



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

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Aboriginal Employment: Quality Versus Quantity

By James Oloo

In January 2013, Dr. Eric Howe and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) released a report titled 'Employment of First Nations People: Saskatchewan Lags Behind.' The report identifies the employment gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people as a key challenge facing Saskatchewan today. Calling the gap "appalling," the report states that if Saskatchewan employed First Nations people at the same rate as Alberta and Manitoba, it would increase its GDP by \$6.7 billion.

Howe reports a higher representation of Aboriginal people in the lower skilled occupations and suggests that the federal policy to welcome unskilled foreign workers has negatively impacted Aboriginal employment. This article is not to critique the Howe report, but rather to enhance the debate.

Closing the employment gap is the right thing to do. Also important, however, is increasing the numbers of Aboriginal people in skilled positions. Both will require more than just the creation of unskilled low-paying positions. Rather, we must emphasize sustainable opportunities that offer meaningful careers. Once businesses develop quality opportunities and work with

institutes such as GDI to provide Aboriginal youth with effective support systems to develop marketable skills, the numbers will follow (see article on LPN, on page 4). Increasing the number of Aboriginal people holding higher level positions in the workplace may have an important flow-on effect in increasing Aboriginal employment levels. Often times, we tend to focus on the numbers (quantity) and not skills (quality).


The issue of employment always brings to the fore the notion of quality versus quantity. Quality refers to jobs that pay well and are generally likely to be around in the long term. A not so quality job is usually temporary, low wage, and susceptible to economic downturn. Quantity on the other hand emphasizes getting people to work, no matter what the job is or how low the wage. So, quality versus quantity, which is preferable? You decide.

Usually the word 'gap' implies quantity - increasing employment and closing the gap. However, focusing on quality is likely to result in more and better paying jobs. This is what GDI is about - providing skills

training in areas that are marketable. Improving Aboriginal employment outcomes should go beyond lowering the unemployment rate to include ensuring that talented and motivated Aboriginal individuals can reach their career goals.

Many people are motivated to work and the Métis have a strong history and tradition of work. A steady job is perhaps the most effective means of overcoming disadvantage. But this being information age, people are paid according to what they know. Sustainability of employment is attributable to interest in the type of work and financial benefits.

In Queensland Australia, the Government established Wal- Meta Unit to achieve targets of 2.4% Aboriginal employees at all salary levels in the public sector. The program aimed at increasing Aboriginal employment in the public service and providing them with career development opportunities while eliminating barriers to Aboriginal employment. That is, it targeted both quality and quantity.

For countries affected by economic recession, focus should be on quantity - getting people back to work and economy moving again. But in Saskatchewan, focus should be quality jobs for Aboriginal people. While it is crucial to bridge, nay, fill the employment gap, it should be a concern if most of the new jobs are in low paying low skilled unsustainable positions. 



GDI Apprenticeship Initiative Update

By James Oloo

As of May 15, 2013, we have 80 indentured apprentices or 67% of our goal of 120 indentured apprentices by December 2013. We have signed partnerships with 107 companies who have expressed interest in offering apprenticeship placements to our clients. Of the 107 companies, 73 are currently employing our clients.

Our clients are presently working in 16 different industries (94% of our target of 17 industries) as welder, automotive service technician, carpenter, electrician, hair stylist, heavy duty equipment mechanic, industrial mechanic, iron worker, locksmith, meat cutter, motor vehicle body repairer, parts person, pipefitter, plumber, sheet metal worker, and truck and transport mechanic.

In general, apprenticeship is embedded in employment. Hence employer partnership is a necessary and sometimes restrictive condition for the success of the program. Employers train, supervise, and mentor the clients; pay their wages; as well as indenture and keep track of client's apprenticeship hours.

GDIT&E conducts monthly and biannual client and employer partner surveys.

Book Donations Wanted

Damian Boyle of Northlands College is looking for book donations for the Northlands College Workplace Education Program at the McArthur River Mine Camp. "These could be on any topic and at any level, to support and encourage learning to over 1,000 workers at the remote mine site," he says.

The surveys help inform our ongoing improvement and accountability process, and enable us to see things from the point of view of our clients and partners. Further, we use the survey results to write reports.

One such report is Employer Partner Partnership Value Report. Our first Employer Partner Partnership Value Report was prepared in March 2012, and the second was prepared in March 2013. The two reports used the same survey questions. In 2012, we used 17 employer responses and in 2013 we used 28. These are summarized below under subheadings that are the survey questions.

'The apprentice is punctual for work.' 75% of employers who responded agree or strongly agree that the apprentice was punctual for work. This is a significant increase from 66% in March 2012.

'I am satisfied with the apprentice's work ethic and attitude.' Most (85%) employers agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the

apprentice's work ethic and attitude. 10% of the respondents disagreed while 5% were neutral. The responses were similar for March 2012 and March 2013.

'The apprentice is meeting expectations and requirements of the job.' Generally, employers have expectations of their employees and will hire people who are most likely meet or exceed expectations. 70% of employer partners agreed or strongly agreed that 'The apprentice is meeting expectations and requirements of the job'. This is down from 82% in 2012. Further, about 30% of employers were neutral or disagreed compared to 18% a year ago.

'We have been offering a broad range of tasks to the apprentice.' Having wide range of tasks and experiences is important inasmuch as it is likely to increase the depth and breadth of confidence, knowledge, competence, and expertise when the client gets his/her journey person certification and joins the labour market. Majority (90%) of employers agreed or strongly agreed that they do offer a broad range of tasks to the apprentices. The response has remained the same from a year ago.

Continued on Page 5.

Saskatchewan Writer's Guild offices in Regina or Saskatoon www.skwriter.com by June 17, or at the Northlands College in La Ronge, or by mail to Damian Boyle, Box 500, La Ronge, SK S0J 1L0. Thank you. For more information, please contact: Damian at boyle.damian@northlandscollege.sk.ca



GDI Board Member, Michael Bell and Director of Finance Cory McDougall at the 2011 GDI Golf Tournament. Come golf with us on May 31, 2013



SUNTEP PA Graduating Class, 2013
Janelle Hudon, Dallas Charles,
Kevin Sayese & Brandon Basaraba
Photo by James Oloo

New BHP Billiton-GDI Scholarship

By Lisa Wilson

A new scholarship agreement has been signed between Gabriel Dumont Institute and BHP Billiton to provide \$20,000 in new scholarships for Métis students over 2013. The new scholarships are made possible by a \$10,000 BHP donation, which is then matched by the Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation (GDSF).

Eligible students will be Saskatchewan-resident Métis, will demonstrate academic success and financial need, and be enrolled full-time in an accredited post-secondary institution pursuing a degree, diploma, certificate, or apprenticeship in Trades,

Business Administration, Commerce, Computer Science, or any other field related to the industry of BHP Billiton. Eight awards of \$2,500 each will be awarded over the course of 2013 under GDSF deadlines and processes.

BHP Billiton "is committed to ... the communities in which we operate. The long-term nature of our operations allow us to establish long lasting relationships with our host communities where we work together to make a positive contribution to the lives of people who live near our operations and to society more generally" (from BHP website).

GDI has been granted funds from the Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship Program in order to provide targeted scholarships to GDI students. The scholarship funds are conditional on matching funding from private sector and/or community-based partners. BHP Billiton is one such partner.

GDI Scholarship Coordinator Amy Briley speaks with industry partners on an on-going basis. For more information about GDI scholarships, please contact Amy at amy.briley@gdi.gdins.org or (306) 657-5719. 🌐



SUNTEP PA 2013 Graduates
Back: Mervin Whitehead & Ashlee Parras
Front: Tanya Weathered & Elizabeth MacAuley

SUNTEP PA 2013 Graduates Celebrate Success

By James Oloo

Attending graduation ceremony is one of the most exciting parts of an academic journey. Graduates look back and say, 'Yes, we've made it!' Such was the case on May 17, 2013 when Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program in Prince Albert (SUNTEP PA) held a very successful graduation ceremony at the E.A. Rawlinson Centre. Gerald Lisoway of SUNTEP PA was the keynote speaker.

All 15 Fourth Year students graduated and attended the ceremony. They are: Dallas Charles, Brandon Basaraba, Ryan Gareau, Erin Lamont, Ashley Grimard, Janelle Hudon, Morgan Larocque, Elizabeth MacAuley, Sheena Mulholland, Ashlee Parras, Kevin Sayese, Jamie Subchyshyn, Sonya Tichkowsky, Tanya Weathered, and Mervin Whitehead.

The Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan Award which is presented to graduating student who has shown outstanding community leadership and teaching excellence was awarded to Jamie Subchyshyn who received the award from her grandfather, Mr. Al Subchyshyn who is a retired teacher. Jamie stated that "SUNTEP welcomed me and made me find my strength."

Sharing the Warmth Award is presented to a student in recognition of his/her involvement in schools and the community, supporting fellow classmates, and volunteer work. Dallas Charles was the 2013 recipient. Dallas thanked all those who have supported him throughout his studies.

The graduates acknowledged the support they have received from their families, classmates, SUNTEP, GDI,

and the community. Sonya said, "Everything is possible if you believe," and Ryan thanked GDI for helping him become a teacher.

SUNTEP PA has a good relationship with several School Divisions that were also represented at the graduation. All the 15 graduates have secured full-time teaching employment.

Entertainment was provided by the talented Northern Prairies Dancers. Jigging competition that followed was won by Kevin Sayese.

To date, 455 students have graduated with Bachelor of Education degrees from SUNTEP PA. The Centre will be offering Master of Education program from this year. Much thanks to Liza Brown, Sandy Sherwin-Shields, and SUNTEP PA staff for organizing such a wonderful event. 🌐



SUNTEP PA 2013 Graduates
Back: Morgan Larocque & Erin Lamont
Front: Jamie Subchyshyn & Ashley Grimard
Photos by James Oloo



DTI PA Holds its 9th LPN Graduation Ceremony

By Teresa Simmonds and James Oloo



Prince Albert Practical Nursing Graduating Class, 2013

Dumont Technical Institute is the second largest practical nursing (PN) training providers in Saskatchewan. DTI offers its PN programs in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina. It has graduated over 200 practical nurses since 2000. Of these 200 plus graduates, 122 were from the Practical Nursing Program in Prince Albert (PA).

Last month, DTI PA held its 9th graduation ceremony to celebrate the success and contributions of all our PN graduates and to show how proud we are of their achievements. The graduates were: Andrea Corrigan, Melissa Dryka, Jamie Durocher, Allison Forseille, Alacia Gerstner, Gerrie Johnson, Sian Kilkenny,

Charmaine McKnight, Monica Sinclair, Kristen Workman, and Alexandra Umpherville.

DTI provides all its students with a high quality educational experience that is rigorous, facilitates self and on-going learning and enhances professionalism. As such, our graduates are a favorite among health regions across Saskatchewan and beyond. At the time of graduating, most (82%) of the graduates already had jobs while all the remaining (18%) secured jobs soon after graduation.

For most graduates, the journey was far from smooth. Clinicals were held during weekends due to space issues,

and on-going renovations meant rearranging a few things. However, the graduates can look back and say that the detours made them stronger and perhaps prepared them for their workplace.

To the students, the program not only meant learning and making lifelong friendships, as well as sacrifice and determination, but it was also a pathway to securing a good future for themselves and their families and perhaps an inspiration to the future generations. Congratulations and very best wishes. 🌍

SUNTEP Regina Graduation 2013

By Janice R. Thompson



Prince Albert Practical Nursing Graduating Class, 2013
Photos by Teresa Simmonds

On May 10, 2013, the strength of the unruly winds couldn't keep out the more than 240 guests who gathered at the 30th Annual Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) graduation at the Delta Regina Hotel. The event celebrated academic achievements of five exceptional professionals earning their Bachelor of Education degrees from the University of Regina (U of R). The smiles, laughter, and memorable visits with Elders, dignitaries, special guests, families, friends, students, alumni, and staff created an unforgettable evening.

they shared with us memories of an event to remember. Celebrating their milestones, and listening to their plans, goals, and aspirations for the future, reminded us of how proud we are of their achievements.

Special awards were given to the graduates in recognition of their achievements. For eight consecutive semesters, Jenel Markwart was on the U of R Faculty of Education Dean's List. Jenel also received a range of academic awards worth tens of thousands of dollars. Most recently, she was featured in the 2013 Proud Generation's Calendar as a role model to the youth in Saskatchewan. And on May 24, 2013, Jenel was the 2013 recipient of the U of R President's Medal Award.

The David Amyotte Scholarship is awarded to a senior SUNTEP student, who promotes Aboriginal culture in the classroom, demonstrates teaching potential and leadership and promotes cross cultural education. This year's recipient was Dennis Pepin.

Nicole Thomson received the Spirit of SUNTEP, an award that recognizes community leadership and involvement by a SUNTEP student. The recipient is a student who has consistently demonstrated the spirit of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity through applying the Circle of Courage.

Entertainment was provided by Nathaniel Baker, the Dancing Buffalo Drum Group, and the George Lee Jigging Club. The ceremony was full of memories to cherish today and tomorrow. Congratulations Graduates! 🌍

Graduates, Ashley Luce and Jenel Markwart are currently employed with Regina Public schools. Dennis Pepin is currently employed with Chief Pasqua First Nation School. Graduates, Coralie Potetz and Nicole Thomson radiated as



SUNTEP Regina Class of 2013
L to R: Ashley Luce, Jenel Markwart, Dennis Pepin, Coralie Potetz, and Nicole Thomson
Photo credited to JR Thompson



GDI Apprenticeship ... Continued from Page 2


'Overall, we are satisfied with the quality of the apprentices' work abilities.' Generally, employers hire employees who have the ability to meet or exceed what is required of them. GDIT&E employment counsellors work with our clients to help them succeed in their chosen careers. 75% of employer agree or strongly agree that overall, they are satisfied with the quality of the apprentice's work abilities; this is decline from 89% in 2012. 25% of employers were either neutral or disagreed. This is an increase from 11% in March 2012.

'Overall, we are satisfied with the support we are receiving in the partnership with GDI.'

An effective apprenticeship program relies on the full support and participation of our partners including the employers. 90% of employers stated that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the support they receive in the partnership with GDI. This is a slight increase from 88% in 2012.

Respondents were invited to give additional comments. Employer comments relating to apprentices were generally

positive. They included such statements as: "Is punctual," "Doing nice work," "doing a very good job," "learning quickly," and "Good worker." Employer comments relating to the Apprenticeship Initiative include "I can't say enough about how good this program is;" "GDI offers very good support. I could not afford to keep (the client) on otherwise;" and it is an "Awesome way to get youth into the trades."

We take the feedback from our employer partners and clients very seriously. We are currently making changes to the program and preparing a best practices document using the feedback. 



'Dancing Feet' at the SUNTEP Regina 2013 Graduation

Photo by JR Thompson

Payroll Cutoff Calendar, June 2013

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Buschnyski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for June 14 Student Payroll			Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for June 14 payday	Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student June 14 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices Student Payday	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for June 28 Student Payroll			Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheet & Payroll Revisions for June 28 Payday	Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student June 28 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices Student Payday	
30						

Employee contracts due prior to payroll cutoff date.
New employee contracts due at payroll upon job acceptance.
MRTs due by 15th of every month.



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GDI Mission:

To promote the renewal and the development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and the distribution of those materials and the development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research