



International
Minerals Innovation
Institute



MEDIA RELEASE

International Minerals Innovation Institute and Saskatchewan Polytechnic provide STEM and ICT resources and training for Indigenous teachers and learners

New innovative programming designed with Indigenous communities will inspire and engage Indigenous learners

September 28, 2021 – Through funding provided by the International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMI) Diversity and Inclusion Challenge, Saskatchewan Polytechnic has created a virtual Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) resource hub for teachers. Sask Polytech is also providing a two-day digital mining bootcamp for elementary-aged (grade seven and eight) Indigenous youth. Both programs have been designed with input from Indigenous communities to inspire and engage Indigenous learners to pursue ICT and STEM subjects and careers. The resource hub and bootcamp are available free of charge.

“The goal of these innovative and collaborative programs is to encourage Indigenous students to engage in an education, and eventually a career, in the ICT or STEM sectors,” says Dr. Larry Rosia, Sask Polytech president and CEO. “Research indicates that interest in STEM begins to wane as early as grade three. Early engagement in these subjects is critical. Our team plans to engage with a minimum of 200 teachers through the resource hub and 200 students through the digital bootcamps this academic year.”

“IMI is pleased to support these highly responsive educators and trainers as they build both capacity and interest in digital education and careers,” says Al Shpyth, IMI’s executive director. “IMI’s industry members are building more digitally enabled operations and want to attract talented Indigenous youth into the mining and minerals industry, and collaborations such as Diggin’ Digital will be a cornerstone of future success.”

The Diggin’ Digital Bootcamp provides Indigenous youth the opportunity to gain awareness, interest and training in ICT and STEM skills. Each bootcamp is designed and developed in collaboration with the Indigenous community where the training is being offered. In June a pilot of the digital bootcamp was completed in collaboration with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band. In total, 56 students received training at two different schools over two days.

“The digital mining bootcamp at Lac La Ronge was a great success,” says Josy Roske, director of Education at the Lac La Ronge Indian Band. “One of the highlights for the students was learning from industry mentors on how they started their careers in mining. All resources for the bootcamp were created in collaboration with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Department. This made the learning outcomes meaningful to students and teachers. This was an excellent partnership where we worked respectfully and collaboratively with Sask Polytech to meet the needs of our students in an authentic way.”

The Diggin’ Digital Professional Development Resource Hub provides teachers with resources, materials and professional development opportunities to incorporate ICT and STEM into lesson plans for Indigenous youth in culturally relevant and appropriate ways. Resources were designed and developed in collaboration with Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan. The goal is to show students the different options for a career in the mining industry. The resource hub is a free digital tool available to all teachers.

For more information on the Diggin' Digital Bootcamp or the Diggin' Digital Professional Development Resource Hub please visit saskpolytech.ca.

About IMII:

International Minerals Innovation Institute is a unique innovation supporting network of mining companies, government departments and agencies, and post-secondary and research institutions, jointly funded by industry and government. It exists to deliver innovations that matter to mining in Saskatchewan. Through the Board of Directors and separate panels for both education and training and research and development, collaboration occurs amongst industry, government, post-secondary and research institutions to clearly define the need, solution, implementation plan and outcomes together.

About Saskatchewan Polytechnic:

Saskatchewan Polytechnic serves students through applied learning opportunities on Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 Territories and the homeland of the Métis people. Learning takes place at campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon and through extensive distance education opportunities. Programs serve every economic and public service sector. As a polytechnic, the organization provides the depth of learning appropriate to employer and student need, including certificate, diploma and degree programs, and apprenticeship training. Saskatchewan Polytechnic engages in applied research, drawing on faculty expertise to support innovation by employers, and providing students the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills.

– 30 –

For more information, contact:

Brianna Bergeron
Saskatchewan Polytechnic Communications and Marketing
306-250-3978
brianna.bergeron@saskpolytech.ca

Al Shpyth
IMII Executive Director
306-250-4991
al.shpyth@imii.ca