

**IN.BUSINESS NORTHERN REGION OPENING CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 20TH AND 21ST, 2015, YUKON COLLEGE, WHITEHORSE YUKON**

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 Northern region includes students and mentors from all across the Yukon, Northwest Territories and northern British Columbia. From mid-September to early-October, over 3,000 kilometers were traveled by both highway and air to make presentations at 8 high schools across the region. Applications to the In.Business program were received from 62 students attending 10 high schools. Following the application process, which involved evaluating students' two-page application

and a recommendation form, 47 students were selected with representation from 10 high schools and 19 Aboriginal communities (shown in the adjacent map). All were notified on October 23rd, with plans for the opening conference in Whitehorse already well underway! Leading up to the opening conference, students introduced themselves electronically via the In.Business Facebook group. Once travel arrangements fell into place, the conference started to become a reality. Twelve students were scheduled to commute via plane, with the remaining students being dropped off by their parents or by arranged community shuttle vans. Unfortunately, a number of hockey tournaments conflicted with the conference time and prevented ten students from attending. Other than this, the opening conference was very well attended.



DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS

Chief Hone Mihaka of New Zealand, who just so happened to be in Whitehorse for another conference at the time and had heard about the In.Business opening conference, wanted to talk to the In.Business youth. At the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre on the beautiful Yukon River, Chief Hone spoke very passionately of his life, his culture, his business, performed a traditional Maori dance and left everyone with more than a few words of wisdom. In true celebrity fashion, everyone lined up with their smart phones and devices to get their “selfie” taken with Hone. Chief Hone also led everyone through a series of warrior poses on the Yukon River bank while the photographer took a series of group shots.



DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS

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. The videos were very well done! To see for yourself, [click here!](#)



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, “Toque Co,” led by mentor Nona Whitehouse, won the contest for their idea of a unique apparel printing company called “Toque Co”. Toque Co members include (pictured from l-r): Julian Jules, FH Collins High School; Nona Whitehouse (mentor); Rebecca Netah, Sir John Franklin High School; Laurence Patterson-Smith, FH Collins High School; and Shania Hogan, Vanier Catholic Secondary School.

The “Purdy Awards” were first handed out at our inaugural opening conference back in 2012. 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 Northern region opening conference were (pictured from l-r): Asia Winter-Sinnott, J.V. Clark School; Rebecca Netah, Sir John Franklin High School; Isaiah Schab, Porter Creek High School; Steven Glada, FH Collins High School; Simone Washie, Sir John Franklin High 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 favourite part(s) of the opening conference,” 47% of responses were the “Hand Games Cultural Ice Breaker”
- 83% 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,” entrepreneurship and leadership/management 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 typically 3 or 4 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 Northern region has representation from the following Aboriginal communities:

Yukon: Whitehorse, Haines Junction, Carcross, Dawson City, Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Aishihik, Teslin, Ross River, Mayo, and Tagish

Northwest Territories: Yellowknife, Hay River, Lutselk'e, and Whati

British Columbia: Atlin

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

Yukon: J.V. Clark, Robert Service School, FH Collins, Porter Creek, Vanier, and Woodstreet,

Northwest Territories: Saint Patrick High School, Sir John Franklin High School, and Diamond Jenness Secondary

Pictured below is a group photo of Northern region students.



To view some more opening conference highlights; [click here](#) for footage! And [click here](#) for photos!

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



<http://www.cbuinbusiness.ca>

The
Purdy Crawford Chair
In Aboriginal Business Studies

First Nations Initiatives | Yukon College

500 College Drive | PO Box 2799 | Whitehorse, Yukon | Y1A 5K4

1.867. 334.2271