EMBARGOED Jan. 28, 2020 - 6 AM PT/9 AM ET

Canadian Association of Black Journalists

Canadian Media Diversity: Calls to Action

Canadian newsrooms and media coverage are not truly representative of our country's racial diversity. We acknowledge that journalism outlets have made efforts to address this worrying gap, but glaring racial inequity persists. As an industry, we need to rethink our approach to this problem by addressing it in a meaningful and systemic way.

The absence of representation in newsrooms across Canada has become impossible to ignore in light of recent events. *Vancouver Sun*'s editor-in-chief apologized in September after the newspaper published an op-ed suggesting that ethnic diversity is harmful. Then, later that month, the industry received widespread criticism for its reductive coverage of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau wearing blackface and brownface. Both of these incidents happened over the past few months — and that's on top of the barriers journalists of colour have faced for decades. Even at our national broadcaster, which prioritizes diversity as part of its mandate, people of colour (POC) and Indigenous people comprise less than 15 per cent of staff, which is not representative of the more than 20 per cent of people of colour who make up Canada's total population.

Beyond the moral imperative, there are strong business and civic cases for racial equity in Canadian media. There hasn't been research on Canadian newsroom demographics since the mid-2000s, which is a testament to how much we hold our industry accountable when it comes to diversity and inclusion. These statistics from 15 years ago were abysmal. Emerging research, which we detail below, shows that circumstances haven't improved much since then.

The Canadian Association of Black Journalists (CABJ) and Canadian Journalists of Colour (CJOC) share a common vision: We want the media industry to be equitable and truly representative of Canada's racial diversity and commitment to multiculturalism. This kind of change starts at the top. So, now is the time for a frank discussion with industry leaders about the changes that need to happen.

EMBARGOED Jan. 28, 2020 - 6 AM PT/9 AM ET

Canadian Association of Black Journalists

Below, we've outlined seven calls to action to help Canadian news outlets establish clear and attainable goals as they seek to diversify their newsrooms.

1. **Begin self-reporting of newsroom demographics on a regular basis**

   Organizations measure what matters to them, and reliable data provides a foundation for change. If diversity and inclusion is truly a priority for media organizations in Canada, they should begin to self-report newsroom diversity statistics on a regular basis. Canadian outlets can look to the American Society of News Editors, which has collected demographic data from newsrooms across the U.S. since 1978, as an example. In the interest of transparency, the results should be released publicly. CJOC and CABJ are willing to work with outlets to develop a survey that assesses the level of representation among newsroom staff and management. We recommend that this survey be conducted every other year.

2. **Increase representation and coverage of racialized communities by hiring more editors and reporters of colour**

   A more diverse news team translates into more diverse coverage. Newsrooms should take a targeted approach to recruitment, focused on hiring talent from racialized communities and ensuring their hiring committees also have people of colour. We encourage news outlets to work closely with organizations such as CJOC and CABJ to access diverse pools of talent. Current newsroom leaders should also seek opportunities to uplift journalists of colour through mentorship, and by supporting their interest in telling diverse stories.

3. **Retain and promote journalists of colour to management positions in the newsroom**

   Editors have the power to greenlight stories, so it's not enough to only hire reporters of colour. We strongly recommend that news outlets create leadership tracks for journalists of colour, and invest in their potential as future managers. Current newsroom leaders should be proactive in seeking out and developing leaders of colour. These individuals should be promoted to occupy

decision-making positions, such as assignment editors, senior and executive producers, managing editors and news directors.

4. **Formally consult with racialized communities about news coverage on an ongoing basis**

   We recommend establishing community advisory boards that have representation from racialized communities, so they can give feedback to newsrooms about their editorial coverage. These boards also provide an opportunity for non-POC journalists and managers to learn from different community members, and gain insight on how news coverage affects them. We recommend that boards have a rotating membership every other year to ensure fresh perspectives are being considered.

5. **Take a structural approach to improving representation beyond corporate training and workshops**

   Diversity and inclusion policies and committees need to go beyond band-aid solutions that don't genuinely effect change. Rather than responding passively to the problem of newsroom representation, news outlets should be proactive in identifying and confronting systemic barriers that journalists of colour face. We recommend focusing less on reviewing existing policies and more on developing new ideas and solutions. These conversations should be driven by journalists of colour with non-POC allies present.

6. **Create scholarships and mentorship opportunities targeted towards aspiring journalists of colour**

   News outlets should create opportunities for aspiring journalists of colour to overcome barriers to entering the industry by way of scholarships and mentoring. We recommend that management invests time in reaching out to racialized communities and nurturing overlooked talent. Scholarships should target journalism students of colour, and mentoring opportunities should be uniquely

designed to nurture them. The long-term goal is to create a bigger pool of diverse talent from which media outlets can draw in the future.

7. **Start the work of diversity and inclusion in Canadian journalism schools**

   Addressing the lack of representation in Canadian newsrooms starts with Canadian journalism schools. Our educational institutions serve as a talent pipeline for media outlets, and also teach current best practices in journalism. More focus should be placed on covering racialized communities, providing perspectives from experts of colour, hiring more diverse faculty and developing strategies for recruitment from racialized communities. In addition to drawing from journalism programs, we encourage news outlets to recruit students from other fields of study. We also want to reiterate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 86th call to action, which calls upon "Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples."

Below, we highlight new research into representation in Canadian journalism, which further underscores the ongoing barriers facing journalists of colour in this country and the work that still needs to be done. We are committed to working with news outlets and other stakeholders to achieve the goal of racial equity in Canada's media industry.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Ryerson University

Led by Ryerson University professors Asmaa Malik and Sonya Fatah, this academic study explores the demographic makeup of columnists at Canada's major newspapers, examining whether they reflect the diversity of the Canadian population at large. Researchers analyzed 21 years of columns in *The Toronto Star, The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail*, using the columnists' own words to identify their race and gender. Between 1998 and 2018, they found that there was no representation of Black women, Indigenous people, Latin Americans, Middle East and North Africans, and non-cisgender

people, while white columnists became significantly overrepresented. Representation of women improved throughout this period, but remained far from parity. This study marks the beginning of a series of research projects focused on developing and assessing the impact of diversity self-reporting tools for Canadian newsrooms.

University of Toronto, Scarborough

An upcoming University of Toronto Scarborough study, led by professor Sherry Yu, attempts to explore newsroom diversity with journalists of colour in Canada. The lack of newsroom diversity and its impact on the newsroom dynamic and news content continues to be documented in Canada and elsewhere. Especially, in Canada, Cukier et al.'s 2010 study found that only about 5 per cent of the leaders in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)-based media organizations are visible minorities. This quantitative finding requires further investigation, especially how journalists of colour synthesize their multiple memberships to media institutions, the professional journalistic community and ethnic/racial communities in responding to this reality. This study explores this question with members of Canadian Journalists of Colour (CJOC) across ethnicities and news sectors.

ABOUT US

[Canadian Journalists of Colour]

Canadian Journalists of Colour (CJOC) is a community of Indigenous, Black and people of colour working in the media industry across Canada. CJOC offers a supportive environment for journalists of colour to talk about the industry — whether that's working through story ideas, sharing resources, posting job opportunities, offering mentorship or brainstorming solutions to problems facing our industry. Since CJOC’s launch in October 2018, we’ve attracted 600 members, and have established chapters in cities and postsecondary schools across Canada.

[Canadian Association of Black Journalists]

EMBARGOED Jan. 28, 2020 - 6 AM PT/9 AM ET

Canadian Association of Black Journalists

Founded in 1996, the Canadian Association of Black Journalists (CABJ) strives to increase representation of Black journalists nationwide. Over the years, the CABJ has sought to comprehensively portray the voices and experiences of Black Canadians. The association believes there is a need to hold the industry accountable as we work to counter systemic racism and diversify newsrooms. The CABJ relaunched in 2018 with a renewed focus to help news outlets diversify, and to inspire a new generation of young Black journalists.

Nadia Stewart, CABJ executive director
Anita Li, CJOC cofounder

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Anita Li, CJOC Toronto
Cherise Seucharan, CJOC Vancouver
Anya Zoledziowski, CJOC Edmonton
CJOC Montréal
info@cjoc.net

Nadia Stewart, CABJ Executive Director
David Thurton, CABJ Board Member
Camille Dundas, CABJ Board Member
Brian Daly, CABJ Atlantic Director
contact@cabj.news