

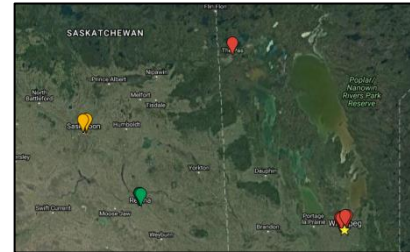
## In.Business Central Region Opening Conference

November 7-8, 2016, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba

In.Business: A National Mentorship Program for Indigenous Youth is a mentorship program that uses social media, mobile technology, Indigenous mentors, and in-person conferences to educate Indigenous high school students about business. In.Business was established in 2011 by the Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies at Cape Breton University (CBU). This small Nova Scotia pilot initially comprised of 30 students and 6 mentors has since expanded and now operates in 4 regions across Canada (Atlantic, Eastern, Central, and Pacific). In.Business is made possible by the generous financial support from Indigenous and Northern Affairs and various other governments, private, and corporate contributors.

### The Journey

The Central region encompasses Manitoba and Saskatchewan. During August, September, and October, presentations were made at 12 high schools across the region with 81 applications received. We had 10 returning students and 37 new students for representation from all 20 high schools (shown in the map to the right) and 18 Aboriginal communities. The opening conference, November 7th and 8th, 2016, was very well attended with 47 students, and 7 mentors (2 from Saskatoon and 5 from Winnipeg).



### Day 1



Elder Wendy Whitecloud, Smartphone-focused teamwork, and Mentor Christa Bruneau

### Meet the Mentors!



The evening prior to the official conference start, students and mentors from Saskatchewan ate delicious Indigenous-inspired dishes and toured mentor Christa Bruneau's restaurant 'Feast Café Bistro.' We heard about Christa's entrepreneurial journey and how she saw an opportunity to help local Indigenous people through the teaching traditional food preparation in a modern context. The next day, the entire group was brought together and students were given the opportunity to meet and speak with each of the seven mentors of the 2016-17 Central Region.

### Pitch It Contest



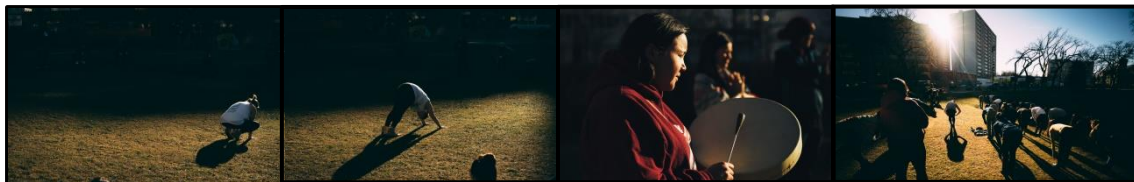
For the afternoon, the students and mentors competed in the Pitch It Challenge. Students were instructed to work in their groups with the guidance of a mentor to develop a pitch for an innovative business idea. In the scenario they were given, due to an economic recession, there were very limited funds available for business loans. In fact, there was only enough money to approve one loan, which meant teams had to convince judges that their idea was the best idea. Each group worked together to brainstorm ideas for their proposal and then made a two minute pitch. After extensive deliberation, the group led by mentor Christa Bruneau won the contest for their product and distribution plan of “Volcanic Bannock.” Other ideas included suicide prevention programs, Indigenous event coordination (especially DJs), and portable filtration straws allowing for clean water on reserves and for outdoor adventures.



U of W Student President Kevin Settee, In.Business bag, Students engaged in Indigenous games, and the Blanket Exercise

After lunch, University of Winnipeg Student President, Kevin Settee, inspired the group with a presentation about the importance of Indigenous peoples’ involvement in business and the environment. Following Kevin’s presentation, we played Indigenous games at the University of Winnipeg recreational complex. In the evening, at Circle of Life Thunderbird House, we engaged in the KAIROS Blanket Exercise (KBE). In the KBE, we learned about the history of Colonization in Canada that binds us together. After which, everyone was given the opportunity to voice what they would do to ameliorate the situation. Most students spoke about completing their education, spending time with Elders, and finding their culture. This was the second year of the KBE in the Central Region, and it was very well received by the students.

### Day 2 Highlights



The second day began with Jade Harper of SpiritFusion Yoga. Ms. Harper spoke with a personal story of loss, and how she came to find yoga as a tool for healing. From that healing came an inspiration to start a business helping people engage with the power of yoga in combination with the Seven Sacred Teachings of the Anishnaabe Nation. She took the students onto the front lawn of the University of Winnipeg to put that practice into action. After yoga, Cape Breton University’s Student Recruitment officer Danny Penticost presented.

### The Purdy Awards

The “Purdy Awards” were first awarded at our inaugural conference back in 2012. Named after the late Purdy Crawford, they are awarded each conference to recognize the special contributions students make to the program. The recipients at the 2016-17 Central region opening conference were (pictured from l-r): **Justice Perkins**, Bedford Road Collegiate; **Isiah Arcand**, Mount Royal Collegiate; **Brianna LaPlante**, Martin Collegiate; **Taz McKay**, Glenlawn Collegiate; (Not pictured) **Sidney Ray Shacter**, Evan Hardy Collegiate.



## What's next?

Until the group comes together again in May 2017, social media and apps will be connecting students with their mentors. Each student has been placed in a group with a mentor and other students. Students will be working on bi-weekly business challenges facilitated by their mentors. The main goal of this program is to help our students explore business opportunities and ultimately entice them to study business in the future. A secondary goal is to have students see themselves as future professionals allowing them to build goals to pursue that reality.

The 2016-2017 Central Region has representation from the following First Nation communities:

**Manitoba:** Peguis, Hollow Water, Waywayceecappo, Pine Creek, Muskoday, Opaskwayak,

**Saskatchewan:** Big River, Yellow Quill, Peepeekisis, Muskoday, One Arrow, Beardy's, Canupawakpa Mosquito, Sakimay, Sapotayewak, Thunderchild, Whitecap

The 2016-2017 Central Region has representation from the following schools:

**Manitoba:** Argyle, Children of the Earth, Glenlawn, John Taylor, Margaret Barbour, MET school, Miles MacDonnell, Oak Park, RB Russell, River East, St James Collegiate, Sturgeon Heights

**Saskatchewan:** Bedford Road, Centennial, Evan Hardy, Mount Royal, Martin, Miller Comprehensive, Scott Collegiate

Below is a group photo of 2016-2017 Central Region In.Business students



To view profiles, refer to our website: [Students](#) | [Mentors](#)



[www.cbuinbusiness.ca](http://www.cbuinbusiness.ca)