations.

The evaluation also pointed to GDI's unanticipated impacts—the most often mentioned unanticipated impact of Institute programs has been the “ripple effect” of successful GDI graduates on their families and on their communities—GDI graduates become role models and leaders.

Finally, the evaluation highlights the important role of GDI in the Métis community, noting that the importance of GDI extends beyond the provincial Métis community—as a unique Métis-driven educational institution in Canada, the Institute is a source of pride among Métis in other provinces.

The complete report will be officially released in the coming weeks. 🌐




2006-2007 Annual Report Distribution

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) 2006-2007 Annual Report is hot off the press and is being distributed to stakeholders, community representatives, and other interested parties. GDI's various departments will receive copies of the report in the near future. It is also available on the main GDI website and on *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture*. Each year, the Institute produces an Annual Report as part of our obligation to our stakeholders: Métis

people and communities in Saskatchewan, funding agents, and the general public. In addition to fulfilling our obligations, the Annual Report provides an opportunity to increase the Institute's profile and to highlight GDI's amazing work.

The report provides information on a number of areas of the Institute's operation as well as the audited financial reports for the fiscal year. GDI oversees five incorporated entities and operates the Saskatchewan Urban

Native Teacher Education Program as part of its core services. The five incorporated entities are the Dumont Technical Institute, the Community Training Residence, GDI Scholarship Foundation, Gabriel Dumont College (GDC), and GDI Training & Employment. In addition to the financial reports, the Annual Report includes reports from the Board of Governors, the Executive Director, and the Institute's programs and departments including SUNTEP, Publishing, Libraries, and Finance.

For additional copies, contact the GDI head office. 



Sick Leave Interpretation Bulletin

In an effort to clarify the Institute's sick leave policy and procedures, a sick leave bulleting has been produced. Under existing policy, employees earn sick leave credits as follows: Twenty days sick leave per year at the rate of 1.67 days per month of employment. The unused portion of an employee's sick leave accumulates from year to year to a maximum of 125 days.

New employees who become sick and do not have sick days accumulated will be advanced up to five days sick leave. These days will be deducted from future accumulations.

Permanent employees will be allowed to advance a maximum of five days sick leave in the event that they do not have any

accumulated sick leave days. These days will be deducted from future accumulations. In the event that an employee terminates her/his employment or is terminated by the employer any advanced sick leave days will be deducted from their final pay period.

When requested, an employee will be responsible for giving their supervisor a complete copy of the Institute's "Opinion of Sickness—Practitioner's Report" completed by a medical, dental or optical practitioner if the employee has been absent for more than three consecutive days. In cases where the employee is absent for more than five consecutive work days the Institute reserves the right

to require a second opinion and have a "Second Opinion of Sickness—Practitioner's Report" completed within 14 days of receipt of the "Opinion of Sickness—Practitioner's Report."

Effective January 1, 2009, the Institute will be dropping its Short Term Disability Benefit. Employees who exhaust their available sick days will be deferred to EI Sickness Benefits for that period of time between use of Institute accumulated sick leave and the 119-day waiting period for the Institute's Long Term Disability Program.

This interpretation bulletin is effective April 1, 2008 and is not retroactive.



Under existing policy, employees earn ... twenty days sick leave per year at the rate of 1.67 days per month of employment.



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e/index.php/833)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.gdins.org



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