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Pride Perseverance Possibilities



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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New Report Urges Canada to Address Métis Rights

By James Oloo

On January 8, 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada released its decision in a case filed by the Manitoba Métis Federation. The case concerned Canada's obligations to the Métis people as enshrined in the Manitoba Act of 1870. The court ruled that Canada had failed to properly distribute land grants that were promised to the Manitoba Métis of the Red River Settlement, and that Canada did not act honourably in implementing the constitutional obligation in s. 31 of the Act.

The Manitoba Act, which received royal assent on May 12, 1870, opened the door for Manitoba's admission into the confederation as Canada's fifth province. The Act followed negotiations between Canada and representatives of Louis Riel's provisional government. The Act provided for Manitoba to become a part of Canada in exchange for which Canada promised to allocate 1.4 million acres of land to the Métis. However, after Manitoba joined the confederation, the promise to the Métis was "ineffectual and inequitable." The result was that the Métis became a landless Aboriginal people. The Manitoba Métis Federation then decided to go to court to advance Métis collective claims.

Following the 2013 Supreme Court decision, the Conservative government under Stephen Harper appointed Vancouver-based lawyer Thomas Isaac in 2015 to provide clarity on Métis rights under Section 35 of the Constitution, which provides protection for Aboriginal rights. On July 21, 2016, Mr. Isaac released his report, "A Matter of National and Constitutional Import," in which he recommends that the federal government create a framework for negotiating and addressing Métis rights, and that Canada have a 'nation-to-nation' relationship with Métis. This article highlights some of the key points in the Isaac Report.

The report states that "Métis peoples hold a central place in the history and development of Canada," and that the "unique and rich Métis identity and culture ... are key components of the origins of Canada." Despite this history, Mr. Isaac writes, the "Métis have largely been forgotten until recent years in the national narrative as a distinct rights-bearing Aboriginal peoples."

The report provides clarity on just who is Métis. It points out that simply

having mixed European-Indigenous ancestry does not automatically mean Métis. Rather, the test for who is Métis remains as Powley. The Powley Decision (*R. v. Powley [2003]*) is a Supreme Court ruling on Métis hunting rights as well as criteria for determining who qualifies as Métis.

The report also says that, unlike other Aboriginal peoples, the Métis have nowhere to go when it comes to negotiating their rights and claims. It calls for a review of existing federal laws, policies and services that affect Métis people.

The report makes 17 recommendations, ranging from reviewing Métis' access to federal programs, such as those that provide health benefits, to establishing a national office to deal with all Métis matters in the country, and long-term, stable funding for Métis organizations. Other recommendations are that:

Canada review its existing policies, programs and services dealing with, or available to, Aboriginal peoples, to ensure that Métis peoples are expressly and distinctly considered.

Canada change its policy that presently requires Métis to pay to enter the Batoche Historical Site.

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The Month of July in History

In July 2009, Elaine Crocker, Program Coordinator, becomes the first Dumont Technical Institute employee to retire.

In July 2011, Gabriel Dumont Institute launches two books at Back to Batoche Festival: *Gabriel Dumont: Li Chef Michif in Images and in Words* by Darren Préfontaine, and *Veterans and Families of the 1885 Northwest Resistance* by Lawrence Barkwell.

In July 2013, the inaugural class of the GDI-University of Regina Master of Education program is held at the Gabriel Dumont Institute Center, Prince Albert.

In July 2014, the Métis Veterans Memorial Monument is unveiled to the public at Batoche Memorial Gardens. The monument is a national tribute honouring Métis servicemen and servicewomen from across Canada who served in the South African ('Boer') War (1899-1902), World War I (1914-1918), World War II (1942-1945), and the Korean War (1950-1953).

In July 2015, Joselyn Britton becomes a Red Seal Chef, the first female GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship client to earn the Interprovincial Red Seal Chef Certification.

In July 2015, the first cohort of the GDI-University of Regina Master of Education program graduates.

Workplace Myths Debunked

By Jim Edmondson

Probation period for new employees is a valuable tool for employers as it allows for a review of the suitability of the new employee early on. It also offers the new employee an opportunity to better understand the expectations and requirements of the new position. Many employers and employees mistakenly assume that there are set standards around probation length and what is required at beginning or to terminate.

Opinions among employers, human resource (HR) professionals, and organized labour, are often mixed as to whether or not it is necessary to have probation periods for new employees. From the employer and HR's perspective, a probationary period lets an employer decide if the employee is a good fit for the organization prior to investing significant resources and incurring severance liability. On the other hand, employees sometimes assume that once hired there is very little the employer can do without incurring penalty (severance). Usually, misunderstandings about what an employer can and cannot do vis-à-vis probation periods are at the root of these problems. Below, I explore some of those mistaken assumptions, and de-bunk the myths.

Myth 1: A probation period is an implied term of all employment contracts.

Fact: While some past court decisions held that a probation period was implied, today, courts are much less willing to agree that a probationary period is part of the employment contract unless the employer clearly explained before the employee was hired that a probation period was required. This is what GDI does with its new hires. We want new employees to be fully informed at onset giving them a much higher success rate.

Myth 2: If an employee is terminated within six months after being hired, the employee is not entitled to notice or pay in lieu of notice.

Fact: While the *Saskatchewan Employment Standards Act* does not require an employer to provide notice or pay in lieu of notice if an employee is terminated within three months after date of hire, that employee may be entitled to severance under common law, unless an employment contract explicitly states otherwise.

Myth 3: Probation periods are always six months.

Fact: While three months is often the probation duration

chosen by employers, it can be any period an employer deems necessary to fairly evaluate the suitability of the new employee for the organization. The Collective Bargaining Agreement between GDI and SGEU contain explicit language regarding probation and has set the probationary period as six months.

Myth 4: An employer is not required to inform the employee of the reasons for termination during the probation period.

Fact: All employers owe an obligation of good faith in the way that employees are terminated. The fact that an employee is on probation does not relieve an employer from the obligation to provide reasonable notice in the event that the employee is dismissed for reasons unrelated to the employee's shortcomings, for cause. Further, some courts have also held that employers are expected to let employees know of any performance issues during the probation period so employees have an opportunity to correct any deficiencies before the end of the probation. This is the reason that GDI conducts performance reviews on probationary employees at four months to enable them to rectify any shortcomings prior to the conclusion of probation.

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Office Admin Prog Holds Sixth Graduation Ceremony

By Chantelle Julé

When you enter a building or workplace of any sort, the first person you are likely to see is an administrative staff, who is there to greet you and direct your needs. Administrative professionals are of high value to organizations as they are

considered the front line staff, the first person that clients see, and the individuals who keep the office and business services running smoothly. Qualified administrative personnel are in high demand. Employers today, however, do

not only look for personality and experience when hiring their administrative staff, but they also look for those who have completed education in this field.

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Meet Danni Meyers, a Female Apprentice Electrician

By Audrey Arcand

According to Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC), there were 9,953 registered apprentices in Saskatchewan in 2014-2015. Of this, 907 (or 9.1%) were women. This was a decrease from 2011-2012 when there was a total of 9,724 registered apprentices in the province, 9.8% (or 950) of whom were women. During the same period, there were 454 registered women apprentices in Predominantly Male Occupations (such as electrician and plumber) in 2014-2015, and 355 in 2011-2012 representing 4.5% and 3.6% of registered apprentices respectively. That is, there is work to be done to enhance women participation in Saskatchewan's apprenticeship programs.

Over the past five years, Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) Training and Employment apprenticeship programs, namely GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative (2011-2014), and GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (2014-2017), have created a total of 502 new apprenticeship jobs for Saskatchewan's Aboriginal clients. This has been done through partnerships with employers across the province. While, as indicated above, the apprenticeship programs in Saskatchewan are generally male-dominated, serious attempts are being made at GDI Training and Employment to promote women participation. Indeed, the ongoing GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship

Project is on track to having more female participants than the previous GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative. One such woman is Danni Meyers.

Danni Meyers is a Year I Electrician Apprentice in the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project and is currently working at Concept Electric in Saskatoon. Danni, who first heard about the GDI Training and Employment from a family member, discussed her experience with us.

Danni stated that she has always wanted to be an electrician, and that she decided to contact GDI Training and Employment after hearing that "Gabriel Dumont Institute had a great program for those who are Métis and looking to get into the trades." However, the final decision to follow her dream was "significantly easier to make after speaking with (her Employment Counsellor) Audrey Arcand. Audrey assured [her] that it was the right decision." In expressing her appreciation to Audrey, Danni asserted that "Audrey was well organized and promptly returned all my calls and emails."

Danni stated that her primary responsibility as an apprentice electrician is learning how to manipulate power as well as constructing various ways of distributing that power. That is also what she likes about her job. As she puts it, "My favourite aspect of my job is that we always

have to be aware and on our toes. Not only is our own safety being put at risk, but others safety is also in your hands. I also enjoy it because it is a very active and hands-on job."

Danni credits what she learned in school for preparing her for Electrician Apprenticeship program. "At school, we had the opportunity to engage in hands-on learning that included wiring and safety awareness." She also continues to learn from her journeyperson-certified supervisor and crew members. Danni asserts that having a friendly, respectful, and supportive team around her at work makes her experience more enjoyable. As well, "I have supportive people at Gabriel Dumont Institute who walk with me in this journey and always assure me that I have what it takes to be an electrician.

When asked about the secret for her success. Danni said, "The secret to my success is all the help that was made available to me through the GDI program Persistence was also an attribute as I talked to people in my everyday life that might give me an open door to my next job. I was also very determined to be a woman in trades." Thank you, Danni for sharing your story with us. We wish you the very best as you work towards realizing your dream of becoming an electrician. 🌟



Danni Meyers,
Year I Electrician Apprentice
GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project
Photo courtesy of D. Meyers



Office Administration Class of 2016
graduate Thomasina Sunshine-Klassen.
With her are (L to R), Kristen Rutten,
Michelle Easterby
Chantelle Julé and Muriel Towriss
Photo courtesy of C. Julé.



Office Administration Graduation ... *continued from Page 2*



Gordon Holtslander
at the Dumont Technical
Institute 20 year celebration
in 2012
Photo from GDI Archives

At Dumont Technical Institute, we are proud to have offered, for the sixth year in a row, the Office Administration program, that provides the knowledge and skills that employers are looking for when hiring administrative assistants.

Our Office Administration program is unique in that for the six years it has been offered in Regina, we have partnered with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region (RQHR) in the delivery of the program. To better prepare our students for careers with the health region, our curriculum includes a medical terminology class. We also offer a two-week practicum placement at the end of the program. The practicum experience gives the students opportunity to experience work in a real office setting, and put their classroom knowledge to use. It also allows the students to build their confidence and gain valuable experience before they graduate. Further, practicum placements enable potential employers to evaluate and mentor our students before they enter the job market.

Many students spoke very highly of their practicum experience, stating such things as, "I really enjoyed my time at the practicum. I would consider working at a place like that," or "I loved my time there and at the end of my first week they had offered me a job," or "I never expected to like it there as much as I did." Several of the students got practicum placements at the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, most of whom were hired by the Health Region upon successful completion of their program. Some students chose different locations for their practicums depending on personal interest. All in all there were many positive outcomes from the practicum component of the program.

Fourteen students who had completed the Office Administration program celebrated their accomplishments with guests, who included over 110 family and friends, at their graduation ceremony at the Regina Travelodge on June 30, 2016. A very nice graduation lunch

was followed by speeches as well as gift and certificate presentations.

As of July 25, 2016, seven of the 14 students who recently completed the Office Administrative program have been hired by the RQHR. Two more may be hired by the health region this summer. On behalf of DTI, we would like to thank the program staff for providing a quality education to our students; to GDI Training and Employment for offering financial support to many students; DTI Program Support Facilitator Darcie Debruyne who helped facilitate the practicum placements; and to RQHR for providing so many placements and job opportunities once again. Further, we would like to thank all of the employers who participated in the program and who offered practicum opportunities. We look forward to offering this successful program for the seventh consecutive year this fall! 🌍



St. Mary's School Jiggers perform at the joint GDI-Meewasin Valley Authority announcement that they had nominated the Saskatchewan and South Saskatchewan Rivers for Canadian Heritage River Designation in May 2012.
Photo by Bonnie Hryciuk

Canada Urged to Address Métis Rights ... *continued from Page 1*

The Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) ensure that there is a clearly identified senior office and senior official within INAC to deal exclusively with Métis-related matters with a whole-of-department mandate.

Canada should work with provinces and territories to develop a joint process by which to address unresolved Métis rights claims and related issues.

Canada conduct a review of its policies and practices associated with the Crown's duty to consult Aboriginal

peoples to ensure that such policies and practices are being fully implemented with respect to Métis in accordance with Canadian law.

Canada develop a discussion document for its engagement with Métis regarding basic principles to initiate a discussion of a Métis rights framework and consider the principles set out in the Report for inclusion in such discussion document.

INAC Minister Carolyn Bennett said in a statement that "Our government is fully committed to working together

with the Métis and to moving forward together based on a recognition of rights, co-operation and partnership."

The Isaac Report titled, A Matter of National and Constitutional Import: Report of the Minister's Special Representative on Reconciliation with Métis: Section 35 Métis Rights and the Manitoba Metis Federation Decision, is available online at <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1467641790303/1467641835266>. 🌍



Workplace Myths Debunked ... Continued from Page 4

Myth 5: An employer can terminate an employee for any reason during a probation period.

Fact: If an employer wishes to terminate the employee during probationary period, the reasons for the termination must be related to the employee's qualifications and suitability for the position. Usually, an unexpected lack of work or financial problems is not a valid reason to terminate the probationary employee. If terminated, the notice period set out in legislation would apply.

Myth 6: An employer can unilaterally extend the probation period.

Fact: Just as an employer cannot unilaterally change

material terms of an employee's contract, it cannot extend a probationary period without the employee's agreement and fresh consideration. Our CBA, in Article 11.1.7, allows for extension of the probation period with adequate rationale, notice, and agreement from SGEU.

Myth 7: Employers do not require cause to terminate during probation.

Fact: Generally, the standard required to dismiss a probationary employee for cause is lower than that required to terminate a non-probationary employee. Courts of law have previously ruled that an incident that may not

constitute just cause for regular employees may constitute cause for dismissal of a probationary employee. Challenge for the courts has been a lack of consistent test for determination of whether cause exists.

The prevailing view among HR professionals is that an employer has the right to dismiss a probationary employee as long as the decision is made for a legitimate work-related reason; is in good faith, and the employee is made aware of the standard expectations of continued employment. GDI, in conjunction with SGEU, has implemented safeguards into our probation system that protects all the parties involved and allows its employees to thrive. 🌐



Dr. Thomas Chase (R), University of Regina Provost, presents Darren Prefontaine with the 'Book of the Year' award for Darren's book *Gabriel Dumont: Li Chef Michif in Images and in Words* at the 2011 Saskatchewan Book Awards. Photo credit: Unbound Images

Payroll Cutoff Calendar, August 2016

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Heritage Day Stat Holiday	Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Aug 5 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Aug 19 Student Payroll	Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Aug 15 Payday		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Staff Payday	Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Aug 19 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Sep 2 Student Payroll			A/P Cheque Run Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Aug 31 Payday	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
28	29	30	31			
		Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Sep 2 Direct Deposits	Staff Payday			

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

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can be obtained at:

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

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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