



# THE GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE COMMUNICATOR



L to R: Joanne Pelletier, Tracy Tinker, Minister Wendy Gervais, Irma Klyne, Brett Vandale, Dennis Langan

*The GDI Communicator is an internal newsletter intended to document the achievements of management and staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research*

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## CELEBRATION AFFIRMS BOTH OUR KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS AND THE INSTITUTE

**By Karon Shmon, GDI Director of Culture & Heritage**

The celebration held on March 22, 2024, to honour five Métis invested into the Order of Gabriel Dumont was a joy to behold. The awards ceremony celebrated all five Métis women: Grace Zoldy (Gold), Christi Belcourt (Gold), Irma Klyne (Gold), Evelyn Johnston (Silver), Patricia LaFontaine (Silver), for their contribution to the Métis community. Full recipient biographies can be found online at <https://gdins.org/gabriel-dumont-institute-to-invest-five-into-the-order-of-gabriel-dumont>.

The ceremony opened with a prayer from Elder and Senator Nora Cummings. An Elder's prayer is our traditional way of starting a gathering in a good way. It sets the tone for the gathering, often asking the Creator for help and guidance and calling on all of us to work together for the betterment of our people. Senator Cummings extolled the

contributions of the recipients and reminded all of us in attendance of the significant role that GDI has in clearing the path and nurturing what people have to offer in our community through their hard work and dedication.

Each recipient's biography was a testament to the significant impact each has made, and continues to make. Each humbly accepted their award noting the help and support they had received from others — our traditional value of sharing the credit for what we accomplish together, even when one is the leader or catalyst.

The feeling of pride in the room was palpable and each recipient received a standing ovation.

**Story continues on Page 4...**





Above: Taylor H. & Kayla N. and their ribbon skirts

Below: DTI Office Administration Class sewing workshop. Photos submitted by Heather Witherspoon



## CONNECTING TO CULTURE ONE THREAD AT A TIME

By Heather Witherspoon, DTI Faculty

January seemed the perfect time to delve into our Métis past and embrace our cultural connections. The role and impact of the ribbon skirt in showcasing our history and roots has been lost to some. Office Administration Regina students fully embraced learning about how the Métis highlighted their identities through our clothing. Elders Gail Witherspoon and Sandy Briere joined us for a three-day event to discuss our past, and to provide instruction on how the garment is constructed and how to sew a straight line. Students chose their material, ribbons, and styles that embraced and connected them through patterns and colours to their cultural roots.

Métis Nation—Saskatchewan Western Region III provided the use of their social room as our sewing center. Elder Gail (GG) provided 13 pre-threaded sewing machines, so the students were all set to go on the first day. We started the first morning with the students collecting their material, finding a seat with GG, who showed us how we would construct our pieces of clothing, whether skirts or shirts and talking about the fabric and how we would handle it. Then we reviewed the sewing machines, its components, the different items at each student's station, which ranged from pins to measuring tape to scissors.

We discussed the importance of how clothing is connected to our culture, discussing the relationship that Métis people have with using clothing to represent our culture, including ribbon skirts and shirts. With the Elders, we could share books, ideas, historical pictures, and family stories from times past. This helped the students understand that, YES, Métis women wore ribbon skirts. While the skirts have evolved since the 1800s, at their

roots, they remain the same, providing us with the opportunity to express our connections to the land, to our culture, and to ourselves of who we are. Being able to share the importance of our culture with one another helps to bridge the disconnect that many feel about our culture.

By the end of the second and third days, students were confident in their journeys with their creations. They helped each other pin, measure, cut and sew their different items and building that community bond to greater levels. Students were laughing, sharing stories, and talking about taking this newly gained knowledge home to their families, where, hopefully, they can encourage others to be proud of who they are!

Amanda H. states, "The knowledge that I gained taught me that Métis are more than just sashes and jigging and that your skirt is your story and that every skirt is unique and represents each individual journey."

Sable L. states, "I learned about the meaning of ribbon skirts, who can wear them, and how long our people have been wearing them. We learned how much they have evolved with the styles, patterns, and colours."

Alysha N. states, "It was interesting to find out that this is a part of our Métis history, and it felt great to participate in something that other Métis women before me have done."

Taylor L. states, "I am very grateful that I was given the opportunity to create my own ribbon skirt. Doing it with my class, surrounded by my community, made it even more special. I felt a sense of belonging."

# MICHIF

## WORDS OF THE MONTH

**LI PRAENTAAN**

Springtime

**LI KAAL DI ZAEF**

Eggshell

**AANORAABL**

Honourable

**LAARZHAAN**

Silver





# UPCOMING PROGRAM DEADLINES



**Early Childhood Education Level 1**  
Saskatoon  
**April 22nd**





**Mental Health & Wellness Program**  
Buffalo Narrows & Ile-à-la-Crosse  
**April 30th**





**Adult Basic Education FLEX**  
Online  
**June 30th**





**NSI TEP**  
Northern Saskatchewan Teacher Education Program

- Four-year Bachelor of Education Degree
- La Ronge
- Sept 2024-May 2028

**Deadline May 1, 2024**



**Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program**

- Four-year Bachelor of Education Degree
- Regina, Saskatoon, or P.A.
- Sept 2024-May 2028

**Deadline May 1, 2024**

**For a full listing of all current programs and to apply online visit [WWW.GDINS.ORG/PROGRAMS](http://WWW.GDINS.ORG/PROGRAMS)**

## SASKLEADS RECOGNIZES SUNTEP STUDENT

By Sheila Pocha, SUNTEP Program Head, and Bethani Groat, GDI Communications Coordinator

On March 14, 2024, SaskLEADS held its annual Spring Conference in Saskatoon, and presented the Educational Leadership Awards to four teacher education students in their final year of studies.

Kate Boyer, from SUNTEP Saskatoon, was one of two honoured with the Exceptional Student Award, which recognizes students who have demonstrated a significant effort to improve the well-being and experiences of Saskatchewan students through their innovative and personal contributions. Sheila Pocha, SUNTEP Saskatoon program head, attended the ceremony with Kate, and she provides the following insight into what makes Kate exceptional.

Beginning her studies at the Gabriel Dumont College in Arts & Science at the University of Saskatchewan, Kate transferred to the SUNTEP program, where she worked hard to achieve great distinction in her grades. She creates warm relationships with youth inviting positivity and productivity with her students. Kate is a natural leader and promotes Indigenous pedagogy and positive connections with Métis culture to inspire others to be proud of their roots. Notably, Kate has a flair for creativity and art as an illustrator, writer, set designer, and artwork



Sheila Pocha and Kate Boyer at SaskLEADS ceremony

designer for the Saskatoon SUNTEP swag. She also supports arts learning for children in her classroom. Kate is an impressive athlete in the gymnasium as well, and she supports students in soccer, volleyball, and basketball, as well as outdoor learning adventures that enhance her teaching skills.

Additionally, Kate promotes her Métis culture and heritage proudly. She can be counted on to present the traditional Métis dance and jigging steps, and she has been asked to perform throughout the Indigenous community at the University of Saskatchewan and around the city.

Aahkamayimo avik la bonn oovraazh. 🌐

## 2024 USASK INDIGENOUS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



Congratulations to this year's recipients of the Indigenous Achievement Awards. SUNTEP students were recognized in several categories.

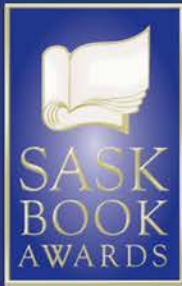
Cherish Morin (left), SUNTEP P.A.  
Emma Winrow (centre), SUNTEP Saskatoon  
Brandi Tourand (right), SUNTEP Saskatoon  
Danielle Boyer (not pictured), SUNTEP Saskatoon



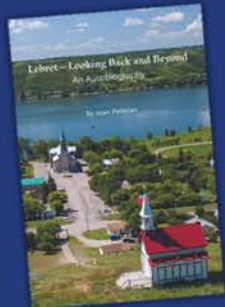


# SASKATCHEWAN BOOK AWARDS NOMINATIONS

Congratulations to GDI Press and authors Gregory Scofield and Joan Pelletier on receiving a total of 4 nominations for the 2024 Saskatchewan Book Awards!



*kôhkominawak ocihciwâwa: Our Grandmother's Hands: Repatriating Métis Material Art* by Gregory Scofield was nominated in all three Publishing categories which include the Publishing Award, Indigenous Peoples' Publishing Award, and Publishing in Education.



Joan Pelletier was nominated for the First Book Award for *Lebret—Looking Back and Beyond: An Autobiography!*

**BOTH ARE AVAILABLE AT [GDINS.ORG/SHOP-GDI](https://gdins.org/shop-gdi)**

## CELEBRATION AFFIRMS BOTH OUR KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS AND THE INSTITUTE

*Story Continued from Page 1.*

It is hard to describe the emotional impact felt when we acknowledge, celebrate, and give thanks to those truly deserving of the honour. As in past ceremonies, recipients often share what a heartfelt honour it is to receive recognition from their own people. All those in attendance received the honour of witnessing the awards ceremony. We left our work behind us for a few hours knowing it would be there on our return, but out of respect and honour for the recipients and ceremony itself, the work could wait.

In good Métis fashion, the event segued into one with fiddle music, a meal, and the enjoyment of visiting with friends and colleagues. Many made their way to personally congratulate the recipients.

I was never more proud of our community and it reminded me of the provincial motto, a fitting phrase that aligns closely with Métis values, "From Many Peoples Strength." 🌐

## INDIGENOUS POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FORUM

**By Amy Briley, GDI Program Coordinator, and Desirae Barker, GDI Senior Program Coordinator**

On February 28, 2024, the Institute hosted a pre-forum social event leading to the 2024 Indigenous Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) Forum. Knowledge Keepers, students, and forum dignitaries gathered in the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) Métis Art Gallery and Museum during this networking event. Many marvelled at the gallery's beauty and enjoyed the fiddle tunes played by Joseph Desjarlais.

Grandmothers perspectives, and their actives roles in the discussions during the one-day event. Other highlights included an Indigenous student panel, and several learning and cultural sessions.

"By coming together in forums like this, we can collectively work towards building brighter futures for Indigenous students. It's important that we are here to sit around the table and centre Indigenous voices, perspectives, and knowledge systems," said acting executive director Brett Vandale during his opening remarks at the forum. "I hope we can create educational experiences that honour diversity, promote equity, and empower Indigenous learners to reach their full potential."

The IPSE forum was held on February 29th at Wanusekwin Heritage Park in Saskatoon. GDI co-hosted it with the First Nations University of Canada and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies in partnership with the Ministry of Advanced Education. The theme of the in-person forum was holistic wrap-around support for Indigenous students, providing post-secondary institutions the opportunity to share wise practices, network, and foster collaboration to improve Indigenous post-secondary education outcomes.

Overall, the group gathered key points and actionable recommendations to determine how to move forward with opportunities for meaningful collaboration across the sector to improve Indigenous student outcomes. 🌐

An important aspect of the forum was the inclusion of Knowledge Keepers,



IPSE Pre-Forum Event  
Photo by George Gingras





# NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN GDI SERVICE AWARDS

## Congratulations

Gabriel Dumont Institute was pleased to recognize some of our long-serving staff in December 2023!



La Loche

L to R: Ernestine McNeil and Jeannie Murray



Ile-à-la-Crosse

L to R: Jody Corrigan, Amy Desjarlais, Peggy Chartier, and Jolene Roy

# 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WELL ATTENDED

By Bethani Groat, GDI Communications Coordinator

In Saskatoon, the Gabriel Dumont Insitute held the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) on March 22nd, 2024. Elders, community members, past leaders, Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN—S) representatives, and GDI staff from across the province came together to review the past year of the Institute’s important work.

The meeting began with a prayer from Elder, Senator Nora Cummings, and Amy Briley, GDI Program Coordinator, welcomed guests on behalf of the Institute. MN—S Minister and GDI Board Chair Wendy Gervais, shared her own educational journey with GDI, and her appreciation for the hard work of the Board and staff to keep that journey going for future generations. Finally, Dr. Cheryl Troupe was appointed as the speaker for the meeting, and the AGM began.

Acting Executive Director, Brett Vandale presented the Operations Report for 2022/2023. He began by reminding everyone of the GDI mission that

encompasses all the hopes and dreams of the founders in 1980. The GDI governance structure remains unchanged as the designated education affiliate of the MN—S, GDI has always been its own legal entity with its own bylaws and constitution.

Overall, the report pointed towards the progress made in relation to GDI’s 2022—2027 Strategic Plan: *Proud Past, Bright Future*, which drives all the current operations for the Institute.

Beverly Lonsdale, Director of Finance, delivered the Institute’s financial report, reviewing the positive growth over the past five years. The Institute remains in a strong financial position thanks to our diversified revenue streams and strong partnerships.

2022/2023 Annual Report, GDI Entity Financial Statements, and the Strategic Plan can be found online at: <https://gdins.org/about/reports>

## APRIL 2024 FINANCE & PAYROLL CUTOFF CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<b>Easter Monday Stat Holiday</b>	Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student Apr 5 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	<b>Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices</b>	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheet & Payroll Revisions for Apr 15 Payday			Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	<b>Staff Payday</b>	Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student Apr 19 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	<b>Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices</b>	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
		Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheet & Payroll Revisions for Apr 30 Payday		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
28	29	30				
		<b>Staff Payday Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student May 3 Direct Deposits</b>				

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

**JOIN US**  
11TH ANNUAL  
GABRIEL DUMONT SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION  
**∞ GOLF ∞**  
MAY 31, 2024  
**TOURNAMENT**  
MOON LAKE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB  
905 VALLEY ROAD, SASKATOON  
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[WWW.GDINS.ORG/GOLF](http://WWW.GDINS.ORG/GOLF)  
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HOLE-IN-ONE  
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