

Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

Saskatoon Office

~~Presentation to~~ The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

Introduction to GDI

The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research was incorporated in 1980 to serve the education needs of Saskatchewan Metis and Non-Status Indian communities.

As a completely native-directed education and cultural establishment, the Gabriel Dumont Institute has been unique in Canada. At its inception, the Gabriel Dumont Institute focused on education through cultural research as a means to renew and strengthen the heritage and achievement of the Metis and Non-Status Indian people of Saskatchewan. The next logical step was for the Institute to become directly involved in education in order to serve the multifaceted needs, including the employment needs of the Saskatchewan Metis community.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute has pursued the development of curriculum and historical education materials. It trains native teachers and delivers programs contracted from universities, colleges, and technical institutes in the province. The very first and perhaps best known of these efforts was the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP). It is a four-year teacher education program leading to a bachelor of education degree. In essence, SUNTEP trains native teachers to meet the needs of native students and has served as a model for native adult education programs right across Canada.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute serves over 500 students each year. It oversees the native services division of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology (SIAST). The main office of the Institute is in Regina with sub-offices in Saskatoon and Prince Albert. Programs are delivered on a needs basis in Metis communities across the province.

In addition to direct program delivery the Institute provides library and resource centres in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. It has revolving mini-library satellite centres across the province, a Research and Development Division, a Finance and Administration Division, a Curriculum and Native Studies Division, and Community Liaison Services. Yearly, the Institute hosts a cultural and education conference.

In 1989, the Institute further expanded its operation to undertake the development and operation of the first Community Training Residence for female offenders in Saskatchewan. In 1992 the Gabriel Dumont Institute launched its second affiliate, the Dumont Technical Institute Inc., which will be a federated college of SIAST.

The growth, expansion, and increasingly significant accomplishments of the Gabriel Dumont Institute throughout the 1980s have been achieved by keeping the Institute's guiding principles at the forefront of all consultation, negotiation, and decision-making. These are:

- * all training and professional education delivered by the Institute must be fully accredited and recognized;
- * all activities of the Institute must be of the highest quality; and
- * all activities undertaken by the Institute will be directed toward the self-determination and self-reliance of the Metis people.

Gabriel Dumont Institute represents a major step toward the realization of Metis self-determination in education, training, employment and cultural development. The Institute also sees the necessity to continue to raise the level of public awareness regarding the needs, goals, aspirations and accomplishments of the Metis people.

Highlights in the Evolution of Gabriel Dumont Institute

The Metis Nation needs people educated to take on the responsibility of nationhood: informed citizens, professionals, politicians, bureaucrats and business people. Gabriel Dumont Institute is working to realize the dream of Metis self-government.

Following are the highlights of the major contractual initiatives and landmarks of the Gabriel Dumont Institute over the last twelve years:

1980 Approval from Saskatchewan Education for core funding of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research;

The Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) is established in cooperation with Saskatchewan Education and the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan;

1983 Implementation of Saskatchewan Training for Employment (STEP);
Initiation of federally-sponsored preparatory, credit skill training, and university programs (skills growth fund and direct course purchase);

1985 Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation is developed;

1987 Agreement for GDI to undertake the joint management of the Native Services Division within the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, (SIAST);

Donner Canadian Foundation grant for the Human Justice Program;

1988 The Native Economic Development Program, (NEDP) contract, to deliver the Native Management Program, is signed;

1989 Signing of an historical agreement with the RCMP to train suitable candidates for policing;

Launching of the first edition of the International Journal of Indigenous Studies;

Signing of a cooperative agreement with the Ile-A-La-Crosse School Board for a high school completion program;

Awarding of the contract, through Saskatchewan Justice, to develop and deliver the first Residential Community Training Residence Program for female offenders in Saskatchewan;

Development of a new research base entitled With Beads, Silk and Quills;

1990 The signing of an agreement with Employment and Immigration Canada to consult with Metis people in Saskatchewan regarding the training needs within their communities;

Signing of an agreement with the Metis National Council, funded through the Secretary of State, for a National Survey of Literacy Programming for Metis people;

Launching of SIAST's first Aboriginal Student Centre;

Initiation of GDI Library Automation and Linkage with university and other databases;

1991 Successful negotiation of a memorandum of agreement for the creation of the Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) as a Federated Institution within SIAST;

Significant donations of Riel's diary and historical Metis manuscripts and dictionary to the Institute archives by the Pappas family of Vancouver;

1992 SUNTEP graduates total over 200;

Signing of master agreement between GDI and Saskatchewan education for the Dumont Technical Institute;

Awarded contract through Employment and Immigration Canada to develop an Aboriginal "Stay in School" Speakers Bureau.

Special Features of GDI Programs

In providing education and employment training opportunities, which are accessible and appropriate for Saskatchewan's Metis peoples, programs run through the Gabriel Dumont Institute have been designed with a number of special features.

1. GDI programs are, for the most part, community-based. In essence, this means that courses leading to diplomas, normally attainable only by attending classes on the campuses of universities, colleges, and the SIAST, are offered in towns and urban centres across Saskatchewan. Students are encouraged to live in their own communities, to maintain political awareness and to become bi-cultural citizens.
2. Most of GDI programs offer a 16-week preparatory phase which includes upgrading in skills related to the specific program. This may include preparation in reading, writing, and mathematics. In this way, students whose previous academic history or literacy skills have not been strong, or whose studies have been interrupted, may gain access to training that they would not qualify for through mainstream institutions.
3. GDI programs offer a Metis Studies component to enable students to grow in the knowledge and pride of their heritage and cultural identity.
4. Gabriel Dumont Institute programs provide a comprehensive system of support to students. Community-based programs include access to a counsellor who is available for both group and individual counselling. Other duties of the counsellor may include assisting students in the procurement of housing, child care, income maintenance, personal financial planning, tutorials, and recreation. Referral to specialized services, such as family counselling can also be arranged. Students of the Institute have a sense of not being cast into a large institute without any support.
5. The Institute includes, if at all possible, an applied practicum phase in each of its programs to provide the students with direct experience in their area of study.



Gabriel Dumont Institute Programs

University Programs: Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP); Native Human Justice; Native Business Management; Business Management Diploma and Certificate; Native Social Work; Community Economic Development; Native Social Work Certificate

Technical Programs: Forestry Technician; Chemical Dependency Worker; Business Administration; Radio\TV Electronics; Early Childhood Development; Business Administration; Integrated Resource Management

Preparatory Programs: Pre-Nursing; Pre-RCMP; 0 to 5 Literacy; High School Completion; Pre-Forestry; Job Readiness Training; Academic 12 Sciences; Social Work Preparation

- Department report on work

New Programs

- Wild Rice Harvesters Co-op ~~Co-op~~
- Pilot Project in Housing Admin.
- Metis Literacy ~~Co-op~~

Sept 94 - completion & evaluation.

GDI's Mandate For The Nineties

The new GDI mandate, 1992-1997 was approved by the membership at the Annual General Meeting in January 1992. It is entitled Towards Self-Government: A Mandate For The Nineties and looks toward an independent, self-determined Metis Nation, with a full range of Metis-controlled education institutions and resources. The Gabriel Dumont Institute's mandate provides the Institute with guiding principles, goals and objectives.

To this time the Gabriel Dumont Institute has been working toward a new education system for Metis people. It has succeeded. It now must work within a new reality for the people: A SELF-GOVERNED METIS NATION.

Exercising Self-Government

- * The Gabriel Dumont Institute will take the lead role in educating for self-government and nation-building.
- * To develop the cultural foundation of the Metis Nation, Gabriel Dumont Institute will enhance, develop, collect, support, and disseminate language materials and programs pertaining to the languages spoken by the Metis, particularly Cree, Dene and Michif.
- * The Institute will collect, develop, design, test and evaluate materials related to the Metis people for curriculum development. It will enhance and expand the library holdings, archival resources, genealogical research and historical and archaeological information of the Metis people.
- * Essential to the goals of self-determination are the support and continued expansion of a Metis-specific resource-base. The GDI must put as a priority the acquisition and accessibility of all written knowledge of the Metis. The Institute's Resource Centre must remain accessible to the community. Modern technology is available to put the material now in our vast collection of documents into computerized data banks to make this collection even more accessible to everyone.

Metis Education System

- * Establishment of a comprehensive Metis education system governed by a Metis Education Act, regulations, policies, and procedures developed by metis governments at the local and provincial levels.

Dumont Technical Institute

- * The Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) federated with the SIAST will develop and deliver, in collaboration with the Metis communities and other Metis self-governed structures, those courses which are deemed essential for the goals of Metis self-government and the development of strong and independent individuals and communities;
- * DTI will develop strategies and services which support the Metis to access and successfully complete SIAST programs and other programs developed under the terms and conditions of the federation agreement;
- * DTI will undertake the assessment of post-secondary technical-vocational needs and experiences of the Metis and identify the appropriate resources, programs and services to address these needs;
- * DTI will deliver Adult Basic Education (ABE), Preparatory and Technical-Vocational Programs under the terms and conditions of the federation agreement;
- * DTI will enter into agreement with employees to ensure employment of Metis graduates in jobs of the cutting edge of technology.

Self-Determination at the University Level

The GDI must commission an assessment of the position of the universities in Saskatchewan in regards to Metis self-determination. Governance and administrative control by Metis people of programs and decisions related to Metis programs must be examined. The existing commitment of the two provincial universities to SUNTEP, employment equity, federation proposals and support for Metis students must be evaluated. If the evaluation reveals lack of support by the universities as to the goal of Metis self-determination, alternative accreditation mechanisms and institutional options will be considered.

- * Aboriginal language development and teacher preparation must become a priority at the university level.
- * Negotiations toward a university education strategy for Metis people must be continued.
- * Development must proceed for SUNTEP models in training in the professions.

Regional Metis College

- * Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Metis government intend to create an adult education component that serves the regional needs of our people. One northern and one southern regional Metis-controlled college would meet the diverse needs of Metis adults in literacy training, cultural and language development, employment training, professional access and Metis.

K-12 System

- * Local Metis School Boards must be organized where numbers warrant.
- * Metis-controlled schools must be developed in Metis communities.
- * Strategic partnerships between Metis governments and School Boards in urban and rural divisions must exist regardless of whether the school is provincial, Metis, federal or band-controlled.
- * Metis-controlled demonstration schools must be developed as practicum centres for teacher trainees and as research centres for evolving Metis-specific teaching materials and pedagogy.

Community Education

- * Community education must become a renewed emphasis of the GDI. It has become apparent that there is a desperate need in Metis communities for materials and literacy classes in the aboriginal languages. Forums are needed to convey information to that segment of the population who will not be formally involved in any of the education structures within our new education network.
- * Community education would involve information on:
 - Planning for self-government
 - Metis rights, land claims, constitutional and aboriginal rights
 - Implementation of self-government
 - discussions on what self-government should be like for our communities
 - institutions of self-government
- * Part of the community education mandate would be to engage the communities in research activities that would build the foundation for community self-government.
- * Community research on the local environment, economy, historical enterprises and education levels, would provide a knowledge base for future decision-making. Decisions for GDI programming could also evolve from the community-based information sources.