

To: The Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

From: The Canadian Media Producers Association; Scott Garvie, Chair; Marguerite Pigott, Vice President, Outreach and Strategic Initiatives

Subject: Study on Gender Parity on the Boards and Senior Leadership Levels of Canadian Artistic and Cultural Organizations

The Canadian Media Producers Association: Overview

The Canadian Media Producers Association (CMPA) is Canada's leading trade association for independent producers engaged in the development, production and distribution of English-language television programs, feature films and digital media. The CMPA works on behalf of its 400 members across Canada to promote and stimulate the Canadian independent production industry. The board of directors is elected rather than appointed, and it is constituted to provide representation for Canada's regions and for varied formats of content production.

Introduction:

Gender parity is a matter of economic justice across all industries, but in the screen-based production industry, gender parity is also about how we see our world and one another. The creative and economic inequality caused by gender imbalance affects which stories get told and how women are portrayed in those stories. The content on our screens has a powerful societal impact, which results in an imperative that women hold key decision-making positions across the entire production industry and in the institutions that surround it.

Minister Joly has strongly focused the attention of the industry on this issue, and this focus has already resulted in substantial change. The CMPA is proud to have been a collaborator and supporter on two highly successful initiatives with *Women in View*, *2X More* and *Five in Focus*, both of which have increased the number of women directors working in film and television. Understanding the importance of data and best practices, the CMPA was also pleased to

commission the study, *Women and Leadership: A Study of Gender Parity and Diversity in Canada's Screen Industries*¹. In addition to being launched at *Prime Time* where it drove an industry-wide discussion, the study was also cited by the International Olympic Committee in their 'Gender Equality Review Project', and is referenced as international, best-in-class research in resource hubs at Women in Film and Television UK, Dame Changer, New York Women in Film and Television, and the 50|50 by 2030 Foundation. And it continues to inform the CMPA's work, and the work of industry partners, here in Canada.

In addition to these and other external initiatives, the CMPA has also recognized that gender imbalance is a challenge within our own organization, specifically with respect to our Board of Directors, and we have taken action to create positive change that can drive progress in our organization and in our industry more broadly.

Gender Parity and the CMPA Board

1.0 By-law Mandated Board Composition

Our board composition is distinguished by three key elements defined in our by-laws:

Elected – A defining characteristic of our board is that it is elected by our membership rather than appointed.

Regional Balance – The number of directors from each province or region in Canada is stipulated in the by-laws in order to ensure regional balance.

Balance of Content Format – The minimum number of directors working in television, film, digital media, or offering services to producers, is stipulated in the by-laws in order to ensure balance in content format or business model.

2.0 Historic Gender Composition of the Board

The chart below contains the gender composition of the CMPA board over the five most recent board terms.

¹ [Women and Leadership: A Study of Gender Parity and Diversity in Canada's Screen Industries](#), Canadian Media Producers Association, Catherine Tait, January 2017



Term	Board seats	Number of female Directors	Percentage of female Directors
2009–2011	25	8	32%
2011–2013	24	8	33%
2013–2015	25	9	36%
2015–2017	23	7	30%
2017–2019	23	10	43%

3.0 Recognition and Change

For our 2017–19 elections, the board approved a motion intended to further operationalize the principles set out in the CMPA’s gender parity and diversity policy. Additionally, five members of longstanding who supported these goals chose not to seek re-election in order to create room for new voices.

Improving Election Processes

Board members agreed to reach out with phone calls to the voting member of each of the 400+ member companies to engage them in issues and to encourage them, or members of their senior staff, to run for the board or to join committees. The CMPA’s objectives of gender parity and diversity were clearly expressed in every communication. Also, all written communications to the membership regarding the election included our stated commitment to seek gender parity and diversity in board composition, and encouraged members from under-represented groups to run. This initiative resulted in an unprecedented number of candidates running for board seats.

Appointment of Directors

The CMPA by-laws allow the board to appoint up to one third of its members. Traditionally this provision has not been substantially utilized because, as a member-driven organization, it is preferable for board members to be chosen by the membership. However, recognizing that both gender parity and diversity were lacking in our board composition, the board resolved to use the appointment process to drive change. The board went to the membership to approve this change of process and the members’ resolution was approved unanimously. After eighteen board members were elected, a gap analysis was conducted,



and the board appointed seven additional members to ensure board composition moved toward gender parity and diversity.

2017–19 Board Statistics

Of the 18 elected board members, 5 are women. Of the 7 appointed board members, 5 are women. 43% of the fully composed board are women, up 9% from the previous year.

Enhancing Influence

Attaining a higher percentage of women directors presents an opportunity to develop their talent, ensure their leadership on the board, and grow their influence in the organization. To do so, we are using our committee structure.

The CMPA has 19 committees. Every committee has a Chair and Co-Chair, and appointments to these roles were made with gender parity, diversity, regional and format representation in mind. 39% of the Chairs or Co-Chairs are women and we are working on increasing this number.

In addition to placing women and diverse board members in positions of leadership at the committee level, they were also delegated the responsibility to populate their committees. As new talent comes in to the committee structure this often has the effect of enhancing the diversity of perspectives. As these new committee members grow in expertise and experience, they become potential candidates for the board.

4.0 Formalizing Equality

Board elections occur every two years, and we will continue to use every tool at our disposal to achieve gender parity and diversity, including re-examining our by-laws. For example, our by-laws cap the number of representatives from certain regions, and this has a curtailing effect on our access to women and diverse board members.

As we move forward in creating more representative boards and committees, we will work to instill the idea of gender balance throughout the organization. Some boards or committees may have more women than men, and some may be the inverse, but ultimately, we will gather the best talent to lead the CMPA and the content production sector in Canada.

While the CMPA has not yet reached gender parity and diversity goals, we have made meaningful progress. We still have much to do, but we have learned some lessons along the way that will help us achieve the board's mandate that the CMPA must have as its leaders a board of directors that resembles the audiences we serve.



Recommendations and Observations

Lessons learned from CMPA's 2017–19 board election process:

- Deploy the entire leadership. To achieve the objective of addressing longstanding challenges such as gender parity and diversity, organizations must pursue the goal in a credible and determined way. This requires the visible participation of the entire leadership.
- Recruitment is essential. Reaching out directly to engage members to run, and clearly stating gender parity and diversity goals, are crucial steps to take on an ongoing basis.
- Develop talent. It's not enough to recruit. It is essential to build the pool of talent from which recruiting will eventually occur.

Relevant Observations and Recommendations from CMPA's study on gender parity:

The Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage has requested that witnesses provide additional observations with respect to a few key questions:

What is stopping women from being asked to join boards or assume top creative roles?

- The obstacles to professional advancement women identified in the study included: not being recognized for accomplishments, pay inequity, harassment, not being able to advance past middle management, inclusion in meetings and networks, and difficulty accessing capital

What steps can we take to address this?

- Factors that helped women address these obstacles included the support of a boss or professional mentor, diversity and gender parity policies or programs, industry mentorship programs and higher education. Of course, hard work and talent were also indicated as dominant factors.

What can the federal government do?

While the study makes many recommendations worth considering for advancing women and diverse people in leadership roles throughout the content creation system, the following recommendations are perhaps most pertinent to the subject of the Committee's study:

- More disclosure of information regarding gender and diversity from public funding agencies, public companies and regulated broadcasters could help improve the imbalance situation, as transparency and data have been effective at driving change in other countries
- The CRTC requires broadcasters to report regarding diversity, but there is no similar requirement with respect to gender
- Incentivize companies receiving funding to report on diversity and inclusion; provide bonus points in selection or funding criteria for those employing women or diverse people in key leadership positions



- Creating a single online destination for women with information on programs and financing, overall promotion, board postings and the reporting of data could be a useful tool in advancing the cause
- Support or incentivize initiatives that would result in enhanced child care, flexible hours and maternity/ paternity leave

Conclusion

The Canadian Media Producers Association appreciates both the leadership of Minister Joly on this issue and the opportunity given to us by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to contribute to this crucial conversation.

We see a future for Canadian content that is inclusive, innovative, and relevant to global audiences. For Canadian creators to fulfill this vision, the leadership must likewise be inclusive and must innovate based on fresh and varied perspectives. We know that our collective success depends upon the work we do together to ensure our creators and our audiences reflect one another. Companies that have high numbers of women in leadership positions have been proven to be more profitable². This presents an enormous opportunity, today and into the future. This is how we will engage the next generation. This is how we will ensure today's youth will look to our industry as a vital, inclusive platform from which they can launch careers and lead businesses.

We look forward with enthusiasm to working with all industry partners to achieve this vision.

² [Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Survey](#), Peterson Institute/EY, Marcus Noland, Tyler Moran, Barbara Kotschwar, February 2016

