



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE OF NATIVE STUDIES AND APPLIED RESEARCH

PRESS RELEASE

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SUNTEP and the Richert Report

The Gabriel Dumont Institute is pleased to announce the release of an important and timely document, The Richert Report, an evaluation of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP).

The accompanying information provides:

1. Background and General Information
2. Biographical notes about the author, Mr. Ruben Richert
3. Rationale for the Report
4. The Significance of the Report
5. Highlights of the Findings
6. Conclusions drawn from the Report

The Chairperson of the SUNTEP Review Committee, Mrs. Grace Hatfield, will formally table the Richert Report with the Gabriel Dumont Institute Board of Governors on Wednesday, January 27th on the eve of the 8th annual Gabriel Dumont Institute Cultural Conference and Annual Assembly to be held January 28 - 30th at the Saskatoon Inn in Saskatoon. Copies of the report will be available for distribution on Wednesday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. January 27th at a press conference at the Saskatoon Inn.

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

SUNTEP is a four year Bachelor of Education program, offered by Gabriel Dumont Institute in co-operation with the Saskatchewan Department of Education, the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. The program is offered in three centres -- Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina.

SUNTEP is a fully accredited program leading to a Bachelor of Education degree. For the first two years of their studies SUNTEP students attend classes at a SUNTEP location. The final two years include an internship and class work at one of the university campuses.

The SUNTEP program includes extensive Native Studies and Cross-cultural education methods, with an emphasis on Metis history and culture. A substantial amount of time is spent in schools working with teachers and students. Most of this field work is done in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. The program provides a solid foundation in the theories and skills of teaching.

Since SUNTEP's inception in 1980, 82 students have graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree, and nine students completed requirements for a Standard A Teaching Certificate. SUNTEP is projecting an additional 60 graduates by the fall of 1990. This figure is based on a current student body of 165.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research is the educational arm of the Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan. The Institute is responsible for the design, development and delivery of specific educational and cultural programs and services. The Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), established in 1980, is one such program.

The primary goals of SUNTEP are:

- To ensure that people of Indian/Metis ancestry are well prepared to fill their just share of teaching positions in the province.
- To ensure that SUNTEP graduates are educated to be sensitive to the individual educational needs of all students, and those of Indian/Metis ancestry in particular.

SUNTEP graduates have gained excellent reputations as teachers and role models. Their training combines a sound academic education with extensive classroom experience and a thorough knowledge of issues facing Native studies in our modern society.

In June 1987, the Co-ordinators of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) in Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon identified the need for a review of the program. The intent of this review was to determine to what extent the Gabriel Dumont Institute was realizing some of its specific educational goals through SUNTEP.

2. AUTHOR OF THE REPORT: MR. RUBEN RICHERT

In July 1987 the Dumont Institute contracted Mr. Ruben Richert to undertake a survey of the field; specifically it recommended the interviewing of SUNTEP graduates and their supervisors. This work was begun in September and completed in November 1987.

Few in the profession of education in Saskatchewan will be unfamiliar with the name of the author of this report. Ruben Richert's extensive experience as a teacher and principal, a past-president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, an educational administrator, and an internship supervisor is well-known. While on staff with the S.T.F. between 1965 and 1983, Mr. Richert was a member and Chair of the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Certification. He was a key figure in the development of Internship Programs for Teacher Education at both provincial Universities. As part of his secondment to the International Management Training for Educational Change (a branch of OECD), Mr. Richert conducted a case study and evaluation of the College of Education in Toledo, Ohio in 1976, and in 1982 he evaluated the College of Education at the University of Manitoba.

The Dumont Institute is pleased to have Mr. Richert bring the authority of his experience and knowledge, together with his forthright and unpretentious approach, to bear on the SUNTEP program. Above all, he understands that academic pedagogical issues and contemporary concerns for social justice, in the end, boil down to the fundamentally crucial interaction that occurs between each individual child and the class-room teacher.

This is not, and was not intended to be, an academic study. It is a view from the perspectives of the practitioners: i.e. the Native teachers in the classroom and their non-native supervisors.

Its objectivity comes from the size of the sample (75% of SUNTEP grads currently working in classrooms were interviewed) and from the many subjective indicators both teachers and supervisors shared with the writer of this report.

3. RATIONALE FOR THE REPORT

When the SUNTEP Co-ordinators identified the need for a survey of the field, it was in response to a number of issues and events that are still timely. These include:

1. the need for a response to The Kerr Report (March 1987), a study of the administrative role of the College of Education [of the University of Saskatchewan] in the Native Teacher Education Programs.
2. the funding agreements between the Dumont Institute and the Provincial Government referred to the need for an evaluation of the program by March 1988 when the agreement expires.
3. a realization that although the Department of Education had given SUNTEP a positive interim assessment (in Birnie and Ryan's Then I can Do It Too: An Assessment of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program), this study was completed in 1983 before any SUNTEP graduates had their B.Eds and had begun to work in the teaching profession.
4. the need for a rejoinder to a surprisingly widely held misconception in some educational circles that a special needs program, such as SUNTEP, was no longer necessary or justified.
5. an apparent (and some would say, appalling) lack of awareness or knowledge of the intent of the SUNTEP program, particularly its mandate for affirmative action through positive role-modelling and the preservation of a cultural identity.
6. the need to stress that affirmative action does not mean the lowering of standards, but rather special support to ensure that participants can reach those standards.

The Dumont Institute concluded therefore, that a survey of the practitioners in the field was appropriate and useful as a bench-mark for assessment of the progress of SUNTEP after four years during which graduating SUNTEP students had become classroom teachers.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RICHERT REPORT

1. It offers qualitative evidence that the goals and mandate of SUNTEP are being realized in this - its eighth year of operation, and with some 80 SUNTEP graduates now employed in the field of education.

SUNTEP GRADUATES:

<u>Centres</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	
Regina	13	3	8	3	27	(23 B.Eds) (4 St.A's)
Saskatoon	7	8	9	13	37	(33 B.Eds) (4 St.A's)
Prince Albert	--	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>25</u>	(24 B.Eds) (1 St.A.)
	20	18	27	24	89	(80 B.Eds) (9 St.A's)

2. This report provides a context in which the success of the program can be evaluated in light of the realities of the job market and the needs of prospective Native teachers. Armed with the views and comments of the graduates and their employers, SUNTEP is in a better position to plan for the future.
3. It also gives some insight into the continued need for and worth of an affirmative action program like SUNTEP. The information collected shows just how important a role well-trained Native teachers play in the enormous task of improving the educational prospects of the Metis and Non-Status children in this province.
4. The excellent graduate employment statistics shown here prove the success and credibility of the program. (Sixty-seven percent of the grads are teaching in public, separate or Indian schools and another 20% are working in post-secondary education or pursuing post-degree studies.)
5. Put simply, this review offers proof that SUNTEP graduates are filling a need and filling it well.

5. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

1. SUNTEP grads are proving themselves to be a very competent and quite secure group of teachers.
2. School principals ranked 25% of the SUNTEP grads in the category of "more competent than most first-year teachers".
3. Over 70% of the SUNTEP grads affirmed that their language skills preparation had helped them in dealing with students of varying language experiences.
4. Over 90% of the SUNTEP grads apply cross-cultural preparation to classroom situations with positive results, particularly in settings where Native students are in significant numbers.
5. Sixty-six percent of principals interviewed believe that Native teachers make a significant difference to both Native and non-native children in redressing stereotypes and providing positive role-models.
6. The importance of cross-cultural and native studies components of SUNTEP cannot be under-estimated and need to be strengthened.
7. SUNTEP grads see the SUNTEP Centres and the Dumont Institute as an important support and resource base, and this element of the program should be expanded through the organization of inservices to better serve practicing SUNTEP teachers.
8. Despite (and some would argue because of) the adoption of educational equity programs by school jurisdictions in conjunction with the Human Rights Commission, there are still misconceptions among teachers and the public in general about what affirmative action programs are about, and SUNTEP needs to address this issue directly. Among other things, equity hiring practices tend to put SUNTEP grads in the spotlight where they must be well-prepared enough and as a result confident enough to thwart ill-informed criticism of their training or hiring.
9. Among school administrators, there are still 40% who are only somewhat familiar, or not familiar at all, with SUNTEP and its specific mandate. More public-relations is required here.
10. Almost 30% of SUNTEP grads are teaching in the north and/or in rural areas and/or on reserves. SUNTEP must acknowledge the reality of this employment statistic. In addition, graduates from the Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina programs must be made more aware of employment opportunities that exist throughout the province.

6. CONCLUSION

1. In light of current provincial fiscal restraint, when special needs programs such as SUNTEP are erroneously regarded as expendable frills or fringes, this report concludes that the social costs of cuts to these programs are more expensive than the program dollars involved.
2. Richert's survey rightly concludes that these relations are nowhere so crucial or challenging as in the school system, in every classroom where individual teachers are charged with the awesome task of educating and socializing their students.
3. The special supportive element of the SUNTEP program cannot be diminished; its strengths, as the report shows, are only now being demonstrated. Indeed SUNTEP must be strengthened so it can in turn be used as an appropriate model that will ensure success for more Indian and Metis students as they access other more diverse technical and university programs.
4. This report concludes that SUNTEP is a small but significant example of human resource development. At its very least, as a program it now provides some measure of control and participation in the education of Indian and Metis teachers and children and in the maintenance and affirmation of a cultural identity which prevents assimilation of the minority culture. As a result, this indirectly halts the spread of prejudice and discrimination against that minority culture by the dominant culture. Ruben Richert's report shows how this fundamentally important step is being taken in classrooms every day by graduates of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program.