

**BUSINESS NETWORK FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH
2011-2012 OPENING CONFERENCE
MARCH 5-6, MEMBERTOU FIRST NATION, NOVA SCOTIA**

On March 5 and 6 Cape Breton University hosted a kick-off event for its new Business Network for Aboriginal Youth program. Under the Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies, the program is believed to be the first of its kind in Canada and encourages Aboriginal secondary students to further pursue business studies in post-secondary education.

Thirty Aboriginal students representing 12 of Nova Scotia's First Nation communities met in person for the first time at this inaugural event. Prior to meeting, the students were connected via social media channels including, Facebook, twitter and Blackberry BBM.

During the two day event students were encouraged to use those channels, specifically Twitter to share their thoughts, ideas and expectations for the two year pilot mentorship program. Live tweeting was displayed in real time for the entire duration of the event and proved to be a big hit with all parties involved including Premier of Nova Scotia, Darrell Dexter; Purdy Crawford Chair and Vice-President External, Dr. Keith Brown; and Comedian, MC and keynote speaker, Candy Palmater.

Highlights of the conference included video presentations where students pitched business ideas or profiled their communities, as well as a Team Business Challenge, in which the winners were the first recipients of the *Purdy Awards*.

The students will continue to work together through social media sites until they meet again for a follow up conference in June.

[Click here to view photos](#)