

March 2020
Volume 14, Issue 3
Gabriel Dumont Institute
40th Anniversary
1980 – 2020



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

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GDI Receives President's Recognition Award

By Lisa Bird-Wilson

The Gabriel Dumont Institute received the *President's Recognition Award* from the Métis National Council (MNC) for 40 years of providing services to Métis Nation citizens in Saskatchewan as well as the rest of the Métis Nation Homeland and the world through its successful education, training, curriculum development, publishing, and cultural initiatives. The *President's Recognition Award* was presented by the President of the MNC, Clément Chartier in a ceremony at the Bessborough Hotel in Saskatoon in March.

As GDI celebrates its 40th anniversary, we reflect on the Institute's beginnings. Forty years ago, the founders of the Institute built a strong and beautiful vision for Métis education—one that we continue to celebrate today. They built the Institute with a dream to educate and train Métis leaders for the future, to build our capacity for self-government. Over the years, at least eleven thousand Saskatchewan Métis have graduated or been funded through GDI in a wide variety of programs, including Bachelor of Education, education administration, apprenticeship, entrepreneurship, practical nursing, and graduate studies, to name just a few.

The structure and the foundation laid down for us by the Institute's founders provide both security and stability to the Institute. We have continued to build on that strong foundation to create opportunities for Métis students. The Institute delivers programs in more than 15 locations across Saskatchewan and has awarded over \$4.2 million in scholarships to Métis students to date.

We are an employer of choice for Métis professionals across Saskatchewan. We have a workforce of over 210 people whose employment at the Institute supports their families and helps build strong communities. Almost one out of every four (23%) of our employees has been with the Institute for more than 10 years. I think what this boils down to is that people stay where they feel they belong. The number of Institute employees has been increasing by an average of about five percent annually over the past five years, and over the past year, our HR department received 976 job applications from those who would like to work for us. Métis families in Saskatchewan are better off as a result of GDI. The province, and the country, are better off because of GDI.

GDI has proven itself as a leader in Métis education.

Our Métis-specific resources are sought nationally and internationally and our graduates go on to do great things, not only here at home, but around the world. Our gallery, museum, and special collections showcase Métis culture and heritage at its finest. Our virtual [museum](#) is second to none.

In the seventies, as the Institute was being negotiated and fought for, it was Jim Sinclair, the then President of the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS), who carried the vision for GDI. The Institute owes a debt of gratitude to Jim, as a founder, and to all the Métis people at the time, who fought for Métis rights—to the Métis people who blocked roads, attended protests, demonstrated, and occupied the lawn at the Leg, and to the leaders who relentlessly lobbied the government, occupied buildings and government offices, and got the door opened to start the negotiations for the Institute. They stood up for us and they refused to take "no" for an answer. The *President's Recognition Award* is for the many people who have had a hand in building GDI. Please congratulate yourselves for this award and on behalf of those who helped make the founders' dream a reality. Way to go, Gabriel Dumont Institute. 🌐



Gabriel Dumont Institute

GDITE and The Changing Labour Market Landscape

By Audrey Hestand



Geordy McCaffrey, GDI Executive Director, receives *The President's Recognition Award* on behalf of the Institute from the Métis National Council President Clément Chartier (Please see page 1).

We are currently in a time of unprecedented Federal investment in labour market programming and Métis education. A shift in the Government of Canada policy – from rapid reemployment to a greater goal of closing the education, employment, and earning gaps between Métis and non-Indigenous people – has created a significant opportunity for GDI as a whole.

The Institute's ability to create or support meaningful, long-term change in our communities has been unchained from previous restrictions. So what are we

doing at GDI Training and Employment (GDITE) with our newfound freedom?

Our mission has not changed; we are still focused on expanding the possibilities for Métis clients, while preserving our culture and heritage. We have increased funding to students pursuing post-secondary education and expanded wage subsidy programming to create more jobs for Métis. Further, we are now able to continue to support Métis business owners through those tough first years.

In early March, I spoke at the Métis Economic Development

Conference, *Building Wealth for the Métis Nation*, as part of a panel of Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Agreement holders. The panel spoke to initiatives underway that would promote Métis economic development and business ownership.

Over the past decade, GDI has supported the advancement of Indigenous apprentices through to Journeyman certification. But, we didn't want to stop at employment – we insisted on continuing our model of relentless support to empower our Journeyman clients to become employers themselves.

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Geordy McCaffrey Receives Prestigious Award

By Lisa Bird-Wilson



Geordy McCaffrey Congratulated by the Métis National Council President Clément Chartier on receiving the *Order of the Métis Nation Award*

Photos courtesy of MNC

Gabriel Dumont Institute's Executive Director, Geordy McCaffrey, received the prestigious *Order of the Métis Nation* award at a ceremony in Saskatoon on March 9, 2020. The *Order of the Métis Nation*, bestowed by the Métis National Council, is the highest award of honour and recognition that can be conferred upon individuals who have made a significant contribution to the Métis Nation.

Geordy's career at the Gabriel Dumont Institute spans 27 years and, in that time, he has made a significant mark on Métis education and heritage in the province. As the longest-serving Executive Director, Geordy provides accountable, professional leadership for the Institute. Over the past 17 years, under Geordy's leadership, GDI has

experienced unprecedented stability and growth. Revenues for programs and services have quadrupled, and best of all, student numbers have increased five-hundred percent.

Geordy can be credited with paying special attention to strengthening the Institute's governance, which is representative of the communities and the Métis Nation, while at the same time maintaining the arms-length relationship built-in by the founders of the Institute. Further, Geordy led the Institute in its bid for federal employment and training contracts and established GDI Training & Employment in 2006. His vision and passion for the Institute have resulted in a beautiful new building in Saskatoon which is home to a museum, gallery, and special collections as well as all of the

Saskatoon-based GDI staff. The new building, in its form and function, is the realization of a long-held dream for a Métis Centre of Excellence.

Under Geordy's quiet humble leadership, the Institute has flourished. He has the keen ability to observe, analyze, and act on trends and opportunities while building partnerships and alliances that enhance the Institute's performance. His legacy includes a gender-balanced Métis senior management team and a human resource base of over 200 staff whose families and livelihoods are better off because of GDI.

Geordy's vision for GDI and his passion for the work of the Institute, along with his sense of humour and affable personality, mark him as a truly remarkable Métis leader.

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Collective Bargaining Update

By Gary Kichula

A new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between GDI and the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU) was ratified on February 13, 2020. The CBA covers the period from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2022, and was a result of extensive negotiations that originally commenced March 23, 2017 with intermittent meetings occurring from that date until the final memorandum of understanding (MOA) was agreed to by both parties on November 26, 2019.

The final draft of this MOA was delivered to GDI on December 12, 2019 and was

approved by the GDI Board of Governors on December 20, 2019. The next step in the ratification process was for all In-Scope GDI staff members to vote on the agreement. This vote occurred in conjunction with the GDI 40th Anniversary celebrations held February 7 and 8.

On February 13, 2020 GDI was notified the agreement had been ratified by all members. As a result, the new CBA agreement was implemented as soon as confirmation of member ratification was received.

The updated CBA items had a direct effect on all GDI staff due to the commonalities between

CBA and GDI Policy and Procedures. Outlined below is a summary of the substantive changes that affect GDI staff. This listing is not all encompassing but does include some of the major changes:

The most substantive issue that was covered through negotiations was related to monetary issues. In order to maintain a distinct separation between management and in-scope staff, the pay grid increases included in the CBA were applied to all GDI Salary Grids, both in-scope and out-of-scope.

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GDI Training & Employment

"GDI Yorkton Office helped me get apprenticeship placement with L.H. Bradley & Son, an Automotive Sales and Service Center in Moosomin, SK. GDI gave me funding and advice. My family was rooting for me from the sidelines, they were my biggest motivation. Thank you GDI."

- Derek Lerat

Red Seal Journeyman
Certification in the
Automotive Service Technician,
Class of 2019
Member of the Kahkewistahaw
First Nation
(Employment Counsellor:
Barbara Reyes).

Geordy Feted With Prestigious Award ... *Continued from Page 2*

A graduate of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), Geordy has committed his career to providing similar positive opportunities for other Métis students across Saskatchewan. He holds an MBA degree from the University of Saskatchewan.

The *Order of the Métis Nation* award recognizes the positive and measurable impact a recipient has made in moving forward the existence, rights and aspirations of the Métis Nation. A recipient's contributions can be made in the political, cultural, advocacy, judicial, educational, social, scientific or other field.

Geordy joins an enviable list of past recipients, including some of our legendary leaders like Jim Sinclair, Harry Daniels, and Elmer Ghostkeeper, as well as national leaders, former Prime Minister Paul Martin and current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Congratulations Geordy. 🌐

GDITE and The Labour Market ... *Continued from Page 2*

The GDI Pathways for Entrepreneurship Project started three years ago. The project was designed to fill the gaps left by other service providers and ensure that our people are successful not only in starting their own businesses, but also in successfully maintaining the businesses long term. From business basics, to first-year financial statements, we are providing the program and services to support the success of new Métis entrepreneurs.

We are working closely with our partners, including Clarence Campeau Development Fund, the SaskMétis Economic Development Corporation (SMEDCO), and the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority (SREDA), to identify the best supports for new business owners – whether that's through supporting the acquisition of business skills, ensuring our client is the most qualified business owner in their industry, or simply

providing some financial reprieve to entrepreneurs just starting the transition of working for someone else, to working for themselves.

Our future is bright at GDI Training & Employment. We are looking to expand our Pathways for Entrepreneurship project into a second phase to create even more opportunities for Métis clients to go full circle from student to mentor, and from employee to employer. 🌐



Derek Lerat
Photo by Barbara Reyes



Gabriel Dumont Institute

GDI Board of Governors:

GDI Board has 12 members comprising a representative from each of the 12 Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) Regions plus a chairperson, who also serves as the MN–S Minister of Education.

Current Members:

Dr. Earl Cook, Chair
 Vince Ahenakew, NR III
 Viola Bell, ER II
 Brian Chaboyer, ER I
 Nancy Duns, ER III
 Jackie Kennedy, WR IA
 Dennis Langan, ER IIA
 Tracy Tinker, NR II
 Juanita Tuharsky, WR III

Vacancies on the Board:

Northern Region I
 Western Region I
 Western Region II
 Western Region IIA

New Collective Bargaining Agreement ... *Continued from Page 3*

These increases were approved by the GDI Board in December 2019 and consisted of the following: 0% on April 1, 2016; 0% on April 1, 2017; and 1% increase on April 1, 2018. Further, there were increases of 2% on April 1, 2019; 2% on April 1, 2020; and 2% on April 1, 2021.

An SGEU Observer clause was added to the CBA where GDI agrees to provide the Union with notice of the time and place of assessment of applications and interviews for any position for which there are any internal applicants. Under this clause, SGEU is entitled to have a representative present to function as an observer

during these assessments or interviews.

A volunteer leave clause was added to the CBA where employees have the ability to apply to their supervisor requesting time off with pay of up to eight hours per fiscal year to volunteer with a community based organization.

Under the terms of the old CBA, GDI provided an “advance” of up to five sick days in the event an employee became ill and did not have sufficient sick accrual to cover these absences. Under the new CBA, the number of “advance” days has been reduced from five days to two days.

Also, in the new CBA, GDI has agreed to the SGEU conducting a biennial (once every two years) of their members in regards to the performance of the Institute’s management staff. Upon completion of the survey, SGEU has agreed to share that information with GDI.

In closing, the representatives of both the Institute and the Union worked in collaboration to ensure an agreement was provided that effectively balanced the cultural and financial needs of both the Institute and its staff. The Institute looks forward to continuing this partnership through to April 2022 into the next round of bargaining. 🌐

GDI Brings Community Cheer

By Jaime Watier

With everything going on in today’s world, it feels like we need “Christmas Cheer.” I know, I know, you may be thinking we just hit the Spring Solstice. But I’d like to revisit this past December.

The Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (MACSI), a treatment center for Métis people trying to battle and overcome their own personal addictions, reached out to Gabriel Dumont Institute for a helping hand. MACSI noted that they would have ten patients in-house over the Christmas holidays at their Saskatoon facility and that most would not be able to see their loved

ones. MACSI stated that these folks had no Christmas gifts and asked if we could possibly help.

During the Annual GDI Saskatoon Christmas Luncheon on December 19, 2019, an announcement was made with regards to the MACSI request and a collection was taken up.

I am happy to say that in the two-hour time span we raised \$525. Way to go GDI Staff and Board members!!

After some feverish shopping buying Maria Campbell’s “Halfbreed,” puzzles, cards, activity books, and treats. Each

gift was beautifully wrapped and delivered to the treatment center. Director of Finance Cory McDougall and his wife were honored to represent GDI in this endeavor.

We all know that Christmas can be a dark, lonely and sad time for some people. I couldn’t imagine the strength it takes to fight to make positive change as well. I am honored to work for such a compassionate and caring organization, staffed with such beautiful souls. A very big thank you to all GDI staff and Board members. You helped shed light and hope at a time our community needed it the most. 🌐



Some of the gifts presented by the Institute to patients at the Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc. Saskatoon.

Photo courtesy of C. McDougall

A Ponderance of 10 Years at GDI

By Daniel A. Downs

While I still feel to be a relative newcomer to GDI – being a part of the family for ten years now, I often take the time to look back at all

had been achieved by a remarkable organization over the last decade. My career with GDI began in November 2009 as a Program Coordinator with

GDI Training and Employment under and Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Investment Fund (ASTIF) project.

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Reflecting on First Decade at GDI ... Continued from Page 4

The day I started, I met up with the newly formed ASTSIF team, and what seemed like countless staff at the Central Office. We were then given a tour of the now-renovated 1003 Building and introduced to the staff who called the big grey building home. It was all very daunting, but everyone we met was welcoming and excited about the project we were about to undertake. What I didn't realize starting out with GDI, is just how diverse and encompassing the programs and services were. I was introduced to my own small part in a much larger organization, and for the longest while did not have the opportunity to envision the much bigger picture.

I'm still in relative disbelief to this day, that one organization can actually be a one-stop-shop for Métis in the province.

After a year in my role, just as I was beginning to fully understand policies, procedures, and terminology, I had the opportunity to attend GDI's 30th Anniversary event and my world was expanded yet again. Never had I thought that there was so much depth and diversity at GDI as I experienced at the 30th. I was given the opportunity to experience not only those that impacted my work-world directly, but those in the broader community that impact the lives of Métis in Saskatchewan and across the country.

Throughout the next ten years, I had the opportunity to develop and maintain relationships with those that impact the work I do, and even more importantly those stakeholders who were inducted in to the Order of Gabriel Dumont Bronze, Silver, and Gold Medal Awards during the February 6-8, 2020 GDI 40th Anniversary Conference and Celebration. I can look at the list of the inductees, and where once I would have recognized them only as names, I can now see them as students, coworkers, and colleagues.

I look forward to many more years of growth and prosperity at GDI. 🌍

Gabriel Dumont Institute



Geordy McCaffrey delivers the *Order of the Métis Nation* award acceptance speech. See story on Page 2. Photo courtesy of MNC

Payroll Cutoff Calendar, April 2020

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
				Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P Invoices	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Pmts on Student Apr 9 Direct Deposits	Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Apr 15 Payday	Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	Good Friday Stat Holiday	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	Easter Monday Stat Holiday	Finance Cutoff @ Noon for Apr 24 Student Payroll	Staff Payday	Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Pmts on Student Apr 24 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P Invs - TMS & Payroll Revisions for Apr 30 Payday	
26	27	28	29	30		
	Finance Cutoff @ 4:30 for May 8 Student Payroll			Staff Payday Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run		

Employee contracts due at payroll upon job acceptance
 Payroll must receive contracts prior to payroll cutoff date, otherwise the employee will be paid on the following pay period.

Gabriel Dumont Institute/Dumont Technical Institute

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 0R9

PHONE:
(306) 242-6070

FAX:
(306) 242-0002

E-MAIL:
general@gdi.gdins.org

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www.gdins.org

Back issues of this newsletter
can be obtained at:

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

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@gdins_org



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research

GDI Locations

GDI Central Office Saskatoon

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 242-0002

Métis Culture and Heritage Department/ GDI Press

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 244-0252

GDI Finance and Operations

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 975-0903

DTI Central Office Saskatoon

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 242-0002

Toll Free (DTI):
1-877-488-6888

SUNTEP Prince Albert

48 12th Street East
Prince Albert, SK
S6V 1B2
Phone: (306) 764-1797
Fax: (306) 764-3995

SUNTEP Saskatoon

Room 7 McLean Hall
University of
Saskatchewan
106 Wiggins Road
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E6
Phone: (306) 975-7095
Fax: (306) 975-1108

SUNTEP Regina

Room 227 College West
University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
Regina, S4S 0A2
Phone: (306) 347-4110

GDI Training and Employment Central Office

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 683-3508

Toll Free (T&E):
1-877-488-6888
Fax: (306) 347-4119

GDI Library Regina

Room 218 College West
University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
Regina, S4S 0A2
Phone: (306) 347-4124
Fax: (306) 565-0809

[https://gdins.org/student-
services/library/](https://gdins.org/student-services/library/)

GDI Library Prince Albert

48 12th Street East
Prince Albert, SK
S6V 1B2
Phone: (306) 922-6466
Fax: (306) 763-4834



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