

# In.Business

*Closing Conference Report*

## 2022



# In.Business

In.Business is a high school mentorship program facilitated by Unama'ki College at Cape Breton University (CBU). In.Business teams Indigenous high school students with Indigenous business mentors, who are educated, working professionals with a background in business. In.Business was established in 2011 by the Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies at CBU. The Nova Scotia pilot of the In.Business program (formerly the Business Network for Aboriginal Youth) comprised thirty students and six mentors from Nova Scotia. Since 2011, In.Business has expanded nationally, and hundreds of students have completed the program. In.Business currently operates an Atlantic Canadian-based program that includes students and mentors from Nova Scotia.

In.Business is made possible by the generous financial support from Indigenous and Northern Affairs and other government and private donors, including Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey and the Province of Nova Scotia.

Due to the global Coronavirus pandemic, the In.Business conference was held virtually since the spring of 2020. As restrictions lifted, we collectively started to learn and adapt to living with COVID-19 as an endemic, and for the first time since fall 2019, an in-person conference was possible! Precautions were taken to ensure student and guest safety at the conference, including additional testing kits and personal protective equipment, a COVID-19 policy, and strategies to limit exposures.



The 2022 In.Business closing conference was made possible by the generous sponsorship from the Ulnooweg Indigenous Communities Foundation.

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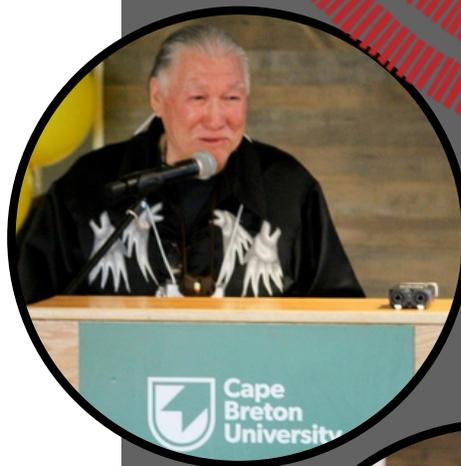


## DAY 1

With excitement to finally be in person again, Lawrence Wells gave a warm welcome to the In.Business group. Lawrence guided everyone with the explanation and meaning of a smudge and created a safe and welcoming space through his morning exercise.

To give our students the chance to grow as leaders, we invited high school student Kaeden Nevin to acknowledge Mi'kma'ki, the unceded, ancestral territory that CBU stands on and the home and traditional territory of Mi'kmaq people. Kaeden spoke the land acknowledgement without reading the paper, which was admirable and highlighted his connection to the land and his culture.

Giving the final remarks was the Dean of Unama'ki College, Laurianne Sylvester. Laurianne welcomed the students and spoke about the days ahead and the transition the students would soon experience from high school to post-secondary. Laurianne also spotted her niece in the crowd of students and shared her connection to the local communities.





# SUNDAYLACE CREATIONS & BLING

Keynote Presenter, Mariah Battiste

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The highlight of the gathering was guest speaker Mariah Battiste the CEO and Creative Director of Sundaylace Creations & Bling, an award-winning Indigenous-owned business based in Eskasoni, NS. Mariah spoke to the students about the successes and challenges she has faced on her entrepreneurial journey.

In particular, Mariah shared one story about how she advocated for a Canada Post mailbox in her community of Eskasoni.

With a population of over four thousand people, Eskasoni only had one location to mail packages. A mailbox is a tool critical in her business model, mailing out packages to beading customers.

*"It's more than just a mailbox. By providing this service to the community Canada Post is supporting innovation and a new generation of Indigenous entrepreneurs."*

Still, Mariah explained to the students that this one red mailbox plentiful in other communities represents the limited access for Indigenous community members to compete in the business market. "It's more than just a mailbox," Mariah spoke, "By providing this service to the community Canada Post is supporting innovation and a new generation of Indigenous entrepreneurs." Mariah shared many excellent tools, tips and lessons learned with the evolution of her small business and scaling up to where it is today.



# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



- Tour of Unama'ki College and Campus
- Business Pitch Competition which invited local high schools
- Visit to the Lanes at Membertou with a behind the scenes business tour
- Presentation by Mariah Battiste-Sundaylace Creations & Bling
- Pitch Video Competition exclusively for In.Business Students
- Tour of Oyster Farm in Waycobah First Nation
- Regalia Making, and Dreamcatcher Mobile workshop
- Awards Ceremony



## TOUR OF UNAMAKI COLLEGE

After the keynote presentation, students completed a tour of Unama'ki College led by Bree Menge and learned about all the fantastic support they will receive as Indigenous students at CBU.

## ICEBREAKER

Following the nutrition break and a visit to the pit games room, Nina Kent led the group through an icebreaker called three sticky notes, which acted as a Segway to the next activity, the pitch competition hosted by Mary Beth Doucette (Purdy Crawford Chair-Shannon School of Business).





## IN-PERSON PITCH IT COMPETITION WINNERS

The Pitch Competition was broken up into two categories, Individual and Group. The creation of these two categories allowed for teamwork and leadership development. To increase engagement and involvement in this activity, we invited local high schools to participate, and accepting that invitation was Allison Bernard Memorial High School. Innovation happens in competitions such as this, and it was inspiring to witness such a fantastic group of students showing a passion for entrepreneurship.



## 1ST PLACE

The Business squad tribe group led by Mary Collier with the ideas of a cultural garden / fish market in member town that would host sessions for children to take part in land base knowledge and mother earth lead by community Elders and Knowledge Keepers.



## 2ND PLACE

The Tribe Group led by Andrea Curley, Eskitown Gang, created a business idea around a dog groomers company. The group identified the problem of finding a reliable, qualified place to take their pets to be groomed locally, and ideally on reserve.

# Individual Winners



Abigail Marshall



Kaeden Nevin



Lexi Paul



Maria Young



## SPECIAL THANKS

A special thank you goes to the professors and instructors for volunteering their time to help pick the competition winners.

Pitch it Judging Panel:

**Mary Jane Morrison**, *Instructor in Hospitality and Tourism Management,*

**Derrick Hayes**, *Associate Professor in Accounting, &*

**Caleb Gibbons**, *Finance lecturer at Cape Breton University.*

We would like to also send a special shoutout to Dr. Keith Brown for stopping in to help mentor the students opting into the individual category, as well as Anne Michelle Chaisson for helping organize student, mentor, and guest check ins at the door. The team at Unama'ki College really came together to ensure the event ran smoothly. The Pitch it Competition is always a great activity to allow youth to practice their public speaking skills, and understand the fundamentals of a pitch deck, and business model canvas.



# LANES AT MEMBERTOU

We finished off day one with some fun at the Lanes at Membertou! Students were given a business tour of the facility at the Lanes at Membertou. As the group arrived a bit early, we had time to squeeze in another fun icebreaker to get to know each other better. Groups were then able to get in a couple of frames of bowling, followed by appetizers in the hall.



After supper, a mentors panel was hosted where mentors were invited to discuss their chosen topic. Mary Coller spoke about their experience as a professional in finance, Kateri Stevens shared their inspiring story about becoming an entrepreneur and opening Sequoia's Cafe to bring healthy food choices to her community of Esksoni. Andrea Curley created a presentation on the History of Residential School, and Eva Keewesoo Nicholas shared with the students how the impact of residential schools affects their families and communities.

After the presentations students and guests were invited to debrief and discuss their thoughts and feelings.





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## DAY 2

On Saturday, everyone travelled by bus to We'koqma'q First Nation to take part in a tour of the Oyster Farm with Elders Joe and Judy Googoo. Students and mentors were divided into four small groups, with two groups at a time taking the tour, and two groups took part in Regalia Making and a Dreamcatcher Mobile workshop at the community centre. Everyone came together to enjoy lunch before returning to Membertou and preparing for the Awards Ceremony.

Students and mentors were fortunate to not only learn about Oyster farming but also had the opportunity to try fresh oysters. A special thank you to Joe and Judy Googoo for hosting this event and sharing teachings and stories with the students.



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## Award Ceremony

### OPENING PRAYER & TEACHING

After the day at the Oyster Farm, students and mentors returned to the hotel to freshen up and prepare for the awards ceremony.

Elder Lawrence Wells officially opened the awards ceremony with a prayer. Nina Kent, the In.Business General Manager shared a beautiful teaching about the Jingle Dress and demonstrated a small dance for the students and mentors.

*"Some students indicated throughout the day that they were unfamiliar with the significance of the Jingle Dress. Thank you, Nina, for bringing this medicine and prayer for students and mentors."*

-Cara Jones, In.Business Coordinator



# SAMQWAN

Samqwan is the Mi'kmaq word for water. This new multi-disciplinary show, created and choreographed by Eskasoni artist Sarah Prosper, welcomed conference attendees to experience the value of water from an indigenous perspective, its sacredness, and its purposes, and to show the gift of walking in two worlds but also the responsibilities.





**Ulnooweg Development Group sponsored the final challenge, where students were tasked with creating a 2-minute video pitch about a business idea. To view the videos, please visit our website [www.cbuinbusiness.ca](http://www.cbuinbusiness.ca)**



**Grade 11 Category- Kelly Cabot**



**Grade 12 Category- Kaeden Nevin**



**Peer Mentor Category- Sabrina Doucette**



**Mentor - Kateri Stevens**



**Alexander Paul** was nominated by his mentor Eva Nicholas for his ongoing dedication to the program. Alexander is a kind and gentle soul and finished each challenge with great insight and humility.



**Summer Gossen** was nominated by Andrea Curley for showing initiative and taking the time for the group tasks. Summer adds an incredibly fun and supportive attitude toward her challenges.



**Miracle Johnson** was nominated by Mary Collier for stepping up to present at the Pitch Competition, even though she was incredibly nervous. Miracle always adds her opinion in group discussions and shows her passion for Indigenous activism.



**Kaeden Nevin** was nominated by his mentor Kateri Stevens for bringing traditional knowledge into business. Kaeden stresses the importance of respecting nature and its animals before money and the bottom line.



**The Purdy awards are presented at the closing conference to recognize special contributions to the program by students. Purdy Awards are now given at the end of the program year because it allows for ample time to get to know students and fully justify the reason for nomination.**

# In.Business PROGRAM GRADUATES

## HIGHSCHOOL STUDENTS

### Allison Bernard Memorial High School, NS

Kaylei Denny  
Olivea Herney  
Katie Francis  
Eliza Gould

### Bridgetown Regional Community School, NS

Summer Gossen

### East Antigonish HS, NS

Aleshia Knockwood  
Kaeden Nevin

### Rankin School of the Narrows, NS

Kelly Cabot

### Sydney Academy, NS

Miracle Johnson  
Jada Paul

### Wagmatcookewey, NS

Alexander Paul

## POST SECONDARY STUDENTS

### PEER MENTORS

Cassandra Bruhm  
Sabrina Doucette

### MENTORS

Mary Collier  
Finance, Ulnooweg  
Potlotek, NS

Kateri Stevens  
Owner and Founder, Sequoia Café  
Eskasoni, NS

Eva Nicholas  
Wabenaki Creations and Art Space  
Waycobah First Nation, NS

Andrea Curley , The Coady Institute  
Six Nations, ON

## PHOTOGRAPHY SHOOT

Cara Jones, In.Business coordinator, brought her professional photography portrait set-up where attendees had fun getting headshots and group pictures with new friends and mentors. Professional headshots go a long way in boosting confidence and make lasting first impressions.

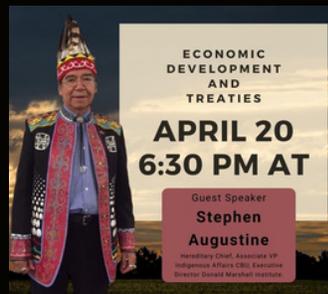


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## PROGRAM YEAR

In between conferences, students remain engaged through the business curriculum delivered throughout the program year. However, we changed the format this year by creating a hybrid approach. Instead of exclusively releasing the challenges on social media, we offered monthly webinars where the student could hear from guest speakers in the area of business chosen for each challenge. Guest speakers during the program year included:



## BUSINESS CHALLENGES & COMMUNICATION

In addition to the Zoom webinars, students were given challenges, for a total of 11 challenges completed for the 2022 program year. The challenges included business topics in marketing, management, operations, leadership, accounting and finance, and communications.

Like in previous years, the program comprised two main components: social media challenges and two overnight conferences. For most activities, students work in groups of 3-5 plus a mentor and peer mentor. The groups participated in a branding exercise during the Opening Conference to create their team name. The team names were: L'nu Turtles, Eskitown Gals, Business Squad, and Horizon Gang. As a way to stay connected between conferences, students stayed in touch through Facebook groups and Zoom Cloud Bi-weekly meetings.

**732**

High School students completed all In.Business Program requirements

**68**

In.Business participants attended, or are currently attending post-secondary school

**27**

In.Business participants, have studied, are currently studying, or will be studying business.

“

It was amazing being a senior mentor for In.Business 2022! Helping young minds see life opportunities through another lens, their hearts, is helpful. I am glad to have been invited to be a helper!

**-Andrea Curley, Mentor**  
*St. Francis Xavier University*

“

Thank you for the opportunity to mentor our future leaders. My heart is filled with love and inspiration. The In.Business program is filled with so much content, information and indigenous knowledge sharing. I am excited to see how far we have come as a Nation and how our young leaders can only do better. Although I was a mentor many times, I learned valuable skills and knowledge. I really do appreciate it, and I am humbled and honoured to be part of the In.Business team.

**Eva Nicholas, Mentor**  
*Entrepreneur*

“

When I first joined In-business I thought to myself, “I don’t want anything to do with business in my future” and if I’m being totally honest, I didn’t even know what I wanted to do in the future. But this program has taught me that if there isn’t anything out there for me, then I can just make it happen for myself and create something brand new. The opportunities are endless, and I can thank In.Business for opening my eyes to a whole new world I never thought I would take interest in.

**Miracle Johnson, Membertou**

“

This is by far one of the most memorable programs that I have been honoured to participate in as a student and now as a peer mentor! This program has encouraged me to step outside of my comfort zone and encourage my own business of mentoring youth in my community. In.Business has encouraged me to become more involved in my culture and move on to pursue post-secondary studies.

**Cassandra Bruhm, Peer Mentor**

