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GDI (1980-2018)

Proud Past, Bright Future



# 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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## Leadership in Action: Stories that Inspire a Nation

By Tracie Léost

On Thursday, April 5, 2018, I had the pleasure of participating on a panel that discussed Leadership in Action: Stories that Inspire a Nation. The event was hosted in Toronto by the Canadian Club Toronto in celebration of Indigenous Youth. The panel members included three Indspire Laureates, including Ashley Callingbull, Thomas Dymond, and me, and was moderated by Ms. Roberta Jamieson, the President and CEO of Indspire.

We were invited to share our stories of determination, to discuss our plans and hopes for the country, as well as to speak to Canada's progress in quest for true reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

We had been previously notified that Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau would be in attendance. So, I planned my talk around the importance of investing in Indigenous education.

Following last minute changes, the Prime Minister did not attend, however there were several public figures, business people, and many Indigenous peoples in attendance. I shifted the focus of my talk from investment of Indigenous education to connecting with Indigenous peoples, especially the

youth, to inspire them to stick with their education, to work hard, and to chase their dreams. I had the opportunity to share my story of bullying and isolation at school, my determination to succeed, and the people and community that made it possible.

I come from the Métis community of St. Laurent Manitoba. My grandparents live there, but my parents have always lived in Winnipeg. So I went to school in Winnipeg but every weekend, summer, or school break I was back in my community. I am a very community-based person and St. Laurent is a huge part of my identity. Growing up there I was surrounded by my people, as well as Métis culture and traditions.

From Kindergarten to grade 8, I was just one of the two Indigenous students in my class. The number of Indigenous students increased slightly in high school. We were four from grades 9-12. It was hard for me to not be in an environment surrounded by people who were just like me, and I didn't have a sense of community at school.

I experienced bullying and isolation. I remember going on a class field trip and we were on the bus passing through Winnipeg North End

which struggles with poverty and homelessness. My classmates asked me and the other Indigenous student if the homeless people on the streets were our cousins. They asked if we would turn out that way because we are the same people.

What has motivated me to succeed is that I am extremely proud of who I am. It is with pride that I carry myself as a strong Indigenous woman. Like the saying "people wear their heart on their sleeves," that's culture for me, it's there and it's present. My people have gone through much struggle so our culture could survive, and we could succeed. For that I will never be ashamed. My motivation is also much bigger than just myself. No one thought I was capable of achieving much in life. Today, I am a role model and I am in a position of breaking the barriers so that our future generations can be more successful. My Elder always says "Hold your head up and be strong because the next generation is watching." I have the ability to pave the way so that our future generations can build their dreams in an environment that supports them.

After the event, I met with several Indigenous students and we shared stories, our experiences, and how to get over hardships.

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Gabriel Dumont College

## Stories of Inspiration ... Continued from Page 1



My goal is to earn a social work degree and have a career in the community working with the youth. It would be great if Canada had an Indigenous woman as the Prime Minister. Maybe one day that will be me. Maarsii!

Tracie Léost, 19, is a first year student at Gabriel Dumont College at the University of Regina. Tracie won three bronze medals under the Métis flag at the North American Indigenous Games in Regina in 2014. In 2015, she completed a

115 km run to raise awareness on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and raised over \$6,000 for the Families First Foundation. She was 16 years old at the time. 🌍

## Asking for Help Reveals Strength, Not Weakness

By Jim Edmondson

I get it, there are some people out there who would rather stroll into work completely naked than suck up their pride and ask for help from co-workers or their boss. For some reasons, many of us perceive a request for assistance as a sign of weakness, when in reality it's actually a sign of great strength. It shows that you're self-aware and self-assured enough to know when it's time to call in some reinforcements. But, that doesn't necessarily mean that asking for help is easy. Approaching someone in your office to ask him or her to lend a hand can actually be pretty anxiety-inducing.

There are at least four instances in the workplace when you should consider asking for help. I have also provided a suggestion for what to say in each scenario, because the last thing you want to do is muster up your courage only to stammer your way through a rambling and unclear request.

### 1. When you have no idea

This one should be obvious to everyone but regrettably is not always. But, if you have absolutely no idea what you're supposed to be doing for a particular work project, it's time to approach someone in your office for some clarification and assistance.

There is no use torturing yourself by trying to blindly navigate a challenging project that you don't understand. If you do that, chances are it won't turn out as expected, and you'll have wasted your own, and everyone else's, time. Refusing to ask for help when you don't know what you are doing will make you appear stubborn and incompetent. So, take a deep breath and approach your supervisor or one of your co-workers in order to get a better understanding of the particular task and goals.

**Try This:** "Hey, I'm feeling a little confused about the details of the XYZ project. Could we set a time to sit down, talk through the nuts and bolts of this assignment, and make sure we're on the same page?"

### 2. When you have a full plate

It happens to the best of us. You kept enthusiastically answering "Yes!" to every project that landed on your desk and now you're completely swamped. You've reached your limit, and you know that there's absolutely no way you'll finish everything by the deadline, even if you pulled all-nighters for the next three weeks. What's the next logical step? Ask for help if you need it. You may feel like you're shirking responsibility. But, everyone has been in this situation at least once in his or her life. Just be sure to repay the favor the next time your co-worker is feeling overwhelmed!

**Try this:** "I hate feeling like I am trying to pass off work on other people, but I'm totally swamped right now. If you have any extra time, would you mind helping me with the XYZ aspect of this project? I know that's your area of expertise, and I'd really appreciate your help and insight!"

### 3. To err is human

We are all human, so mistakes are pretty much inevitable. But, it's not exactly about *what* we did or the mistake itself, it's about how we react to it. The worst thing we can do is attempt to sweep it under the rug without anybody noticing. And, if we try to remedy our error by getting involved in areas or departments where we don't really belong, we could very well make our problem even worse. Sure, it may be embarrassing to make mistakes and then to have to ask for help, but if we need help fixing our slip-up, make sure to approach the appropriate people in your office immediately. You're not the first person to make a mistake at work, and you certainly won't be the last.

**Try this:** "I'm so embarrassed, but I completely messed ABC up, and now I need XYZ done in order to fix it. I'm so sorry for the confusion and extra work. I really appreciate your help!"

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Tracie Léost  
(Please see Page 1).  
Photos courtesy of  
Winnipeg SUN and  
Tracie Léost



## Cecile O'Neil Fondly Remembered by Colleagues

By James Oloo

Former co-workers continue to remember retired Gabriel Dumont Institute employee Cecile O'Neil, who passed away this month at the age of 72 years. The celebration of Cecile's life was held on April 9, 2018 in Big River, Saskatchewan.

Tammy Cummins, Employment Counsellor at the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment in Prince Albert, said, "Cecile was a mentor. I looked up to her. She inspired us to be passionate about our work at the Prince Albert Office." Cecile was the first Program Coordinator of the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training & Employment in Prince Albert. "Many of the earliest employees at the Prince Albert Centre were hired by Cecile. She had a saying that, "You give it 100% and after you reach the top, you can do some more. We are serving our people."

"Cecile reminded me of my Grandma," said Robbie Walliser, the Gabriel Dumont Institute Benefits Administrator. "Cecile came across as a strong woman, but she had a big soft heart. She genuinely cared for

people. Cecile was a good woman, a loyal friend, and colleague, who always had a smile, a joke, and an encouraging word."

Sylvia Moss, Employment Service Manager at Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment, also shared her memories of Cecile. "We were out for lunch with two other staff members, when I knocked over a very tall glass of water and ice. Instinct took over immediately as I pushed it all away from me and directly onto Cecile's lap!! There was a lot of laughter and for me embarrassment. Cecile never let me forget what a horrible first impression I had made!"

"Cecile was a great lady. She was strong, funny, tenacious, kind, stubborn, a good listener, and at the core, she had a heart that was always in the right place," Sylvia stated. "Cecile had a huge heart for the Métis people and communities in which she lived and served, and she was a good example of how to lead with confidence. I always admired her ability to build solid partnerships for Gabriel Dumont Institute, her work with industry and community

partners are still viable today. Cecile was quick with a smile, and her laugh was infectious." Sylvia continued, "I know so many of us will never forget her, she impacted us all in so many ways. My heart goes out to her entire family."

Cecile joined the Institute in 1998 as an Employment Counselor at the Dumont Technical Institute La Loche. She later served in the same capacity in Duck Lake, North Battleford, and Prince Albert.

At the time of her retirement in December 2012, Cecile had also served as a Partnership Coordinator, Program Coordinator, and Acting Director of Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment. On her last day at work, Cecile stated that "It has been an honour to witness the success and achievement of many students and clients and it is such a phenomenal experience. I like to believe that my role at Gabriel Dumont Institute has made a positive impact on many students and clients as evidenced by many a positive contact I have maintained with students over the years." 🌍

### GDI Training & Employment Entrepreneurship Program

On March 19, 2018, Western Economic Diversification Canada announced a \$1.16 million funding for the GDI Entrepreneurship Program. For information about the program, please contact Brendon Demerais or Charity Chaboyer



Brendon Demerais  
Self-Employment Services Manager  
brendon.demerai@gdite.gdins.org  
Phone: 306.657.2234



Charity Chaboyer,  
Administrative Assistant  
charity.chaboyer@gdite.gdins.org  
Phone: 306.657.2239

## Asking for Help in the Workplace ... *Continued from Page 2*

### 4. When you need a hand

As an employee, you already know that your focus should be placed on turning out the best work possible - not just something that has your name all over it. If you are working on a project you think could benefit from additional input of your co-workers, never hesitate to ask them to lend their advice and talents. This will foster

collaboration among your team members, and also help to make your project the very best it can be. Talk about a win-win.

**Try this:** "I'm working on XYZ project, and I'd love your expert insight on this particular area. Can we set up a time when we can chat and bounce some ideas off of each other? I really think your input could take this project to the next level!"

Asking for help is not always easy. However, sometimes it is downright essential. If you find yourself in one of these scenarios at work or in your home life, do take a deep breath, swallow your pride, and approach others in your office for some much needed assistance. I promise you, it will be better for you and everyone else involved in the long run. 🌍



**Gabriel Dumont Institute**

On April 26, 2018, Gabriel Dumont Institute, in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan, announced the establishment of a new Gabriel Dumont Research Chair in Métis Studies. The Institute contributed \$200,000 towards the senior research position to be housed at the College of Arts and Science, the University of Saskatchewan.



Dr. Earl Cook, Minister of Education, Métis Nation–Saskatchewan and chair, the Gabriel Dumont Institute Board of Governors



Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann Vice-Provost of Indigenous Engagement, University of Saskatchewan  
Photos by James Oloo

## When a Community Comes Together

By Nichole McCloud

Adult Basic Education Level 4 students at the Dumont Technical Institute

Lloydminster program have been working efficaciously to collect enough donations in support of our graduation scheduled for May 2018. In this effort, the outpouring support from our community has been astounding. It is thanks to our community that in one short month since we

started on this fundraising endeavor, we are close to meeting our target of \$2,000.

Together, we came up with some pretty impressive and simple ways to successfully fundraise for our graduation. One of the first projects we came up with was to organize a bottle drive which incredibly ended in us raising hundreds of dollars towards our final goal.

Another project was for our students to sell individual boxes of chocolates to our friends, family, and the community. We sold 26 cases of chocolates in less than one month adding enormously to our graduation pool. One of the most fun and rewarding projects we initiated as a class was putting on a Pie Bingo.

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## Former NORTEP Students Earn Education Degrees

By Derek Cornet

The final cohort of NORTEP (Northern Teacher Education Program) students officially became educators Saturday April 28, 2018 when they were handed the degrees they worked years to earn.

In all, 15 residents of northern Saskatchewan collected Bachelor of Education certificates at a special ceremony held at the Jonas Roberts Memorial Community Centre. The ceremony featured speeches from staff and students, as well as from dignitaries who travel to La Ronge to be at the event. One student who made a speech on behalf of the class was Tamara Ninine, of Southend, who said she's looking forward to returning home to Southend in a new role.

"I was working with family and child services and I have seen the cycles of abuse and impacts of drug and alcohol in my community," Tamara Ninine said. "I thought there had to be a better way to improve the socioeconomic status of the people in the community. I thought education was the best fit for me to try and reach the young people out there."

Ninine also wanted to thank the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) for stepping in to help them complete their education after the provincial government cut NORTEP's funding in 2016.

She said the final year was difficult because of the decision, adding the uncertainty led her to give up her rental unit and move back to Southend. Ninine then had to commute between La Ronge and Southend every week to finish her degree.

Ninine also credited NORTEP staff for working hard over the years to ensure that they succeed in their studies. She asserted that she would like to take what she learned to become a transition coach to assist young people in her community when they move from the reserve and into the city.

"We wanted to stay as a NORTEP cohort and SUNTEP allowed us to stay together and they accommodated us in every way," Ninine said, adding that "They (SUNTEP) are the ones who made it a smooth transition for us. Not the government – not anyone else."

SUNTEP is a four year, fully accredited direct entry Bachelor of Education program offered by the Gabriel Dumont Institute in cooperation with the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, and the Ministry of Education in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina. When NORTEP ceased its operation in 2016, the entire cohort of fourth year students submitted a request to SUNTEP to supervise their internships and offer their remaining classes to enable them meet requirements for their education degree.

NORTEP was founded in 1976 to bring teacher education opportunities to the North. In 2017, the funding from NORTEP was transferred by the Government of Saskatchewan to Northlands College to offer teacher education program. Existing NORTEP students had the option of continuing their studies at the Northlands College.

The article first appeared on LarongeNOW.com. It is reprinted with permission. 



# When a Community Unites ... Continued from Page 4

The Native Friendship Center hosted our bingo night, and fellow students, families, and faculty made a tremendous amount of desserts and pies. It was an incredible experience seeing our community come together and participate at an event like this. It was absolutely amazing being able to see all of the different generations of families, young and old, having fun together and taking part in this fundraising activity. It was definitely entertaining for everyone involved.

The local Co-op has also been very supportive. It is because of the Co-op that we were able to sell many

raffle tickets for our Easter gift basket draw while simultaneously selling cases of chocolates to the community. In the coming weeks, we hope to raise more money by selling raffle tickets for our Mother's Day gift basket and square's raffle. We are also organizing another bottle drive that will last until the end of the school term.

Were it not for a select group of dedicated and determined students who orchestrated and organized each one of these events, we would have probably not been as successful towards meeting our fundraising

goals. It is undoubtedly because of these motivated individuals that our entire class will get to experience firsthand what an amazing graduation feels like. I am very grateful to have had such hard working, inspirational classmates to share my graduating year with. This past year has been so memorable and unforgettable in many ways. My classmates and I are extremely thankful to have had the opportunity to take part in this program and are excited to see what the next chapter of our lives will look like after graduation.



Cecile O'Neal  
(October 23, 1945 - April 4, 2018)  
at a work event in 2012.  
Photo by James Oloo

## Payroll Cutoff Calendar, May 2018

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
				Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student May 11 Direct Deposits	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheet & Payroll Revisions for May 15 Payday	Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	<b>Student Payday</b> Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P Invoices	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for May 25 Student Payroll	<b>Staff Payday</b>		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	<b>Victoria Day Stat Holiday</b>	Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student May 25 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	<b>Student Payday</b> Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P Invs - Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for May 31 Payday	
27	28	29	30	31		
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for June 8 Student Payroll			<b>Staff Payday</b> Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run		

Employee contracts due prior to payroll cutoff date.

MRTS due by the 15th of every month, and employee contracts are due prior to payroll cutoff date.



## Gabriel Dumont Institute/Dumont Technical Institute

917 22<sup>nd</sup> Street West  
Saskatoon, SK  
S7M 0R9

PHONE:  
(306) 242-6070

FAX:  
(306) 242-0002

E-MAIL:  
[general@gdi.gdins.org](mailto:general@gdi.gdins.org)

Visit us at  
[www.gdins.org](http://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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**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

### GDI Publishing Saskatoon

2, 604 22nd Street West  
Saskatoon SK S7M 5W1  
Phone: (306) 934-4941  
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

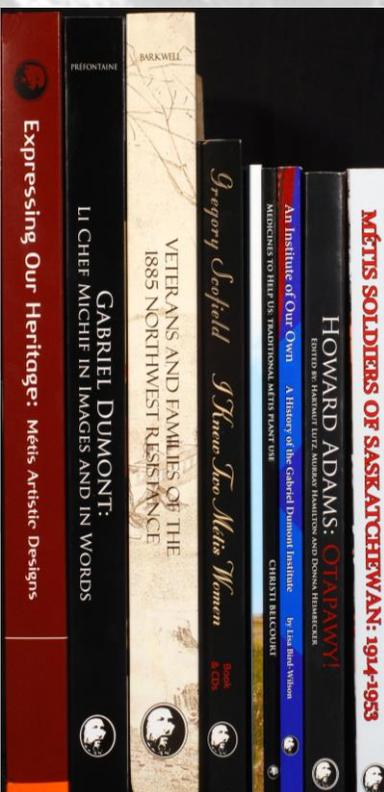
### GDI Library Regina

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