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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

GDI Prepares for Strategic Planning

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) Board of Governors and senior management will undertake a strategic planning session in January 2008. The Institute last developed a strategic plan in 2004, when a group of about 30 Board members, staff members, political representatives, community members, and managers discussed GDI's strategic direction. Several strategic objectives were identified, including the development of a Métis Centre of Excellence, a Graduate Studies component for the Institute, a northern presence, and a Métis Education Act. The strategic planning sessions that are planned for later this month will revisit the 2004 plan, and will take an inventory of each objective.

Many strategic goals

from the 2004 plan have been accomplished or are well under way, while others have been stalled due to circumstances beyond the Institute's control. For instance, a Métis Education Act was identified at the 2004 strategic planning session as a high priority for the Institute; however, shortly afterward, the 2004 Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN—S) election was disputed and the Métis' political voice was largely absent, making this objective unrealistic in the political climate at the time. The Institute would like a Métis Education Act because it currently operates under a contract with the provincial government while all other educational entities in the province operate under specific pieces of legislation. For instance, the Regional Colleges are governed by the *Regional Colleges Act*, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies is under provincial legislation recognizing it

as a post-secondary institution through the *Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Act*. GDI and Métis education in the province lacks provincial legislation that would provide some security and a measure of recognition for the Institute. The strategic planning session later this month will ensure that the Institute remains proactive, and generates informed decisions, and will make wise use of its resources. It is anticipated that approximately 30 people will participate, including an Elder, Board members, MN—S representatives, senior managers, student representatives, community members etc. These sessions will be held in Saskatoon.



DTI and SaskEnergy Offer Successful Program



A unique partnership between industry and Métis education has resulted in 10 new Métis employees for the Saskatchewan Crown Corporation responsible for natural gas distribution in the province. The Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) and SaskEnergy coordinated a partnership program to provide opportunities for Métis to gain employment with SaskEnergy. SaskEnergy recommended a **SaskEnergy Induction Readiness Training Program** to assist with pre-employment screening and to provide training support to help prepare Métis for existing technical positions within SaskEnergy. DTI agreed to prepare a group of 14 Métis students for the SaskEnergy Induction Process. Upon successful completion of the program and passing the Induction Process, SaskEnergy agreed to hire the students.

The program attracted 49 applicants with 13 finally

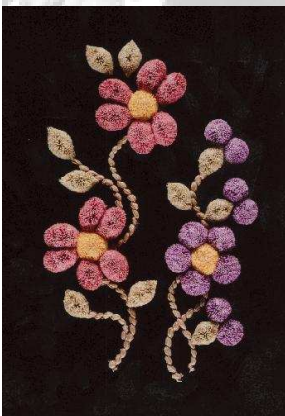
being selected to participate in the program. One student dropped out for personal reasons leaving 12 students who completed the program. Out of the 13 students, 7 students (54%) were successful in the Induction Process, and were offered employment with SaskEnergy. This compares favourably with SaskEnergy's internal success of approximately 50%. Three other students were offered employment even though they did not pass the Induction Process. However, they did well enough to merit attention. Together, this meant **10 out of 13 students were offered employment** with SaskEnergy, a 77% success rate.

The training program, which ran from August to November 2007, included the following training components: Class 1A truck driver training; Oilfield Safety Tickets—H2S, First Aid/CPR, GODI, TDG, WHMIS, Confined Space Entry, and Ladder Safety;

Induction Readiness Training with Service Best Training; and Induction.

DTI Program Coordinator, Tony Blacklock notes, "Having a definite connection to employment is critical to the success of this program. Students were told from the beginning that they would start in salvage if successful. This alleviated any uncertainty about where they might be working once they completed the program." Having secure employment at the end of the program helps students make the financial transition from training to employment.

The training program, the second of its kind to be offered by DTI in partnership with SaskEnergy, was delivered in Saskatoon. Discussions are underway for a third program with the possibility of a northern delivery location.



DTI Staff Update

In recent months the Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) has welcomed several new staff members. Robbie Walliser joined the DTI head office in Saskatoon to fill the role as a half-time receptionist and a half-time program support for Program Coordinators Elaine Crocker and Shirley Gardiner. Earlier in the year, Program Coordinator Janice R. Thompson moved from her term position as Program Coordinator at the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program, Regina to DTI Saskatoon. Most recently, DTI is pleased to welcome Tracy Laprise on staff as a Program Coordinator. Tracy has worked with DTI in the past, as an instructor for the Basic

Education program, the Continuing Care Aid preparation program in La Loche, and Management Studies in Ile-a-la Crosse. Tracy will work from an office in Ile-a-la Crosse and will coordinate northern programs. Tracy Laprise replaces DTI program coordinator Tracy Stephensen, who resigned from her position in November.

DTI has approximately 40 full-time staff, including Program Coordinators, Administrative Coordinators, Faculty, Custodians etc. Head office staff include Brett Vandale, Director; Claudette Moran, Program Coordinator; Elaine Crocker, Program Coordinator; Shirley Gardiner, Program

Coordinator; Tony Blacklock, Program Coordinator; Janice R. Thompson, Program Coordinator; Sheena Yew, Clerk Steno; Bonnie Hrycuik, Clerk Steno; Robbie Walliser, Clerk Steno; Marlene Laliberte, Administrative Coordinator; Jessica Rorison, Administrative Coordinator; Rhonda Pilon, Administrative Coordinator; Edwin Morin, IT Technician; and Doug Pelletier, Custodian. Numerous Faculty members work in DTI locations throughout the province. Please feel free to submit staff updates regarding your centre to lisa.wilson@gdi.gdins.org.




Michif Funding Announced

The Honourable Carol Skelton, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Rosetown-Biggar, announced, on behalf of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Honourable Josée Verner, that the Government of Canada will provide the Institute with \$60,000 to host the annual Michif Language Conference in Saskatoon on March 14-15, 2008. The Michif languages are widely recognized as being endangered. The

Institute has taken a leading role in preserving and promoting the three Michif languages spoken in Saskatchewan: Michif-Cree, Michif-French and Ile-a-la Crosse Michif. These initiatives include children's books, narration components to children's books, guide books, videos and web development.

The National Michif Language Conference is expected to have 200

participants who will work to promote Michif and pass it on to younger generations. The \$60,000 funding for the conference is from the Department of Canadian Heritage's Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI). The Institute's Publishing Department will be coordinating the conference. For information about the conference please contact Karon Shmon, Program Coordinator, Publishing Department. 

"The Institute has taken a leading role in preserving and promoting the three Michif languages..."



Graduate Program Awards Bursaries in Third Adjudication

“At the latest Selection Committee meeting, six applications were reviewed and three awards were made.”

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) launched its Graduate Student Bursary Program in 2006 in response to the priority established in the 2004 Strategic Plan for graduate studies programming at the Institute. The Graduate Student Bursary Program is operated under Gabriel Dumont College (GDC), and is a three-year pilot project. The program operates under a Terms of Reference which can be found on the Institute's website at www.gdins.org, and a Selection Committee meets twice per year to review applications and award funding.

The Selection Committee has had a total of three adjudication meetings: November 2006, May 2007, and November 2007. At the latest Selection Committee meeting, 6 applications were reviewed and 3 awards were made. Bursary recipients for the fall 2007 awards were Natasha Beeds, Jody Burnette, and Céleste Lévesque. Natasha Beeds is pursuing a Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Saskatchewan; Jody Burnette is pursuing a PhD in Educational Psychology at the University of Regina; and Celeste Levesque is attending the University of Saskatchewan, and

working toward her Master's degree in Toxicology.

Members of the Selection Committee are Guy Blondeau, GDI Board of Governors; Brian Chaboyer, GDI Board of Governors; Sheila Pocha, GDI Board of Governors; Tavia Inkster, GDI Training & Employment; and Michael Relland, Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program, Prince Albert. The Executive Director's designate, Lisa Wilson, is a non-voting member who acts as chairperson for the meetings. Recipients of GDC Graduate Student bursaries are highlighted on the GDI website. 

New Program Offers a Step in to Health Careers

“Participants of the program will complete work placements in targeted areas.”

The Dumont Technical Institute has partnered with the Saskatoon Health Region and CanSask to deliver an eleven-week training program called **Step into Health Careers**. Sixteen participants will be selected to receive training in Employability Skills, WHMIS, Food Safety, First Aid/CPR, Transfer/ Lift/ Repositioning, Practical Work Experience, and mentorship, among other areas.

The majority of the training will be onsite at the Saskatoon Health Region, and will include acute and long-term care settings. This creates familiarity with the healthcare environment, and allows for a smooth transition from Employability Skills Training into work experience and employment.

The objectives of the program are to provide skills and support

necessary for the participants to gain and maintain employment in various entry level positions in the health sector, and to provide an understanding of the choices, opportunities, and steps necessary to engage in professional health careers leading to opportunities for career pathing within the health region.

Participants of the program will complete work placements in targeted areas such as Diagnostic Imaging,

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Northern Campus Moves Ahead

In the 2004 Gabriel Dumont Institute Strategic Plan, the need for an increased northern presence for the Institute was articulated. The Institute's senior management has been working toward this objective over the past several years. The most recent development in this initiative is the purchase of a building in La Loche. The GDI Board of Governors has approved the purchase of the Community Development Corporation (CDC) building in La Loche which will provide the Institute with classroom and office space, and a stronger northern presence. La Loche was selected as a prime location for a building, which will be a

visible presence for GDI. The decision to put the northern campus in La Loche was based on several factors such as the area's potential tar sands development, its exploration activity, particularly in uranium, lack of a large post-secondary presence, and its large Métis population.

The purchase of the CDC building to house Institute programs is considered an interim measure. The Institute is a member of the La Loche Post-Secondary Steering Committee, which has applied for resources for a feasibility study for the development of a post-secondary centre with laboratory and research capabilities. The initiative

is in partnership with the village, other post-secondary institutions, and various stakeholders. The objective of the feasibility study is to determine whether the establishment of a post-secondary centre in La Loche is feasible based on future industry requirements, the pool of potential students, and stakeholder resources. The study will also determine the importance and demand for a research facility, and the equipment required for such a facility.

If GDI is successful in its offer to purchase the CDC building, it is anticipated that the Institute will operate from the CDC building for approximately five years before becoming a tenant in the proposed new post-secondary centre. 

"The GDI Board of Governors has approved the purchase of the Community Development Corporation (CDC) building in La Loche which will provide the Institute with classroom space, office space, and a stronger northern presence."


New Program Offers a Step in to Health Careers

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Porter, and/or Food and Nutrition. While working in these areas, students will also have access to mentorship program support. In addition, the program has built in a three-month post-program phase to facilitate employment retention success. During the three months following the program, facilitators of the Saskatoon Health Region will work with those

participants who have become employees on such areas as job coaching, addressing day care issues, hosting group meetings, and peer support activities.

Delivery dates for the new program are March to May, 2008. The cost of the program will be shared between partners CanSask and DTI. Information sessions and

interviews are planned for January 30 and 31 at St. Paul's Hospital. Contact Brett Vandale, Director of DTI for more information. 

"...the program has built in a three month post-program phase to facilitate employment retention success."



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