



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EIGHT STUDENTS INVESTED INTO ORDER OF GABRIEL DUMONT

GDI NAMES RECIPIENTS OF THE 2022 ORDER OF GABRIEL DUMONT BRONZE MEDALS

(SASKATOON, SK)— The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research (GDI) is proud to announce eight students will receive bronze medals and be invested into the Order of Gabriel Dumont for 2022.

The Order of Gabriel Dumont has been awarded since the 1980s, honouring individuals with gold and silver medals for their contributions to the Métis of Canada. In 2010, the bronze medal was introduced, which recognizes and honours outstanding GDI students and alumni. Since its inception, 46 students and alumni have been awarded the bronze medal.

“GDI students and alumni are excellent role models in our communities. We are proud of the eight 2022 bronze medal inductees who continue to strive for excellence inside and outside of the classroom. They have each distinguished themselves through leadership, community involvement, and overall performance,” said Lisa Bird-Wilson, Executive Director.

The Order of Gabriel Dumont is one of the Métis Nation’s highest civilian honours. Medals are awarded annually by GDI to a small number of persons who have serviced the Métis of Canada with distinction. The Order is presented in the form of a medallion with a certificate signed by the officers of the Institute over the seal, which enrolls the recipient in the Order.

“The bronze medal awards are truly important to GDI, it’s an opportunity to showcase the excellence happening within our Institute and acknowledge the students who go above and beyond,” said Leonard Montgrand, Chair of the Gabriel Dumont Institute Board of Governors.

For more information about the Order of Gabriel Dumont Bronze Medal Awards, [please visit our website](#). Each recipient will be presented a bronze medal at their designated program’s awards ceremony. A list of recipients with citations is included below.

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For more information and media inquiries:

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About 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.

RECIPIENT CITATIONS

THE ORDER OF GABRIEL DUMONT—Bronze

**Trenton Macdonald
SUNTEP Student
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**

Trenton is a fourth-year Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) student in Saskatoon. He is a passionate and committed educator destined to do great things on behalf of the Métis community and within education. Trenton is passionate about social justice and Métis cultural education and is involved in the student clubs that lead this type of work. Trenton persevered through tough barriers of pursuing education with a health impairment and learning disability. Both have not overshadowed his commitment and dedication to his learning; he attends his classes regularly, always completes work on time, and overall has very strong academic skills. During his extended practicum with primary grades and middle years' students, Trenton engaged with his school community culturally, sensitively, and gregariously in many good ways. He ensured his students learned about Indigenous outcomes, particularly Métis cultural outcomes, and he created fun learning activities for all of his students. Not only did he take the time to get to know the school community, he also volunteered to coach volleyball and led the team to great victories. Trenton is known as an active athlete in his home community of Turtleford, Saskatchewan, due to his passion for ice-skating and his desire to help others learn the sport.

**Heather Witherspoon
SUNTEP Student
Regina, Saskatchewan**

Heather is a fourth-year SUNTEP student in Regina. Heather has excelled academically and is on her way to graduating with distinction. She is known for displaying and spreading joy to everyone in the community. She goes the extra mile to ensure that everyone feels included, valued, and appreciated. Heather was instrumental in setting up a student-led initiative at SUNTEP Regina called "Woven Together." This group was established when she realized that



students were feeling disconnected from the community during online course delivery. Along with her peers, she organized a weekly informal online meet up for all students, staff, and faculty as a way to build connection and community among the SUNTEP student body. Heather invests time in learning & leadership opportunities that extend beyond formal education. Since learning the art of finger weaving in her first year at SUNTEP, Heather has worked hard to reclaim and share Métis culture in the community. She is generous with sharing her knowledge and has taught Métis finger weaving at various events in Regina. Heather is passionate about sharing Métis education in other contexts as well; she is involved with Métis learning sessions at her church and within the Beta Sigma Phi Sorority.

Keeley Henry
SUNTEP Student
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

Keeley is a third-year SUNTEP student in Prince Albert. She is a smart, hardworking, and dedicated student. Keeley is an excellent role model for her children, home community, and all Indigenous peoples. She is a mother to five children and has overcome many personal obstacles while learning to balance life at home and at school. In 2017, Keeley left her home community of Beauval to further her education. She attended Dumont Technical Institute's Adult Basic Education program and graduated with her grade 12 diploma. From there, she was accepted into SUNTEP Prince Albert. Leaving her extended family and transitioning to a new environment was a challenge, but Keeley has demonstrated perseverance through each of these changes and has grown both personally and professionally. She is the vice-president of the Student Leadership Council and is not afraid to advocate for herself or others. Her roots stem back generations of proud Métis. Coming from a traditional background, Keeley openly shares many great stories about the struggles and lessons of her childhood, community, and culture. Her ability to teach students the sacredness and history within their own Indigenous culture is evident, and she demonstrates a passion and pride for Métis and First Nations education.

Brandon Shmon
GDI Training & Employment Student
Business Diploma – Human Resources
Saskatoon, SK

Brandon is a GDI Training and Employment sponsored student in his third year of the Human Resource Business Diploma program at Saskatchewan Polytechnic in Saskatoon. Brandon has a positive, outgoing personality that makes him especially easy to communicate and interact with. He is a determined, studious, mature student that has conquered many hardships to continue his education. The pandemic alone is a challenge for many students; on top of this, Brandon also discovered additional barriers during his education that required him to reach out for accessibility services due to his unique learning disabilities. Through these trials and tribulations, Brandon persevered and overcame the tough times with a positive attitude. Brandon has excelled academically in his second and third year of studies receiving high marks in the majority of his classes. Brandon is a proud Métis man and leader. He is a voice for the people around him and



has taken on various leadership roles in his life. He emphasizes that being a Métis post-secondary student is important not only for him, but also the Indigenous community. He takes pride in knowing that he is helping pave the way for future Métis students to shine throughout their own education.

Eileen Lennie-Koshman
Métis Nation University Sponsorship Student
Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies
Saskatoon, SK

Eileen is a Métis Nation University Sponsorship (MNU) sponsored student in her second year at the University of Saskatchewan pursuing her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Indigenous Studies. Eileen is a mature student, going back to complete her education at the age of 38. She encourages others to never give up on their education, reminding them that they are never too old to go back to school. She is the first one in her family to get a university education. Eileen is a hard-working, enthusiastic student that balances her job and education well. She has a special commitment to finishing her degree program and has been a model GDI Training & Employment client by remaining responsive and taking the initiative as an adult learner. Eileen is passionate about advocating for the betterment of Indigenous People's futures; she believes access to education for Métis is important because Métis' needs are unique, and Métis representation matters. She hopes to finish her degree and potentially work towards a master's or doctorate in either Indigenous studies or social work. Her future goals include working for an organization that supports the success of Indigenous peoples as she hopes to make a difference for the youth, adults, and elders of her community.

Erin Aubichon
NSITEP Student
La Ronge, SK

Erin is a second-year Northern Saskatchewan Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NSITEP) student in La Ronge. She is originally from Île-à-la-Crosse and moved to La Ronge to further her education. Erin is a devoted mother and works diligently to overcome many obstacles in her educational pursuit. She is continuously working to improve her learning process and is driven to find ways to bring her artistic creativity and Métis culture into her education and the education of her future students. She recently used her artistic talents to develop the logo for NSITEP's orange shirt day. Erin also has many artistic hobbies, including creating ribbon skirts for family and friends as well as singing and song writing. She has performed in many local communities and large cultural events, including Métis Cultural Days in Saskatoon and Métis Fest in North Dakota. She has also used her singing talent to fundraise for Telemiracle for several years. In 2019, Erin was nominated for an Indigenous Music Award and had the chance to congregate with many other Indigenous artists from across Canada. She is an exceptional and inspiring role model for Métis artists and encourages youth to pursue their own ambitions. Erin will be a fantastic addition to the teaching profession.



**Anne Bear
Dumont Technical Institute Student
Saskatoon, SK**

Anne is currently working on completing the one-year Continuing Care Assistant program at Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) in Saskatoon. Anne is one of the most resilient people one could meet, having overcome many obstacles in her life with courage and optimism. Nearly 60 years old, Anne began her journey in education at DTI several years ago. She started taking courses to complete the Adult Basic Education program and graduated with her grade 12 diploma in 2021. Anne has a learning disability and requires assistance in her studies. She remains focused on her goals and has developed strategies that work for her success. Anne is currently near the top of her class academically. She is curious about every aspect of school and will be a lifelong learner. Anne is a leader in the classroom by encouraging other students. She is the “go-to” person when there are questions in the class about Métis culture. She is a kokhum to 16 grandchildren and incorporates her family and cultural values into everything she does. Her positive outlook truly shines inside and outside the classroom; she is always willing to participate. Anne is an inspiration to many and will continue to be a positive role model for others.

**Frank Roy
Dumont Technical Institute Student
Saskatoon, SK**

Frank is enrolled in the Level Three Adult Basic Education program at Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) in Saskatoon. He takes dedication and pride in learning, understanding, and educating others on Métis culture and the importance of the right to identify as Métis people. Frank has taken it upon himself to complete his education and seek out all of the information that he can on understanding Gabriel Dumont Institute’s history and services so that he can share this information with others. Frank has excelled in all of his classes and has taken a special interest in Métis Studies and understanding the history of the Métis. Frank’s character shows natural leadership; he is humble and understanding of his peers and the people he meets in the community. Frank has made incredible strides in the classroom academically and otherwise. On the first day of the program, Frank had never turned on a computer. Now, he is accessing technology on his own and assisting others when needed. Frank’s grades have always been top-notch, but he has a true passion for being present and part of the community. Frank undoubtedly shares his knowledge and passion with the Métis community and helps others in seeking out future opportunities.