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GDI (1980-2018)

Proud Past, Bright Future



# GDI Communicator

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

## In this issue:

Offensive  
Comments at  
Work: How to  
Respond

SUNTEP Grad  
Spreads Health  
Awareness

Payroll Cutoff  
Calendar

## Highlights:

Dean Gauthier:  
Employer Partner  
and Former Client 1

Pinehouse  
Business Program  
a Success 3

Human Resources  
Update 4

## Dean Gauthier: Employer Partner and Former Client

By James Oloo, Brendon Demerais and Brenda Klassen

This month we caught up with Dean Gauthier, a former client and now employer partner of the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) Training & Employment, to find out how he has been doing since completing his apprenticeship training at the GDI Indigenous Apprenticeship Program. Dean is a Métis journeyman and entrepreneur from Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. He recently acquired Meadow Lake Truck and Trailer Ltd.

Dean participated, as an apprentice, in the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative under the original Skills and Partnership Fund (2011-2014). He heard about the GDI Training & Employment from friends at the University of Saskatchewan, where he was also on the volleyball team. He then visited GDI Training & Employment soon after that and met with Employment Counsellor Brenda Klassen.

From when he was a young boy, Dean knew he liked trades-related activities. However, he was not sure what exactly he wanted to do. He noted that, "Brenda helped me a lot by introducing me to programs offered by the GDI Training & Employment. She gave

me very useful information and answered my questions regarding eligibility, application process, and funding opportunities, as well as strategies that could help me succeed." Dean stated that he was open to learning, and that made him ask many questions. "This pushed me even more to work hard and get as much help as possible."

As many of us know, school can be challenging sometimes especially when there are life/family pressures. So, how did Dean keep motivated and working towards his goal? His answer is brief and simple: "My wife deserves most of the credit; without her I wouldn't have gone this far with my training, and now as a business owner and employer."

When asked what his typical day looks like, Dean said, "Each day is always different. We set up jobs for each of our mechanics daily. I am mainly in the office doing paper work, answering phone calls, ordering parts, making work orders to send out to our customers." He noted that he is happy to have a good team that does excellent work.

As the owner and manager of the Meadow Lake Truck and Trailer Ltd, Dean has seven employees and took a summer student this year through a partnership with the GDI Training & Employment. Dean says "There is so much to learn

in this trade, I found that you never stop learning, and with technology advancing almost every day, you have to make time to read. You need to have knowledge of the industry and changes that are happening."

Dean enjoys the challenges and opportunities that come with being a business owner. "I am my own boss, I like flexible hours of work, and I am thankful for my mechanic Willy. He basically takes over if I need to be somewhere for a meeting." Dean plans to "employ as many Métis and First Nations people as I can. I would also like to expand my business and set up another shop back home in Beauval and provide services for the North."

Dean counts hard work, persistence, and interpersonal skills as some of his strategies for success. "I wasn't afraid of paper work. I kept applying for grants; many of the funding applications did not go through. However, out of the many grants I applied for, I would get one. I also travelled to different locations to meet with banks to get a loan. Instead of phone calls and application, I figured if they meet me in person it would make a difference."

Continued on Page 3





GDI Training & Employment  
Indigenous Apprenticeship

## Offensive Comments at Work: How to Respond

By Jim Edmondson



Dean Gauthier completed his apprenticeship training through the GDI Indigenous Apprenticeship. He is the owner of Meadow Lake Truck & Trailer and currently partners with GDI Training & Employment as an employer of GDI Indigenous Apprenticeship clients. (Please see Page 1). Photos by Brenda Klassen

Have you ever been in a situation where a co-worker or someone else says something that immediately makes you feel uncomfortable? They think they are just being funny, but the comment is inappropriate, maybe even offensive, sexist, or racist. What should you say or do if you find yourself in this situation? Is there a way to draw attention to the comment without putting the other person on the defensive? And are you risking your reputation, job, or career by speaking up?

There is no denying that this is a tough situation. These decisions are particularly risky at work because they involve “two of the most corrosive elements of bias in the workplace”: the uncertainty that whether what you heard is bias and the fear that you might be penalized for how you handle it. It’s normal to question ourselves in these situations, wondering whether we heard the person right or if it was just a joke.

Even if you think you would say something in the situation, you may find the reality is different. The first step is to decide whether it is worth addressing the comment. There are certainly good reasons to do so. Preserving your own sense of integrity and ridding the workplace of sexism or

racism are certainly two of them. If you don’t speak up, you are signaling that this is OK! You’ve essentially just given the person permission to do it again. This might also be an opportunity to change the person’s behavior for the better, a chance you don’t want to miss!

If you are in a position of authority, the stakes are even higher. Managers have a responsibility (in some cases a legal one) to ensure that no one feels threatened or uncomfortable at work. You need to consider who you are dealing with, how they might react, and what the costs will be if you call them out. They might be dismissive (“You’re overreacting, it’s just a joke”) or get defensive (“What are you accusing me of?”). So ask yourself: How does this person normally react when challenged? Are they self-aware or well-intended?

If you choose to say something, approach the situation as if the person didn’t mean to offend you. Most of the time, the person is just clueless and doesn’t know how their behavior is being interpreted. Be compassionate. Chances are, you’ve made mistakes too. Haven’t we all made stupid comments, sure! You might even share your own experience of saying something you later wished

you could take back. Stating that you’ve been in similar situations may make the person less defensive and more open to hearing your perspective.

Try not to level accusations. Harsh words, such as “That’s racist,” may lead to much more defensive reactions. Most people have an exaggerated view of what these terms mean, so they react strongly.

### What you could do

Weigh the consequences of *not* speaking up. Leaving a comment unaddressed may give the person permission to do the same thing again.

Recognize that if you are in a position of authority, you have a responsibility to address offensive comments.

Ask questions that help the person reflect on what they said and clear up any misunderstandings.

### What you should not do

Neglect to think through the political costs, especially if you’re the target of the comment.

Assume the person meant to offend you or anyone else; it’s possible that they are clueless. Accuse someone of being biased — that’s likely to put them on the defensive and unlikely to change their behavior over the long term.



## SUNTEP Grad Spreads Health Awareness

By Bidushy Sadika

In September 2017, Britt Meyers, a 2017 Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program graduate, started a fitness business to help women

manage their physical and mental health while balancing their school work.

Renew U Fitness is an online fitness program that supports women aged 18 to 25, as they

make and meet nutritional and workout goals. Meyers hopes that women will experience a sense of rejuvenation on their path to a healthy body.

*Continued on Page 4*

For more information about the GDI Indigenous Apprenticeship, please contact Sara Belair, Administrative Assistant, GDI Indigenous Apprenticeship [apprenticeships@gdins.org](mailto:apprenticeships@gdins.org) 1-877-488-6888 or (306) 657-2243.



# Pinehouse Business Program a Success

By Dylan Pelletier

Dumont Technical Institute was proud to offer a Business Certificate program in Pinehouse Lake, Saskatchewan during the 2017-2018 school year. This program was a huge success especially since it is typically not run in a small community such as Pinehouse Lake. The main reason for this is that the instructor credentials needed to teach the program are rigorous. For example, our accounting instructor needed a professional accounting designation. These individuals are usually only found in larger communities. We were fortunate to be able to hire Raj Joshi and Randy Natomagan to teach the courses. Both met

the high standards set by the Saskatchewan Polytechnic and Dumont Technical Institute. The students not only had great success in the Business Certificate program, but they were also very satisfied with how the instructors handled the class.

The students included Amy Boyd, Farrell Boyd, Maxine Iron, Kaylene Lariviere, Kelsey Lariviere, Owen Lariviere, Dena Marsh, Sophie McCallum, Joanna Misponas, Brendan Natomagan, Fiona Natomagan, Kendra Natomagan, Lorelle Natomagan, Matthew Natomagan, and Pamela Woods.

The Northern Village of Pinehouse and Pinehouse Business North were major partners. They provided administrative assistance in student recruitment, helped with interviews, and assisted the students with funding documents. Many thanks to Walter Smith, Martine Smith, Mike Natomagan, and Reyna Natomagan for helping make the business program a success.

Gabriel Dumont Institute Training & Employment funded the majority of the students so they too deserve credit for making the students' dreams possible.

*Continued on Page 5*

Gabriel Dumont Institute



Gary Kachula  
Accounting Coordinator

## Dean Gauthier: A Success Story

*Continued from Page 1*

Given his experience with the GDI Indigenous Apprenticeship program, Dean was asked his suggestions on how to improve the program. He stated that he "would like to see more trades-related pre-employment programs, to give high school students, or even adults, a chance to see if this type of work is for them."

Over the years, Dumont Technical Institute, in partnership with the GDI Training & Employment, has been offering pre-employment trades programs to its students with the knowledge and skills they need as they enter the workforce or become an apprentice. Pre-employment programs have been offered in carpentry, scaffolding, electrical and welding programs.

Dean has an advice for Métis who are interested in a career in the trades, any line of work

or who are thinking of going back to schooling: "head down to the local Gabriel Dumont Institute office and speak with them. They have a lot to offer."

Dean attended the University of Saskatchewan for one year. He then joined the GDI Training & Employment Indigenous Apprenticeship Program as an apprentice Heavy Duty Equipment Technician where he was placed with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways. In 2012, Dean completed his training and earned his journey person certification.

Dean worked for the previous owners of Meadow Lake Truck and Trailer Ltd. When the business was up for sale he saw an opportunity and acquired it.

In 2018, GDI received funding from Employment and Social Development Canada for its new Pathways for Entrepreneurship initiative.

Dean has accessed the professional business plan reimbursement, and accomplished milestones towards business start-up. These milestone achievements provide up to \$1,500 in incentives. Dean is also accessing a self-employment transition allowance. This allowance assists new entrepreneurs with the transition from regular employment to operating their own business. Dean has also been matched with a business mentor to provide opportunities for further networking and support.

Dean is currently working with GDI to access training to help him streamline his business operations, provide training to his staff, and access funding for professional services supports. We look forward to working with Dean to ensure that his business is a strong success in the Métis community. 🌐



Erin Miers  
Program Support Manager  
Dumont Technical Institute



Brian Vass  
Faculty, Adult Basic Education  
Photos by James Oloo





GDI in the Community  
Spinal Cord Injury Awareness

## SUNTEP Grad Promotes Women Health ... Continued from Page 2



Brett Vandale, Director  
Dumont Technical Institute

And, as a past student, Meyers believes she has insight into a successful fitness plan for this demographic.

"With university students, a lot of them need help with the accountability factor, so ... I do the nutrition guide and the workout, and then I have a private Facebook page to make myself available to them, and then [I] do weekly check-ins," Meyers said. "So, each week, they will check in with me, and I can alter their plan or help someone with any struggles that they are going through."

Meyers notes that establishing her own brand was not an easy task. Renew U Fitness has required Meyers to balance her career as a teacher with her role as a nutrition and fitness counsellor. Beyond this, she has also faced criticism, with many wondering how students can afford a personal trainer. As a solution to alleviate the financial impact of hiring a personal trainer, Meyers's services are offered at a 20 percent discount for students.



Bill Lehne  
Employment Services Manager,  
GDI Training & Employment  
and President,  
Spinal Cord Injury  
Saskatchewan  
Photos by James Oloo

## Human Resources Update

By Robbie Walliser and James Oloo

It has been a busy summer at the Gabriel Dumont Institute Human Resources Division. A number of new employees have recently joined the Institute.

Joining Dumont Technical Institute are Prudence Bergen and Holly Levac as new Faculty in the Continuing Care Assistant program in Regina; and Anita Bergen and Gayle Penner are new Faculty members in the Continuing Care Assistant program in Saskatoon.

On top of being understanding toward many students' economic situations, Meyers aims to be accommodating of their hectic schedules.

"It is kind of a priority thing — lots of university students are busy with studying and focusing on school, but they also need to find balance between their own health and school," Meyers said. "So, you need to realize that your health is important, and in order to do well at school, you need to be healthy yourself."


Meyers is pleased with the affirmative response that Renew U Fitness has garnered. "It's been pretty positive so far," Meyers said. "I am young myself — I am only 22 — and a lot of my friends and people from my community have reached out to me to let me know how inspiring I have been to them, so that keeps encouraging me."

Although Renew U Fitness is a relatively new business, Meyers is already looking to expand her services. "I am actually creating a public e-book — and maybe, looking

into creating an app — just because I find that's kind of the way the world is going. The younger generations are very technologically inclined, so I am working on that right now," Meyers said.

Although Meyers recognizes that it is difficult to take time off from studying during the school year, she notes that even a little bit of physical activity goes a long way.

"Take time each day, throughout your studies, to get moving. Whether it's a short fifteen-minute walk or attending a yoga class, make time for yourself," Meyers said. "When the finals grind begins, we can get very consumed by the books, but we also need to acknowledge our sanity. Staying active has both physical and mental benefits that will allow students to study while striving to be their best self."

This article first appeared in *The Sheaf*, a student-run newspaper at the University of Saskatchewan. It is reprinted here with permission. 

Three employees have joined the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP Saskatoon): Ashley Shaw as Student Support Facilitator, Angela Caron as Faculty, and Tasha Neveu is the new Administrative Assistant.

Please join us in welcoming our new coworkers. In 2016-2017, GDI had 207 full time employees. Seven out of every ten (71%) employees were women and more than half (53%) were Métis. 




# Business Program in Pinehouse ... Continued from Page 3

Dumont Technical Institute

The students themselves had to meet extremely high academic standards to both get into the program and to pass their exams. They worked very hard often staying in the classroom into the evenings. Some of the students graduated with averages of over 80%.

The program will benefit both the community and individual graduates who may take up jobs in the area, or pursue further education. Many others may also be motivated to earn their high school diplomas or post-secondary credentials. Congratulations to all the Pinehouse Business Certificate

Program graduates. 



A section of the Pinehouse Business Certificate Program graduates  
Photo by Dylan Pelletier

## Payroll Cutoff Calendar, September 2018

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

| SUNDAY | MONDAY  | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY                           | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY |
|--------|---|--|-----------|------------------------------------|---|----------|
|        |   |  |           |                                    |   | 1        |
| 2      | 3   | 4  | 5         | 6                                  | 7   | 8        |
|        | <b>Labour Day<br/>Stat Holiday</b>  | Cutoff @ Noon for Sept 14<br>Student Payroll                             |           | Accounts Payable<br>Cheque/EFT Run | Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P<br>Invoices   |          |
| 9      | 10  | 11   | 12        | 13                                 | 14  | 15       |
|        | Cutoff @ 4:30 for<br>Timesheet & Payroll<br>Revisions for Sept<br>14 Payday | Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop<br>Payments on Student<br>Sept 14 Direct Deposits |           | Accounts Payable<br>Cheque/EFT Run | <b>Staff Payday</b><br>Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P<br>Invoices<br><b>Student Payday</b> |          |
| 16     | 17  | 18   | 19        | 20                                 | 21  | 22       |
|        | Cutoff @ 4:30 for<br>Sept 28<br>Student Payroll                             |  |           | Accounts Payable<br>Cheque/EFT Run | Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P<br>Invoices   |          |
| 23     | 24  | 25   | 26        | 27                                 | 28  | 29       |
|        | Cutoff @ 4:30 for<br>Timesheet & Payroll<br>Revisions for Sept<br>28 Payday | Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop<br>Payments on Student<br>Sept 28 Direct Deposits |           | Accounts Payable<br>Cheque/EFT Run | <b>Staff Payday</b><br>Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P<br>Invoices<br><b>Student Payday</b> |          |
| 30     |   |  |           |                                    |   |          |

Employee contracts due at payroll upon job acceptance  
Payroll must receive contracts prior to payroll cutoff date. If received after the cutoff date, the employee will be paid on the following pay period. MRTS due by the 15th of every month.



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index.php/833](http://www.metismuseum.ca/browse/index.php/833)

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**GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE**  
of Native Studies and Applied Research

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Saskatoon SK S7M 5W1  
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Fax: (306) 244-0252

### GDI Finance and Operations

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### DTI Central Office Saskatoon

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### SUNTEP Prince Albert

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### GDI Library Regina

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[https://gdins.org/student-  
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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