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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

The COVID-19 Experience from a Practical Nursing Perspective

By Chantelle Jule

When one decides to pursue their dream of becoming a nurse, they generally know the road ahead will be challenging. It is a road that will require support, dedication, hard work, and long hours—but at the end of it, there will be a rewarding career. 2020 has required students to really have to focus on keeping the end-goal in sight (amongst all of the other distractions that COVID-19 has caused). Living in a pandemic has created additional challenges and stress for everyone in some way, but for those in education, it has changed or drastically altered their path.

In March 2020, the familiar face-to-face teaching model that students had come to know came to an abrupt halt. Instructors and students were moved from their classrooms into the virtual realm of online education by the global COVID-19 pandemic. For Practical Nursing (PN) students, this drastic switch took place in a matter of only a couple of days as their schedules are tight, and there was no time to lose. Being able to adapt and adjust was not necessarily easy for everyone. With so many moving parts involved in

nursing education, there was a huge need for collaboration with several stakeholders. Licensing bodies, higher education accrediting bodies, school administrators, hospital administrators, faculty, and students began working together to identify the barriers and challenges each faced, as well as creating solutions to remove those barriers and obstacles. Thinking outside the box created significant opportunities for innovative learning.

Expectations, relationships, and routines were gone. In some ways, it was like starting something brand-new; classes were held on Zoom, and assignments and exams were re-evaluated or removed to ensure the workload was manageable while maintaining the program quality.

The real challenges became clear in the weeks to follow as some of our students had lost their part-time jobs or had spouses that lost theirs as well. Some had family members become ill, and some had family members they could no longer visit and support like they wanted or needed to. Many students had to teach themselves and their children, which increased

the anxiety and fear of the unknown. There were so many questions about whether they would graduate on time or be able to go to the required clinical to complete the course. What if they went to clinical and got COVID? There were many fears and stresses surrounding the transition into a workforce that was exhausted and overwhelmed.

Toni Schoenthal, a fourth-semester PN student in Regina, discusses her personal experience of completing nursing school in a pandemic. Toni is one month away from completing her two-year diploma and will be among Dumont Technical Institute's (DTI) first Practical Nursing class to graduate during a pandemic.

Toni pointed out that attending school during a pandemic has opened her eyes and has shown her she cannot always be in control of everything. One of the biggest challenges she faced was in March when all the schools and daycares in Saskatchewan closed.

Story continues on page 4



For more information on Canada's Census Program and how to use the data check out the Statistics Canada Website:

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm>



The Gabriel Dumont Institute is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dennis Fisher. The Dennis and Jean Fisher Collection, donated to GDI in 2011, includes hundreds of Métis-specific artifacts, documents, photographs, and ephemera related to the 1885 Resistance. Our condolences to Dennis's family and friends.

A full article on Dennis will be included in the Winter issue of the *New Nation: La naaveel naasyoon* coming January 2021.



Saskatchewan Métis-specific Census Data

By Desirae Barker

Back in 2014, the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) purchased specialized Census data from Statistics Canada. The specialized data took the information from the 2011 Census and provided a demographic breakdown of Métis by each Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN—S) region. As this data worked as an essential tool in research, reporting, and planning for the Institute, GDI has again ordered specialized data with updated numbers from the most current Census in 2016.

The data itself is a custom demographic profile for the population of the province of Saskatchewan and its 12 Métis Nation regions. Each region shows the population of Métis and demographics including; age and gender and socio-economic information including education, employment, and income. Since 2014, GDI has used this statistical data in a number of ways. Some examples are detailed below:

The census data helps to identify Métis labour market trends, information on graduates, and potential gaps in Métis education, skills, and training. It has also been a medium for creating community profiles for each of the 12 regions.

These community profiles enable the Institute to better understand various characteristics of the Saskatchewan Métis population.

In terms of reporting, the census data has been used to calculate growth, prepare annual and quarterly program reports, and is extremely helpful as a metric for year-over-year comparisons.

Overall, the data makes for better planning and implementation of programming as it can be used to identify the need and demand for new programs and services.

Having the data set from 2011 and 2016 will provide the Institute with an effective comparison tool. However, it should be noted that the census process is a dynamic one, and for this same reason, it changes from one cycle to the next. Since the regions are stable in terms of geography, changes are minimal and would affect only a small proportion of the population.

Another point to consider is that the data from 2016 is derived from a mandatory survey that had a high response rate of 96.9%, while the data from 2011 had a response

rate of 68.6%. This means that the information cannot be identical but, for practical use, they are considered the same, as the most recent bordered definitions are applicable for all the data that concerns that region.

Although using data from four years ago may seem out-of-date, it is important to understand that data is typically behind by the time it becomes available. According to the Statistics Canada website and Wikipedia, after a census is conducted, it is released in data sets over the course of the following year. Statistics Canada conducts a census every five years, meaning the next available census will not take place until 2021.

The 2016 data discussed above has been purchased by DTI and is currently being compiled by Statistics Canada. If you are interested in these statistics and have a use for them in your department, they will be available by January 1, 2021.

Please contact Desirae Barker, Research Coordinator, via email at desirae.barker@gdins.gdi.org for more information.



Christmas Break 2020 Reminder

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) Board of Governors has set the Christmas Break for the end of the year. The

Institute will be closed from Thursday, December 24, 2020 to Sunday, January 3, 2021 (inclusive).

The Institute will re-open on Monday, January 4, 2021. 🌐





Holiday DOOR DECORATING CONTEST

GDI TRAINING &
EMPLOYMENT INVITES ALL
GDI EMPLOYEES TO
PARTICIPATE IN A HOLIDAY
DOOR DECORATING CONTEST!

TO ENTER THE CONTEST,
SIMPLY DECORATE YOUR
OFFICE DOOR (OR A DOOR IN
YOUR FACILITY/HOME), TAKE
A PICTURE, AND EMAIL IT TO
ANGIE.RATHGEBER@GDITE.GD
INS.ORG BY THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 10TH.



The Gabriel Dumont Institute expresses our deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of Michel Maurice, fondly called Mooshom Mike by many. We are grateful for his service to the Métis as an Elder and cultural Knowledge Keeper.

A full article on Michel will be included in the Winter issue of the New Nation: La noavei noasyoon coming January 2021.



Terminology in Transition: What does Indigenous mean?

By Karon Shmon

I hope the usage of the term “Métis and Indigenous,” seen at times as “Indigenous and Métis” or “Indigenous/Métis,” will cease being used because it is creating and reinforcing a misconception about to whom this refers. Métis are Indigenous!

The Métis are recognized in Canada’s Constitution as being Indigenous, along with the Inuit and the First Nations Peoples. This recognition was achieved after a long, hard, legal battle, led by Harry Daniels, which resulted in the change to the Constitution in 1982. Adding us on with “and” or the backslash is like saying “humans and women.” What comes after “and” is already part of what comes before it.

We are running into this problem frequently as most people think that, for Canada, “Indigenous” means only First Nations and then leave the Inuit and Métis out of their thinking and mindset. Less frequently, they think it means First Nations and Inuit. Outside the environments where this is well known, primarily in government and education, people assume Indigenous does not include Métis. I even surmise that a survey of the public would prove this.

Now, using Indigenous alone does not work as it reinforces a mistake by

omission, not telling to whom this refers. Using “and” or worse, the “/” backslash, also reinforces a mistake, this time by signaling that we are outside the term. The way to solve this problem is not to reinforce it by adding on either the Inuit or Métis, but to use a comma the first time the term is used and say “Indigenous, the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit of Canada,” and keep going. After that, people reading the rest of the copy will have that in mind. Using a footnote may also work but is at risk of being ignored, and a footnote does not suit all types of writing.

Further to this, I am of the opinion that Indigenous is not a good term because it takes us back to the time when a global, or pan, the terminology was acceptable, such as “Native” or “Aboriginal.” I even see these terms as a lazy copout to think no further. There are very specific times when global terms are appropriately used.

A rule of thumb is to use as specific terminology as possible. For example, if one was to speak specifically about the Nations under Treaty 6, they should be named but the people living on what is considered Treaty 6 Territory includes us Métis because this is “the traditional homeland of the Métis.” At present, this territory also includes the Dakota, specifically those First Nations displaced to Saskatchewan, such as

Whitecap, Wahpeton, Standing Buffalo, and Wood Mountain First Nation (Lakota). All these nations were here early and certainly have a right to say they are Indigenous Peoples of this land. Some do not pre-date the Métis presence. This is why saying we are on “Treaty 6 Territory” only acknowledges those groups that took Treaty under Treaty 6, so it is not inclusive of the other Indigenous peoples who also are from/live here and did not take Treaty.

For any group or organization that has education as its mandate, this is an essential function as this is where people look to have the terminology validated and verified. We cannot stop the wave of people using “Indigenous” which is the same inclusive and ambiguous term as “Aboriginal” in that only well-informed people understand to whom these terms refer.

Since we are in transition with the terminology, and because we frequently find people who do not know to whom “Indigenous” refers, further specifying and educating one another through adding a paraphrase is required until this no longer occurs. We will know we have arrived when people start saying, “Yah, yah. We know Indigenous includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.” That will be a happy situation. 🌐





Toni Schoenthal, photo courtesy of Chantelle Jule

The COVID-19 Experience ... continued from page 1

This left Toni at home, completing nursing courses online while also being a single parent to three children full-time. As she had been out of school for 15 years before entering the PN program, teaching herself and her children proved to be difficult. Furthermore, the lack of student and instructor communication was isolating.

PN students, including Toni, faced lost clinical time because the Saskatchewan Health Authority could not accept students into certain units. In which case, a virtual simulation was used to replace some of these experiences. While simulation is designed to replicate real nursing scenarios and teaches clinical decision-making skills, it does not compare to personal interaction.

Due to the lost clinical time, Toni was concerned that she would not be fully prepared for the future. Time management, countless distractions, and constant juggling had Toni feeling the extra stresses and pressures of COVID-19 and its effects. While Toni's struggle seemed universal to a majority of

DTI's students, she noted that routine was more important than she had once thought. When asked to reflect on what the pandemic has taught her, Toni states, "I was surprised at how much value there is to routine. At home and outside of home, structure, routine, and socialization are so important at all ages, even in young children."

With her diploma insight, Toni is happy to feel purpose and accomplishment. Healthcare is very important and seeing the effects it has on others, has encouraged her to become an excellent nurse. "GDI has changed my life. There was a ton of support. Everyone was so welcoming and understanding. I gained a close-knit group of friends, and the smaller class sizes and more one-on-one interaction were among some of my favorite things about coming to DTI."

As much as COVID-19 has presented some negative experiences or made things more difficult in several ways, it has also taught us many things. The sense of pride to see staff and students

persevere through every challenge that presented itself was admirable. The nursing staff went above and beyond to put in the extra work to make sure they were navigating the new road as best they could and making sure no one was left behind.

Watching the students transition to online learning and practice critical thinking made the faculty very proud. While educators are always encouraged to think outside the box, COVID-19 has held us to that task. It allowed us, DTI faculty and staff, to implement new things and teaching strategies that we may have never considered before; some of these things worked so well that we will continue to use them even when the pandemic is over.

As always, we are very proud of our upcoming graduating class, what a rollercoaster ride their journey has been. And while we feel saddened that we cannot celebrate their success how we would like to, we will certainly send our virtual hugs and congratulations as they begin their exciting new career. 🌐



GDI COVID-19 Update

By Desirae Barker

Due to the rising cases of COVID-19 in Saskatchewan, many staff at head office are still working from home as much as possible in efforts to reduce contact between employees. Departments

are incorporating half-time approaches to limit in-office work time. Many staff work from home offices to continue to support students and clients. The mask procedure is still in effect and must be worn at

all times in public common spaces. Please ensure you are informed about GDI'S most current COVID-19 procedures and updates. More info can be found here: <https://gdins.org/covid-19/>





Virtual Tribute to Veterans and Louis Riel

By Desirae Barker

This year, gathering to honour all of the Métis, First Nations, and Inuit veterans was not possible due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Fortunately, the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) Métis Culture and Heritage department developed a virtual commemoration video to celebrate both National Aboriginal Veterans Day and Louis Riel Day.

The virtual commemoration pays tribute to the men and

women who have served to protect our rights and freedoms. The tribute began with opening prayers by Métis elders, and featured musical guests including Donny Parenteau, Andrea Menard, Jess Lee, Ray St. Germain, Krystle Pederson, and Mike Gouchie as they revisit their collaboration on "Honouring Our Heroes: A Tribute to Métis Veterans."

Currently, the virtual commemoration video has over 100 views and is still viewable online. It can be

viewed on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbiTGR6gDLo> or on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/gabriel Dumont Institute/videos/813068246123491>.

We are grateful and proud of the service and sacrifice of all veterans, and especially of the Métis veterans including those from 1885 to the present. They shall all be remembered. 🌐



Payroll Cutoff Calendar, December 2020

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student Dec 4 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Finance Cutoff @ 4:30 for Dec 18 Student Payroll		Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheet & Payroll Revisions for Dec 15 Payday	Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
		Staff Payday Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student Dec 18 Direct Deposits	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheet & Payroll Revisions for Dec 31 Payday	A/P Cheque/EFT Run Finance Cutoff @ 4:30 for Dec 31 Student Payroll	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run			Christmas Day Stat Holiday	Boxing Day Stat Holiday
27	28	29	30	31		
				Staff Payday Student Payday		

**Green = subject to change. Employee contracts due at payroll upon job acceptance
Payroll must receive contracts prior to payroll cutoff date; otherwise the employee will be paid on the following pay period.

