



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research

September 27, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NEW RESEARCH REPORT SHOWS THAT SUNTEP GRADUATES PROVIDE OVER \$13
BILLION IN BENEFITS TO SASKATCHEWAN**

There exists an Indigenous employment gap: a large gap between the employment rates for Indigenous people and for non-Indigenous. This gap is not closing fast enough given Saskatchewan's demographic reality. There is also a gap in educational attainment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Bridging the Indigenous employment gap involves bridging the Indigenous education gap.

New research report by economist Eric Howe, *SUNTEP: An Investment in Saskatchewan's Prosperity*, shows that the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) is securing a prosperous future for Saskatchewan. "SUNTEP graduates are worth over ten million dollars *each* in bringing about a prosperous future for our province, literally worth more than their weight in gold. SUNTEP's very existence helps guarantee the prosperity of our province," Professor Howe noted.

Saskatchewan faces a stark choice: a future of prosperity or one of poverty and despair. Uneducated Indigenous people are among the poorest people in our province. Yet, education changes everything. Educated Indigenous people are among the most prosperous. Saskatchewan's growing Indigenous population can be made up largely of either educated or uneducated people. The prosperity of our province hangs in the balance.

The report shows that education is a path out of poverty for Indigenous people. And, as the Indigenous population continues to grow rapidly, the path which avoids a future of poverty for Saskatchewan is, in two words, Indigenous education.

The report identifies the benefits of having Indigenous teachers in Saskatchewan schools. For example, Indigenous teachers present all students with a positive representation, which can be extremely valuable in a context where the media stories frequently involve the negative. Further, an economic benefit of an

Indigenous teacher arises when the teacher is a role model: when Indigenous students see themselves in their teacher and decide to persevere in education.

The Dean of the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan Dr. Michelle Prytula stated that “The College of Education is proud of our partnership with Gabriel Dumont Institute which provides opportunity for Indigenous people to earn a teacher education degree through SUNTEP. We are happy to play a role in SUNTEP’s success.”

“This research report shows that SUNTEP has been a game changer,” said Dr. Earl Cook, Chair of the Gabriel Dumont Institute Board. “SUNTEP is a bi-partisan success story. When the program was started in 1980, there were less than 10 Indigenous teachers in Saskatchewan urban schools. To date, 1,238 Indigenous educators have graduated from SUNTEP with 978 (or 79%) working as teachers and school administrators.”

Howe also examines the benefit to Saskatchewan if the province’s Indigenous residents had the same average level of educational attainment as that of their non-Indigenous counterparts. Computing the breakdown in the benefit by credential, the report shows that the largest payoff is for University degree, such as SUNTEP. Howe notes that the payoff to Saskatchewan of just raising the number of terminal Indigenous high school diplomas to be the same proportion as for the non-Indigenous population is \$21.9 billion. This alone is equal to more than a quarter of the highest value of provincial Gross Domestic Product recorded in Saskatchewan’s history.

SUNTEP is offered by Gabriel Dumont Institute in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina. For almost a third of a century, SUNTEP has been supported by many individuals and organizations, including the provincial governments of Saskatchewan from both ends of the political spectrum, the University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, school divisions across the province, the Métis Nation–Saskatchewan, as well as our students, their families, and their communities.

Full report available at [www.gdins.org](http://gdins.org)
(<http://gdins.org/me/uploads/2017/09/GDI.SUNTEPHoweReport.2017.pdf>)

Dr. Howe is a professor of economics at the University of Saskatchewan. His specialties include Indigenous social policy research and the economy of the Canadian prairies. The Gabriel Dumont Institute engaged Professor Howe to prepare this research.

Gabriel Dumont Institute was incorporated in 1980 to serve the educational and cultural needs of Saskatchewan’s Métis community. Through partnerships with various post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan, Gabriel Dumont Institute

offers a variety of accredited educational, vocational, and skills-training opportunities to the Métis across Saskatchewan.

The news conference will be held at:

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Date: Wednesday September 27, 2017

Location: GDI Publishing Department, #2 – 604 22nd Street West, Saskatoon, Sask

For more information and media inquiries, please contact

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