



Organization of Women in International Trade - Toronto Spring Newsletter 2021



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From the President's Desk

Congratulations to everyone on thriving in the Age of a Pandemic!

We had our first ever virtual AGM on January 27th, and I must admit it was a bit nerve-racking. We found some great guidance on virtual AGMs and elections, and we worked out any kinks in three practice sessions.

OWIT-Toronto continues to plan ahead with lots of activities for 2021. Keep an eye on our Events Page for any upcoming events. We are always looking for new ideas from our members, including Member Spotlights, where you share your entrepreneurship journey with us and showcase your international products and

services. We can all learn from each other. Let us know if you are interested.

I encourage all members to review their profiles, to ensure the information in our [Members Directory](#) is current. Also keep an eye out for any Exclusive Business Opportunities. Many of our members are featured in panels and conferences, and we have highlighted a few below.

Congratulations to the excellent slate of nominees and winners of our Export Awards. We are now reaching beyond the boundaries of the Greater Toronto Area.

Spring is just around the corner. Take some time away from your desk and enjoy a walk with a friend!

Helen Hemmingsen

Welcome to New Board Members



Two new Board Members were voted in at our Annual General Meeting on January 27, 2021. Please join us in welcoming [Cathy Williamson](#) [left] as VP Finance, and [Ledia Dervishaj](#) [right] as VP Membership.

A Special Thank You





We would like to thank [Stephanie Dei](#) [left] and [Paulette Haynes](#) [right] for their energy and enthusiasm as VP Finance and VP Membership over the last two years. They stepped down from their duties on the Board in early 2021. Stephanie has moved to Ottawa, and Paulette is pursuing interests in her legal profession.

Please join us in wishing Stephanie and Paulette success and prosperity in the future. We will miss them both at our member events and board meetings.

Virtual Spotlight Shines on Winners of OWIT-Toronto Export Awards



The recipients of [OWIT-Toronto's 16th Annual Export Awards](#) were celebrated in its first-ever (and flawlessly executed!) virtual ceremony, held in November, that attracted over 150 guests. Congratulations to Christine Nakamura, Vice President, Toronto, [Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada](#), for clinching the JoAnna Townsend Leadership Award for Excellence in International Trade; to Diane Reko, CEO of [Reko International Group](#), and Janet Stewart, CEO of [WeLoveLearning Canada](#), who tied for Woman Exporter of the Year, and to Rachel Zlatar of McMaster University, winner of the Student in International Trade Award. Their inspirational acceptance remarks followed congratulatory virtual greetings from Canada's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland, and from Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade.

All participants had the opportunity to do virtual networking after the Awards presentations. OWIT-Toronto thanks the event sponsors - [Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub](#), [BMO](#), [UPS Canada](#), [Jewels4Ever](#) and the [City of Toronto](#) - for their support and active participation in the ceremony.

Members on Stage



Check out this [Tedx talk](#) by Anita Agrawal, owner of Best Bargains Jewellery and Past President of OWIT- Toronto, and this [news piece](#) featuring her.

To be on "Member on Stage" of the next issue, please contact us at info@owit-toronto.ca

Do not forget to [renew your membership](#), and check our [member benefits!](#)



Congratulations to [Jessica Horwitz](#) on joining the partnership at [Bennett Jones](#). Jessica and Bennett Jones are corporate members of OWIT-Toronto. Jessica specializes in international trade, customs, and regulatory compliance. She represents Canadian and international clients in trade disputes and investigations, assisting clients with import/export issues including customs compliance, export controls and economic sanctions, and anti-corruption compliance and international investment matters.

Jessica has been an invaluable member of OWIT-Toronto, we appreciate the ongoing support and sponsorship from Jessica and her colleagues at Bennett Jones.

[Read about other featured OWIT-Toronto members.](#)

Trade Policy Committee Update



From submitting consultation papers to participating in stakeholder groups, the past year has been a busy period for OWIT-Toronto's [Trade Policy Committee](#) members. And the upcoming months promise more of the same. [Here is what we've been up to.](#)

OWIT-Toronto Participates in USMCA Pilot Program

The SME Counsellors Network Pilot Program is a trilateral U.S. Canada-Mexico initiative to establish a network of small and medium sized enterprise (SME) counselling organizations. The objective of this pilot program is to connect SME counselling groups operating in North America to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, as well as engage in joint activities with the ultimate aim of building a peer network. This initiative is one of the first activities proposed under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) Committee on SME issues, which is tasked with promoting increased trade and investment opportunities for SMEs, including through cooperation on support initiatives, joint activities to promote SMEs owned by under-represented groups, and the exchange of information and best practices.

OWIT- Toronto - represented by board members Helen Hemmingsen, Susan Baka and Alma Farias - participated in the January virtual introductory session attended by members from all three CUSMA countries: Canada, United States and Mexico. The agenda involved a best practices discussion and an update on digital platforms, useful platforms with activities, and opportunities accessible to our members and contacts. Check our website/web resources; we have posted BDC and Canadian Commercial Corporation links presented at the session.

We will be informing about progress and outcomes in the coming months.

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*Up Your Speaking Game to
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Moderator:
 Susan Baka
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 International VP, OWIT

Anne Freedman
 Speakout Inc.

Camelia Mazard
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VISIT THE WEBSITE TO BOOK: [EXCErate2021.com](https://www.excelerate2021.com)

[EXCELERATE 2021: GroYourBiz Global Virtual Summit Series](#), which began in February and runs through til May, includes a Global Competitiveness track. OWIT International will sponsor a session called [Up Your Speaking Game to Attract New Global Opportunites](#) on April 14 at noon EST. a diverse panel of speakers from Canada, Africa, Geneva and the US. Don't miss their valuable insights! You can [purchase tickets](#) for an individual session or the whole Summit series.

What to Watch for

OWIT-Toronto is in discussions to have joint collaborative events with other OWIT chapters: one with OWIT-Ottawa and OWIT Dominican Republic and another with two OWIT chapters in Florida: Tampa and Miami. These will be great opportunities to connect with other OWIT members. Stay tuned for the dates and details.

Join OWIT-Toronto Today!

Follow us on social media



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BCBC - Belgian Canadian Business Chamber: <http://www.belgiumconnect.com/>

B2BeeMatch: <https://www.b2beematch.com/en/>

Bennett Jones: <https://www.bennettjones.com/>

EDC - Export Development Canada: <https://www.edc.ca/>

EP - The Entrepreneurs Point: <https://www.entrepreneurspoint.com/>

FITT - Forum for International Trade Training: <https://fittfortrade.com/>

Jewels4Ever: <https://www.jewels4ever.ca/>

TBDC - Toronto Business Development Centre: <https://tbdc.com/>

The Ontario Government: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/government>

WEKH - Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub: <https://wekh.ca/>

Subscribe for more news and events!

OWIT - Toronto Chapter

Website: <http://www.owit-toronto.ca> || Email: info@owit-toronto.ca

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