

IN.BUSINESS EASTERN REGION OPENING CONFERENCE OCTOBER 29-30, 2015, NORTH BAY, ONTARIO

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 Eastern region includes students, mentors, and peer mentors from Ontario, Quebec, and Nunavut. From mid-September to early-October, presentations were made at 11 high schools across the region. Applications to the In.Business program were received from 57 students attending 9 high schools. Following the application process, which involved evaluating students' two-page application and a recommendation form, 40 students were selected with representation from 9 high schools and 15 Aboriginal communities. All were notified on October 8th, with plans for the opening conference in North Bay already well underway! This was the first year that the In.Business Program was offered in these regions, so most students didn't know anyone other than a few classmates. Once travel arrangements fell into place, the conference started to become a reality. Three students from Iqaluit traveled by air to North Bay, a school bus brought in students from Sudbury, ON, while the rest of the students arrived by local transportation and chartered taxis.

DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS

The conference kicked off with guest speakers Chief Scott McLeod (Nipissing First Nation), Harley D'Entremont (Nipissing University), and Dot Beaucage-Kennedy (Elder, entrepreneur). The day was filled with activities and the students had a chance to meet and interact with their business mentor. In the afternoon, the students experienced what it was like to be a business student by having a tour of Nipissing University's main campus and a guest speaker from the School of Business. The day wrapped up with a dinner at the student-run campus restaurant, "The Wall".



Intro Videos – Prior to the conference, students were asked to prepare a short video introducing themselves to the group. With very little guidelines for this challenge, students were asked to explain a little bit about themselves and their community, and why they applied for this program. The videos provided an opportunity for students and mentors to learn about the other people they would be interacting with for the next several months. This was the first challenge in the program and the videos were very well done!

DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS



Pitch It! Contest – In the business world, getting approved for a loan is sometimes a very competitive process. 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, Group 1 led by mentor Holly Barker, won the contest for their idea of a cell phone case that would charge the phone’s battery by movement called “The Shaker.” Group 1 members include (pictured from l-r):

Jennifer Tabobondung, Parry Sound High School; Andrew Clark, Inuksuk High School; Andrew Paris, Lasalle Secondary School; Aleah Perrier, G. Theberge School; Cameron Lacroix, Sudbury Secondary School.

The “**Purdy Awards**” were first handed out at our inaugural opening conference back in 2012, in Nova Scotia. They are named after 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 opening conference were (pictured from l-r): Kyesha Fong, St-Joseph Scollard Hall; Raineskye Roy, Lasalle Secondary School; Avery Kataquapit, Lasalle Secondary School; Cameron Lacroix, Sudbury Secondary School.



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,” 63% of responses were the “tour of Nipissing University.”
- 74% 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 various apps will be relied upon to keep students connected with their mentors and each other. Each student has been paired with a mentor and placed in a group with five or six 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. After spending a few days together, we are well on our way!

The 2015/16 Eastern region has representation from the following Aboriginal communities:

Ontario: Nipissing, Dokis, Attawapiskat, Taykwa Tagamou, Wikwemikong, Sagamok Anishnawbek, Birch Island, Whitefish, Shawanaga, Wasauksing, Serpent River

Quebec: Mistissini, Eagle Village, Chisasibi, Long Point First Nation

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

Ontario: Widdifield Secondary School, St-Joseph Scollard Hall, Nbisising Secondary School, West Ferris Secondary School, Sudbury Secondary School, Lasalle Secondary School, Parry Sound High School.

Quebec: Gilbert Theberge School

Iqaluit: Inuksuk High School

Pictured below is a group photo of Eastern region students and mentors.



www.cbuinbusiness.ca

The
Purdy Crawford Chair
In Aboriginal Business Studies