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Pride Perseverance Possibilities



# 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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## Work-Life Balance: What Does it Really Mean?

By Jim Edmondson

Work-life balance has been defined as a comfortable state of equilibrium achieved between an individual's priorities at their job and their private lifestyle. Most psychologists would agree that the demands of a person's career should not overwhelm their ability to enjoy a satisfying personal life outside of the workplace. Simply put, work-life balance refers to a healthy balance between work and the other aspects of our lives. It is leaving the issues or worries of each at the door as we enter the other world, and not allowing one or the other to dominate.

Work-life balance does not mean an equal balance. Trying to schedule an equal number of hours for each of your various work and personal activities is almost always unrewarding and unrealistic. Life is and should be more fluid than that. Work-life balance means something different to every individual.

There have been times when I was the poster child for bad work-life balance behavior and lifestyle. In my home office and at my previous employment, I placed a sign, at a prominent location, which read "Never leave for tomorrow what you can get done today." I was king of the 3:00 a.m. and work emails during weekends. I wore my

10 hour days, seven days a week work ethic as a badge of honor. Then a funny thing happened. I realized that I could be a much better leader, employee, manager, husband and friend when I took the time to focus on achieving balance. It was not easy. In fact, I still struggle sometimes to achieve that balance. However, I have found that when I live a more balanced life, I become happier, healthier, and more productive.

These days, achieving a work-life balance can seem like an impossible feat. Technology makes us accessible around the clock. Fears of job loss incentivize longer work hours. In fact, a 2012 survey by human resource professionals revealed that in North America, a whopping 94 percent of working professionals reported working more than 50 hours per week and nearly half said they worked more than 65 hours per week. To help avoid a poor work-life balance, I have compiled some simple tips that can help you find the balance that is right for you.

### Let go of perfectionism

A lot of overachievers, regrettably like me, develop perfectionist tendencies at a young age when demands on their time are limited to

school, sports, and maybe an after-school job. It's easier to maintain that perfectionist habit as a kid, but as we grow up, life gets more complicated. As we climb the ladder at work and as our families grow, our responsibilities mushroom. Perfectionism becomes out of reach, and as we strive for it in one area it can become destructive to the other. A healthier option is to strive not for perfection, but for excellence.

### Identify what really matters

Over the years, I have seen too many people spend too much time working on things that don't really matter. Time is the most valuable commodity in life: it is the one thing you cannot buy more of. So, don't waste time. Focus on what really matters. What really moves the needle for the Institute? Are you working on priorities that drive the overall goals of the Institute or are you just making noise? Really scrutinize your day and max it out every hour, minute and second to focus on the most important outputs. For some, this may require a high degree of planning and structure. If you are better organized it will lend itself to productivity and allow you to leave work at work.

### Embrace the off button

Pretty much every piece of technology has an off button, so use it.

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## GDI Receives Unique Art Donation

By James Oloo

In general, Gabriel Dumont Institute employees believe in the Institute's mission - which is "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." Individually, the Institute staff contributes to the realization of this mission both within and without the workplace. So, when the GDI Training and Employment Director Lisa Wilson was in Brandon, Manitoba in August to read/present at a local university and community arts event, she also acted as an ambassador of the Institute.

In her presentation, Lisa shared stories about issues including child welfare and the sixties scoop, and how these led to cultural disruption among Aboriginal peoples with the consequences- such as loss of cultural identity and

language - still being felt today.

Lisa noticed a lady in the audience who she thought "felt some affinity to [her] presentation topic." The lady was Gayle Johnson, and Lisa later got the opportunity to meet her. Ms. Johnson and Lisa discussed a number of issues including "the Children's Aid and the prevailing notions about child welfare and their implications for Aboriginal children in the Prairie Provinces."

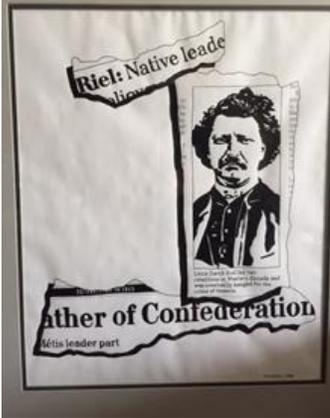
To give context, the Government of Saskatchewan enacted the Child Welfare Act in 1908. The Act set the stage for the establishment of children's aid societies across the province by requiring cities with populations of over 10,000 to provide shelters for orphaned and underprivileged children.

Gayle Johnson ended up making a donation of artwork to Lisa. The artwork, by the renowned Ontario artist

Dennis Tourbin, is of Louis Riel and was commissioned by Ms. Johnson for her son, Riel, "as a piece of strength and art financial investment" for him. Ms. Johnson indicated that she "felt Louis Riel's power would protect my [her] Riel."

Ms. Johnson's son, Riel Omer William Bisson, overcame adversities and attended Royal Military College and graduated with an Aeronautical Engineering degree in 2011. Sadly, her son Riel died of acute myeloid leukaemia on May 24, 2014 at the age of 34 years. Ms. Johnson stated that, "it is fitting you receive this piece for the Gabriel Dumont Institute. Riel's passion, strength and determination go with the piece."

The Gabriel Dumont Institute Publishing Department Director Karon Shmon asserted that the donation is "a great acquisition for GDI!" Jim Edmondson, the Director of Human Resources, said, "I am glad we have the opportunity to get such a beautiful piece." *Continued on Page 4.*



A photo of the artwork donated By Ms. Gayle Johnson to Gabriel Dumont Institute  
Photo by Lisa Wilson

## Métis and the 2015 Federal Election

By James Oloo

On October 19, 2015, Canadians went to the polls to elect federal Members of Parliament and the Prime Minister. Before the night was over, Mr. Justin Trudeau, the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, was declared the Prime Minister-designate after his party won 184 of the 338 seats in Canada's House of Commons. What does Mr. Trudeau's win mean for the Métis?

The Liberal Party released its reconciliation plan for the

Métis Nation in a September 29, 2015 announcement. In it, Mr. Trudeau stated that if elected, he will work on a "Nation-to-Nation basis" with the Métis Nation to reach meaningful reconciliation and achieve positive results for Métis children, youth, families, and communities.

Specifically, the Liberal Party Leader asserted that, "There is an urgent need to take real action to advance reconciliation with the Métis Nation, and to renew the

relationship based on cooperation, respect for rights ... and a commitment to end the status quo." He continued, "After a decade of ... failure, Liberals will work diligently toward meaningful reconciliation with the Métis Nation."

Mr. Trudeau further stated that, if elected, his government will work with Métis groups to establish a federal claims process that recognizes Métis self-government and resolves outstanding claims.

*Continued on Page 5.*



Shawn Mahar, Apprenticeship Coordinator, (centre) with Métis Millwright Pre-employment Program graduates Brandon Mahar (L) & Riley Sylvester at the AECON Industrial, Saskatoon  
Photo by James Oloo



## Charting New Waters: The Spirit of Partnership

By Daniel Downs

Anyone who has spent time on open waters knows that you are as likely to encounter rough waters, as you are to find calm. When waters are rough, more hands on deck simply means the potential for more hands to get seasick in high waves. Having more people on board will not help you steer your ship any better; it will not allow you to sail your ship any faster; and it will often see you change course numerous times for reasons uncertain.

So too will you find this in program planning at the College level when multiple partners are involved. Many hands on deck do not often make for easy steering, faster speed, or straight-line navigation. In all regards, a partnership is a difficult ship to sail.

So why would one want to engage in such an activity? Surely one is to encounter rough waters as often as calm when engaging in partnerships? Surely it would be easier to go it alone, where the success and failures of reaching your goal rest in your own hands?

To me, the answer can be summed up rather easily. Although partners may have different methods, motives, or even mandates behind their goals... they all have one thing in common. A shared vision ... the true spirit of partnership.

For years, Dumont Technical Institute has engaged in many partnership programs with our sister company GDI Training & Employment, other Regional Colleges,

Friendship Centres, Government Ministries, Community agencies, and communities as a whole in the planning, design, and implementation of programming in the province. This year, I have had the opportunity to engage in several programs that would not have been possible without the participation of partners. Be it a means to share financial resources, pool expertise, or simply to draw attention to many of the training and educational needs facing communities, partners have remained a critical part of the vision Dumont Technical Institute holds for the Métis of Saskatchewan.

One program I would like to highlight, unique to me in my tenure with Dumont Technical Institute, has been the Heavy Duty Equipment Technician Level 1 program awarded to Dumont Technical Institute by the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC). What has traditionally only existed in the realm of Saskatchewan Polytechnic... the leveled training of apprentices within the Province, was awarded this year to Dumont Technical Institute in Prince Albert. In this, Dumont Technical Institute has been asked through SATCC to offer an eight-week training program to Saskatchewan apprentices; having them progress from Level 1 to Level 2 apprentices within the province.

Due to Dumont Technical Institute's continued and constantly evolving partnership with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, as well as GDI Training & Employment in its promotion of

apprenticeship programming and employment throughout the province, Dumont Technical Institute was a safe training bet for SATCC. The trials, tribulations, course corrections, and rough waters that had been navigated by Dumont Technical Institute and GDI Training & Employment previously, allowed for Dumont Technical Institute and the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure to carry out the training required for 12 Saskatchewan Apprentices that would not have had the opportunity to progress in their employment this year if not for the ongoing partnership work being done.

It is hoped that this training program will continue to highlight Dumont Technical Institute's partnership with both GDI Training & Employment and Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure in the promotion of trades and apprenticeship training for Métis people in the province, and show that GDI and our government partners are a continued safe investment.

Much like sailing open waters, too often the course of destiny of a program or an entire community can be bogged down in discourse, argument, and differing point of views over small or insurmountable issues. Always keep in mind, the hard work, effort, and course corrections made between you and the people you call partners will only serve to aid in your goals. A partnership is a difficult ship to sail... but well worth the effort to share the victory and vision with others. 🌐



A sign at the Gabriel Dumont Institute Building in Prince Albert, SK

Happy Halloween From GDI Libraries! 🎃



Photos by P. Beszterda



## Work – Life Balance ... *continued from Page 1*



Gabriel Dumont Institute  
Central Office, Saskatoon



Apprenticeship Stats, October:  
210 employer contracts signed  
138 clients employed  
59 indentured  
39 gone for technical training  
- On track towards meeting  
and/ or surpassing the targets

It is not easy and for many people this is the hardest thing to do; and often, workdays never seem to end. There are times when we should just shut our phone off and enjoy the moment. When you are on vacation, be on vacation. Do not bring your tablet to the beach. Once you have done it a few times, it is easier to push the boundaries. When you unplug and step back, you will start to experience one of life's greatest treasures --

perspective when you step away and think as opposed to just diving in and responding in the moment. You will be able to think about life challenges you may be experiencing with greater clarity. You allow yourself the freedom to be more analytical and less emotional. Technological advancement has helped our lives in many ways. But it has also created expectations of constant accessibility. So don't text at your kid's soccer game and don't send work emails while you're hanging out with family. Make quality time true quality time. By not reacting to the updates from work, you will develop a stronger habit of resilience. Resilient people feel a greater sense of control over their lives, while reactive people have less control and are more prone to stress.

Respect boundaries  
You cannot achieve your balance if you don't respect the

boundaries you have put in place. It will be hard in the beginning but you need to stick with it so you develop a routine and drive a culture and lifestyle of predictability. You will find that there is also something else you can do. There is always another email to reply to or a problem to work, but you need to *personally* respect your boundaries. If you don't then you can't expect others to respect them.

Start small. Build from there  
We've all been there: crash diets that fizzle out. New Year's resolutions we forget by February. It's the same with work-life balance when we take on too much too quickly. I have seen it too many times, someone looking for balance commits to drastic changes: cutting their hours from 60 hours a week to 40, bumping up their daily run from zero miles a day to five miles a day. It's a recipe for failure. Our minds and habits just aren't wired that way. Make small achievable goals and move forward from there.

Be open about your needs  
I believe that the first thing that people need to do is identify what truly matters to them and communicate it. Don't hide it and don't expect others to guess what makes you feel balanced and fulfilled. Do you need to leave work at 4:30 p.m. so you can have dinner with

your family? Do you need to step away at 12 p.m. to attend a yoga class? Whatever your sweet spot is you need to find it and be transparent about it. Employees need to have an open dialogue with their managers to come to an understanding of what the individual wants and what is possible. Different jobs require different approaches, but everyone can benefit from having an open and honest conversation about what balance means.

Effective work-life balance will vary over time, often on a daily basis. The right balance for an individual today will likely be different tomorrow. The right balance for you when you are single will most assuredly be different than when you're married, or when you have children; when you start a new career versus when you are nearing retirement.

There is no perfect one-size fits all balance you should be striving for. The best work-life balance is different for each of us because we all have different priorities and different lives. HR and health experts agree: the compounding stress from the never-ending workday is damaging. It can hurt relationships, health and overall happiness. 🌍

## GDI Receives Artwork Donation ... *continued from Page 2*

Cory McDougall, the Director of Finance, stated, "That is a great art piece!" The Director of Dumont Technical Institute, Brett Vandale, said, "A pretty cool piece of artwork. This is great news!" And Geordy McCaffrey, GDI Executive Director, noted that "I hope

Gabriel Dumont Institute can display the artwork in honour of Riel."

Dennis Tourbin (1946 -1998) was a celebrated Canadian artist whose works are exhibited in the National Gallery of Canada, the Canada Council

Art Bank, the National Archives of Canada, the Rodman Hall Art Centre, the Art Gallery of Peterborough, and numerous other galleries across Canada and abroad. The Dennis Tourbin Fund for Emerging Artists was established in his honour. 🌍



# Métis and the 2015 Federal Election ... Continued from Page 2

And, quite remarkably, Mr. Trudeau promised to “convert current year-to-year funding, made available to provincial Métis communities for Métis identification and registration, to a permanent initiative.”

In highlighting the socioeconomic challenges faced by the Métis across Canada, the Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, Justin Trudeau, said that “Improving Métis quality of life requires distinct and innovative approaches and real partnership with the Métis Nation as well as with the provinces and territories.” Mr. Trudeau also made commitments that have important implications to the work of Gabriel Dumont Institute.

He stated that his government will:

- 1) Undertake a review, in partnership with Métis communities, of existing federal programs and services available to the Métis, to identify gaps and areas where strategic investments are needed in order to improve Métis quality of life;
- 2) Renew the Aboriginal Strategic Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS) and also expand its funding by \$50 million per year (GDI Training and Employment is one of the 84 ASETS agreement holders across Canada);
- 3) Work with the Métis to develop a Métis Economic Development Strategy – and provide \$25 million to implement this new strategy (Remember, in March 2015, GDI Executive

Director Geordy McCaffrey presented a paper at the ‘Toward a Métis Economic Development Strategy’ meeting in Winnipeg. The meeting proceedings and report are available at <http://www.metisnation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MED-S-III-Report-2-Policy-Framework-1.pdf>); and 4) Fulfill the commitment in the Kelowna Accord to enhance existing scholarships and bursaries to Métis students. (Note that since 2010, GDI has awarded over \$1,120,000 in scholarships and bursaries to Saskatchewan’s Métis).

The Liberal Party’s ‘Advancing and achieving reconciliation for the Métis Nation’ is available online at <https://www.liberal.ca/liberals-announce-reconciliation-plan-for-the-metis-nation/>

Irrespective of an individual’s political affiliation, these commitments to enhance the well-being of the Métis make sense, for the status quo is just not viable anymore.

When Mr. Trudeau made these promises, he was on the campaign trail. But now, he has been elected the Prime Minister. Many will be watching closely how he constitutes two key Departments: Employment and Social Development Canada, and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. No matter who the new ministers will be, many observers will revisit Mr. Trudeau’s commitment to advance and achieve reconciliation for the Métis; and if necessary, they will remind the new Prime Minister of his promises even as they congratulate and wish him well.



## Payroll Cutoff Calendar, November 2015

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Nov 13 Student Payroll			Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P Invs - Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for Nov 13 Payday	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
		Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Nov 13 Direct Deposits	<b>Remembrance Day Stat Holiday</b>	Accounts Payable Cheque Run	<b>Staff Payday</b> Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices <b>Student Payday</b>	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	<b>Louis Riel Day Stat Holiday</b>	Cutoff @ 12:00 for Nov 27 Student Payroll		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
		Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Pmts on Student Nov 27 Direct Deposits Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Nov 30 Payday		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	<b>Student Payday</b> Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
29	30					
	<b>Staff Payday</b> Cutoff @ 4:30 for Dec 11 Student Payroll					

MRTS due by the 15th of every month, and Employee contracts are due prior to payroll cutoff datete.



## Gabriel Dumont Institute/Dumont Technical Institute

917 22<sup>nd</sup> Street West  
Saskatoon, SK  
S7M 0R9

PHONE:  
(306) 242-6070

FAX:  
(306) 242-0002

E-MAIL:  
[general@gdi.gdins.org](mailto:general@gdi.gdins.org)

Visit us at  
[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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@gdins\_org



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

## GDI Locations

### GDI Central Office Saskatoon

917 22nd Street West  
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9  
Phone: (306) 242-6070  
Fax: (306) 242-0002

### GDI Publishing Saskatoon

2—604 22nd Street West  
Saskatoon SK S7M 5W1  
Phone: (306) 934-4941  
Fax: (306) 244-0252

### GDI Finance and Operations

917 22nd Street West  
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9  
Phone: (306) 242-6070  
Fax: (306) 975-0903

### DTI Central Office Saskatoon

917 22nd Street West  
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9  
Phone: (306) 242-6070  
Fax: (306) 242-0002

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

### SUNTEP Prince Albert

48 12th Street East  
Prince Albert, SK  
S6V 1B2  
Phone: (306) 764-1797  
Fax: (306) 764-3995

### SUNTEP Saskatoon

Room 7 McLean Hall  
University of  
Saskatchewan  
106 Wiggins Road  
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E6  
Phone: (306) 975-7095  
Fax: (306) 975-1108

### SUNTEP Regina

Room 227 College West  
University of Regina  
3737 Wascana Parkway  
Regina, S4S 0A2  
Phone: (306) 347-4110

### GDI Training and Employment Central Office

917 22nd Street West  
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9  
Phone: (306) 242-6070  
Fax: (306) 683-3508

Toll Free (T&E):  
1-877-488-6888  
Fax: (306) 347-4119

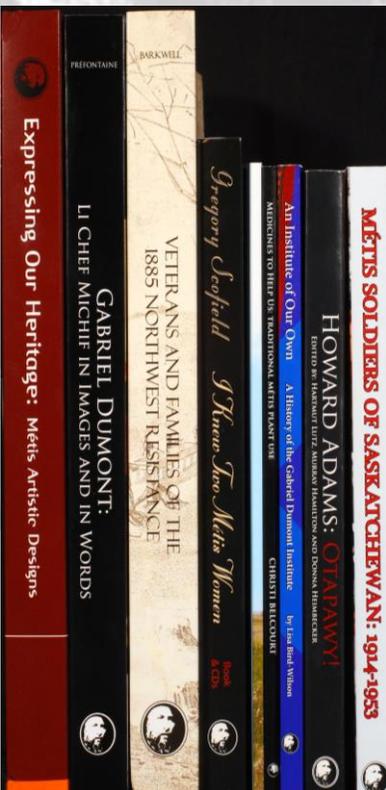
### GDI Library Regina

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  
Fax: (306) 763-4834



#### 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**  
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