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

GDI All Staff Meeting a Positive Event

The GDI All Staff meeting was held September 25 and 26 in Saskatoon. The growth of the Institute was evident by the volume of people who were at the event. Over 100 staff members from across Saskatchewan attended the meetings which were held at the Saskatoon Inn.

The meeting was officially opened with a prayer by Elder Peter Bishop, followed by welcome and remarks from President Robert Doucette. President Doucette offered warm greetings to all staff in attendance and provided positive affirmation for the work that the Institute is doing.

Geordy McCaffrey, GDI Executive Director, led the introductions of all staff members. Managers of the various units introduced their staff members, including more than 40 from DTI. It was great to be able to put faces to names.

Geordy then did an overview of GDI, including the structure of the Institute and the function of all the different parts. Underlying this presentation was an idea of the values that we hold

as an organization. A more in-depth article on this presentation appears on page 2.

Geordy also presented on the GDI 2008-2011 Strategic Plan, highlighting the six broad goals that make up the plan. Further information on this is included on page 2 of this newsletter.

The evening of the 25th was filled with spectacular Métis entertainment, including the exceptional voices of Amanda Goller, followed by Krystle Pederson, both of whom sang beautifully. Finally, Ryland Bernier, PA SUNTEP student, along with his father and brother, played fiddles and guitar to get our toes tapping and several people jigging.

After a fantastic dinner and several draws for door prizes (with special thanks to the many sponsors), the Recognition Awards began. 21 staff members were recognized for their years of service to the Institute (for full story see page 5).

Friday September 26th started with a presentation

by Cory McDougall on the new policies and procedures manual. Cory went over the new Acceptable Use Policy and this policy is also included in this newsletter as a Special Insert. CD's of the most recent policies and procedures were handed out to all staff in attendance. The ultimate goal is that in the future the policies and procedures will be available to staff on the GDI website.

The final presentation was made by Karon Shmon who facilitated a "Looking Forward" session. Groups worked together to create a slogan, pitch, poem, ad, song, or cheer about GDI and/or their work group. The groups then presented their creations, to much laughter and applause. It was a great way to end the meeting on a high note, definitely "looking forward."

Thanks to the organizers of the event, who did a fantastic job. They are Donna Ross, Rhonda Pilon, and Amy Gallagher. Also thanks to the many sponsors and to everyone who presented or pitched in to help.

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GDI Overview Reveals Values of the Institute
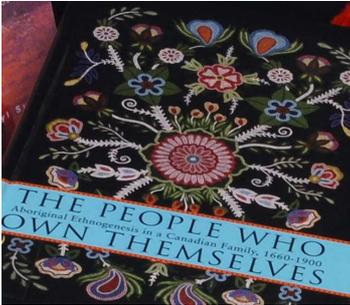
At the GDI All Staff meeting on September 25 and 26/08, Geordy McCaffrey, Executive Director of GDI presented an overview of the Institute in which he outlined not only the structure and function of the various components of GDI, but which also spoke to the values that GDI operates from. This article attempts to summarize some of these values.

GDI is unique as the only institution in Canada which fuses university, technical, skills, basic education, employment, publishing and social justice programming. The services provided by GDI to Saskatchewan Métis are not replicated anywhere else. It is recognized that mainstream institutions are not the ideal setting for success for many in the Métis community. This is confirmed in the literature on best practices in Aboriginal education and learning (EKOS Evaluation, 2008).

Culture is a critical feature of GDI programming. "By building a sense of community and belonging, the cultural component is considered to be important in student retention in programs, as well as increasing pride, cultural identity and self-esteem among students and graduates" (EKOS Evaluation, 2008).

Human Resources are one of GDI's main strengths. GDI has a 71% Métis workforce and is the largest employer of Métis people in the province. One of the most important key strengths that contributes to the successful delivery of culturally-specific education and training programs is the practice of hiring qualified Métis staff, which contributes to the culturally-affirming environment of the institute, and provides role models for participants.

Governance and the leadership of the Institute in a positive direction are important. Among its strengths is the Institute's current direction, which emphasizes strategic planning, sensitivity to community needs, willingness to collaborate with other institutions…as well as being attentive to governance and accountability (EKOS Evaluation, 2008).

The supports that have been put in place for holistic, client-centred programming are crucial to our success. Examples are smaller class sizes, individual attention from faculty and staff, and access to ancillary services such as counselling and tutoring.

GDI has also become a conservator of Métis history, and a source for those seeking Métis information throughout the world.

GDI Strategic Plan Overview

At the GDI All Staff meeting Sept 25 & 26 Geordy McCaffrey, Executive Director introduced and summarized the Institute's new 2008-11 Strategic Plan. Highlights include an audit trail of the strategic planning process; an environmental scan of relevant considerations both within and outside GDI; a summary of the planning sessions including what we have to be proud of and what the key issues are for GDI to consider; and six broad strategic goals for the Institute to focus on.

The six broad strategic goals are 1) GDI will strengthen and stabilize its governance status; 2) GDI will stabilize and affirm its internal structure, processes and operations; 3) GDI will plan for a permanent Saskatoon based facility from which to conduct its central affairs; 4) GDI will seek to renew its partnership with the Federal Government to deliver labour market programs and services in Saskatchewan; 5) Métis culture is a cornerstone of the GDI mission; amassing and disseminating the Métis cultural legacy will remain a priority focus; and 6) GDI will systematically maintain open lines of communication with its stakeholders and partners.

A copy of the full Strategic Plan 2008 is available on the GDI website at www.gdins.org.

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GDI Plans for AGM 2009 and 2010

A schedule for Annual General Meetings for 2009 and 2010 is being proposed by the GDI Board of Governors.

The plan is to host a GDI Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon in April 2009. This Annual General Meeting will be smaller in nature due to the important and imminent 2010 date.

In 2010 the plan is to host a large event. 2010 is both the 125th anniversary of the 1885 Resistance and GDI's 30th anniversary. The Institute plans to celebrate the historical 125th anniversary of the Resistance by hosting an AGM that includes a cultural conference.

As details emerge for the next AGM in April 2009 information will be made available through the GDI Communicator, internal email, etc.

According to the Not-For-Profit Act, GDI must host a yearly Annual General Meeting.

2010 is both the 125th anniversary of the 1885 Resistance and GDI's 30th anniversary.

GDI Policy and Procedure Consolidation Update

A broad-based plan launched in July 2007 for the consolidation and development of Institute policies and procedures continues. In the fall of 2007 the Institute hired an external consultant to produce comprehensive GDI policies and procedures manual intended to encompass all aspects of GDI's governance and its operational policies. Over the course of the contract, policy analysis and consolidation took place. Policy gaps were identified and a Governance Committee was established to deal with policy issues. The GDI Governance Committee prepared a Terms of Reference which was approved by the GDI Board. Purposes of the Governance Committee include reviewing and developing Institute Policies and Procedures with the objectives of enhancing performance, understanding, transparency, and improving internal structure.

Several policy changes/additions have been passed at recent Board meetings, on recommendation of the Governance Committee. New policy includes Michif language; strategic planning, budgeting and reporting; governance; physical violence; programming; internet use; and jury duty/witness leave.

The ultimate goal of the project is to present the Institute's policies and procedures in a user-friendly digital format that follows a standardized formatting scheme. A maintenance plan will also be developed. Cory McDougall, Director of Administration, is heading up the project.

"The ultimate goal of the project is to present the Institute's policies and procedures in a user-friendly digital format that follows a standardized formatting scheme."

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DTI Hosts Successful Staff Meeting

By Tracy LaPrise

Performers from Ecuador proudly wearing their new Métis sashes.

DTI staff jig along with the St. Mary's jiggers.

DTI enjoyed their annual DTI All Staff meeting on Wednesday, September 24th and the morning of Thursday, September 25th. This year's meeting was held at the Saskatoon Inn and was organized to precede the GDI All Staff meeting.

DTI staff drove in from all parts of the province including LaLoche, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Yorkton & Prince Albert, just to name a few. We really appreciate the effort made by staff to be at this important event.

The 24th started with an information session from the Director of DTI, Brett Vandale. Rhonda Pilon finished the morning with an informative session about PTA.

The afternoon had Instructors and Coordinators working in groups on Basic Education Redesign, which is headed by Claudette Moran and the BE Redesign task team. Special thanks to Trona Guenther who is participating during her maternity leave. The DTI Basic Education Redesign task team, an internal task team formed to ensure that DTI is meeting the objectives/initiatives mandated from Advanced Education, Employment & Labour, was formed in

April of this year.

While the basic education instructional staff were participating in this workshop, the support staff were receiving information about GDI Training & Employment and skills training from Tavia Laliberte. J.J. Johnston also worked with the support staff on a communications manual for the front line staff. If anyone would like more information on this, please contact J.J directly.

Two team building exercises were next on the agenda with the staff breaking into groups, one group working on beading while the other group went on a scavenger hunt. Special thanks to Misty Marion who taught the beading class and was very patient with the DTI staff.

After a delicious supper, a group of performers from Ecuador, Pakarinka Sisari, played beautiful music for us. Following that great performance, was another great performance from the St. Mary's jiggers.

To top the night off, we had our traditional Washu Tournament, (thanks to Geordy for providing his Washu board), and now we have new champions. Congratulations to Rhonda Pilon and Bonnie

Hrycuik for being the new Washu Champs!

Our final event for 'All Staff' occurred Thursday morning, where Murray Walker provided us with valuable information about conflict resolution. Murray's workshop was very informative and DTI should be an even more positive place to work.

Special thanks to Bonnie Hrycuik who put in her time and effort to make sure all was ready. Bonnie also contributed her own collection of beautiful Métis art, which was the hit of the All Staff. Thanks again to all who participated and we hope to see even more people at next year's All Staff! Have a wonderful year!

Washu action photo featuring Janice Thompson.

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Occupational Health and Safety

GDI has an active Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Committee for the worksite at 917 22nd Street West in Saskatoon. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993, a worksite that has 10 or more workers of one employer must have an OHS Committee. An OHS Committee must consist of at least 2 but no more than 12 members. At least half of the members must represent workers other than workers connected with the management of the workplace.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993, the duties of an occupational health committee are (a) to participate in the identification and control of health and safety hazards in or at the place of employment; (b) to cooperate with the occupational health and safety service, if any, established for the place of employment; (c) to establish, promote and recommend the means of delivery of health safety programs for the education and information of workers; (d) to maintain records with respect to the duties of the committee pursuant to this section; and (e) to receive, consider and resolve matters respecting the health and safety of co-workers.

The duties of the occupational health representatives are the same as a, b, and e in the previous list. In addition, representatives have the duty to receive and distribute to workers information regarding health and safety.

The next Occupational Health and Safety committee meeting for 917 22nd Street West will be on October 17, 2008. Staff can bring forward any concerns about workplace safety to any of the new OH & S committee members, who are as follows: Jason Johnston (out of scope); Brandy Laronde (out of scope); Doug Pelletier (in scope); Sarah McCallum (in scope); and Darcy Goodwin (in scope).

Members of the committee for 1001 22nd Street West are Tony Blacklock (out of scope); Jennifer Johnstone (in scope); and Dylan Pelletier (in scope).

Staff are encouraged to bring concerns forward to OHS members. If you have questions about the OHS committees, please contact Cory McDougall at 242-6070.

The next Occupational Health and Safety committee meeting for 917 22nd Street West will be on October 17, 2008.

Staff who have devoted 20, 15, and 10 years of service were presented with a gift, and kind words were offered to mark their contribution.

GDI Staff Recognized for Years of Service

At the recent GDI All-Staff meeting held in Saskatoon, a number of staff members were recognized for their years of service to the Institute. Staff who have devoted 20, 15, and 10 years of service were presented with a gift, and kind words were offered to mark their contribution. The following is a list of the staff who are recognized.

20 + years of service
Lorraine Amiotte, 24 years
Marilyn Belhumeur, 24 years
Linda Lysyk, 23 years
Sandra Sherwin-Shields, 21 years
Erma Taylor, 21 years
Kenneth Kutz, 21 years

15 + years of service
Stan Kolosa, 19 years
Donna Biggins, 19 years
Michael Relland, 18 years
Murray Hamilton, 18 years
Ruth Daniels, 17 years
Marlene Laliberte, 15 years

10 + years of service
Bente Huntley, 14 years
Geordy McCaffrey, 13 years
Darren Prefontaine, 11 years
Bryan Guiboche, 11 years
Lisa Wilson, 11 years
Elizabeth Majocha, 10 years
Blanche Morrisette, 10 years
Joanne Pelletier, 10 years
Nicole Amiotte, 10 years
Cecile O'Neil, 10 years
Congratulations to all.

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New Acceptable Use Policy Passed

A new policy outlining acceptable use of the internet and other electronic resources was passed at the September GDI Board of Governors meeting. The policy notes that the use of computers and the internet are an integral and valuable part of the operations of GDI and staff and students are encouraged to use the computer resources and networks responsibly and in support of the mission and goals of the Institute and its affiliates.

"Because the internet is an unregulated, worldwide vehicle for communication, information available to staff and students is virtually impossible to control. Therefore, the Gabriel Dumont Institute adopts this policy governing the voluntary use of electronic resources and the internet in order to provide guidance to individuals and groups obtaining access to these resources on Gabriel Dumont Institute owned equipment or through Gabriel Dumont Institute affiliated organizations."

Gabriel Dumont Institute Rights and Responsibilities
In terms of the rights and responsibilities of the Institute, the policy states that any employee, student, or other individual who engages in any activity that does not conform to the established purpose and general rules and policies of the network shall be in violation of this policy. Within this general policy, the Gabriel Dumont Institute recognizes its legal and ethical obligation to protect the well-being of students in its charge. To this end, the Gabriel Dumont Institute retains the following rights and recognizes the following obligations:
1) to log network use and to monitor fileserver space utilization by users, and assume no responsibility or liability for files deleted due to violation of file server space allotments;
2) to remove a user account on the network;
3) to monitor the use of online activities. This may include real-time monitoring of network activity and/or maintaining a log of internet activity for later review;
4) to provide internal and external controls as appropriate and feasible. Such controls shall include the right to determine who will have access to Gabriel Dumont Institute owned equipment and, specifically, to exclude those who do not abide by the Gabriel Dumont Institute 's acceptable use policy or other policies governing the use of the Institute's facilities, equipment and materials. Gabriel Dumont Institute reserves the right to restrict online destinations through software or other means; and
5) to provide guidelines and make reasonable efforts to train staff and students in acceptable use and policies governing online communications.

Staff Responsibilities
1) Staff members who supervise students, control electronic equipment or otherwise have occasion to observe student use of said equipment online shall make reasonable efforts to monitor the use of this equipment to ensure that it conforms to the mission and goals of the Gabriel Dumont Institute; and
2) Staff should make reasonable efforts to become familiar with the internet and its use so that effective monitoring, instruction, and assistance may be achieved.

User Responsibilities
Use of the electronic media provided by the Gabriel Dumont Institute is a privilege that offers a wealth of information and resources for research. Where it is available, this resource is offered to staff, students, and other patrons at no cost. In order to maintain the privilege, users agree to learn and comply with all of the provisions of this policy.

Acceptable Use
1) The Institute trusts that employees will manage their time effectively and in a responsible manner when using the internet. Personal use of the internet is allowed within reasonable limits as long as it does not interfere with business use or productivity;
2) Staff and students are expected to use high ethical standards in electronic communication. When using e-mail, extreme caution must always be taken to avoid revealing any information of a personal nature;
3) Network accounts are to be used only by the authorized owner of the account for the authorized purpose;
4) All communications and information accessible via the network should   not be assumed to be private property;
5) Staff and students wishing to subscribe to mailing lists and/or bulletin boards must receive prior written approval from the system administrator;
6) Exhibit exemplary behavior on the network as a representative of the Institute and the Métis community; and

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Special Insert—Policy Update

7) From time to time, the Gabriel Dumont Institute will make determinations on whether specific uses of the network are consistent with the acceptable use practice.

Unacceptable Use
1) Giving out personal information about another person, including home address and phone number, is strictly prohibited;
2) Any use of the network for commercial or for-profit purposes is prohibited;
3) Excessive use of the network for personal business shall be cause for disciplinary action;
4) Any use of the network for product advertisement or political lobbying is prohibited;
5) Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent other users on the network;
6) No use of the network shall serve to disrupt the use of the network by others. Hardware and/or software shall not be destroyed, modified, or abused in any way;
7) Malicious use of the network to develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage the software   components of a computer or computing system is prohibited;
8) Hate mail, chain letters, harassment, discriminatory remarks and other antisocial behaviors are prohibited on the network;
9) The unauthorized installation of any software, including shareware and   freeware, for use on Gabriel Dumont Institute computers is prohibited;
10) Use of the network to access or process pornographic material, inappropriate text files (as determined by the system administrator or building administrator) or files dangerous to the integrity of the local area network is prohibited;
11) The Gabriel Dumont Institute network may not be used for downloading   entertainment software or other files not related to the mission and objectives of the Gabriel Dumont Institute for transfer to a user's home computer, personal computer or other media. This prohibition pertains to freeware, shareware, copyrighted commercial and non-commercial software and all other forms of software and files not directly related to   the instructional and administrative purposes of the Gabriel Dumont Institute;
12) Downloading, copying, otherwise duplicating, and/or distributing copyrighted materials without the specific written permission of the copyright owner is prohibited;
13) Use of the network for any unlawful purpose is prohibited;
14) Use of profanity, obscenity, racist terms or other language that may be offensive to another user is prohibited;
15) Staff and students are prohibited from playing games on GDI systems and networks. Students may do so when specifically authorized by a teacher for instructional purposes; and
16) Establishing network or internet connections to live communications, including voice and/or video (relay chat), is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the system administrator.

Disclaimer
1) The Gabriel Dumont Institute cannot be held accountable for the information that is retrieved via the network;
2) Notice is hereby given that there are no facilities provided by this system for sending or receiving private or confidential electronic communications. System administrators have access to all mail and will monitor messages. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities;

3) The Gabriel Dumont Institute will not be responsible for any damages you may suffer, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries or service interruptions caused by our own negligence or your errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained is at your own risk;
4) The Gabriel Dumont Institute makes no warranties (expressed or implied) with respect to:
- the content of any advice or information received by a user, or any costs or charges incurred as a result of seeing or accepting any information; and
- any costs, liability or damages caused by the way the user chooses to use his or her access to the network; and
5) The Gabriel Dumont Institute reserves the right to change its policies and rules at any time.

The policy is accompanied by a User Agreement that is to be signed by all adult and student users. If you have questions or concerns about the new Acceptable Use Policy please contact Cory McDougall, Director of Administration at 242-6070.

GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
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GDI's 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.

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