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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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## Practicing Gratitude at the Workplace

By [Shepell](#)

Your Employee and Family Assistance Program

Do you remember the last time you felt grateful for one of life's small pleasures? For example: a day of sunshine after weeks of rain; a thoughtful comment from a colleague. These little gifts happen daily, but how often do we pause and express gratitude for them?

Complaining is easy, problems appear crystal clear, unwanted, and definitive: a cold in the summer, not enough free time, a difficult coworker - we can always find something that isn't right. Noticing the things in our lives that are going right is not as easy because good things don't shout and beg attention in quite the same way as the things we deem bad. Good things can more easily go unnoticed in our busy problem-solving lives.

However, research shows that practicing gratitude has many positive effects on mental and physical health and overall well-being. In a recent study at the University of California, three groups of people were asked to make weekly logs of their experiences: one group focused on tracking negative things in their week, another on what they were grateful for or positive things, and a third was simply asked to make a note of something that affected them, without

emphasizing whether it was good or bad. After 10 weeks, the people who recorded what they were grateful for were generally more optimistic they even exercised more and had fewer trips to the doctor.

Research shows that those who regularly express gratitude experience fewer symptoms of pain and take better care of their overall health. They are also happier and have less intrusive negative emotions such as envy, resentment, and regret. Other benefits of gratitude include improved sleep, self-esteem, and immune system. Expressing gratitude also increases resilience and strengthens our emotions.

It is not easy to make the switch from focusing on negatives to emphasizing positives. An effective way to increase your daily dose of gratitude is to keep a gratitude journal. This means that each day you record five things you are grateful for (doing it right when you wake up or before sleep tends to make it easier to stick to). Some things of course will repeat, big ones like having a roof over your head, a loving family, or a career you care about. Others might be smaller and only occur that day, like when you caught

the bus just as it was pulling up. Big or small, paying attention to the little gifts that fall upon us every day will increase your awareness of them and you will begin to feel more grateful overall and reap the many benefits of saying thanks.

You can also express gratitude aloud. This means doing things like telling people what you appreciate about them and sharing positive stories and feelings from your day. It also means that when you feel the urge to complain or criticize make an effort to find something you are happy about to voice in its place.

Of course, this does not imply that you must put an end to telling people when something is wrong - it can be extremely beneficial to have the compassionate ear of a friend when times get tough. However, if you can eliminate some of your daily complaining and turn up the dial on gratitude, you are sure to bring more positivity and good health into your life and the lives of those around you.

The Employee and Family Assistance Program provides immediate and confidential assistance for any work, health or life concern and is available to Gabriel Dumont Institute employees. For more information, please visit [www.shepell.com](http://www.shepell.com) or call 1 (844) 880-9137. 



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

The Month of  
**October** in History

In October 2009, GDI Publishing's children's book, *Dancing in My Bones*, by Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton, illustrated by Sherry F. Racette, and translated into Michif by Norman Fleury, is shortlisted for five awards: Reader's Choice, First Peoples Publishing, Publishing in Education, Award for Publishing, and First Peoples Writing.

In his October 2009 Speech from the Throne, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall declared 2010 the Year of the Métis. Mr. Wall noted that, "Long before Saskatchewan was a province, there were Métis here." 2010 also marked 125th anniversary of the 1885 Northwest Resistance.

In October 2011, Dumont Technical Institute marked its 20th anniversary.

In October 2012, the inaugural Métis Awards of Saskatchewan ceremony is held in Regina.

In October 2012, the Gabriel Dumont Institute Board of Governors approved the first master's degree program to be offered by the Institute. The community-based Master of Education program to be delivered by Gabriel Dumont Institute in partnership with the University of Regina will be offered in Prince Albert beginning July 2013.

## A Teacher's Experience: Why I Like DTI

By Brian Vass

I am fairly new to Dumont Technical Institute. Last semester, I taught Math and Communications for the Heavy Equipment Truck & Transport Mechanic Training Program in Prince Albert. Now, I am teaching Level 4 Biology and Information Processing in the Adult Basic Education program in Saskatoon. I obtained a Master's Degree in Adult and Distance Education after teaching adult students for 17 years. I obtained my undergraduate degree as an adult, so foraging into the field was quite natural for me, and I still appreciate the students I get to work with.

I have not quite been "Everywhere man," but I have "Breathed the mountain air, man," (I can sing the whole song for you some time upon request) and would say that I have had quite an extensive experience in adult education systems across Saskatchewan, which is why I would like to extend my kudos to the way Dumont Technical Institute

designs its Adult Basic Education program to allow for class and course preparation during the work day.

I have worked in similar post-secondary institutions serving a similar clientele, where the workload often resulted in instructor burnout. Further, all of the Institute staff, academic and non-academic, are very cordial and supportive, making Dumont Technical Institute an exceptional place to work. I feel blessed to be working here.

I would like to name all of the great people I work with, but there just isn't enough space for that. Everyone is so amazing. I suppose there are a number of reasons the atmosphere at the school is so great. The facility is fantastic. I remember my orientation tour. My mouth was in jaw dropping overdrive, and I don't think I will ever get over it. My office is the size

of my living room, and that is only a starter. The classrooms have the newest technology, and the students come with great expectations, which make the teaching-learning process very enjoyable.

Not all students are the same. Some are easier to inspire, in one way or another. It is an honour for me to have many such students at DTI, one of whom recently celebrated her 27<sup>th</sup> birthday. All our students are special and deserve to be acknowledged for their efforts, and I try to do my part to get them to the next step of their journey. So, I wrote a 'birthday poem' which provided student-centered teachable moments that the students found motivating.

My wife wrapped a piece of cheese cake for the 'birthday party.' It might not have been much, but it was a special moment for a student who holds down a full time job as a security officer and often works night shifts, then attends school all day. 🍷

## Accuplacer: What is it used for?

By Kristi Ross

Have you been told that in order to qualify for admission into a program, your client or a prospective student will need to take an Accuplacer test? Or does your client simply not have the education requirements? If so, then please continue reading.

The Accuplacer is a multiple choice examination used by the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC) and various colleges across the country to determine whether a person should be given admission into the program they

want to pursue. From the feedback we have received thus far, many students and counsellors are unsure about what is assessed in an Accuplacer test. Below are some examples of the uses of the Accuplacer testing during a post-secondary education admission process.

### Eligibility for admission

This is perhaps the most important assessment that is made using Accuplacer test. The test enables colleges and SATCC to determine whether the

application of a particular candidate meets the admission requirements for a college-level program. The result of the Accuplacer test will then serve as one of the determinants in choosing the candidates for post-secondary programs including the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project. Please note, however, that the minimum benchmarks for admission to a particular program are determined by individual colleges and SATCC.

*Continued on Page 5.*



## Success Story: Michael Sims

By Ashley Hayden

I recently sat down with my client, Michael Sims, who is a Year I Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic apprentice with the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure in Moose Jaw, to talk about his experience and hopes for the future. I have closely worked with Michael as his Employment Counsellor for over one year.

Asked how he first heard about the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program, Michael stated that his “Mother was looking for a Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic program that would take me in. She then saw an ad on SaskJobs and wrote the number down.” Once Michael and his mom realized that the ad was by GDI Training and Employment, they “were excited because being Métis, I had a better chance of being accepted and (the program) was right here (in Moose Jaw).”

When he visited the GDI Training and Employment

### Power of Laughter

By Jim Edmondson

Feeling low? Try laughing more. Some researchers think laughter just might be the best medicine, helping you feel better and putting that spring back in your step. Laughter is a powerful antidote to stress, pain, and conflict. It has been proven that nothing works faster or more dependably to bring your mind and body back into balance than a good laugh.

Humor tends to lighten our burdens, inspire hope, connects us to others, and keeps us alert. With a

Regina Centre for his appointment with me, Michael already knew what trade he was interested in. As he recalled, “I knew what I wanted, and Ashley helped me with the process, and lots of good advice.”

Regarding his job, Michael noted that “I like my job as a Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic apprentice. I like hands-on work, and it is satisfying to see a truck I helped fix roll out safe.” He continued, “It feels good to be working in the field I dreamed of as a young boy.”

Michael is very determined and has his eye set on the future: “My career goal is within this industry. I’d like to get my Red Seal certification and have a secure job at an organization like the Ministry of Highways.”

Michael shared his philosophy on life and work stating that, “Work your hardest and be willing to

potential to heal and renew, laughing often is a good resource for dealing with problems, enhancing our relationships, and supporting both physical and emotional wellbeing.

Laughter relaxes the whole body. It relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed. It also boosts the immune system by slowing down the production of stress hormones while increasing infection-fighting antibodies. Further, laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow,

learn at any moment.” He spoke of the importance of surrounding oneself with “people who believe you can achieve your dream no matter the obstacles you are facing.”

Further, Michael expressed pride in his Métis identity and appreciation to Gabriel Dumont Institute. As he put it, “There is pride in being part of a school that recognizes heritage, understands the barriers you face, and celebrates your success.” Michael also described how his mother is proud of Gabriel Dumont Institute.

At the end of our conversation, Michael said, “I would still be in a low paying job with uncertain prospects if it were not for GDI. They have accepted me into the apprenticeship program in a trade I have always loved, given me funding to buy tools and help me start my career. Thank you.” You are very welcome Michael. We are always here for you. 🌐

which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems. The mental health benefits of laughter include added joy and gusto to our lives.

Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body’s natural feel-good chemicals that promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain. As well, laughter helps you keep a positive, optimistic outlook through difficult situations. And laughter is contagious—just hearing laughter primes your brain and readies you to smile!  
*Continued on Page 4.*



Claudette Moran, Senior Program Coordinator, Dumont Technical Institute, has retired. An article about Claudette will appear in the November GDI Communicator. Photo from GDI Archives



Michael Sims, Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic Year I Apprentice, Photo by Ashley Hayden





Murray Hamilton, Program Head, Gabriel Dumont College Saskatoon.

## Power of Laughter ... *Continued from Page 4.*

The overall social benefits of laughter are that it can strengthen relationships, make others want to be around us, enhance teamwork by promoting group bonding; and it is a great diffuser of conflict and disagreements.

You can create opportunities to laugh. For example, watch a funny show, visit a comedy club, or seek out funny

people. You could also host game night with friends, play with a pet, goof around with children, or make time for fun activities like bowling or karaoke.

Shared laughter is one of the most effective tools for keeping relationships fresh and exciting. Emotional sharing builds strong and lasting bonds, but sharing laughter

and play also adds joy, vitality, and resilience.

People who incorporate humor and play into their daily lives find that it renews them and all of their relationships. Whether you believe that laughter is medicinal or helps people feel better, it certainly doesn't hurt. Laugh and be happy! 🌍

## SaskPower's Wavell Starr Hosts Career Event at GDI

By James Oloo

SaskPower Aboriginal Sourcing Consultant Wavell Starr was at Gabriel Dumont Institute on October 7, 2016 to meet with Dumont Technical Institute students about various employment programs at SaskPower. Wavell brought coffee, doughnuts, writing pads, pamphlets, and great information about opportunities at SaskPower.

Gabriel Dumont Institute and SaskPower have partnered for many years to create training and employment opportunities for our Métis students and clients. Today, seven of our clients are working at SaskPower under the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project, including six Powerline Technicians one who started as a meter installer before transitioning in

to the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project. The latter is now a unionized employee of SaskPower and is also working towards his journeyman certification in Industrial Mechanics. The seven apprentices are working in Estevan, Regina, Meadow Lake, and Prince Albert.

Wavell noted that "SaskPower appreciates the effective partnership we have with GDI that is why I am here today to engage with the students and to encourage them to consider careers with SaskPower." He stated that employment opportunities include summer jobs and entry level positions among others; and that Grade 12 diploma or equivalent is the minimum requirement for most of the

positions with SaskPower. Wavell answered several questions that were asked by the students. A number of Office Administration students expressed interest in doing their practicum at SaskPower.

Wavell, who is also a pro-wrestler based in Regina, is planning to visit other Gabriel Dumont Institute campuses in the near future, and will also be back in Saskatoon. On behalf of the Institute and our students, I'd like to express my sincere appreciation to Wavell and SaskPower for taking time to visit with us. We look forward to seeing you again soon. A Regina Leader-Post article that features a YouTube video of Wavell is available online at <http://leaderpost.com/life/qc/wavell-starr-is-saskatchewan-first-nation-sensation> 🌍



Audrey Arcand, Employment Counsellor, (L), and Angie Yew, Administrative Coordinator, GDI Training & Employment.



Darren Préfontaine Curriculum Developer, GDI Publishing Photos from GDI Archives

## Finance & Operations Update

By Cory McDougall

With the busy fall intake period over and everyone settled back in, we thought it might be a good time to remind folks of a few initiatives we are working on.

Payments by Electronic Funds Transfer (ETF) are becoming more and more

popular. Forms for staff and vendors are available in the "Forms" section of the intranet if you (or an interested student, client, or employer) would like to sign up for this.

The "Forms" section of the intranet has been updated. You should be able to

access all forms required for day-to-day work in this section. If there are forms you feel should be added, please contact support@gdins.org.

Management Reporter is now available exclusively through the intranet. We will be sending out monthly tips via email. *Continued on Page 4.*



## Accuplacer Tests ... *Continued from Page 2*

**Determination of skills**  
Accuplacer test can determine a client's skills. Having required knowledge and skills implies that a client may be considered for admission to a program.

**Determining right course**  
Having identified a client's skill level, Accuplacer test helps in making decisions on courses that a client can take based on his or her abilities.

**Keep in Mind...**  
It is essential that the client reaches the benchmark in this examination because the result will help determine whether they qualify for the college-level course or be indentured as apprentices with SATCC. Clients can always obtain study materials from the Dumont Technical Institute Testing Services.

We delivered 16 exams for GED in October. Since January 2016, we have delivered 242 GED exams. Testing Services also assisted three clients with Accuplacer testing for the Heavy Equipment Truck & Transport Mechanic program in Moose Jaw. To date, we have assisted a total of 23 clients for Accuplacer. If you have any questions, please contact Kristi Ross at [testing@gdins.org](mailto:testing@gdins.org)

## Finance & Operations Update ... *Continued from Page 4*

We have sent out a listing of support staff to contact for almost all Finance, IT and Operations issues. This was done via mass email and it is also available in the intranet "Forms" section. The hope

is that this will help to serve staff and clients better by removing the frustration of not talking to the right person the first time you call to resolve an issue related to Finance, IT, or Operations. Should

have any questions or suggestions on any of these items, please contact us at [cory.mcdougall@gdi.gdins.org](mailto:cory.mcdougall@gdi.gdins.org). If you are unsure how to access the intranet, please contact IT at [support@gdins.org](mailto:support@gdins.org)



Wavell Starr, Aboriginal Sourcing Consultant at SaskPower, speaking with Dumont Technical Institute students. See story on Page 4. Photo by Marcel Petit

## Payroll Cutoff Calendar, November 2016

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Buschnyski

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

MRTs due by 15<sup>th</sup> of every month.

Employee contracts due prior to payroll cutoff date.

New employee contracts due at payroll upon job acceptance. If received after the cutoff date, the employee will be paid on the following pay period.



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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)

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**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**  
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