**Annual Report April 2010**

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It has been an active year with new opportunities and areas of research opening, while other projects are coming to a close. Funding from two SSHRC grants—the Northern Development Grant and the Aboriginal Research Program Grant—held in collaboration with the Innu Nation Environment Office (2006-2009 with an extension year), have finished. I will be writing up project reports with project partners over the next six months in fulfillment of the grant. These grants were focused on the continued development of the Innu Environmental Guardians Program and to work with Innu youth at risk in developing alternative educational programs. The past two years, much of this work has overlapped with our International Polar Year (IPY) grant (2008-2011) also held in collaboration with the Innu Nation Environment Office. The IPY grant is specifically targeted to increase the Innu Nation Environmental Guardians capacity to monitor climate change in Labrador. Dr. John Jacobs, climatologist from Memorial University’s Geography Department, and Dr. Stephen Loring of the Smithsonian Institutes Arctic Studies Center have been key instructors and partners, offering two modules on Climate Change to the Innu Guardians this past year. Dr. Alexander MacLeod and Ms. Betty MacDonald, Director of Continuing Education have worked closely with me to have these programs certified through SMU.

The IPY was submitted as part of the University of the Arctic’s IPY Educational Research Cluster to look at developing a model of education for and in the circumpolar north. As SMU’s UArctic Members Council representative, I traveled to Kiruna, Sweden to attend the UArctic Council meeting in 2009, and will be travelling to Yakutsk, Russia in 2010. These meetings have become increasingly important in the development of a UArctic Thematic Network on Local and Regional Development coordinated by Tor Gjertsen of Finnmark University College (FiUC), of which I am a member. In March, 2010, Tor Gjertsen visited SMU to further our Memorandum of Understanding with FiUC and look at potential student and teacher exchanges. In October, 2010, I and an Innu colleague will be attending the Gargia Conference in Northern Norway hosted by FiUC and Sami College to discuss Indigenous issues throughout the circumpolar north and opportunities for cooperation.Closer to home, I was the Halifax Regional Municipality project coordinator the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (UAPS), a ten-city national research project conducted by Environics Institute. Ten First Nations and Metis interviewers were hired to conduct over two hundred, forty-seven page surveys with Aboriginal peoples residing within the municipality. The intent of the research was to raise the profile of the growing number of urban residing First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples throughout Canada, highlighting, their issues, aspirations, and challenges. The UAPS study, including the Halifax survey results, was formally released and publicized on CBC and in the Toronto Globe and Mail on March 31st (www.uaps.ca).

In 2009, the Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq, Mi’kmaq Labour Market Strategy, commissioned my office to conduct a “Market Research Literature Scan” to help build a foundation for developing a comprehensive labour force strategy for Mi’kmaq. David Sable, project researcher, conducted a major portion of the research and made a user friendly, thematically based, on-line document for research into the many factors affecting Economic Development in Mi’kmaw communities. The results were presented at the Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Research Program (AAEDIRP) and the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat’s, “Let’s Work Together: A Conference on Creating Meaningful and Sustainable Employment for Atlantic Aboriginal People,” February 16-18, 2010.

In February, 2010, I received the good news that a SSHRC Aboriginal Research Program Grant totaling $250,000 was successful. This grant was written in partnership with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq, the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Center (TARR), the Mi’kmaq Association of Cultural Studies (MACS), Parks Canada and the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History to develop Pjilas’i Mi’kma’ki: Mi’kmaw Place Names Digital Atlas and Website. The vision is to create and interactive, query based, authoritative resource for Mi’kmaw place names and land use history, including film and oral histories.

Finally, I continue to serve as the SMU representative on the Atlantic Association of Universities Working Committee on Aboriginal Issues and the Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Research Program, and Chair of the Northern Studies Committee.