

BACKGROUND

Gabriel Dumont Institute

Recognizing the importance of cultural strengthening programs, A.M.N.S.I.S. organized a cultural conference in 1976, funded by the Department of the Secretary of State. The main conclusion of the conference was that the Association should work to establish a major educational-cultural program, which would take the form of a native studies, cultural and research institute. The Association developed a detailed proposal for such an institute, and presented this to various government agencies. After more than two years of discussions and lobbying, an agreement was reached by the Minister of Continuing Education and the President of A.M.N.S.I.S. in the Spring of 1979, to move toward the development of such an institution. This began with discussions on the purpose, role and programs to be carried out by such an institute. The purpose was identified as strengthening Native culture, developing job-oriented training programs geared to Native needs, and cross-cultural programming. The Institute became known as the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, named for the heroic Metis Leader and General, Gabriel Dumont.

It was agreed that initial programs should include a library resource center, a research section, a curriculum development section, and field liaison services. It was also agreed that the Institute should have a community education role. The Institute evolved steadily as planning, resources and opportunities became available.

The first contract to fund the Gabriel Dumont Institute was effective December 1, 1979 and ran to June 1, 1980. It provided for a developmental phase, wherein the structure, policy and procedures of the Institute, along with a three-year program plan were developed. The recruiting, selection, and appointment of the senior staff took place during this phase as well. The first operational contract covered a three-year period, from June 1, 1980, to March 31, 1983. The progress of the Institute was reviewed at that time, and a new agreement was signed with the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower for core support.

Over the years, the Institute has gained a national reputation as a primary cultural and educational institution for Metis and Non-Status Indians. Gabriel Dumont Institute graduates are employed in several provinces, while curriculum materials produced by the Institute are purchased across Canada.