

**IN.BUSINESS EASTERN REGION CLOSING CONFERENCE
MAY 2-3, 2016, NORTH BAY, ON**

In.Business: A National Mentorship Program for Indigenous Youth is a mentorship program that uses social media, smart technology, Aboriginal mentors, and in-person conferences to educate Aboriginal 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). The Nova Scotia pilot of the In.Business program (the Business Network for Aboriginal Youth) was comprised of 30 students and six mentors from across Nova Scotia. Since 2011, In.Business has expanded nationally and is comprised of 275 students and 40 mentors from across Canada, and includes students from every province and territory. In.Business is made possible by the generous financial support from Indigenous and Northern Affairs and various other government and private donors.

The Journey

In fall 2015, 57 students applied and 35 students were accepted into the program in the Eastern Region. The 35 students that were chosen and their six mentors attended two overnight conferences: the opening at Nipissing University and North Bay Indian Friendship Centre in October, and most recently, our closing in North Bay on May 2-3. In between conferences, students worked in their virtual groups on 9 bi-weekly business challenges via social media, which were facilitated by their mentors. In total, over 50 different topics were explored, including: a stock market simulation; skills needed for management; the business side of social media; funding options for entrepreneurs; interview preparation; and marketing your home community as a tourist destination. Students also learned about running their own business using “Music Mogul,” a smartphone gaming app that was designed specifically for the In.Business program. Music Mogul explores business concepts by letting the player manage Aboriginal musical bands as they tour across Canada.

DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS

Twenty students representing 8 high schools and 11 First Nation communities across Ontario, Quebec, and Nunavut travelled by plane and bus to gather for one last time as a group! Some grade 10 and 11 students will return to the program next year, and the grade 12’s are all moving on to new chapters in their lives. The day started out with a welcome lunch and greetings from Elder Donna Debassige, followed by a presentation and tour of Ontario Power Generation’s corporate office. Next we were off to Big Medicine Studio on Nipissing First Nation for a team building workshop, led by co-artistic director Sid Bobb, a Gemini award-winning actor. We wrapped the day up with a banquet dinner where we watched the 60 Second Sell Videos submitted by the students.



Students participate in a presentation at Ontario Power Generation corporate office, North Bay, ON

60 Second Sell – As the final challenge of the year, students were tasked with preparing individual videos promoting themselves in 60 seconds or less. The ultimate goal of these videos was to convince the judging panel that they should be sponsored to study business. For the first time in In.Business history, there was a three-way tie, with each student awarded a bursary of \$1,000 to study business at CBU or any of our partner institutions (University of Winnipeg, Yukon College, Nipissing University, and Vancouver Island University). If the winners study business at any other post-secondary institution in Canada, their awards are valued at \$500. The videos were scored on the following: content, creativity, persuasion, relevance, and enthusiasm. With very little guidance, the students created fantastic videos showing how confident, well-educated, and creative they are. Kyesha Fong of Nipissing First Nation, Summer Southwind of Sagamok First Nation, and Autumn Charbonneau of Wikwemikong First Nation were our winners!



(l-r) Kyesha Fong, Dr. Keith Brown, Summer Southwind, Autumn Charbonneau, Dr. Harley D'Entremont (Nipissing University)

DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS



Students complete the Building Bridges activity

Building Bridges – Each group chose a business from a predetermined directory that they would like to run for the day. Groups were given information about their business including: background/situation, goals, other factors, and company positions. There were six companies to choose from: a marketing firm, a printing company, a trucking company, a seafood wholesaler, a restaurant, and a waste management company. The objective was to work together to brainstorm the possible partnerships and connections that they could make with the other five companies. Once the “marketplace” opened, the objective was to negotiate as many contracts as possible. Each time a signed contract was approved, each group received a piece of the bridge. The marketplace was open for a mere 30 minutes, and everyone worked together to establish at least three contracts per group – which unlocked all of the pieces needed to build the bridge.

Closing Award Presentations – To close out the conference and the In.Business Eastern Region for 2015-16, there were several awards presented. First, it was time for the “Purdy Awards” which were awarded to students who strived in the program and at the closing conference. They are named after the late Purdy Crawford and are awarded at each conference to recognize special contributions to the program by students. The recipients of the Purdy Awards at the 2015/16 Eastern region closing conference were: Summer Southwind, Sudbury Secondary School; Brandon Bowen, St-Joseph Scollard Hall; Andrew Clark, Inuksuk High School; and Madeline McGregor, Sudbury Secondary School. All students who completed the In.Business Program received a completion certificate.



Purdy Award Winners (l-r): Summer Southwind, Brandon Bowen, Andrew Clark, and Madeline McGregor

EXIT SURVEY RESULTS

An exit survey was completed at the end of the closing conference and here are some of the results:

- When asked “Why did you choose the In.Business Program?” the majority of responses were to learn more about business (interested in business, want to pursue business at post-secondary, want to own their own business, etc.)
- 89% of students strongly agree or agree that they gained valuable skills during the program
- 95% of students strongly agree or agree that they were satisfied with the program and would recommend this program to other students
- 95% of students strongly agree or agree that they feel more knowledgeable about business after participating in the In.Business Program.

Finally, in recognition of their hard work and dedication, 25 students, representing 9 high schools and 12 Aboriginal communities, received certificates for successfully completing the 2015-16 In.Business (Eastern) program.

<p>G. Theberge High School Aleah Perrier Lydia Miller</p> <p>Inuksuk High School Andrew Clark Benjamin Flack Ryan McGowan</p> <p>Lasalle Secondary School Andrew Paris Avery Kataquapit Curtis Pelletier Daniel Mejaki RaineSkye Roy Zach Lavoie</p>	<p>Nbisiing Secondary School Makenzie Dokis</p> <p>Parry Sound High School Taylor Judge</p> <p>St-Joseph Scollard Hall Secondary School Brandon Bowen Kyesha Fong</p> <p>Sudbury Secondary School Cameron Lacroix Jonathon Sanderson Madeline McGregor Santana Ennis Summer Southwind</p>	<p>West Ferris Secondary School Dylan Maranda</p> <p>Widdifield Secondary School Autumn Charbonneau Bradley Mianscum Kianna Hookimaw Mkoohns Pelletier</p>
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Group photo taken at Big Medicine Studio, Nipissing First Nation