

**NATIONAL WOMEN LAWYERS FORUM - ANNUAL MEETING - NOVEMBER 7 - 9,
2014**

Present:

NATIONAL OFFICERS

1st Co-Chair: Linda Robertson (Vancouver)
2nd Co-Chair: Elaine Keenan Bengts (Yellowknife)
Vice-Chair: Heidi Schedler (Halifax)
Secretary-Treasurer: Sara Gottlieb (Toronto)
Past Chair: Judith Huddart (Toronto)

BRANCH CHAIRS/REPRESENTATIVES

Alberta: Ingrid Meier
British Columbia: Rachel Lammers (Kamloops) and Deborah Taylor (Vancouver)
Manitoba: Carolina Fridman
New Brunswick: Kathleen MacDougall
Newfoundland and Labrador: Kelly Curties
Nova Scotia: Tara Miller
Ontario: Sabrina Bandali
Prince Edward Island: Libby Shaw
Québec: Claire Brassard
Saskatchewan: Michelle Ouellette Q.C.
Yukon: Melissa Atkinson
Regrets: Northwest Territories

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Sandra Appel (Toronto)
Emmanuelle Vallée (Vancouver) –*Saturday, via conference call*

Regrets: Celeste Haldane (BC)

CBA STAFF

Gathoni Njuguna, Liaison Officer
Karin Galldin, Project Director, Legal Futures Initiative – *Saturday afternoon*

GUEST

Gary Luftspring, Legal Futures Initiative Steering Committee Member (Ricketts, Harris LLP, Toronto) – *Saturday afternoon*

November 8, 2014

1. Welcome and Approval of Agenda and Draft Minutes

Linda provided an overview of the agenda and background on our lunch speakers (Karin Galdin, Gary Luftspring), i.e. our concerns and submissions with respect to the direction of the Futures Steering Committee and their mandate, and explained that Karin and Gary would provide an update on the Futures Report.

Judi requested change to minutes “hot tips for hot MENTORS not members” in two places. [Note: this change has now been made and sent to Gathoni]

Heidi moved, Judi seconded approval of minutes of October 15, 2014 meeting.

Sandra moved, Sabrina seconded approval of agenda for November meeting.

2. Co-Chair’s Opening Remarks

Linda spoke about past National WLF meetings, and discussed that our next WLF executive meeting would be held in fall 2015 in Vancouver (dates are not set as we wait for dates from key note speaker, Justice Abella).

Linda provided background on her 35 years of work on behalf of women lawyers, and gave thanks to Judi Huddart, past WLF Char, who we’d like to support next year as head of CBA Conferences. Judi said a few words of thanks to the group, and thanks was given to Gathoni for all of her hard work.

Linda reviewed why we are a Conference, not a Section (ie. b/c not substantive law), and the statistics available on WLF membership by province, advising that we have increasing membership, with 1768 WLF members across the country. Linda reviewed the provincial breakdown of membership, noting BC has the largest (625), with large contingents in Alberta and Ontario.

Linda also reviewed last year’s Women’s Leadership conference in Montreal in November, 2014, which we sold out, and provided thanks to Sandra who heavily assisted with the WLF panel at the CBA CLC in Newfoundland in August, 2014.

Linda explained that the WLF often has resolutions at summer and winter session of CBA Council meetings, and often partners with Equality Conference.

3. Roundtable introductions

All present introduced themselves, and gave insights into what they were looking to get out of this weekend. Chairs (or their representatives) explained that their goals for the weekend included:

- receiving suggestions on how to grow their sections;
- events to hold;
- how to educate men on women’s issues;
- how they could introduce a new thrust to existing WLF activities;
- learning how other provincial sections were addressing competition for membership from other similar affinity groups;

- how to move their or the national WLF into an advocacy role, including adopting a public position on issues, both as a tool to help women and to grow WLF membership, and generally increasing public profile of WLF.

Linda suggested that provincial branches could plant localized offshoots of their branch.

4. WLF Orientation

CBA Orientation

Elaine was in Ottawa for the CBA Orientation for Conference Chairs on October 19, 2014, and relayed some of the controversies that arose at the Orientation. Some matters discussed including the hiring of another set of consultants for the CBA “Rethink” and the intervention request by the Business Law Section and CCAA re *Chevron*.

With respect to the intervention controversy, Elaine explained that the CBA Legislation and Law Reform Committee had recommended that there should be no CBA intervention, but CBA Executive decided to intervene, which was reported to Council in August. After receiving membership flack, and review of the CBA Intervention Policy, the Executive ultimately withdrew their intervention. Elaine also explained that she learned of proposed changes to the CLC model, which has been losing money. There was also discussion about changing the name of “Conferences” to “Communities”, and possible changes to the CBA website in January 2015 which may affect us.

Elaine also mentioned the special thanks that was given to Judi and Linda by Fred Heaton, former CBA president, for their assistance with the Futures Project.

Elaine recommended that WLF officers coming in lower on the rung of WLF executive (i.e. Vice Chair, Secretary) should attend CBA national orientation in the future.

WLF Budget

Heidi reviewed the WLF budget and noted that, while other Conferences have received decreased funding, WLF has received additional funding. This is partly due to the fact that we bring in members. This year the big change to our budget included line items for travel/expense/membership fee for our involvement with the National Conference of Women Bar Associations and the ABA.

Heidi encouraged branches to make travel plans for national meeting as far as possible in advance. We put our budget submission in in March. Sara noted the role of our semi-annual Leadership Conferences in raising revenue, and encouraged all present to get their provincial membership out to attend. Elaine noted that only sections (and not Conferences) could retain a portion of proceeds from conferences/events they hold.

MAL

We have a vacancy – if someone would like to get involved in your province, please provide name to Linda.

Relationship to Equality Committee

We have strong working relationship with Equality Committee, often bringing forward joint resolutions.

5. Branch Reports Roundtable

Michelle – Saskatchewan (Saskatoon)

Achievements: three new calls attending WLF meetings. Her branch began this year with a professor at the University of Saskatchewan who teaches “Law and Happiness” speak on the issue. She has another session planned with respect to retirement planning. Michelle also reported that there was previously a regional WLF in Regina, but this lasted a couple years only.

Challenges: lack of engagement (with young women in particular) and related difficulties with growth.

Tip: Linda mentioned that BC WLF tries to get members early by going to university “club days”.

Tara – Nova Scotia

Achievement: Tara explained that their branch tries to hold substantive lunch and learns, giving back events and socials. This past year, their branch organized a “putting our your own shingle” lunch (to be rescheduled), a province-wide donation/gift-card drive for women’s shelters for International Women’s Day (second year and plan to do again). The branch’s social/well-being event included a shopping and champagne event (high end women’s store owned by three lawyers, get to shop tax free), and a balance workshop (nutritionist, yoga, meditation) for women to learn about tools to support them.

Challenge: Succession planning. The current co-chairs came in at same time, and are trying to develop an executive.

Tips: Getting information about events out there: suggestions include leveraging contacts (getting word out to law firms), and asking CBA to repeatedly promote events.

Libby – PEI

Achievement: Their branch holds an “annual women lawyers day” on a Friday– goes from 10- which members speak at. Their branch coordinates with the law society, so the event includes some non-CBA members and is completely full. The day included a session on effective mentoring with two partners from large firms and a two-course dinner prepared. They advertise three months in advance, through both CBA and Law Society

Challenge: Keeping young women practicing in PEI (many leave for other provinces), and related difficulty attracting younger female members to CBA.

Kathleen – New Brunswick

Achievement: Held May Conference, partnering with University of Moncton law school, day and a half long, which was open to women in business and politics (not just law). The conference included seminars on gender negotiation, why women leave private practice, changing business models, Justice McLachlan and Linda were present. This year they also established the “Muriel Corkery Ryan” Award (some challenges related to nominations). The branch is trying to grow membership by wine and cheese, networking, other socials. Most active membership is in St. John.

Challenges: Had no responses to request for nominations for new Muriel Corkery Ryan award. May open up invitation for nominations to outside forum.

Rachel – BC WLF - Kamloops

Achievements: Branch held their regular events, including a provincial court judge who hosts a barbecue at her house and invites law students. Their branch is trying to reach out to law students at the new Faculty of Law at Thompson Rivers University, including a potluck for first year law students. The branch also puts on a retreat at a spa every year, and gets partial funding for retreat for students from provincial law foundation.

Challenges: communications with OBA head office.

Deborah – BC WLF - Vancouver

Achievements: Facilitated discussion on Lean-In, and the larger mentoring program, explaining the latter is now completed largely online. The branch is also sponsoring a walk for ovarian cancer, partnering with other groups (Justicia*, equity stakeholders in CBA). The branch recently held its yearly launch event “hot tips from hot mentors” – the president from the BC branch attended and was impressed.

Challenge: Have new executive, as past exec timed out. Other challenge is to remain current and make sure meeting needs of all lawyers at all levels (i.e. junior and senior lawyers event and mid to senior event – a recent example was an event involving dinner with women QCs). The National WLF can help BC WLF by developing a common voice across the country, which , will attract members to feeling more a part of a bigger picture.

Tip: Get students to be volunteers with free attendance at WLF events. Deborah can also provide the application form for their branch’s mentorship program.

*Linda provided background on the Justicia program – it develops at model policies re: harassment, flexible work, parental leaves, and other issues involving women. Sponsored by law societies. Meant to roll out “best practices” to firms.

Claire – Quebec

Achievements: In February held “Women Lawyers and Politics” with three speakers, including one woman who just ran for mayor, a former PQ minister and liberal party lawyer. 85 people attended the event. The branch has another session scheduled to discuss “Bertha Wilson Report” or “Touchstones Report”, with six speakers, as an extended lunch session.

Challenges: Abandoned mentoring program. Have big competitor in Quebec Bar Association, which holds programs for and was there before WLF.

Sabrina – Ontario

Achievements: Improvement to inter-generational conversations. Had retreat for section executive and decided on section “outreach” initiative to determine what the WLF membership wants. The branch is also liaising with other organizations (i.e. LEAF/Law Society for Intl Women’s Day, the Young Women and the Law, and possibly Women’s Law Association of Ontario). These organizations have expressed appreciation for collaboration with the WLF given the reach and brand of OBA/CBA. The branch now has an annual award (looking for suggestions on how to make more high-profile), and is attempting programming where remote access to session possible.

Challenges: Advocacy. Would like feedback on how Ontario Want advocacy can feed into national conversation. Communications is challenge because of CASL compliance.

Tip: Take lead/initiating collaborations. Encouraged use of personal networks – making one to one connections through “pulse” initiative is another way to reach out.

Melissa – NWT

Achievements: Will be putting out a survey to determine what are women lawyer issues or demographics. She’d like to work on Intl Women’s Day Event. Try to get together socially. Have great turnout at meetings (approx. 12).

Challenge: [none detailed]

Carolina – Manitoba

Achievements: Membership has grown. Branch holding lunch and learns, and annual “So You Want to Be a Judge” panel. Branch is considering advocacy re: appointment to women on bench. Will also have mid-winter session focusing on tips for women wanting to move into partnership, and spring event. Often have educational programs, not socials, but have in past had a social at an aesthetics salon. Branch also has annual award for achievement to woman lawyer.

Challenge: Maintaining and attracting new members.

Comment: Would like to support advocacy role of National WLF.

Ingrid – Alberta (Edmonton Area)

Achievements: Increase in membership. In September, held annual “Hot Tips from Hot Mentors” session and in March will hold their annual “Candid Conversations” event (joint with law society). The branch last year held a lean-in circle. The Branch’s third regular event is alternating dinner between judges and QC/women judges. The Branch has regular monthly meetings and a book club (meet once per month with 15-20 members) (limited to CBA). As result of lean-in session, will commence mentoring circles, not limited to WLF members. Also

have an “I don’t have a date” program, where a WLF member circulate invites to event, and are helping to host a women’s awards dinner in the province (WLF nominated various women). The Branch will hold its holiday fund-raiser, a winter presentation on pro-bono volunteer programs, and in the spring, will hold a session on limited scope retainers, and a business skills session.

Obstacles: Lack of executives – hard to get people to commit to time.

Tips: Lean in circles work where smaller membership. This branch has a different structure that works – younger and more senior chairs, a LEAF executive member, and an articling student and a prof from the law school (connection with law students).

Comment: Believes advocacy at national level will help with membership. Also notes that in Alberta and Halifax, the Justicia program is different (about access to justice)

Kelly- Newfoundland

Achievements: The branch will hold events with wine, may have lean-in circle.

Obstacles: Branch has had no interest for events in the past. People interested in getting involved are public sector, in-house counsel whose memberships aren’t funded.

Tip: (from Heidi) – have event open to members and non-members and have membership chair come out and speak to that. Michelle also suggested a speed-mentoring session.

Elaine – NWT

Achievements: Annual meet/greet sushi party held at start of year. Have successful mentoring program – open to male and female, CBA/non-CBA member, involving a luncheon (pay own way) but often have 20 people out – v. successful program. The branch also does community outreach and fundraising (spontaneous, un-organized).

Obstacles: No law schools, no spas, high number of women practicing law (60%), all the superior court judge, but WLF has had difficult time figuring out what its role is.

6. CBA Legal Futures Initiative

Gary and Karin introduced themselves.

Gary provided some background on the Futures Report, namely the leadership conference Gary helped to arrange over the course of 10 years, resulting in many speakers coming to the CBA to talk about the future of the legal profession.

Gary provided overview of the Report - divided into teams: innovation team, regulatory reform, legal education (Karin referenced that one part of the report eclipsed others). Margaret Hagin, a prof from LA created the CBA Futures infographic.

Gary reviewed some of the prepared slides, reviewing that clients are expecting more choice and flexibility in legal services, billing, delivery arrangements and greater speed, convenience and participation in legal process. The regulation of lawyers in Canada has not changed, and should be challenged in both public interest and interest of profession.

Gary spoke a bit more about lack of innovation in profession, and some of the key recommendations.

- a) new business models should be carried out under the oversight of an enhanced regulatory framework;
- b) entity regulation should be developed as a supplement to regulation of individual lawyers;
- c) commitment to diversity in Canadian legal profession should be embedded within the entities delivering legal services, as well as within the governing bodies of law societies.

Karin spoke about need for CBA for the Report, and bringing it to law societies in Canada. She spoke of the underlying belief of the Report being that reform has to occur in order to allow more people to access legal help, and the need to create more diversity, both in terms of the profession and who it works with. Reference to alternative business structures in report, and not wanting to create precarious working environments for women.

The group decided to provide feedback on the substantive report, rather than undertake the prepared workshop.

Sara asked where references to women/diversity encompassed in Future of Legal Profession Report. Karin pointed to recommendation #9 – Law societies should require firms to comply and report on demographics.

Gary and Karin stated that they believe freeing up regulation will lead to alternative models, which will result in the profession becoming more diverse. They think graduated licensing would assist with this.

Various comments were made regarding concerns with lack of reflection of WLF feedback. Karin acknowledged the report wasn't able to attack firm structure directly.

Sabrina asked about concerns with ghettoization if only some of measures adopted (i.e. pink ghetto of two tiered partnerships). Karin responded that this was a possibility with some of the reform measures, but Committee didn't hear much from Australia/New Zealand about this. Have no data in Canada about where women lawyers go and why. Karin thinks if Alternative Business Structures are regulated, studied, reported on, may not be problematic model.

Heidi asked about outcomes based reporting, and hoped it could be addressed in Report.

Judi provided feedback on how the Report seems to focus on large firms keeping market share, and isolates her as a small, collaborative family law lawyer.

Gary's feedback was that the report impacts her as a sole practitioner as she's prevented from

forming a partnership with a social worker and therapist now. Lawyers shouldn't be prohibited from practicing in whatever mode they wish.

Ingrid mentioned challenge of additional administration costs if more regulation as a result of the Futures proposal for small firm practitioners. Women from large firms are moving to sole practitioners, and if impose additional regulatory requirements, may be disparate imposition on women. Gary stated that this would not be what Futures was proposing.

Sandra mentioned that issues of diversity are still of greater concern to US in-house counsel than Canada. Gary said small business guys were more open-minded than corporate counsel.

Linda liked the part on entity regulation b/c wants to beef up sexual harassment policy in law firms (she's had two calls about attempted rapes at firms within last three weeks). Linda also noted that alternative business structures given women more flexibility - as it seeps through profession, billable second will start to fade.

Gary and Karin repeatedly mentioned lack of quantitative data –only anecdotal data. Gary acknowledged that diversity, partnership challenges, etc. only going to get worse in the future.

Linda asked about what's left to be done with Report, and asked what WLF's role could be.

Gary stated that some items still need to be studied, due to lack of time, data at time of publishing, and Karin clarified that the Committee didn't unpack pricing in law firms, and how this serves as an obstacle to lawyers advancing in their career. Karin invited feedback on report, and information on how it can grow. Gary said WLF can give feedback and force some regulatory change when goes to law society.

Karin said young lawyers group going to create working group to provide feedback to Futures. Karin said we were the only group that provided formal submissions.

7. Communications

a) New newsletter format

Emmy advised the group that CBA has discontinued its practice of sending out emails every quarter to all women CBA members with the WLF newsletter, and are instead forcing all Conferences/Sections to move to blog format on website. CBA is aiming for a post a month for each Conference/Section blog. Emmy is concerned we will lose themes and articles in this format, and will look into re-organizing newsletter format so can have summary of articles.

The group reviewed the new format for the newsletter, which Gathoni circulated, and Gathoni explained that the CBA website is incorporating new features, and eventually will incorporate selection options for members about how they want to engage/receive emails, including the newsletter. Sabrina suggested that, in website development, it would be great if we could suggest that the CBA and provincial online preference selections "speak" to or mirror each other.

The group discussed the possible loss of readership/membership, with CBA no longer sending our newsletter to all women members of the CBA. On our request, Gathoni will go back to CBA and query if we can get blast to our previously wider audience.

Emmy also spoke to need to amalgamate the website and newsletter committee. Emmy suggested a Twitter Account and Facebook page, and wants a new volunteer for the Communications Committee. Gathoni relayed that Facebook is not a possibility, further to CBA policy. Sara and Heidi mentioned that Twitter is a lot of work, and Emmy stated there are no volunteers on the newspaper committee, to work on the electronic media piece.

Judi said she was interested in working on Twitter with someone else. Tara also said she wants to look at what CBA says about what we can Tweet, and Kelly and Tara are interested in working together to come up with a framework for our Tweets. Judi, Kelly and Tara will be sent the CBA Social Media Policy and speak off-line about next steps re Twitter.

8. Reminders/CBA and National Sections Updates:

a) Vancouver 2015 Leadership Conference

Theme is “Women Leading the Way”. Linda relayed that some of speakers include Justice Abella, Campbell, Riva Seth, Diane Ross.

b) CLC Aug. 14-16, 2015, Calgary

Gathoni will report back on whether there will be CLC, and what format will be. Then WLF can revisit if wish to organize another session. Linda thinks we should hire one of our possible speakers from Vancouver Conference’s organizing efforts.

10. Forum Business

a) Cecilia I. Johnstone Award

Linda discussed that our Johnstone award was previously always presented at the CBA annual conference in August, but, given that CBA eliminated the awards reception this past summer, we have to revisit a new presentation format. As most awards will now be presented at the CBA mid-winter meeting, we can do this in alternate years, and otherwise present in years that we hold a leadership conference (perhaps at a lunch).

All were asked to consider nomination for Celia Johnstone award in their province.

b) ABA Commission on Women

Heidi provided background, and spoke about need for us to remain involved. The women on the Commission are appointed to the ABA Commission by the president of the ABA, and set policy, come out with publications. An initiative that they’d like us to partner on is “Women’s day on the Hill” – theirs will be on Capital Hill, on June 23, 2015, ours would be on Parliament Hill.

This event will aim to get a mass of women lawyers to meet with their senators on the Hill and speak about whatever advocacy position ABA is putting forward.

c) National Conference of Women's Bar Associations

Linda explained that this group is constituted by local US bar associations, and hold meetings twice a year. The timing of the meeting is challenging, being close to the CBA mid-winter and August meeting. Their focus as of late has been engaging men in women's issues in the law (see Catalyst report). The Conference requires fairly involved committee work.

d) Resolutions for Mid-Winter- ***Deadline: December 8***

Previously the WLF was going to prepare a resolution re: women on committees of CBA. Elaine was concerned the resolution was too negative, and that there were already 5 resolutions related to issue. Heidi's view is that we need to go back to the executive and request that they consider diversity and the impact and importance of it. Linda or Elaine will speak to Michelle Holland about this by phone and go from there in terms of next steps.

Elaine referenced a resolution that Claire was possibly interested in re: sexual harassment. Claire isn't sure that a resolution is the way to go.

e) FOI request for women applicants to the bench

In attempt to prompt a response/change with respect to appointment of women to the federal bench, Elaine drafted and will submit an FOI request, asking for the total number of applications received in each jurisdiction, in each year from 2008-2014, the number of applications from females, numbers from males, number of females who received a recommended or highly recommended by judicial advisory committee of each jurisdiction.

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Next Phone Call

Linda advised that we will not have a call in November, and next call will be on Wednesday, December 10, 12 EST (Heidi's birthday).

Linda will send around an "essential book list for women lawyers", and specifically mentioned a book called "The Happy Lawyer."

Member At Large

Linda reiterated the need for a fourth MAL and invited those attending who are not Branch chairs to apply. Linda also asked the non-branch chairs to brief their chairs on the meeting.

Communications Contact

All present were asked to identify one person from their branch who would remain their communications contact this year to provide brief updates on their branch activities. Heidi requested they respond to Sara by December of this year.

Strategic Planning Session

Linda reiterated that the items we spoke yesterday about discussing included:

- a) national women lawyers day event
- b) more advocacy
- c) talking about Futures Report
- d) sexual harassment issues
- e) Day on the Hill
- f) assistance needed in growing membership

a) Cross- Canada WLF Event

The group discussed various events that could be co-ordinated and held by all branches across the country. Linda mentioned ideas including attendance at LEAF breakfast, Ovarian Cancer support, causes supporting women's legal issues (lawyer offering advice to Afghani women, Vancouver lawyer providing legal support, supporting missing aboriginal women).

Heidi mentioned getting "satellite" law offices across the province to accept donations on behalf of women's shelters. Nova Scotia attempted this and held fundraisers involving donations of "stuff" when women flee homes, and the next year, gift cards. These offices agreed to coordinate delivery of the products/gift cards. No tax receipts were provided.

The group also discussed doing a grassroots project, nationally. Rachel Lammers suggested "coupon-ing" initiative in each province.

It was agreed that the event should be held during the week of International Women's Day (March 2, 2015). Idea of relief aimed at "Women's Experiences of Violence", i.e. sexual harassment, rape, shelters was also largely in favour by the group.

Linda also suggested fundraising in the form of a pub crawl (collecting donations for charity), which provides an easy way to raise the profile of the WLF and get additional membership, by inviting friends and colleagues that aren't members.

Linda will send around an email to share with the Branch executive and select what in each jurisdiction will work with respect to fundraising for this cause.

b) Advocacy

Judiciary

Linda relayed that we would keep everyone apprised of our FOI request with respect to women on the bench.

Linda also mentioned an event in BC where three judges attended (two visible minorities), and explained how to apply for judiciary, and had discussions on how to encourage more diversity on the bench.

Michelle discussed challenges in getting judges out to speak in her province, and Sabrina suggested that in Ontario, we had similar concerns, but were told it was a matter of finding the right judges. Linda suggested asking the head of the law society or chief judge to speak, as a way of giving the “stamp of approval”. Sara suggested downplaying the “feminism” issue, if judges have concerns with apprehensions of “bias” by male litigants.

Women on CBA Committees

Linda had thought to contact Michelle Hollins – she said in National Magazine that her focus would be on the retention of women.

Sara discussed conversation at OBA Council where its Executive Director expressed frustration with the length of time spent debating composition of “Re-Think” Committee, and reported that OBA’s working committee was similarly almost all men (maybe one woman).

The group discussed that the same usual faces are always on the various committees. It should be conveyed to Michelle that provincial branches need a model to work from, i.e. CBA should set the tone.

Sabrina queried what the next level is after a “resolution”, if its not implemented effectively. Heidi said that the by-laws were likely already amended to reflect the diversity requirement. Elaine suggested raising the conversation to higher levels at CBA, and noting that the resolutions as recent as 2014 aren’t being followed.

Judi would like us to query why \$1.3M was spent to hire consultants on this, and get more understanding of process that was followed.

Linda suggested each province should have a database of women who would be interested in sitting on corporate boards that could be sent to institute of corporate boards, head hunters. The group discussed that women would need to consent to be on list and we’d need disclaimer that the list wasn’t supported by CBA.

Sabrina can get the resources that exist with respect to list of candidates.

Linda mentioned a book published by Ivy School where listed women candidates for boards, and both Ingrid and Linda were included and never received a call. None of the women Linda knows that are in the book have been called.

The general feedback was that Linda should call Michelle and ask how we can assist CBA in complying with the resolution – i.e. providing list of names or otherwise.

c) Futures Project

Concern was expressed by many present from last year's meeting contingent that the Report did not reflect our feedback. The group discussed the format in which could express to Gary and Karin our disappointment with the failure of the Report to reflect our feedback, and ask what can be done now.

Sabrina recommended an audit of the Report, reading it with a gendered lens, and providing recommendations for amendment. The group was very enthusiastic and Sabrina suggested that we have a call to undertake gender-impact analysis, and will look into possible contacts that can give us a backgrounder on this (Women's Court of Canada example).

Sabrina will take the lead in dividing up the sections and deciding which section she'd like to report on first. We will otherwise divide up the sections. Linda will call Karin and find out if there's some other information we should be aware of before commencing this work. Linda will also find out if received Futures received feedback from Equality.

Gathoni suggested we approach the Young Lawyers Division who formed a sub-committee to respond to the Futures Report, and perhaps collaborate with them. We could also speak with the Equality Committee and SOGIC and check time lines.

d) Sexual Harassment

We discussed that the key message out of the Ghomesi scandal was about why women won't complain about harassment/sexual violence. The group discussed the relationship of the scandal to challenges for women lawyers, noting that professional women don't complain because of concerns of reputation. The Equity Ombudsman for the BC Law Society reports that articling students are most commonly harassed.

Claire reported on a newspaper article where the journalists started a movement "raped and never reported". The journalists have received thousands of responses, and Claire thinks WLF should be denouncing this issue. We discussed how last year we similarly tried to get a letter out ASAP re: Nadon appointment – it took months.

Claire was advised to go through Quebec CBA, and then to get reporter to direct inquiry to executive of CBA, for quickest response.

Elaine recommended we present the topic as a resolution at the February mid-winter meeting, (deadline December 8). Heidi mentioned that the objective of the resolution would be to give official voice to our concerns. The next stage would be to have the conversations to work with CBA to develop a model policy to go out.

Michelle suggested getting it out by contacting Marie-José (CBA Communications Lead), who attends national editorial board meetings, which will be taking place in later November. Michelle can ask it to be added to the agenda.

The group discussed what we want the message to be. Claire identified the objective is to seize on this momentum to feature our forum's role with respect to these issues. She thinks we can make a comment, expressing our objection to sexual harassment, rape, etc., without avowing to take certain steps.

Melissa provided feedback on the implications of this issue for marginalized communities. She spoke about the confusion at the highest level with respect to this issue, and how it illustrates how difficult it is for marginalized communities.

Heidi spoke about the work done to collect anonymous stories in Halifax.

Ingrid and Kathleen spoke about how WLF can and should create a safe-haven for complainants to come forward.

Heidi offered to draw up a possible media release for review by the group, based on the feedback. The two possible angles of our message will either be a) encouraging women to come forward and file complaints, either with their work place or law societies, as applicable, and for law firms to have in place policies and contacts to seriously deal with these issues or b) lack of clarity in the law and need for legislatures to draft new rules/regulation about this.

Claire recommended that we should tie in the MPP harassment issues and Ghomeshi scandals. Sabrina mentioned linking in the difficulties in coming forwards.

Elaine will draft a resolution for December 8.

e) Day on the Hill

Heidi suggested this item could be put-off until January call. We mentioned that timing of our event doesn't necessarily need to coincide with American event.

f) Growing Membership

Linda expressed hope that everyone obtained ideas from going around roundtable. Linda also invited chairs to speak to any other chair, or call Linda, to get ideas how to grow membership.

Action Items (In order of discussion, *not* priority)

1. **All present** will turn their minds to recruiting a fourth member at large.
2. **Gathoni** will ask CBA if we can get an email blast out to our previously wider audience for the newsletter, or other means of getting a larger audience for our blog;
3. **Gathoni (or Elaine?)** will put the question re: newsletter on next agenda for Conference Chairs;
4. **Gathoni** will send Judi, Kelly and Tara the CBA Social Media Policy;
5. **Judi, Kelly and Tara** will speak off-line about next steps re Twitter for WLF;
6. **Elaine** will draft a resolution for December 8 deadline with respect to sexual harassment;

7. **Gathoni** will report back on whether there will be CLC, and what format will be;
8. **All present** will consider nominations for Celia Johnstone award in their province;
9. **Linda** will call Michelle Hollins and ask how WLF can assist CBA in complying with the diversity on committee resolution(s) – i.e. providing list of names or otherwise;
10. **Elaine** will submit the judicial appointment FOI request;
11. **Linda** will send around an “essential book list for women lawyers”;
12. **All present who are not Branch Chairs** will brief Branch Chairs on discussions;
13. **All Branch Chairs** will identify one person from their branch who would remain or become their communications contact to provide brief updates on their branch activities, and provide Sara and Gathoni with this contact by December;
14. **Linda** will send around an email for Branch executives about a national fundraising undertaking (likely related to violence against women);
15. **Sabrina** will look into online resources that exist with respect to list of candidates for corporate boards;
16. **Sabrina** will look for contacts to provide a gender-impact analysis educational overview by phone on a future WLF call;
17. **Sabrina** will take the lead in dividing up the sections of the Futures Report and decide which section she’d like to report on first
18. **Linda** will call Karin and find out if there’s some other information we should be aware of before commencing work on audit of Futures Report. Linda will also find out if received Futures received feedback from Equality.
19. **Elaine** will call Janet Furor or Michelle Hollins and ask how best to get Press Release out or otherwise allow WLF to voice support for women reporting harassment/violence (exact message to be determined);
20. **Michelle** will put item on national editorial board meeting agenda about women reporting harassment/violence issue;
21. **Heidi** will draw up a possible media release;
22. **Gathoni** to put “Day on the Hill” on December or January Agenda.