



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

## In this issue:

- GDIT&E Policy Changes
- Métis Flag Inspires
- IT Update
- Christmas Break Reminder

## Highlights:

- Communicator to Feature MN-S Regions 2
- Scholarship Foundation Update 3
- Aboriginal Education Gap 4
- Métis Veterans Monument 5

## GDIT&E Policy Changes

By Bobbie McLeod

Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment (GDIT&E) recently conducted a review of program policies and procedures. The review was initiated to ensure that GDIT&E programs align with the new federal funding agreement, the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) under which GDIT&E delivers its programs and services.

ASETS is the federal government's successor strategy to the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS) and is designed to help improve the employment opportunities of Aboriginal peoples ensuring that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people are engaged in sustainable, meaningful employment in a relationship of mutual trust, respect and openness.

The changes to GDIT&E policy were also reviewed to tackle another concern: funds are being exhausted very early in each fiscal year. Repeatedly over the last several years, there has

been a gap of eight to nine months that GDIT&E does not have sufficient financial resources to assist clients pursuing post-secondary training.

Several changes to the Individual Sponsorship Program (ISP) are as follows:  
Cosmetology, Esthetics and Hairstyling: GDIT&E is limiting investment in clients pursuing esthetician, cosmetology and hairstyling training to \$100,000 per fiscal year.

University degree programs: GDIT&E is limiting university funding. Only the last year of study of university degree is eligible. Only tuition and books funding is available. For single parents or clients with a disability in the last year of a degree program, GDIT&E may provide extra funding for eligible costs.

Postgraduate degree and professional programs: Post degree/professional university programs including but not limited to Law, Dentistry, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Optometry are not

eligible for funding.

Tuition maximum: GDIT&E will pay a maximum of \$10,000 in tuition costs per year of study.

Employment transition: Clients who successfully complete their program may be eligible to receive a one-time employment transition allowance of \$200.

GDIT&E has also introduced a new program, Immediate Employment Assistance. This program will be piloted out of the Saskatoon and Ile-a-la-Crosse service delivery offices. The Immediate Employment Assistance program aims to assist Métis clients who have an offer of employment but require assistance to start their job.

All changes were effective upon GDI Board of Governors approval on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Throughout the month of December, GDIT&E staff developed a communications strategy to notify clients and other stakeholders about the policy changes.

If you have questions or would like additional information about these policy revisions, please contact your local Training & Employment office or by calling toll free

1.877.488.6888. 



## GDIT&E Partners With Northlands College for Industrial Mechanic Program

By Lisa Wilson

GDIT&E has been approved to partner with Northlands College to support Métis clients in a full time Industrial Mechanic Applied Certificate program. The program will run for 19 weeks from January 2012 to May 2012 and will train clients to develop the skills necessary to fill positions within northern Saskatchewan.

Under the partnership

agreement, Northlands College will provide the training program accreditation and delivery, facilities, supplies and materials. GDIT&E will provide training income supports for a maximum of 12 clients and provide career-counseling services, including ensuring each student has an action plan.

Employment prospects for Industrial Mechanics

are good and people entering this occupation can usually expect to find jobs primarily in Forestry, Mining, Oil, and Gas industries. Industrial Mechanics tend to be an aging workforce. In 2006, for example, 32 percent of all industrial mechanics were 45 years of age or older (NOC2243). This is a very stable occupation that feels little effect from seasonal employment and is not sensitive to overall economic conditions (NOC2243).



Photo by P. Beszterda

## Métis Flag Inspires

By Christine Fiddler

On November 15, 2011, one day before the 126<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Louis Riel's death, history was made in the Queen City. Regina became the first city in Canada to fly the Métis flag in its city's square. The flag represents a powerful way to increase awareness of Métis culture, history and inspiring ways to bring the community together. The raising of the flag was an important way of celebrating the life of Louis Riel, a Métis hero who safeguarded Métis rights and culture. Robert Doucette, president of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, told CBC, "I just think that it's setting the tone for the rest of Canada to follow and be

inclusive of a great people who have given so much for this country."

DTI's Office Education and Wellness Program students celebrated the flag raising ceremony and the anniversary of Riel's death by preparing a traditional Métis feast of boudin and buns, which was served at the Regina's North East Community Centre. The meal was attended by approximately 120 people including Elders, special guests, Métis Local members, and the general public. Russel Fayant, a member of the Regina Riel Métis Council and instructor with GDI's

SUNTEP program said, "For the Métis youth who attended the ceremony today, I hope that they look at that flag and think that they have things to aspire to and be proud to show their culture."

The significance of the Métis flag is interpreted in two ways. First, the infinity symbol represents the Métis people and their culture that will live forever. Secondly, the unity of two worlds joined to create a unique and historically rich culture. The Métis flag, which was given as a gift by the North West Company in 1816, is the oldest flag indigenous to Canada.



Photo by P. Beszterda

## Communicator to Feature MN-S Regions

By James Oloo

Beginning January 2012 issue of the *GDI Communicator*, we will have one article each month featuring one of the 12 Métis Nation regions in Saskatchewan. The articles

will highlight Métis demographic characteristics including population, labour market participation, and educational attainment for

the Métis population in each region. The articles will be based on 2006 Census. We hope that our readers and GDI staff will find the information useful.



## Scholarship Foundation Update

By Lisa Wilson

The Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation (GDSF) selection committee met in early November 2011 and awarded scholarships to over 78 students across six different scholarship programs. In total, over \$60,000 in scholarships were awarded.

Since 1986 GDI has administered scholarships under the GDSF. The first scholarship program under the Foundation was the Napoleon LaFontaine Scholarship, which continues to endure today. In 1998 SaskEnergy made a commitment to GDI for scholarships. That agreement has since been renewed and updated and SaskEnergy continues to provide this scholarship today.

More recently, GDIT&E negotiated \$1.3 million to be invested in a scholarship fund for Métis people. This capital investment was

made directly to the GDSF thereby securing all the protections and benefits of the Trust Agreement.

A unique attribute of the scholarship program established under GDIT&E is that it provides a fund for partnership leveraging related to scholarships for Métis people. This allows GDIT&E to seek out employer business and industry partners to cost-share Métis specific scholarships. Under the terms of reference for the scholarship funds, the Institute seeks to form partnerships with businesses, industry, crown corporations, individuals, and others to develop targeted scholarship and/or bursary initiatives directly linked to labour market demand. The scholarship partnerships benefit employers by identifying high-calibre Métis

students studying in a relevant field, and Métis students benefit by the availability of a new Métis scholarship fund.

The scholarships established under this partnership leveraging arrangement to-date are: SaskTel Métis Scholarship; Cameco-GDI Scholarship; GDI-Saskatoon Health Region Scholarship.

Also established under the GDIT&E Scholarship is a Basic Education scholarship designed to assist Basic Education students in the transition from their studies to either the work force or further training.

The GDSF has provided scholarships to almost 2,000 Aboriginal students since 1986. In 2011, the total amount of scholarships awarded by the Foundation since its inception surpassed the million-dollar mark. 🌐



## Renewal of DTI-SIAST Federation Agreement

By Lisa Wilson

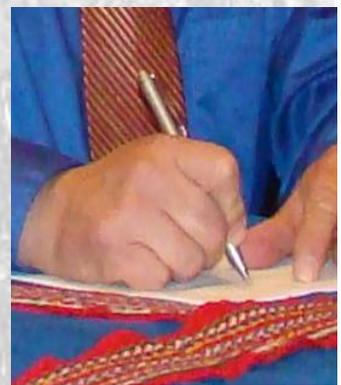
At its November 2011 meeting, the Gabriel Dumont Institute Board of Governors passed a resolution accepting a re-worked Dumont Technical Institute-Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (DTI-SIAST) Federation Agreement, which expired earlier this year. The DTI-SIAST Federation Agreement is a five-year agreement that outlines the working relationship between the two institutions. Under the DTI

grants agreement with the provincial government, DTI is required to maintain and continue the Federation Agreement with SIAST. The Federation Agreement was originally signed in 1994 and was subsequently renewed in 2000 and again in 2005. It is currently due for renewal again.

Highlights of the most recent changes include adjustments to many points that no longer reflect the working relationship between the

two organizations - for instance, references to adult upgrading, which DTI delivers in-house. The key change to the agreement is an expanded process to deal with disagreements over programming and delivery of SIAST brokered programs. The new process includes options for both mediation and arbitration—options that were noticeably absent in past versions of the agreement.

DTI and SIAST are working together to establish a signing ceremony for the new agreement. 🌐



## Closing Aboriginal Education Gap Makes Economic Sense

By James Oloo



Photo by P. Beszterda

The 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' report highlighted the fact that gaps existed between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians in almost all socioeconomic indicators. The 2010 Council of Ministers of Education, Canada Summit on Aboriginal Education report underscored the gap in academic achievement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. C.D. Howe Institute scholar John Richards averred that Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal educational attainment gap is one of the great social policy challenges facing Canada today while Eric Howe posited that Aboriginal education gap presents the greatest economic opportunity for Saskatchewan.

The Howe Report has challenged policymakers, governments, education systems, and stakeholders of the need to bridge the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student outcomes. The choice is to meet this challenge or to continue along a well-trodden path and arrive at 'more of the same,' but with worse consequences given the recent Aboriginal population

trends and Saskatchewan's economic outlook.

As success stories by a number of current and former GDI clients and students reveal, education and training are, perhaps, some of the most effective forces that shape human capital. The Howe Report shows that benefits of education accrue to both the individual and the society. The individual may get a well-paying job, have benefits, and also have improved health and pay higher taxes.

However, economics aside, governments have a duty to build each individual's human capital by fully educating its citizens as much as possible. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines human capital as 'the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being'. The importance of education to human capital is supported by Dr. Howe who asserts that Aboriginal educational gap is wastage of potential. GDI is doing its part in

bridging the Aboriginal education gap. It is one of the two biggest producers of practical nurses in Saskatchewan, has graduated over 1,000 Aboriginal teachers who touch lives of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students on a daily basis, and its Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative will increase the number of Aboriginal apprentices in Saskatchewan by at least 120. Further, GDI's numerous programs continue to empower Métis individuals to get the skills they need for gainful employment as well as to develop Métis culture through research.

Much can be achieved if we heed President Doucette's June 2011 call to Métis people and employers to partner with GDI to enhance Métis participation in apprenticeship training. Métis individuals, who are looking for work in the trades, are encouraged to contact any GDI office or call 306-242-6070 or toll free 1-877-488-6888.



## Howe Report Gets Nationwide Attention

By James Oloo

The Howe Report, 'Bridging the Aboriginal Educational Gap in Saskatchewan,' has received wide attention across the country. The report was introduced to the Senate of Canada by

Senator Lillian Dyck in November. On December 7, it was discussed at the Legislature in Regina.

The report was also discussed in newspapers and magazines including

Maclean's, The Cord, the StarPhoenix, The Eagle Feather News, and Regina LeaderPost. Politicians, including Saskatchewan NDP, have issued policy statements with respect to the Report. 🌐



## IT Update

By Gareth Griffiths

### Website

In the period between November 15 and December 14, 2011, the website received over 62,000 page hits. The highest activity has been seen on the external (and internal) vacancies sections.

Recent changes to the site include an enhanced scholarship page including partnership logos and a new page "Stay Updated" which has instructions on

how to use RSS to automatically keep up to date with news items.

### IT Support System

Between November 15th and December 14th, we have received 47 new requests to the support system, of which 39 are already completed and closed (an 82% closure rate). Overall, we have closed 51 calls in this period. The total number of open work orders is 16.

### Intranet Launch

The Intranet site is now

live. An email was sent to each staff member when the account was created with a temporary password and a link to allow this to be changed. Already available on the Intranet is the Excel Travel expense claim form (under Finance).

Currently in development for the Intranet are Policies and Procedures, internal vacancies, as well as a streamlined process for applying for disposed assets, which will allow bidding directly through the intranet.



Photo by P. Beszterda

## 2011 Louis Riel Day Celebrations

By Bradley Brown

On November 16, 2011, GDI and Parks Canada hosted a well-attended Louis Riel Day celebration at Batoche National Historic Site. The purpose of the celebration was two-fold, to mourn and pay homage to Riel and the sacrifices he made for the Métis, and to honour and celebrate the contributions and sacrifices of all Veterans.

The event began with an opening prayer from Métis Elders Rose Fleury and Nap Arcand. Métis Elder Harriet Oaks then sang O' Canada in Michif. Oaks and Métis Veteran and Elder Edwin St. Pierre delivered a poem dedicated to

Veterans in Michif and English. St. Pierre then led a procession to the cemetery on the stunningly beautiful November day where he laid a wreath of remembrance. Lunch was then served and everyone in attendance was delighted to hear music by Métis fiddle player Dallas Boyer and Métis guitarist Phil Boyer.

Following lunch, there were a series of presentations and performances relating to Métis history and Veterans. Dennis and Jean Fisher were acknowledged for their generous donation of Métis artefacts to GDI. The artefacts relate to the Batoche area and the 1885 Resistance. Dr. Cathy King

shared her knowledge of Métis Veterans including highlights of her trip to Europe to find the graves of Métis soldiers. Gregory Scofield, a renowned Métis poet, shared from his latest book, *Louis: The Heretic Poems*. The day ended with performance by Parenteau who did an exclusive new song about Métis Veterans. The song has been commissioned by GDI for a forthcoming CD that pays tribute to Métis Veterans.

Riel once said, "My people will sleep for 100 years, and when they awake, it will be the artists who give them back their spirit." The celebrations made his words ring true as the Elders and presenters demonstrated how their artistic and spiritual passions aid in enhancing Métis culture and history.



Photo by P. Beszterda

## Métis Veterans Monument

By Lisa Wilson

In October 2011, Eagle Feather News donated four Roughrider tickets to GDI to help raise funds for the Métis Veterans Memorial Monument planned for Batoche.

Anyone who made a donation to the monument had their name entered in a draw once for every five dollars donated. The more a person donated, the more times their name

was entered. Two draws were made for a pair of tickets each. Lucky winners of the tickets were Jim Edmondson and David Morin. In total, this initiative raised \$700 toward the monument.



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Back issues of this newsletter  
can be obtained at:

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