



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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## Tavia: A 'Boss Every Worker Would Love as a Mentor'

By James Oloo

On August 29 2013, Jim Edmondson, the Director of Human Resources, sent an email to all GDI employees that GDI Training and Employment Director Tavia Laliberte had accepted the position of President and Chief Executive Officer for NorthWest Regional College in North Battleford and would be leaving the Institute in October. This article examines Tavia Laliberte's contributions to GDI and the Métis Nation in general over the past 13 years as a member of the GDI staff.

Tavia joined GDI in 2000 as an Administrative Coordinator and a year later became a Program Coordinator (PC) especially because of her hard work, dedication, and leadership skills. While working as PC, Tavia enrolled in the University of Saskatchewan Edwards School of Business Master of Business Administration program and upon graduating in 2006 became the founding director of GDI Training and Employment (GDIT&E). An unprecedented career growth in just six years by a Métis woman whose dedication, proven success record, and drive to empower Aboriginal peoples is second to none.

In her role as GDIT&E director, Tavia oversees Métis training and employment operations and

services for Métis communities across Saskatchewan. GDIT&E offers employment counseling, provides demand-driven skills training in health and trades sectors, as well as individual student funding and wage subsidies to employers. Between 2007 and 2012, for example, GDIT&E served 5,439 clients with an average success rate of 83%, up from an average of 71%. Under Tavia's leadership, GDIT&E has been recognized by the Office of the Federal Interlocutor, Service Canada, and Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services for its contributions to creating training and employment opportunities for Métis peoples.

Under Tavia's direction, GDIT&E developed and implemented a blind adjudication model and process that ensures accountability and transparency in its program delivery under the Government of Canada's Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA). This innovative model was new to AHRDA delivery and was recognized by Service Canada in 2007 as a "promising practice in AHRDA delivery in Saskatchewan."

GDIT&E holds the Métis Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) agreement for Saskatchewan, a \$47.5 million five-year agreement between GDI and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). Under the ASETS agreement, GDIT&E provides labour market services to Métis people across Saskatchewan.

In 2009, GDIT&E received \$5 million in federal funding from the Aboriginal Skills and Training Strategic Initiative Fund (ASTSIF) to provide training to Aboriginal peoples. GDIT&E was the only AHRDA holder in Saskatchewan to receive ASTSIF funding.

More recently, Tavia was instrumental in attracting over \$2.4 million in federal funds to the province through the GDIT&E successful application for Skills and Partnership Funds that was used to establish the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative. The initiative is expected to increase Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship by at least 120 by the end of the year.

She has negotiated and entered into partnerships with a number of private and public organizations that have resulted in the establishment of employment opportunities and scholarships for our Métis students and clients.

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## IT Update

By Gareth Griffiths

### IT Support System

In August 2013, we received 44 IT requests to the support system. Of these, 33 are completed and closed (76% closure rate). Overall, we closed 34 calls in this period. There are currently 39 open Work Orders.

### Website Redesign

Work is continuing at pace. The sitemaps were presented to Directors in July and the feedback was good. We have now received a full set of wireframes showing how items will be presented graphically on the pages for each section. Also, we recently signed off on the visual design concept drawings for the new site, and are about to enter the development phase, where the web site will be designed.

### Online Payslips

The Online Payslips system is now available. We will continue to parallel run the paper based payslips through 2013, with a paperless only system in place

in January 2014. Online payslips are available at <http://services.gdins.org>.

### Email Security

Please be wary of clicking links in emails. If anything looks suspicious please do not click the link. One area of concern previously mentioned is phishing attacks. This is where an email is received asking for personal information such as passwords and bank accounts. No reputable company should ask for this kind of information.

Three phishing attempts were reported to IT this month. The most common form says that your mailbox quota or storage limit is reached, and asks for you to click a link to verify the details. As a general rule, we will not ask for your username or password. We automatically get informed of mailbox quota limits and

can work behind the scenes to address this. If you receive an email that looks suspicious, please delete it.

### Windows 8

Windows XP will come to the end of its Extended Support lifecycle in April 2014. This will mean that no more updates or support requests will be handled by Microsoft for this operating system. Windows 8 has recently been launched and is being pushed as a replacement. The user interface is a major departure which will require significant training, and at the moment we are unsure how our applications will work with this. At this time we are recommending to use Windows 7 Professional edition until we can analyze this further. For more information or assistance with any IT-related issue, please contact IT at

[support@gdins.org](mailto:support@gdins.org) 



A sample of the new GDI homepage concept

## Tavia Laliberte: Farewell Messages by GDIT&E Staff

By James Oloo

If you are like many employees, your boss can significantly impact your productivity and state of happiness at work. In their book *First, Break All the Rules*, Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman identify characteristics of workplaces that attract and retain the most productive workers. They found that employees' views of their employer are more determined by their immediate boss than by the overall company. That is, it was their direct boss, rather than pay, benefits, or a charismatic leader at the helm that was the most important factor for employees.

I sent an email to GDIT&E staff asking them what comes to

mind when they think of the GDIT&E Director Ms. Tavia Laliberte. Their responses are presented below.

'Tavia always make me feel that I am an important part of the organization; that no matter what position is held we are all an intricate part of the success of GDIT&E. We're losing a great leader' (Tammy Cummins).

'Tavia is a good listener; great at advising and directing you in the right path at times of conflict at professional and personal levels' (Kathy Cummings).

'Tavia's guidance and support for SPF project is invaluable! She has high expectations, lets us to work independently, and trusts our decisions; she is always there for guidance and

reflection on tough issues that may arise (Jason DeBack).

'Tavia (is) a very accomplished, capable, and strong leader who truly cares about Métis people. She is an excellent role model to Métis women everywhere' (Sheena Yew).

'In Tavia we have a new meaning of 'boss.' Fear, power, and pride have become respect, engagement, and encouragement to learn and grow' (name withheld on request).

'What an honour and privilege to work under Tavia! It's sad to lose such a strong and inspiring Métis woman who leads by example. I'll continue to look up to her as a role model in the years to come' (Audrey Arcand). 



Tavia at GDIT&E 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations in Prince Albert, 2012  
Photo by Angie Yew



## Common Themes in Key Aboriginal Employment Models

By James Oloo

At GDI, our mandate involves empowering Métis people so that they may have the skills needed to get and keep gainful employment. In the August Communicator, we noted that while employment rates in Saskatchewan have increased over the past year for both Aboriginal and the general population, there still remains a gap in employment outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

It is therefore important to examine what Aboriginal training and employment service organizations, including GDI, that have been successful in helping Aboriginal peoples get sustainable employment, are doing right and if there are common strategies in their training and employment models that are contributing to their success.

Giddy, Lopez, and Redman (2009) reviewed several studies and evaluations of successful employment programs for Aboriginal peoples and identified seven factors that are common to successful practice. These include having a strong vision and understanding the importance of monitoring targets, responding to the

employment market, maintaining strong relationships with community and business, offering 'job related' and culturally appropriate training, collaborating with Aboriginal leaders and the community, providing holistic support, and ensuring strong staff commitment. In this article, we look at how GDI is doing with respect to the seven strategies.

### *Strong vision and monitoring targets*

Our mandate, vision and values are clear. We believe that each of our clients has something special in them, they have a potential, and that despite various barriers on their path, we can walk with them towards their goals. We have dedicated employment counsellors who monitor targets and provide support to our clients.

### *Responding to labour market*

GDI is up to date with employment trends in the Province and across the country. GDIT&E and DTI have been able to better predict and respond to labour market. To this end we continue to prepare our clients to acquire marketable skills that are in high

demand. Our success in this area is evidenced by the fact that we have higher than average program completion (graduation) rates for similar training institutions, and an overwhelming majority of our graduates often get employment before or soon after graduating.

### *Partnerships*

Whether in the area of scholarships, program delivery or apprenticeship training, GDI has built effective relationships with a number of stakeholders to enhance the success of our clients and students. This summer, GDI and its partners, the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Tribal Council, and SIIT celebrated the graduation of eight students, including three who were Métis, from the Aboriginal Heavy Equipment Operator and Class 1A License Pre-employment Training Program; and by the end of August, the GDI Apprenticeship Initiative had entered into partnerships with over 90 employers to hire and train our apprentices. Others include SaskTel Métis Scholarship, GDI-Saskatoon Health Region Scholarship, BHP Billiton-GDI Scholarship, and SaskEnergy Métis Scholarship.

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Tavia Laliberte  
Photo courtesy of T. Laliberte



Dwayne Docken at the GDIT&E 2012 All-Staff event in Prince Albert. This year's GDIT&E All-Staff will be held in Regina on October 7-10  
Photo by Angie Yew

## A Chat With A. Sayazie, GDI Finance Newest Employee

By James Oloo

We sat down with Amanda Sayazie, the newest GDI Finance team member, to discuss her experiences at GDI. The U of S Bachelor of Commerce graduate joined the team in May 2013 from an accounting firm in Saskatoon.

Amanda's move to GDI was influenced by a number of issues. At the accounting firm,

there was less work-life balance especially during tax season when they could work 14-hour days. Further, she had "reached a plateau" and wanted a more challenging work environment with opportunity for growth. As Amanda was pondering her next career move, she saw an ad by GDI that interested her.

She liked the fact that GDI emphasizes Métis culture. "I am Métis, and was attracted to an organization that not only impacts the lives of my people, but also promotes my culture."

After she got hired, Amanda realized that GDI was "the perfect place" for her.

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## A Chat with Amanda Sayazie ... *Continued from Page 3*



Amanda Sayazie  
Photo courtesy of A. Sayazie

During her first month at GDI, Amanda visited the GDI Prince Albert centre and got to meet and speak with students and staff. She notes that “It became clearer to me that what we do is not just a job, rather, it touches many lives.”

The same month, Amanda attended the grand opening of the GDI building on 1003 St Saskatoon. “It was eye opening for me to hear GDI Executive Director Geordy McCaffrey talk about the history of the Institute.”

During that first month, Amanda got the opportunity to volunteer at the GDI Scholarship Foundation Golf Tournament during which over \$20,000 was raised towards scholarships for Métis students. She also participated in a career fair at Black Lake, SK where her family is from and was able to see relatives and network with a number of professionals who work with Aboriginal peoples. Stating that she enjoys her work, Amanda says that she has recommended GDI to many of

her friends and relatives as a great place to learn and work.

A challenge that Amanda experienced was the transition from a relatively small firm with less than a dozen employees to a large office with diverse personalities and backgrounds. She is very thankful to GDI staff for helping her settle in her new position and feel welcome.

To be successful in today’s competitive world, Amanda likes to improve her knowledge and skills. She is half way through her master’s degree program in accounting - the first in her family to go to graduate school - and is very thankful to GDI for supporting her.

So, where does Amanda get her motivation to excel? With deep sense of honour and admiration, she points to a woman who was raised in a loving family of 16 at a reserve in Black Lake. At a young age, the woman decided that to get more opportunities for herself and future family, she needed to move to the city. And

so she moved to Prince Albert, then to Saskatoon, both big yet lonely places for her. But she worked hard and did not give up; finished school and got a good job that she did for 17 years with a respected organization. The determination and sacrifice by the courageous single mother opened doors for the only child she ever had and gave her child a head start that included love for education, perseverance, and belief that all things are possible when you believe in yourself and work hard. That woman is Amanda’s mother Yvonne Sayazie.

Amanda opened another chapter in her life when she got married at a colourful wedding on September 21 in Saskatoon. The new bride and her husband Stu will be going to the Bahamas for their honeymoon in December. Congratulations Amanda.



## Tavia Laliberte: A Boss and Mentor... *Continued from Page 1*

Such scholarships include SaskTel Métis Scholarship, GDI-Cameco Scholarship, and GDI-Sask Health Region Métis Scholarship. Last year, over 30 Métis students benefited from these scholarships.

Tavia represented the Métis people of Saskatchewan as a member of the Métis National Council’s Métis Human Resources Development Agreement Working Group. The group successfully negotiated the terms of the Métis Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) agreements between HRSDC and the Métis National Council. The ASETS is a five-year agreement that replaced the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS)

agreements. For more information about ASETS and AHRDS, please visit [www.hrsdc.gc.ca](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca).

In 2012, Tavia was a member of the Governor General’s Canadian Leadership Conference. According to the Leadership Conference, “All members share one thing in common: they are high potential individuals expected to achieve senior leadership positions in their organizations and communities.” Tavia is already on her way to achieving those expectations.

Tavia serves in a number of committees within GDI and other Aboriginal institutions

across Saskatchewan including the Northern Career Quest board of governors.

In recognition of her service to the community, Tavia has received numerous awards including the Edwards School of Business – Role Model, and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services’ Outstanding Métis Woman award.

Congratulations Tavia. It is sad to see you leave the Institute; but I am glad that you have another opportunity to do what you enjoy doing. As one of your staff says, “Tavia is a kind of boss every employee would love to have as a friend and a mentor.”



Tavia and GDI Executive Director Geordy McCaffrey  
Photo by Angie Yew



# Aboriginal Employment Models ... Continued from Page 3

**Job-related and culturally appropriate training**  
 Providing relevant skills training that is culturally appropriate is at the core of GDI's mandate. That is what we have been doing for the past three decades.

**Working with Aboriginal leaders and communities**  
 GDI is the official training and education arm of the Métis Nation Saskatchewan. We are not only accountable to the Métis citizens of Saskatchewan, our students and clients, and the general public, but we also endeavor to develop and deliver Métis specific educational programs and services across the Métis homeland in the province.

**Holistic support**  
 In general, our clients, and Aboriginal people in general, are often more likely to face multiple barriers and challenges than the general population. In our quest to meet the Institute's mandate, GDI believes in and supports an effective and holistic approach to service delivery and is guided by the Institute's values of culture, quality, respect, responsiveness, and accountability. While working with clients, we take a view of the whole person and not just the student or client.

**Strong staff commitment**  
 As a norm, GDI employees are committed to the success of our clients and students. Our employees are

knowledgeable, innovative, caring, supportive, and are often perceived by the clients and students as approachable and a valuable source of advice. We are always enthusiastic and take pride in the success of our students and clients.

For in depth analysis of various models that have been used in promoting success in Aboriginal employment, please see research by Giddy, Lopez, & Redman (2009). Brokering successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes: Common themes in good-practice models at [www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2127.html](http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2127.html)



Tavia Laliverte, GDIT&E Director, is a married mother of two small children. Photo courtesy of T. Laliberte

## Payroll Cutoff Calendar, October 2013

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Buschnyski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
		Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Oct 4 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	<b>Student Payday</b> Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
6	7	8	8	10	11	12
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Oct 18 Student Payroll	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheet & Payroll Revisions for Oct 15 Payday		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	<b>Thanksgiving Day</b> <b>Stat Holiday</b>	<b>Staff Payday</b> Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Oct 18 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	<b>Student Payday</b> Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Nov 1 Student Payroll			Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices & Payroll Revisions for Oct 31 Payday	
27	28	29	30	31		
		Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Nov 1 Direct Deposits		<b>Staff Payday</b> Accounts Payable Cheque Run		

Employee contracts due prior to payroll cutoff date.  
 New employee contracts due at payroll upon job acceptance.  
 MRTs due by 15<sup>th</sup> of every month.

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

Back issues of this newsletter  
can be obtained at:

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

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

## GDI Locations

### GDI Central Office Saskatoon

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Fax: (306) 242-0002

### GDI Publishing Saskatoon

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Saskatoon SK S7M 5W1  
Phone: (306) 934-4941  
Fax: (306) 244-0252

### GDI Finance and Operations

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Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9  
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Fax: (306) 975-0903

### DTI Central Office Saskatoon

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Toll Free (DTI):  
1-877-488-6888

### SUNTEP Prince Albert

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Prince Albert, SK  
S6V 1B2  
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Fax: (306) 764-3995

### SUNTEP Saskatoon

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### SUNTEP Regina

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3737 Wascana Parkway  
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Phone: (306) 347-4110

### GDI Training and Employment Central Office

917 22nd Street West  
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9  
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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

<http://gdi.voyager.uregina.ca/>

### GDI Library Prince Albert

48 12th Street East  
Prince Albert, SK  
S6V 1B2  
Phone: (306) 922-6466  
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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