

International Women's Forum of Canada Report of the Vice-President Leadership, 2009

The focus of this year's efforts in the Vice-President Leadership portfolio has been the search for an outstanding candidate for IWF Canada to support in her application for an IWF Leadership Fellowship. I am delighted to report that the Board has endorsed such a candidate as well as a second strong candidate as an alternate.

The Fellowships are a wonderful opportunity for the successful applicant to enhance their leadership skills and build their peer networks. The year-long program includes an Orientation Session, Participation in an IWF Conference, a week at the Harvard Business School and a week at the Judge Business School in Cambridge, UK. The components of the program are delivered by faculty, business leaders and international experts, and address topics of global management and leadership, including international perspectives on corporate governance, diversity, leading and managing internationally, innovation and cross-cultural collaborations and alliances. The opportunity for Fellows to discuss their own careers with each other and to discuss best practices and lessons learned in their respective organizations are important parts of the program. Each Fellow is also assigned a mentor.

The funding for the Canadian candidate came originally from a surplus from the 1999 World Leadership Conference in Montreal, supplemented by a grant from the AT&T Foundation. Last Fall each Canadian chapter of IWF was invited to consider this Fellowship and to identify one or more rising stars whom the Chapter members would undertake to mentor and propose for the 2009-10 Fellows Class. Candidates were sought from the not-for-profit sectors for such individuals might not otherwise have the resources to pursue such an opportunity. Several chapters were successful in identifying one or more candidates.

The Board established a Sub-Committee, comprising the person from each Chapter who was taking the lead in the process of identifying and mentoring potential nominees and the Executive Vice-President, Leadership, to oversee the process and to make recommendations to the Board. The members of the Sub-Committee were Carol Fitzwilliam (Montreal), Ellen Moore (Toronto), Karen Oldfield (Halifax) and Sandra Stash (Calgary). Some chapters had their own search and selection committees.

The Sub-Committee solicited resumes from the chapters and then asked a small number of candidates to complete full applications. The Sub-Committee was very impressed with the calibre of the candidates. After careful deliberation the Sub-Committee recommended one candidate and one alternate and the Board endorsed the recommendation at the May 6, 2009 Board meeting.

The applications will be submitted to Washington by the June 1, 2009 deadline and we await word as to the decisions of the international selection committee for the 2009-10 Fellows Class. We are confident that our selection process has been rigorous and that we are well positioned to uphold our well-established track record for producing outstanding Canadian Fellows.

Thank you to all who were involved in the process and especially the members of the Sub-Committee.

Respectfully submitted

Sheila A. Brown PhD
Vice-President Leadership
May 10, 2009