



Gender Parity in Key Creative Roles

Progress Report

January 31, 2024

Introduction

On December 13, 2018, Corus was pleased to participate in the CRTC's Women in Production Summit, alongside Canada's largest public and private sector broadcasters.

During the Summit, all participants agreed that, although there had been some progress in the preceding years, the data indicated that women continued to face barriers to career advancement in the Canadian film and television production industry. Gender under-representation in key creative positions needed to be addressed. Progress on this front is not only good for women and society in general, but it also makes good business sense. Corus is committed to creating and fostering lasting solutions to ensure more women play leading roles in our industry.

In this report, we provide Corus' 2023 progress report on our commitment to achieve gender parity in key creative roles for all big budget drama series by 2025, and the work we have done to achieve greater gender representation across other genres, across our portfolio of services.

Diversity Matters and Corus is Closing the Gap

Corus has been promoting diversity for many years as an important part of our content strategy. We have made it our mission to purposefully seek out projects led by women and have made important progress on expanding roles for women in our commissioned productions. Additionally, we have made concerted efforts to support greater diversity, equity, and inclusion across all of our original content, providing new opportunities for women of color. Our series are populated with strong female voices, both in front of and behind the camera.

Among the big budget¹ original production English-language dramas that Corus broadcast in 2022-23, we are proud to be able to report that we have reached gender parity in the fields of writing, producing, and editing; and have reached near gender parity in the fields of Director (48%) and Showrunner (43%) Additionally, we are pleased to be able to report that on an overall percentage for our original productions big budget dramas, we have achieved 54% total of women occupying key creative roles. In addition to exceeding the commitment Corus made in 2018 relating to the drama genre, we continue to report year over year growth of female leadership in original productions of other genres. For example, again this year, we report growth of female leadership in the factual genre², which is historically male dominated, exceeding gender parity in writing and producing categories. In lifestyle programming, we

¹ TV over \$900k; Films over \$2.5M

² Category 02B Long-form documentary and category 11(b) Reality television

continue to see women perform key leadership roles (e.g., Showrunner Producer, Writer) surpassing gender parity. Further specifics can be found in Appendix “A.”

At Corus, we are purposeful in bringing gender balance to all our commissioned properties. We take a focused approach to seek out storytelling that amplifies diverse voices. Working in concert with Corus’ DEI team on a Creative Diversity Strategy ensures that clear measures and objectives are in place as we collaborate with existing and new content creators. Together, we work with our production partners to train, hire, and promote women and persons from diverse communities and to work towards gender equity in all key creative roles. We work to ensure that our scripts reflect the diversity of Canadian society, and do not exploit or condone violence, racism, or sexism.

2022-23 saw an overall increase in representation of women directors, writers, and cinematographers across factual, drama, lifestyle, and kids programming. Looking forward, a key area of focus for us will be to continue to increase the number of women in the edit suites of our productions.

Women in Production at Corus

Corus is committed to fostering a strong, vibrant, and sustainable media industry that is both domestically successful and globally competitive. Empowering women leaders is an integral part of this vision. Led by a team of talented women, over the past years Corus’ Original Programming team has expanded from delivering hit series to our domestic channels, to becoming a leader in developing, producing, and selling unscripted content in Canada and around the world.

We are proud to count talented women among our Original Programming team in charge of our commissioning strategy. Rachel Nelson, Vice President of Corus Original Programming and Head of Corus Studios leads a team of female executives who are advocates for the advancement and inclusion of women and diversity in our industry and in our shows.

Corus’ strong Original Programming team includes industry veteran Lynne Carter, Manager, Original Programming, and five long-time senior Production Executives, bringing the percentage of women on the team to over 80%.

Rachel has been instrumental in developing the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy for Corus Originals and will continue oversight of this important initiative. She has been a key leader in the production of hit scripted series like *Family Law*, *Departure*, *Love Club* and *Robyn Hood*. We are pleased to report that these original series have all achieved a significant balance of women in key creative roles.

On Corus' French-language Original Programming side, Julie Godon is a recognized leader in the Quebec media industry. She manages the programming, acquisitions, original productions, dubbing and creative services teams for Corus' French channels. Julie is on the board of directors for the Academy of Cinema and television (French division) as well as President of their rules committee. Her team oversees drama productions for Séries Plus, multiple documentaries for Historia and animated productions for Télétoon. Julie's team makes a point of strongly encouraging all independent producers of those shows to reach gender parity within their teams. The team is also proud to count Anik Salas, the President of Réalisatrices Équitables within the ranks of their Creative Services team.

Off-Screen Initiatives

Corus recognizes that in order to ensure gender parity in key creative roles of production, we must ensure that we support women in all phases of their career and help to provide a path. Corus' ongoing off-screen initiatives to address the gender gap in the past year have included:

- **Women in Communications and Technology (WCT)** - Corus continues to support WCT, by sponsoring the Corus mentorship program, which is designed to help women advance to senior roles within communications industries. Cheryl Fullerton, Corus' Executive Vice President, People & Communications, is Chair of the WCT Board.
- **Corus Chair in "Women in Management"** - Corus' commitment to the career progression of women of all cultures and backgrounds is recognized through its support of the Corus Entertainment Chair in "Women in Management" at the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario. The Chair was established by Corus to develop innovative research, teaching materials and outreach programs on Women in Management and to broaden the impact of the school's unique teaching and research programs. This research explores culturally related themes such as the impact of race on perceptions of fairness in promotions and methods of evaluating the effectiveness of organizational diversity issues.
- **Corus.Futures Scholarship Program** - Launched in 2022, the Corus.Futures Scholarship program supports Canadian students from underrepresented communities in their final year of post-secondary studies. The Susannah Therrien Radio Scholarship and Internship is specific to supporting individuals who identify as female pursuing Radio studies through financial assistance, a three-month paid internship and mentorship opportunities. In 2023, we launched the so.da Social Marketing Scholarship

and Internship which also includes support for female-identifying students in the social media space.

- **Women in Film and Television – Toronto Chapter (WIFT-Toronto)** – Corus continues to be an active member of WIFT-(Toronto) as sponsor of the Corus Media Management Accelerator program, which is designed for screen-based professionals and entrepreneurs with less than five years of management experience. Developed in conjunction with the G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education at Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University), this program focuses on essential management principles required for future leaders. Sara Chan, Corus’ Vice President and Associate General Counsel, Programming, Rights and Revenue, sits on the Board of WIFT (Toronto)
- **Black Women Directors Accelerator Program** – Corus has partnered with the Directors Guild of Canada and the Black Screen Office in this newly-created program that offers training and mentoring to five experienced Black women Directors culminating in the opportunity to direct an episodic TV show as a guest director.
- **Forward Together** – Corus is a founding partner of Forward Together, a movement forged out of a vision to bring companies and professional women together to share best practices and resources internal to one organization with all women, to enable best in class learning across industries. Whether it is world-class training, top-notch speakers, or excellent facilities, companies leverage their internal resources that, when shared broadly, are used to benefits and impact significantly more women in our greater community.
- **OYA Black Arts Coalition** - Corus has partnered with OYA Black Arts Coalition to facilitate the *Corus Unscripted Internship Program*, a newly created training, networking, and mentorship opportunity for recently graduated Black students interested in pursuing a television career in the lifestyle and factual genres. The *Corus Unscripted Internship Program* also provides two students with an eight-week paid internship placement on a Corus-supported unscripted production in 2024 (internships to date have supported students identifying as female).
- **Participating in Mentoring and other Industry Initiatives**
Corus’ values include: “Win Together”, “Think Beyond”, “Make it Happen”, “Learn Every Day”, and “Show We Care”. Each one of these is also important and relevant to ensuring gender parity. We recognize that we have both an opportunity and an obligation to share and to learn.

Accordingly, members of Corus’ Original Production team have always participated in industry initiatives that support diverse talent through festivals and programs such as Reelworld, imagineNATIVE, Hot Docs,

National Screen Institute's Totally Television, Banff, and Whistler Film Festival, among others. This year, we expanded efforts to provide more opportunities for direct mentorship specifically focusing on diverse and BIPOC creators. Several team members are partnered with diverse talent through mentorship programs from Reelworld, WIFT, Whistler Film Festival "Women in Focus" and the Banff Netflix Diversity of Voices Initiatives. Corus team members also participated in the Creators of Color Incubator this year, which focused on Women of Color, as well as attended pitch meetings through BIPOCTV Mentorship Mondays, a BIPOCTV Kids' TV Writing Bootcamp.

Similarly, Corus' Global News continues to build relationships with local communities, and meet with subject matter experts from underrepresented groups, in an ongoing effort to uncover new story ideas from these communities. One of these organizations is *Informed Opinions* which amplifies the voices of women and gender-diverse individuals for a more democratic Canada. *Informed Opinions* works to ensure the perspectives and priorities of women in all their diversity are equitably reflected in the news media and integrated into Canadian society.

- **Corus' Community Youth Engagement Program** was established in 2023 to support youth in their post-secondary pursuits and expose them to Corus' business and our Corus professionals. Community organizations and educational institutions are invited to Corus for both a tour and a curated panel of Corus team members who share their career journeys with attendees. In July, Corus hosted a group of young women from Pathways to Education Scarborough Village who were interested in learning more about animation, social media, marketing, and production and featured a panel of Corus women in those respective disciplines.

A Whole-of-Industry Approach to Gender Parity is Needed

Corus remains committed to closing the gap for women in our industry. We will continue to exert our decision-making powers to affect change, continue to support the development of new creative talent through a range of initiatives, and use our power/influence to approve key creative talent in commissioned properties as a means to affect change in Canadian productions. However, as we have noted in previous years: we cannot do this alone.

While we will continue to do our part to drive the decisions we can control, we must not forget that CRTC regulations require us to purchase the vast majority of our high budget programming from independent Canadian producers, over whom we have limited control.

We hope these other parties will join us in this important effort. Only together, with a whole-of-industry approach, which includes Canadian independent producers and digital media broadcasters, can we achieve lasting change for women in our industry.

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