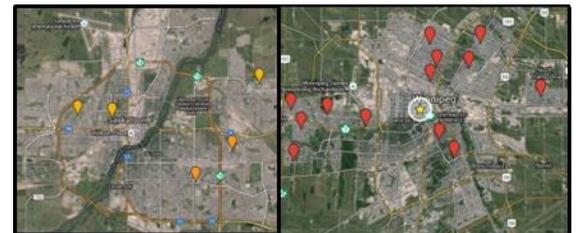


**IN.BUSINESS CENTRAL REGION OPENING CONFERENCE  
NOVEMBER 6-7, 2015, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA**

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. In 2015, In.Business expanded nationally and is now 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, private, and corporate contributors.

**The Journey**

The Central region encompasses Manitoba and Saskatchewan. During September and October, presentations were made at 21 high schools across the region with 169 applications received. We had 8 returning students and 52 new students for representation from all 21 high schools (shown in the maps above) and 32 Aboriginal communities. The opening conference, November 6th and 7th, was very well attended with 54 students, and 9 mentors (4 from Saskatoon and 5 from Winnipeg).



**DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS**

**The KAIROS Blanket Exercise**



After touring the University of Winnipeg, we engaged in the most well received activity of the conference, The KAIROS Blanket Exercise. The Blanket Exercise is an experiential teaching exercise that raises awareness of the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. The exercise begins with blankets arranged to represent Canada prior to colonization. The participants represent Indigenous peoples and move freely around the blankets. While a narrator and other participants representing Europeans or newcomers join, and begin to interact with those on the blankets, space becomes scarce. The history of the relationship between Europeans and Indigenous in Canada is explained, emphasizing the resilience of Indigenous peoples and the actions taking place today in the name of reconciliation.



Comedian Paul Rabliauskas, U of W AVP Wab Kinew, The Social Enterprise Centre, and Manitobah Mukluks HQ

After lunch, University of Winnipeg Associate Vice-President Wab Kinew spoke and inspired the group with a lecture on the current state of Indigenous business. His talk included how Indigenous people can live traditionally and be successful, and in fact how tradition provides the tools to do so. In the evening we made our way to visit the Social Enterprise Centre (SEC). At SEC we learned about leaders taking business strategies and applying them to solve community issues. We then visited the headquarters of Manitobah Mukluks and learned about their story, product lines and upcoming projects.

### Pitch It Contest



For dinner, we went to Neechi Commons, a local Indigenous co-operative. While at Neechi Commons, the students and mentors competed in the Pitch It Contest. 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 2 minute pitch. After extensive deliberation, the group led by mentor Lisa Whitecloud, won the contest for their idea of self-tying shoe laces called “AutoLaces.”

### DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS



The second day began with ice breakers before settling into using our smartphones to play Music Mogul, the featured app of In.Business. Music Mogul puts players in the role of an Indigenous band manager. The game allows you to tour acts across the country, building up a fan base as you go. The user has to decide on ticket prices, equipment rental, selling merchandise at shows, and advertising. Students competed for best show, most tickets sold and most profit.

### The Purdy Awards

The “Purdy Awards” are handed out at each conference to recognize special contributions to the program by students. They were first handed out at our inaugural opening conference back in 2012 and are named after Purdy Crawford who was the original Chair. The recipients of the Purdy Awards at the 2015/16 Central region opening conference were (pictured from l-r):

**Timothy Amos**, Sturgeon Heights Collegiate; **Ronald Gamblin**, Sturgeon Heights Collegiate; **Hope McIntyre**, Oak Park High School; **Keemawan Moostoos**, Mount Royal Collegiate.



### Survey Results

Before students returned home after the opening conference, they completed a survey based on their experiences over the two day conference. Some of the notable results include:

- When asked “What was your favorite part(s) of the opening conference,” 46% of responses were the “KAIROS Blanket Exercise.”
- 87% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the following statement: “I found the guest speakers engaging and learned from their experiences.”
- When asked, “What topics do you hope to learn the most about while participating in this mentorship program,” leadership/ management and public speaking were the two most popular responses.

### What’s next?

Until the group comes together again in May 2016, social media and apps will be connecting students with their mentors. Each student has been paired with a mentor and placed in a group with 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.

The 2015/16 Central region has representation from the following First Nation communities:

**Manitoba:** Peguis, Skownan, Deer Lake, Kistaganwacheeng, Norway House, Paungassi, Big Grassy, Hollow Water, Waywayceecappo, Pinnaymootang, Nelson House, Poplar River, Split Lake, Cross Lake, Kinonjeoshtegon, Marten Falls  
**Saskatchewan:** Poundmaker, Gordons, Yellow Quill, Lac La Ronge, Cote, Kawacatoose, Peepeekisis, James Smith, Muskowekwan, One Arrow, Standing Buffalo, Beardy's & Okemasis, Thunderchild, Wollaston Lake

The 2015/16 Central region has representation from the following schools:

**Manitoba:** Westwood, U of W Collegiate, TCI, Sturgeon Heights, St. Johns, St. James, River East, RB Russell, Oak Park, Miles Macdonnell, The MET School, John Taylor, Glenlawn, Children of the Earth, Daniel McIntyre, Churchill  
**Saskatchewan:** Bedford Road, Centennial, Evan Hardy, Mount Royal, Walter Murray

Pictured below is a group photo of Central region students:



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



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

The  
**Purdy Crawford Chair**  
In Aboriginal Business Studies