

The Women Lawyers Forum has a national executive that meets monthly to discuss current events in the branches and to work collectively on national projects. The Executive is made up of branch chairs from across Canada, members at large and the executive: <https://www.cba.org/Sections/Women-Lawyers/Executive>

Below is a quick overview of the ongoing national projects that the WLF is working on in 2020/2021:

- **Pay Equity Committee**
 - o This committee was struck a couple of years ago.
 - o The first project was to survey law firm partner compensation by gender. The results were published in a report in October 2020: <https://www.cba.org/Sections/Women-Lawyers/Resources/Resources/2020/Partner-Compensation-Survey-Final-Report>
 - o Next steps – Pay Equity Webinar and Roundtable April 2021
 - Webinar will include panel of women leaders from the U.K., USA and Canada to discuss what other jurisdictions are doing to tackle the topic and what steps Canada could take
 - Webinar followed by facilitated focus groups and an individual survey
 - Data will be taken from the focus groups and produce in a report by end of 2021
- **Touchstones**
 - o Committee was created to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the CBA Gender Equality Task Force Report, Touchstones for Change: Equality, Diversity and Accountability. Now known as the [Touchstones report](#), the 1993 document explored discrimination against women and others in the legal profession who didn't look like the traditional white male role model. The Touchstones task force found barriers to women and racialized individuals at all levels: barriers to entry into law school – and a “poisoned” atmosphere in the schools; barriers to articling positions; as well as barriers to women's success in private law firms and the judiciary.
 - o This committee hosted a webinar in October 2020 dealing with unconscious bias and is working on making the webinar into a series, with a question and answer period and toolkit
- **Leadership Conference 2021**
 - o Every two years, the WLF host a Leadership Conference. We will host a conference in October 2021
 - o As of September 2020, the CBA is no longer authorizing in-person conference.
 - o Proposed theme is “Adapt and Thrive – how to pivot and disrupt in uncertain times”.
 - o Still working out the specifics, i.e. speakers, dates, social component.
- **Cecilia I. Johnstone Award**
 - o Here is the link for information on the award/eligibility: <https://www.cba.org/Sections/Women-Lawyers/Awards/Cecilia-I-Johnstone-Award#:~:text=Johnstone%20Award%20was%20established%20in,historically%20were%20closed%20to%20them.>
- **Madam Justice**
 - o The Madam Justice project is an online gallery presented by the [Women Lawyers Forum \(WLF\)](#) in collaboration with the [Judges Section](#). The project is intended to celebrate

diversity on the bench by showcasing advice and perspectives from women judges across Canada. The project is ongoing and we will be adding to the gallery over time.

- Link to website: <https://www.cba.org/Sections/Women-Lawyers/Madame-Justice>

- **Gowning Committee**

- In 2020, did research on the gowning policies across Canada
- Drafted letters to federal courts to amend gowning policies to allow for maternity and disability exemptions: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mpfpw_6Lc-ZMi_dvtkt6V4EN5hE9bxTn/view
- There is a survey out asking for people's experiences gowning: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/L57PY9J>

- **Mandate – WLF Identity**

- New mandate has been approved but is not yet on the CBA website.
- Questions arising from discussion with SOGIC:
 - what was the intent of adding a reference to non-binary folk in the mandate; and
 - what is WLF doing to ensure it is a safe space for these folks.
- No end point to this project, ongoing internal work.
- Proposed two prong approach:
 - Year 1: internal look at the identity of the WLF and executive training – i.e. are we an identity-based organization or advocacy-based, is WLF a space for anyone but centered on women's experiences or something broader?
 - Year 2 and following: manifesting this revised identity, possible hiring of professional consultation (a SOGIC recommendation)
- Need for provincial WLF sections to also engage in this as lots of diversity between each branch.