



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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## GDI Prepares for Board Changes

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) is governed by a twelve-member

Board of Governors, plus a Chair who is the Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN—S) Education Minister. In 2005, at the GDI Annual General Meeting, a motion for staggered Board terms was passed. This resulted in three-year terms that are staggered to ensure continuity. The terms of several Board members are due to expire in the very near future, and a few seats are also vacant. As a result, Board vacancies will be filled by this established process:

1) the position is advertised in the MN—S area with a statement of qualifications and duties; 2) resumes are collected and shared with the Area Director. The Regional Council identifies their choice through a motion at a duly constituted MN—S Regional Council meeting; 3) The MN—S Provincial Métis Council would then consider and/or approve the selected candidate; 4) The candidate's name and resume would be sent to the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour for final approval; 5) The Board member would go through training, and would sign applicable code of conduct/conflict of

interest guidelines prior to participating at a meeting.

Board appointments are either vacant or due to expire for the following regions: Northern Region II (Clearwater-Clearlake Region) (vacant); Northern Region I (vacant); Western Region I (expiring); Western Region II (expiring); Eastern Region III (expiring), and Western Region IA (vacant).

Since 2005, the GDI Board has had a governance role rather than a management role. The current bylaws outline the role and responsibilities of the Board as follows:

- To adopt policies for GDI's effective operation;
- To formulate a strategic plan and to oversee its implementation;
- To approve annual budgets, audits and programs;
- To function as GDI ambassadors, and to encourage students and potential students in their study and career plans;
- To represent GDI to all levels of government, to Métis people, and to the public generally; and
- To appoint a Chief Executive Officer to be directly responsible for implementation of policy and the Institute's day-to-

day management and operations.

According to a recent independent Evaluation of GDI, the current Board of Governors is strong and is operating effectively. "Its current role as a policy board is perceived to be healthy and appropriate, and clearly understood by its members. The Board is perceived to be highly committed to the best interests of GDI, professional, and making a positive contribution to the success of the Institute" (*GDI Evaluation Final Report, 2008 p. 34*).

All appointments to the Board must be Métis, and they should know the cultural, historical and social circumstances of Saskatchewan Métis. Ideally, the collective skills on the Board will represent a number of different disciplines and perspectives, preferably education or post-secondary education, finance and administration, business, human resources (personnel), law, and communications. This skill set will ensure a wide range of skills and perspectives are available when decisions are considered. 



## Graduate Studies—Bursary Program Update



The next deadline to apply for the *Gabriel Dumont College Graduate Student Bursary Program* is October 6, 2008.

In 2006, GDI established the *Graduate Student Bursary Program* to: (1) provide financial assistance and encourage Saskatchewan Métis to pursue full-time graduate studies, and to conduct research in fields related to Métis people; and (2) increase Métis employment in Saskatchewan and within GDI.

The program is a three-year pilot based on an annual contribution from Gabriel Dumont College (GDC). The value of each award is up to \$10,000 for each academic year of study at a recognized university in Canada or abroad. Applicants are eligible for a maximum of two awards, which may be

in consecutive or non-consecutive years. Bursary recipients who are undertaking graduate studies at the University of Saskatchewan may be able to access office space and equipment at the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education (SUNTEP). If qualified, they may also be considered for teaching opportunities with SUNTEP or GDC.

To date, the Institute's Graduate program has had a total of 10 graduate students at both the Master's and Doctoral levels in such diverse fields of study as History, Special Education, Toxicology, Business Administration, and Educational Psychology.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must be a Saskatchewan Métis; have applied to, been accepted in, or are

already enrolled in a full-time graduate degree program at the Masters or Doctorate level at a recognized university in Canada or abroad; plan to undertake, or already be engaged in a major research project or thesis which relates to Métis people; be committed to working in a Métis work environment upon the successful completion of their studies; demonstrate need for financial support during their study period, and; demonstrate a commitment to the advancement of Métis people.

Application and Financial Declaration forms and further information are available on the GDI website at [www.gdins.org](http://www.gdins.org).

Annual deadlines for receipt of applications are **April 6** and **October 6** each year. 🌐

interruption to services for clients.

## GDI T&E Receives AHRDA Extension

As many Gabriel Dumont Institute Training & Employment (GDI T&E) stakeholders are aware, the national Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS) is winding down and a successor strategy is being planned by the federal government. The current agreement between the Institute and Service Canada was set to expire March 31, 2009; however a one-year extension has been implemented. The extension begins April 1, 2009 and ends on March 31, 2010.

The extension "will allow the Government of Canada to fulfill its Budget 2008 commitment to engage Aboriginal groups and other stakeholders on the design and transition to a successor strategy to the AHRDS. It will also help ensure a seamless transition in implementing the new strategy" (*Service Canada FAQ Sheet*). AHRDA holders have been assured that there are no changes to the terms and conditions of the program for the duration of the extension, and that there will be no

The plan is to phase out the existing AHRDAs by March 31, 2010, and replace them with a new successor strategy starting April 1, 2010. The new strategy is expected to draw from best practices under the current AHRDS. Human Resources and Social Development Canada is currently developing the process for selecting new agreement holders under a new strategy. The GDI 2008-2011 Strategic Plan identifies work for the post-AHRDA process as a key priority for the Institute. 🌐



## GDI T&E Scholarship Program

Details of the *GDI T&E Scholarship and Bursary* program are still being finalized, but GDI T&E Director, Tavia Inkster is hopeful that the fund can begin disbursing awards as early as spring 2009.

The *GDI T & E Scholarship/Bursary* program was established to encourage Saskatchewan Métis to pursue full-time education in fields related to Métis people that will lead to sustainable long-term employment as well as fill identified labour market needs.

The scholarship/bursary program is based on an endowment fund of \$1.3 million established under the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA). The goal of this fund is to provide AHRDA funding to

Métis clients who have eligible action plans. Interest accrued on the initial investment will be allocated as scholarships/bursaries, and will be available for eligible applicants.

Tentative details of the scholarship/bursary program include awards categories for **Basic Education** students, **Post-Secondary** students, and a **Labour Market Entry** award for those who have recently completed an accredited education program.

Tentative application deadlines are May 1 and October 1 annually.

Preliminary basic criteria for all awards include self-declaring as a Métis; holding a valid Saskatchewan Health

Card; being enrolled or about to enroll in a diploma, certificate, degree or adult basic education program that is at least eight months of full-time studies; being enrolled in a public educational institution or an Aboriginal educational institution in Canada providing a recognized diploma, certificate or degree program; demonstrating a commitment to the needs of Métis people; and writing a letter detailing an employment action plan.

Please watch the GDI website for the Terms of Reference and Application forms for this program, which will be released soon. [www.gdins.org](http://www.gdins.org).



*"The scholarship/bursary program is based on an endowment fund of \$1.3 million established under the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA)."*

## GDI All Staff Meeting

Later this month, GDI staff from all over the province will have the opportunity to get together to meet, share ideas, exchange information, and build collegial relationships at the Institute's All-Staff meeting.

This year, the GDI All-Staff Meeting will be held in Saskatoon on **September 25 and 26, 2008** at the Saskatoon Inn. All sessions will take place in the *Saskatchewan Room A*

with the meeting's opening set to commence at 1 pm on Thursday September 25. The GDI All-Staff Meeting will wind up by 1 pm Friday September 26, allowing Institute staff time to travel home.

Agenda items include opening remarks by Board Chair and MN—S President and Education Minister Robert Doucette; an overview of the Institute's strategic direction for the next three years; a

demonstration of the GDI Policies and Procedures project; entertainment; and a banquet and recognition awards.

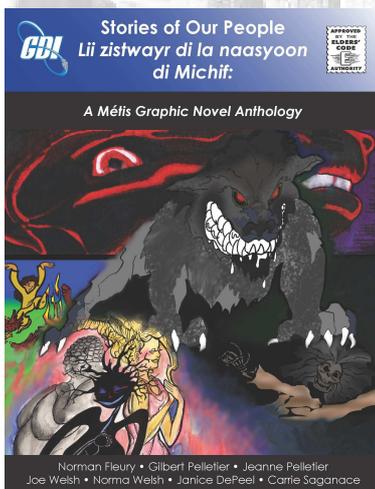
A planning committee has been working diligently on the meeting's details. Planning committee members are Donna Ross, Amy Gallagher, and Rhonda Pilon. For more information please contact one of the planning committee members. 

*"This year, the GDI All-Staff Meeting will be held in Saskatoon on **September 25 and 26, 2008** at the Saskatoon Inn."*



## Publishing Department Busier than Ever

A milestone resource will soon be available: *A Métis Graphic Novel Anthology*.



GDI's Publishing Department provides a number of key services to Saskatchewan's Métis community including:

- An award-winning publishing program
- A curriculum and cultural resource production program
- A research component specializing in cultural, educational, and historical expertise
- A Métis-specific archival resource centre and museum
- An online learning community anchored on *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* and *The Back to Batoche Interactive Website*
- A cultural funds administration component

The Publishing Department is firmly committed to ensuring that the province's Métis have a strong voice in all decision-making bodies effecting curriculum development, book publishing, the preservation of the Michif languages and cultures, and archival and museum

programming.

The Publishing Department works on a number of projects: *New Breed Magazine* is a quarterly publication printed in partnership with the MN—S. *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* is an online Métis-specific primary and secondary resource depository that is user-friendly, free and accessible to all those interested in Métis history and culture. *The Virtual Museum* continues to upload additional material.

The Publishing Department is pleased to be in the process of preparing additional Michif content for the Virtual Museum.

The Publishing Department will soon have a beautiful artistic, cultural, scientific, Indigenous language and traditional knowledge resource ready for distribution—*Medicines to Help Us*, by Christi Belcourt. It is anticipated that this stunning, unique set of study prints will become a best seller. The resource also includes Cree, Ojibway and Michif content.

A second milestone resource will soon be available: *Stories of Our People/Lii zistwayr di la naasyoon di Michif: A*

*Métis Graphic Novel Anthology*. The back cover of the book says it includes stories about three Métis tricksters—Wiisakaychak, Nanabush, and Chi-Jean; werewolves (Roogaroos); cannibal spirits (Whiitigos); flying skeletons (Paakuks); and of course, the Devil (li Jiiyaab). "Steeped in Michif language and culture, this graphic novel anthology includes the storytellers' original transcripts, prose renditions of the transcripts, and five illustrated stories."

As a community-based publisher, the Publishing Department spends a great deal of time within Métis communities and at community events. To date, the Publishing Department has been present at over seventy Métis cultural events across Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. Some of the community events attended by the Publishing Department include *Awasis*, *Back to Batoche*, *South Bay Days*, and the *John Arcand Fiddle Fest*.

The Publishing Department is honoured to receive direction from the province's Métis community in all of these endeavours.



## GDI T&E Purchases Essential Skills Tools

The GDI Board of Governors approved the purchase of both Essential Skills Portfolio (ESPORT), an annual 10-license subscription which will service 300-500 clients throughout Saskatchewan and Essential Skills Online (ESO), a 10-license subscription that will provide approximately 19,200 instructional hours.

ESPORT is a basic skills assessment and planning tool that helps people who are preparing for entry level occupations. ESPORT-Plus, with PLATO, offers a supported learning program tailored to an individual's chosen occupation.

ESPORT and ESO provide a suite of software and courseware tools and resources that help facilitate adult education, employment preparation

and Essential Skills development programs. They help adult or young adult clients assess, document and upgrade their Essential Skills with specific reference to the essential skill requirements of over 200 occupations profiled by HRSDC. They present a solution combining self-assessment and career exploration, portfolio and resume building tools, with online essential skills training and assessment tools, all aligned to Essential Skills Job Profiles created by HRSDC for the National Occupational Classification (NOC).

ESO is an e-learning program designed to help learners develop the essential skills necessary for the jobs that they are seeking. After completing Essential Skills assessments some

learners will identify Essential Skills gaps for their chosen occupation. For example, if a client needs higher numeracy skills prior to starting a Construction Electrician apprenticeship, they can be enrolled in the ESO Numeracy course for NOC 7241 Construction Electrician. An instructor can help the learner develop a learning plan using ESO as a bridge to close the skills gap and acquire the Essential Skills they need for the job that they are seeking. Through online assessment, ESO acknowledges prior learning and skills and offers instruction and practice focused on new skill development rather than on previously mastered abilities. ESO is designed to develop transferable Essential Skills. It is not intended to be industry, company, or job specific.

These resources will be available for both individual clients and GDI programs later this fall.



## Northern Campus Update

For some months the Institute has been working on the purchase of a building in La Loche to serve as a Post-Secondary facility. GDI made the offer to purchase the Community Development Corporation (CDC) building in La Loche in order to provide the Institute with classroom and office space, and a stronger northern presence. La Loche was selected as a prime location for a more

visible GDI presence in the North because of the area's tar sands activity, its general exploration activity particularly for uranium, and the fact that it is a Métis community without a large post-secondary presence.

The offer to purchase the building was conditional on a building inspection and an environmental report, which were both satisfactorily completed earlier in the spring.

However, an unanticipated delay has resulted due to the CDC's status with the non-profit registry. The sale cannot be completed until the CDC reconciles their paper work with the non-profit corporation branch. Once this is complete the Institute will be in a position to complete the sale. In the interim, the Institute continues to rent the building in order to house and deliver its programs.



## Essential Skills



Visit the *Essential Skills Website* at to learn about the nine Essential Skills:  
[http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/home\\_e.shtml](http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/home_e.shtml)

*A building inspection and an environmental report were both satisfactorily completed earlier in the spring.*



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Back issues of this newsletter  
can be obtained at:

[www.metismuseum.ca/brows  
e/index.php/833](http://www.metismuseum.ca/brows<br/>e/index.php/833)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.gdins.org](http://www.gdins.org)



**GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE**  
of Native Studies and Applied Research



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### **GDI Library Regina**

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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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