2. An Overview of the Gabriel Dumont Institute

2.1 The Need for Special Education/Cultural Incentives for Aboriginal People

The urgent demand for education, training, counselling, cultural research and community services designed to meet the special needs of Saskatchewan's aboriginal population has long been recognized. Over the years, statistics, surveys and field observations have portrayed the severe social and economic disparity of aboriginal people in comparison to the general population of the province. These same studies have demonstrated that people of aboriginal ancestry view education as the foremost means of achieving the goals they have set for themselves and their children.

2.2 The Founding of the Gabriel Dumont Institute

In 1976, the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (A.M.N.S.I.S.) secured funding from the federal Department of Secretary of State to organize a province-wide Cultural Conference. More than 250 delegates and guests attended. The purpose of this conference was to develop a strategy to renew and strengthen the aboriginal community within Saskatchewan.

Delegates to the conference determined that the creation of a native-controlled institution for the advancement of research, culture and employment-oriented programming related to aboriginal people would provide a positive first step. The Institute became known as the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, Inc., named for the heroic Métis leader, General Gabriel Dumont. The Institute was formally incorporated in December, 1976 under *The Societies Act*. In the spring of 1979, after more than two years of discussion, the Saskatchewan Minister of Continuing Education and A.M.N.S.I.S. reached agreement for the funding of the Institute. In 1981, with the dissolution of *The Societies Act*, the Institute was continued under *The Non-profit Corporations Act*. Operations began in Regina in January of 1980, and that September, the Institute accepted its first students in Saskatoon and Regina.