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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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Feds Announce New Aboriginal Training Fund

On April 17, 2009, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) announced the creation of the Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Investment Fund (ASTSIF) as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan. ASTSIF will receive \$75 million for the next two years.

The fund's intention is to strengthen partnerships between Aboriginal employment service organizations and employers through training-to-employment programs linked to concrete job opportunities. The fund will support short-term, focused initiatives designed to help Aboriginal people obtain the specific skills they require to benefit from economic opportunities.

"The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that First Nations, Métis and Inuit fully share in economic opportunities," said the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, who made the announcement on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of HRSDC.

The fund will be an important step toward implementing the partnership- and results-based successor to the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS), to be put in place in April 2010. The fund will also support additional investments in training for Aboriginal individuals facing barriers to employment, such as low literacy and lack of essential skills for employment, and it will also fund projects which will test innovative ideas and approaches to delivering Aboriginal labour market programming.

ASTSIF will build on the current AHRDS model. However, ASTSIF will be a separate Aboriginal labour market program with a different focus, requiring contribution holders to identify and implement distinct, short-term, targeted projects.

Ninety per cent of ASTSIF funding will be delivered by Service Canada Regions through a regional application process, while the remaining 10% of the total ASTSIF budget will be held for projects that are national in scope. Through

a regional application process, the AHRDS service delivery network of the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA) holders will be the primary recipients of funding. AHRDAs will also be expected to enter into projects that are based on partnerships with employers, other Aboriginal organizations, educational institutions or other levels of government. They are required to deliver measurable results within the two-year timeframe.

Only existing AHRDAs will be eligible to apply for regionally-delivered ASTSIF funding. GDIT&E is eligible to apply as the AHRDA holder for Saskatchewan Métis. Joint applications by two or more AHRDAs will be encouraged (Sources: HRSDC News Release, April 17, 2009; HRSDC FAQ's sheet).

For more information on the ASTSIF visit the HRSDC website at <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca> or contact Cecile O'Neil, GDIT&E A/Director, at 242-6070.



DTI Shares in Literacy Award



The Saskatoon Literacy Coalition has won a 2009 *Saskatchewan Literacy Award of Merit* in the category of Literacy-related Programs. DTI shares in this award as an active member of the Saskatoon Literacy Coalition. The award will be presented at the 2009 *Saskatchewan Literacy Awards of Merit*. His Honour, the Honourable Dr. Gordon Barnhart, Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan, will present the award at a ceremony in Saskatoon on April 30, 2009. The winning project is the annual International Literacy Day (September 8th) celebration which is the largest in the province.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Awards of Merit was established by the Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation in 1990, International Literacy Year. The awards are intended to 1) recognize learners who have demonstrated exceptional performance and accomplishment as a learner in literacy; 2) recognize individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to the cause of literacy; and 3) recognize significant accomplishments in service or professional activities in literacy, outstanding initiative and leadership in support of literacy.

DTI has been a member of the Saskatoon Literacy Coalition for the past seven years (plus) and has been represented on the coalition by Elaine Crocker for the entire time. Due to changes in work roles, Elaine will be replaced this spring as the DTI representative on the coalition by Janice Thompson, DTI Program Coordinator.

The picture (below) is of members of the Saskatoon Literacy Coalition with His Worship Don Atchison, Mayor of Saskatoon, for the proclamation of Literacy Week, which is the week of May 4th. Photo courtesy of the *StarPhoenix*.



GDI T&E Partners in EA Program

Last month, the *GDI Communicator* reported on the partnership between the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) Board of Education and DTI for delivery of an Educational Assistant (EA) certificate program (formerly known as the Teacher Assistant Program). GDIT&E is also a partner in this program and will sponsor up to fifteen

students for the ten-month certificate program.

The high demand for EAs within the GSCS system makes this partnership a good fit for GDIT&E. The GSCS Board of Education has guaranteed to employ the graduates, who will earn between \$15.09 and \$17.85 per hour and will be unionized under CUPE.

The EA program combines theory and practical application for elementary and secondary students in the K-12 school system.

For more information contact Elaine Crocker, DTI Program Coordinator, at 242-6070.



GDI T&E Scholarship Program Update

The *Gabriel Dumont Institute Training & Employment Scholarship Program* is based on an endowment fund of \$1.3 million established under the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA). The fund's goal is to provide AHRDA funding to Métis clients who have eligible action plans. Interest accrued on the initial investment will be allocated as scholarships and will be available for eligible applicants.

A detailed Terms of Reference for the *GDI Training & Employment Scholarship Program* are still being worked out, and a committee has been established to determine the criteria and award categories. One of the objectives of the committee is to determine

opportunities for the new scholarship to fill in any gaps in current Métis scholarships. This scholarship will most likely be administered under the *GDI Scholarship Foundation* and will use the same application deadlines as are currently established: May 1 and October 1 annually.

The *GDI Scholarship Foundation* has been awarding scholarships to Métis people since the early 1980s. Most recently, the *SaskTel Métis Scholarship* was added to the Institute's scholarship programs due to a partnership agreement between GDIT&E and SaskTel. Other scholarship programs managed by the Institute include the *Napoleon LaFontaine Scholarship program*, the

SaskEnergy Métis Incorporated Scholarship, and the *GDC Graduate Student Bursary Program*.

Basic draft criteria for scholarship awards include self-declaring as Métis; holding a valid Saskatchewan Health Card; enrolling in a recognized educational institution providing accredited training; and demonstrating commitment to the needs of Métis people. Other criteria will be available once the terms of the scholarship are determined and approved.

Please watch the GDI website for the Terms of Reference and Application forms for this program, which will be available in the near future.

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)."

Several New Programs Approved for T&E

At the April Board meeting GDI T&E received approval for several new programs.

The Office Education program was approved for Pinehouse and includes partnerships with DTI, Pinehouse Business North, and employers who have provided letters of support for employment.

In Prince Albert, the Medical Lab Assistant program was approved. The program will be delivered in partnership with DTI and the Prince

Albert Parkland Health Region (PAPHR). Training will take place on-site at the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert. Delivery of the Medical Lab Assistant program will be a first for DTI. Medical Lab Assistants are in high demand in the PAPHR and in other health regions in the province.

A Heavy Equipment Truck and Transportation program was approved for Prince Albert, in partnership with DTI and the Ministry of Highways, and included letters of

support from employers.

Finally, the GDI Board approved delivery of the Aboriginal Police Preparation Program for Meadow Lake. The program is in partnership with DTI, and provides skills required to enter the RCMP training or municipal police forces and can transfer credits for Correctional Studies programs.

For more information, contact GDIT&E A/Director, Cecile O'Neil at 242-6070.

"Delivery of the Medical Lab Assistant program will be a first for DTI. Medical Lab Assistants are in high demand in the PAPHR and other health regions in the province."





GDI Hosts Successful AGM

On Saturday April 25, 2009, GDI hosted its Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon at the Saskatoon Inn, Canadian Room.

Delegates and attendees registered between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. while Dallas and Phil Boyer played fiddle and guitar music in the background. Following an opening prayer by Elder Peter Bishop, the day's agenda started with a special partnership recognition and scholarship signing event to celebrate the partnerships between GDI and SaskEnergy, and between GDI T&E and SaskTel. Cecile O'Neil, Acting Director of GDI T&E, emceed the special ceremony. GDI's Chair Gabe Lafond and Executive Director Geordy McCaffrey delivered comments about the significance of such partnerships in Métis education and training. Gillis Lavalley, SaskEnergy's Manager of Aboriginal programs, along with Ken Keesey, SaskTel's Vice President of Customer Service, spoke about the importance of the partnerships with GDI to their respective organizations. The recognition event concluded with a signing ceremony for the *SaskEnergy Métis Incorporated Scholarship* agreement and the *SaskTel Métis Scholarship* agreement.

Immediately following the special ceremony, emcee Murray Hamilton, SUNTEP Saskatoon Coordinator, called the GDI AGM to order. Métis Nation—Saskatchewan President Robert Doucette and Education Minister Gabe Lafond delivered opening remarks. Gabe Lafond had the pleasure of presenting Service Awards to two out-going Board members, Doyle Vermette and Robert Doucette.

Murray Hamilton then called for nomination of a Speaker and Jim Durocher was nominated and accepted as Speaker. The agenda was adopted and the meeting proceeded as planned. Geordy McCaffrey gave the Institute Operations Report, Cory McDougall, Director of Administration, gave the Financial Report, and both reports were accepted by motion. The presentations were interrupted by the arrival of the Honourable Rob Norris, Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour (AEEL), who came from another engagement to give his greetings and remarks. Minister Norris spoke of the important work GDI is doing and the solid reputation that the Institute enjoys not only in our province but across Canada.

Following an introduction of the GDI Board members and review of

the minutes dated December 1, 2007, the GDI AGM was adjourned.

Volunteers from all areas of GDI were on hand at the AGM to ensure that the event ran smoothly. Planning committee members were Amy Gallagher (GDI Publishing), Brandy Laronde (GDI T&E), Catherine Aubichon (GDI Finance), Lisa Wilson (GDI), and Geordy McCaffrey. DTI staff set up and ran the registration table and several GDI T&E staff attended to details to ensure a seamless event. GDI Publishing provided the decorations for the hall, which included infinity banners, sashes, flags, vibrant displays, and a couple of glass Red River carts. SUNTEP Prince Albert provided their display and one outside display, the Clarence Campeau Development Fund, was on-hand with their display and information. All of these items made the room look spectacular, and attendees commented on how nice the decorations looked. Thanks to all who helped make this event run smoothly.

For 2010, the Institute plans to host a larger-scale AGM and cultural conference to coincide with the 125th anniversary of the 1885 Resistance and to celebrate the Institute's 30th anniversary. 

Volunteers from all areas of GDI were on hand at the AGM to ensure that the event ran smoothly.



DTI to Get New Student Database

DTI is moving forward with the purchase and implementation of the Student Information System (SIS) database. This system has been used for several years by the Regional College system in Saskatchewan, and is part of a larger IT system used by provincial government agencies called OCSM (One Client Service Model). OCSM is based on the principle of shared client information as a means to provide more efficient service and less data entry.

The SIS will replace the manual system of reporting and record keeping that DTI has used since its inception in 1992. The manual system was, at one time, sufficient to meet the needs of both DTI and its stakeholders. However, DTI has grown over the years and now registers in excess of 600

students each year, making the manual system time consuming and inefficient. The use of the SIS does not change or impact DTI's unique, culturally-relevant, community-based programming. It is anticipated that the system will incur a one-time cost of \$60,000 for system set up, training, and infrastructure updates.

A student information database is identified as one of DTI's strategic goals, and the Institute has conducted diligent research into the system. For example, Tavia Laliberte did her Master's research on the Institute's reporting and student information needs, and the Institute's internal IT Coordinator has conducted follow-up research to determine that the existing SIS system is

DTI's best fit.

It is anticipated that SIS's implementation will provide DTI with greater control over information and greater protection of individuals' information. DTI will sign on to a Data Sharing Protocol to protect client information, which is based on respect for individual privacy.

For further information on the SIS contact Brett Vandale, DTI Director, at 242-6070.



Leadership Conference a Success

The Native Nations Institute's Aboriginal Leadership, Governance, and Economic Policy Conference held in Saskatoon on April 29 and 30, 2009 was a huge success. As a co-host and partner, GDI helped to bring the ground-breaking conference to Saskatchewan. Participants in the two-day seminar included several Provincial Métis Council members, most of the GDI Board, and other leaders

in the Métis community.

Conference participants numbered close to 250, double the anticipated amount of registrants. Participants had the opportunity to hear practical information about strategies that have been proven to work in leadership, governance and economic development in Aboriginal communities. The information was backed up by the examination of

several relevant case studies.

The event was considered a huge success and discussions are underway within the province to plan for the unfolding dialogue about Aboriginal leadership and governance development.



Conference participants numbered close to 250 in an event that anticipated a registration of about half that amount.



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

We're on the Web!

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www.gdins.org



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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