

## DIVERSITY | Women as a strategic advantage

### WLC Chair Fiona Douglas-Crampton looks back on the program's 2015-16 year

BY FIONA DOUGLAS-CRAMPTON

The first business objective we identified for this year at the Women's Leadership Circle (WLC) was to highlight that women are a strategic advantage for businesses. I think this objective had resonance for all of us around the committee table, not only because we recognize the research supporting it, but also because we also know that not everyone gets it yet.

We still have frustrating discussions in some male-dominated fields in which even the idea of "comply or explain" regulations are seen as a "burden" to those hiring. Yet most of us know that women—and diversity in general—can differentiate a business and allow it to innovate at a rate that will outpace competitors.

There were signs of this evolution to women being recognized as a strategic advantage throughout the WLC's events and activities this year.

Once again, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade took a lead role in the B.C. Economic Forum,

presented in October 2015 in partnership with the WEB Alliance and the Women's Enterprise Centre.

The WLC capitalized on the opportunity to further the conversation on one of the key topics at the B.C. Economic Forum, and as a result, our "Becoming Conscious about Unconscious Bias" event became the largest WLC event of the year. (Take the Harvard Implicit Bias test at [projectimplicit.com](http://projectimplicit.com)—you may be surprised to discover unconscious biases you didn't know you had!)

Another outcome of the 2015 B.C. Economic Forum was the report *Women as a Catalyst for Economic Growth*. Following the report's release, we encouraged our Members to take active steps to increase gender diversity in leadership at their organizations by taking our Leadership Challenge. (Learn more at [boardoftrade.com/leadershipchallenge](http://boardoftrade.com/leadershipchallenge)).

This year we also celebrated the second annual Wendy McDonald Awards, with 65 nominations and a sold-out event to recognize the winners. I encourage you to read



Fiona Douglas-Crampton, Chair, Women's Leadership Circle

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about these award recipients at [boardoftrade.com/wlc](http://boardoftrade.com/wlc), as they represent the future and the very best in our community.

We also actively invited men to the table much more this year. We did this by engaging more men in our quarterly Morning Leader discussions, and by partnering with the Board of Trade's other Signature Programs, such as the Small Business Council. This is clearly the way to go—all of us working together to move forward diversity in leadership.

Most recently, we have been

evolving and re-energizing our WLC tables at the Board of Trade's speaker events. Back in 2007 when the WLC was born, one of the main purposes of the WLC was to make female members feel more comfortable when attending speaker events. At that time, a WLC table was a place to meet other women, and a landing place for those who didn't yet know a lot of people.

Times have changed since then. Yes, the WLC's tables are still a great place to meet incredible women in the business community, but women now represent more than 40 per cent of the Board's membership and 45 per cent of new members! Clearly women are comfortable here, so the WLC tables have evolved into a place for discussion, feedback and ideas on how to improve the WLC program moving forward. I would encourage you to join us at an upcoming event and take part in the conversation!

It has been an active and inspiring year here at the WLC, and I feel very lucky to have been part of it. **SB**

Fiona Douglas-Crampton is Chair of the Women's Leadership Circle. She also serves as President and CEO of the Dalai Lama Center for Peace & Education.



## Welcome to some of our newest members

### Companies

Aaron Schroeder  
**Brightspot Climate Inc.**

David Seccombe  
**CEQAL Inc.**  
[ceqal.com](http://ceqal.com)

Allison MacDonald  
**Compendia Business Information Services**

Carol Simpson  
**Focus Professional Services Inc.**

Kyle Green  
**Green Mortgage Ltd.**

Mina Fung  
**Love It Art**

Kevin Barlow  
**Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council**

Joel Steinberg  
**Navigate Surgical Technologies Inc.**  
[inliant.com](http://inliant.com)

Elias Imsis  
**Qelexa Business Solutions Inc.**  
[qelexa.com](http://qelexa.com)

Jun Ramos  
**Ramos & Fortier Ltd.**

Tammy Norman  
**Satin Laser Spa Inc.**  
[satinlaserspa.com](http://satinlaserspa.com)

Shafiq Jamal  
**Weber Shandwick Vancouver**

Derek Dix  
**We Are Colder**

Paul Batchelor  
**Pacific Newspaper Group**  
[sunprovince.com](http://sunprovince.com)

Daljit Thind  
**Thind Properties Ltd.**  
[thind.ca](http://thind.ca)

Dennis Frewin  
**Freedom 55 Financial**  
[freedom55financial.com](http://freedom55financial.com)

### Individuals

Megan Gelmon  
Rene Estevez

Stephanie Janot

Maribel Reyes

Sharron Burnett

Louise Harley

Paul Crosby

Gontran Nzobonimpa

Stephanie Snowden

Jonathan Bradley

Rochelle Marasa

Maneisha Sandhu

Abhishaek Rawal

Wilson Wong

Chris Horte

*Leadership loves company*