MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northlands College and GDI Sign MOU to Partner on Delivery of a Masters Program in La Ronge

Indigenous Community-Based Master of Education Program Opens up Education in northern Saskatchewan

(SASKATOON, SK)— Northlands College and Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) will sign a memorandum of understanding on February 18, 2022 at 2 PM CST to partner on the delivery of an Indigenous Community-Based Master of Education Program (ICBMEP) in La Ronge, Saskatchewan. The signing of the MOU will take place at Northlands Colleges Eli Fluery Cultural Centre in La Ronge.

The memorandum of understanding between GDI and Northlands College builds on more than a decade of program partnerships between the two educational institutions. Both partners are equally invested in increasing access to education in the northern populations of the province. "We are proud of this partnership that will remove barriers to higher education for Métis people in the north," said Lisa Bird-Wilson, GDI Executive Director.

"GDI has played an important role in advancing teacher education in Saskatchewan since its inception in 1980. At the time, there were less than a dozen Indigenous teachers in the province. Now, more than 1,400 Indigenous educators have graduated from our SUNTEP programs and 94 from our Master's degree programs," said Leonard Montgrand, Métis Nation—Saskatchewan Minister of Education and GDI Board Chair.

The ICBME program is designed to provide a unique cohort model of graduate education to educators in off-campus locations to more effectively link theory to local educational issues and practice. The ICBME program is a ten-class course-based Master's program with a focus on Indigenous education. As part of the memorandum of understanding, GDI will utilize its Affiliation Agreement with the University of Regina to ensure that all course offerings fulfill the academic requirements and rigor required by University standards.

"Northlands College is both honoured and humbled to enter into this program partnership. Our history of collaboration with GDI has proven to be fruitful and beneficial for the people of northern Saskatchewan. We look forward to the outcomes of this Masters Program and to future partnerships with GDI," said Guy Penney, President & CEO.

"This partnership provides another important pathway for residents of northern Saskatchewan to engage in post-secondary education close to home," Advanced Education Minister Gene Makowsky said. "Growing Indigenous participation in the labour market and our economy is a key

component of Saskatchewan's Growth Plan, and graduates of this program will have a positive impact on our children, our communities, and our province for generations to come."

The first cohort of the La Ronge ICBME program began in July 2020 with 24 graduate students. As the program began amid the pandemic, the first year of classes were delivered online. Future years of the program will be delivered on-site at Northlands College. Delivery in La Ronge serves students from across the north in communities such as; Black Lake, Meadow Lake, Cumberland House, Beauval, and Stanley mission. Applications are now open for a second cohort that will begin the program in July 2022. More information on entrance requirements and how to apply can be found at *www.gdins.org/programs*.

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Northlands College:
Northlands College serves the northern half of our province of Saskatchewan. We educate residents on treaties 5, 6, 8 and 10 territories, homelands of the Indigenous Peoples. The distances separating our communities are vast and covers approximately 321,163 square kilometers or 49% of Saskatchewan's area. Northlands College was established in January, 1988; therefore, it has a long history of providing high quality education and training programs and services that meet the development and employment needs of Northerners. Northlands College is governed by an eight member Board of Directors.

Gabriel Dumont Institute:
GDI is a Métis-owned post-secondary and cultural institution in Saskatchewan. Since 1980, GDI has prided itself as a conservator of Métis culture and history. Together with its subsidiaries; the Dumont Technical Institute, Gabriel Dumont College, GDI Training & Employment, GDI Culture & Heritage, and the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), GDI provides Métis-specific education programs and services in 13 communities across the province. GDI is affiliated with the Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN–S) and is governed by a 12-member Board of Governors plus a chair who is the MN–S Minister of Education.

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