



January 31, 2005

Diane Rheaume
Secretary General
CRTC
Ottawa ON K1A 0N2

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Dear Secretary General:

Re: VisionTV Annual Reports on Cultural Diversity Corporate Plan

PAP

VisionTV is pleased to provide the following report with respect to our Cultural Diversity Corporate Plan and our performance since last reporting to the Commission in January of 2004. We have used the same format as previously requested in developing this report.

Corporate Accountability

**SECRETARIAT
IM / BROADCASTING**

(i) senior executive in charge of diversity

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(A) Has a senior executive been identified in the corporate plan?

The Chief Operating Officer continues as the senior executive responsible for implementation of the VisionTV Corporate Plan for Cultural Diversity.

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(B) What specific responsibilities have been identified in the corporate plan?

Ultimately, the COO has the authority to hire and fire to ensure the goals in the plan are being achieved. Specific responsibilities include:

- Setting the tone and direction of the company's diversity plan
- Making recommendations to further the success of the plan
- Leading in the implementation of corporate diversity initiatives
- Monitoring progress
- Chairing the management and staff advisory committee on cultural diversity
- Initiating the annual performance reviews for all management and staff
- Arranging and scheduling any required training or other professional development activities

(C) What has the senior executive responsible for diversity accomplished in this reporting year, particularly with respect to ensuring that management becomes more reflective of Canada's multi-cultural reality?

We have engaged in positive measures hiring in a number of areas in order to enhance the diversity of our work force including: Production Intern, Sales Co-ordinator, and Segment Producer.

All job descriptions were updated in 2004, including specific references to performance expectations to support the achievement of our corporate plan for cultural diversity.

VisionTV's Board of Directors provides leadership in this area as well, enhancing its diversity in 2004 by adding more women and representation of First Nations.

VisionTV's long history of success in promoting cultural diversity on-air is perhaps best reflected in the recognition programs affiliated with VisionTV have received. For example, in each of the last four years projects associated with VisionTV have won the Canada Award at the Gemini's for excellence in television programming that reflects the racial and cultural diversity of Canada: 2001 *Made in China*; 2002 *Film Club*; 2003 *Carry Me Home: the Story and Music of the Nathaniel Dett Chorale*; and this year's winner *Cosmic Current*.

(D) If applicable, please describe any new initiatives, including those that might have resulted from work in this area.

Along with *Women In Film and Television* and *Innoversity*, VisionTV developed an internship program to provide a year-long internship to a talented young filmmaker of colour to work with our in-house production team. This expands on our past practice of inviting culturally diverse interns to work on our in-house shows on an informal.

VisionTV continues to sponsor the VisionTV/Peter Flemington Scholarship for Excellence in Television Documentary Production at Ryerson University. This annual prize is awarded to a student in the School of Journalism whose documentary work builds bridges of communication and understanding between people of different faiths and cultures.

(ii) clear goals for station managers

(A) What goals for station managers have been identified in the corporate plan?

Although VisionTV, as a specialty service, does not have specific "station managers" in many respects the COO fulfills a similar role with respect to internal management.

The work of the COO is supported by the Manager of Human Resources and the Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee ("CDAO"), a group of senior managers responsible for advising the COO on diversity issues.

Specific goals for these individuals include:

- Evaluation on progress with respect to diversity included in annual performance reviews
- Regular meetings to discuss diversity initiatives
- Implementation of training for employees
- Annual report to the Board of Directors on diversity
- Maintain policy of positive measures in hiring; maintain or increase overall numerical representation from designated groups
- Continue support of Innoiversity and other industry initiatives on diversity

(B) In this reporting year, which initiatives to meet those goals have been implemented?

Each of the objectives noted above was achieved in 2004.

(C) What are the outcomes of those initiatives?

Performance reviews for all staff were completed; all job descriptions were reviewed and updated to include references to furthering diversity; the CDAO met on a bi-monthly basis; training sessions on equity and diversity were offered to all employees; reporting to the Board was done on a quarterly basis; policy measures were maintained and numerical representation of visible minorities increased; we continued to support Innoiversity, as well as numerous other initiatives including in particular the Broadcasting Strategic Alliance, an industry effort to increase Aboriginal participation in all aspects of the broadcast system.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

All of the initiatives identified in our original Cultural Diversity Corporate Plan have been implemented. VisionTV has a long tradition of reflecting diversity in its work force and on-air presentation. We intend to maintain that standard of excellence.

(iii) diversity training for management

(A) What specific training initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

Annual anti-harassment and employment equity training have been identified in the plan. Supplementary training in English is available to employees on an as needed basis.

(B) In this reporting year, what training initiatives have been implemented?

Seminars on anti-harassment and employment equity were offered in March 2004.

(C) For those training initiatives that have been implemented, please answer the following questions:

i. What kind of training has been received?

Guest speakers from HRDC and the Ontario Human Rights Commission were invited to educate VisionTV employees about the broader policy issues and requirements of government legislation and case law.

ii. Please indicate which levels of management have participated in this training and what proportion of management that this represents.

Seminars were arranged and conducted so that all employees and managers could attend. Ninety percent of management was represented.

iii. What have been the benefits of this training?

There is now greater awareness of the importance anti-harassment and equity policy and procedures. More educated staff and managers are more sensitive to these issues and better able to address matters that may arise in the future.

(D) Please identify timelines for those training initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

Supplementary training in English will be provided at the request of an employee.

(iv) staff involvement in plan's progress

(A) What specific initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

As diversity is a core value at VisionTV, staff have been involved in all aspects of our successful achievement of diversity goals. The corporate plan references specifically:

- Annual performance reviews
- Distribution of multi-faith calendar
- Maintenance of Equity and Diversity policies
- CDAO to advise COO
- Training opportunities

All policies that impact diversity initiatives are available on the corporate intranet which serves as the homepage for staff internet access. Each new employee is provided with the relevant policies and the importance of equity and diversity is explained and emphasized at the time of hiring.

(B) In this reporting year which initiatives have been implemented.

All of these initiatives were pursued this year.

(C) For those initiatives that have been implemented, please answer the following questions:

- i. In this reporting year describe the opportunities provided for staff assessment of progress in the area of cultural diversity?***

Each staff member provided written commentary and then met with their direct supervisor as part of the annual performance review. The discussions included an opportunity to review diversity initiatives. All job descriptions were reviewed this year and each had an opportunity to provide input and recommendations on necessary revisions. A management and staff committee chaired by the Manager of Human Resources working with supervisors and the COO then reviewed and completed each job description. The members of the CDAO consulted with staff on a regular basis and were available as a resource to all employees as part of the CDAO's mandate as an advisory body. Attendance at training sessions on equity and diversity were mandatory for all staff. In addition there were quarterly staff and senior management meetings when diversity and equity initiatives could be discussed.

- ii. How many staff participated in this assessment?***

All staff participated in these assessments.

- iii. Through staff assessment have future challenges been identified?***

We have yet to achieve complete success in increasing the representation of Aboriginal persons in our workforce. While we do work with a number of independent contractors and have engaged interns who are Aboriginal persons, and include representation from First Nations on our Board of Directors, we have not yet added Aboriginal persons to our staff complement. VisionTV's Manager of Human Resources will be exploring ways to expand our recruitment and positive measures hiring to improve performance in this area. As noted above, we are working with an alliance of broadcasters to examine ways to improve our performance in this area.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

All of the initiatives identified in VisionTV's Cultural Diversity Corporate Plan with respect to staff involvement have been implemented.

(E) If applicable, please describe any new initiatives, including those that might have resulted from work in this area.

As noted above, we have initiated an internship program in conjunction with Women In Film and Television and Innoversity, to provide a year-long internship to a talented young filmmaker from

a visible minority or Aboriginal background to work with our in-house production team. This idea was the result of staff assessments conducted in our Communications department.

(v) improving employment practices re visible minorities

Hiring

(A) What specific hiring initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

Two specific initiatives have been identified in VisionTV's plan:

- Maintain positive measures hiring to feature Aboriginal peoples and visible minorities
- Maintain or increase current overall numerical representation from the four designated groups

(B) In this reporting year, which hiring initiatives have been implemented?

Both of these initiatives have been implemented.

(C) For those initiatives that have been implemented please describe what has been accomplished.

We have engaged in positive measures hiring in a number of areas in order to enhance the diversity of our work force and have increased numerical representation in two of the four designated groups while maintaining levels in the other two groups.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

All of the initiatives have been implemented.

(E) If applicable please describe any new initiatives including those that might have resulted from work in this area.

As noted above, we have not yet achieved success in hiring and retaining qualified Aboriginal candidates to VisionTV's staff. Our Manager of Human Resources will be making recommendations to the Executive Management team this year on how to improve performance in this area. We are also participating in the Broadcasting Strategic Alliance, an industry effort to increase Aboriginal participation in all aspects of the broadcast system.

VisionTV's Board of Directors remains committed to making diversity at the Board level a priority. The nominating committee of the Board is empowered to ensure that representation from the four designated groups is a priority in the recruitment of new members. In particular in 2004, an additional director of First Nations heritage joined the Board.

Retention / training

(A) What specific initiatives including training have been set out address retention of culturally diverse employees in the corporate plan?

In addition to the training initiatives discussed previously, VisionTV engages in the following practices that encourage the retention of culturally diverse employees:

- Annual distribution of the multi-faith calendar to all employees
- Maintain availability of a multi-purpose room for meditation or prayer
- Policy allowing substitution of statutory holidays for alternate days
- Regular meetings of CDAO
- Strong representation of visible minorities and women among senior and executive management
- Reflection of diversity in on-air presentation
- Cultural diversity identified as a core value of the organization

(B) In this reporting year, which initiatives have been implemented?

Diversity is an ongoing commitment at VisionTV. All of these initiatives have been actively pursued this year.

(C) For those initiatives that have been implemented please describe what has been accomplished?

The multi-faith calendar is displayed and used by many employees in their offices and work spaces. The calendar is also used as a programming tool. We are enclosing a copy of the 2005 calendar for your reference.

Individual employees take advantage of the multi-purpose room and the holiday policy from time to time. The members of the CDAO consulted with staff regarding diversity initiatives, met on a quarterly basis, and provided advice to the COO.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

All of the initiatives identified in the corporate plan have been implemented.

Reflection of Diversity in Programming

News

VisionTV does not engage in the production or broadcast of news programs, and as such these sections do not specifically apply to our circumstances. Our in-house current affairs show focusing on faith, spirituality, and moral and ethical issues related to religion, is the closest equivalent to news programming at VisionTV. Our Executive Producer of In-house Production, a position that has always been held by a woman from a visible minority group, is responsible for

enforcement of our editorial policy that requires balance and diversity in the program content. All of the hosts of VisionTV's in-house productions in 2004 were women of visible minority backgrounds.

Non-News

(i) Diversifying casts; and (iii) Diversifying Acquisitions

(A) What specific initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

The Senior VP Programming makes the final determination on all matters related to VisionTV's program offering, including acquisition, licensing, and scheduling decisions, to ensure a fair and accurate reflection of cultural diversity on-screen. Specific responsibilities identified in the plan include:

- Supervising the Executive Producer for In-House Production, Director of Independent Production, and Mosaic programming
- Leading the implementation of on-air diversity initiatives
- Monitoring progress
- Enforcing VisionTV's *Code of Ethics*
- Using the Canadian Multi-Faith Calendar as a programming tool
- Reviewing and hiring on-air personalities
- Adhering to VisionTV's Guidelines for Independent Productions
- Liaising with the Mosaic Program Management Group

The Senior VP Programming is therefore ultimately responsible for the diversity of our on-air presentation. The senior manager responsible for each area of our programming schedule (Executive Producer of In-house; Director of Independent Production; Manager of Acquisitions; Manager of Mosaic Programs) reports to the Senior VP Programming. Each manager has cultural diversity identified as a performance goal and is responsible for ensuring diversity policies are followed in their area of programming. The managers have regular group meetings and individual meetings with the Senior VP. The Senior VP then reports to the President & CEO and the Board of Directors on a regular basis regarding diversity in the program schedule.

The Director of Independent Production has specific responsibility for the implementation of VisionTV's Guidelines for Independent Producers which includes a statement emphasizing the importance of cultural diversity and the fair and accurate reflection of visible minorities.

The Manager of Mosaic Programs is responsible for seeking out programs from under represented groups and for ensuring the all programs meet the standards set out in VisionTV's Code of Ethics, including the references to diversity.

(B) In this reporting year, which initiatives have been implemented?

All of the initiatives in the corporate plan have been pursued this year.

(C) For those initiatives that have been implemented please describe how each initiative has contributed to diversifying casts / acquisitions.

VisionTV's long history of success in reflecting Canada's cultural diversity continued in 2004. Descriptions of a few of our notable achievements in diversifying casts this year are set out below.

Approximately 15% of the average broadcast week on VisionTV is comprised of Mosaic programs from Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim faith communities that feature visible minorities in leading roles. This outstanding diversity in the Mosaic area is enhanced by the diversity of programming we offer in our Cornerstone schedule.

The **Reel Diversity Competition**, developed by the National Film Board and VisionTV as an initiative to support emerging filmmakers from visible minorities, expanded nationally with VisionTV, CBC and CBC Newsworld as broadcast partners. In 2003 and 2004, ten first films were produced and broadcast as a result of this program.

Documentaries produced in association with VisionTV have received the prestigious Canada Award – for programming “that reflects the racial and cultural diversity of Canada” – at the Gemini Awards for the past four years in a row including the 2004 winner *Cosmic Current*.

Two of the first three pilots from VisionTV's **Cultural Diversity Drama Competition**, *St. Jamestown* and *Da Kink in My Hair* were delivered and broadcast in 2004. The third, *Hotel Babylon*, went to air in January 2005. We are pleased to enclose a DVD which includes each of these outstanding pilot projects. They celebrate the cultural diversity of Canadian society and reflect the talent that abounds amongst culturally diverse creative teams.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

All of the initiatives are currently being implemented on a day-to-day basis.

(ii) Diversifying scripts

(A) What specific initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

As VisionTV has not historically engaged in significant script development, there are no specific initiatives identified in the plan in this regard. Any development would be subject to our overall commitment to diversity including the terms of our Code of Ethics and Diversity Policy.

(B), (C) & (D)

N/A

(E) If applicable, please describe any new initiatives including those that might have resulted from work in this area.

One outcome of our foray into diversity drama has been to identify the need for greater script and concept development among culturally diverse producers. We will be earmarking some of the additional resources made available through the increase in VisionTV's wholesale rate approved by the Commission in 2004 to script and concept development in this area.

Community Involvement

(i) Community input and feedback

(A) What specific initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

The following specific initiatives for community input and feedback have been identified:

- Bi-monthly meetings of Mosaic Program Management Group ("MPMG")
- Website posting seeking suggestions and feedback
- Maintain diversity of volunteer Board of Directors and consult on a regular basis
- Annual review of in-house production by industry and community representatives
- Urge CAB Joint Societal Issues Committee to examine how to best measure audience trends of visible minority and Aboriginal viewers

(B) In this reporting year, which initiatives have been implemented?

All of these initiatives were pursued this year.

(C) For those initiatives that have been implemented, please answer the following questions.

i. What kind of input and feedback has been solicited?

From the MPMG we have sought feedback:

- a. to address the needs of the various faith broadcasters.
- b. to ensure diversity and balance between the Mosaic and Cornerstone schedules.
- c. on implementation of VisionTV Code of Ethics in specific situations and on general matters of policy.
- d. on matters pertaining to programming.
- e. on matters of pricing of air time and accessibility.
- f. regarding the creation and broadcast of on-air promotions for Mosaic programs.
- h. about faith and cultural events advertised by VisionTV and attended by VisionTV representatives.

Our website solicits feedback from viewers on all aspects of our programming. We receive a wide range of correspondence from viewers in reply, by letter, email, and telephone. From time

to time we ask for commentary on specific issues, including feedback on the diversity of our program schedule, either through online questions, polls, or the use of surveys. Visitors to our website are able to respond online providing immediate feedback to us.

The Board of Directors has representation from at least five different faith communities. We consult with the Board on a regular basis regarding diversity initiatives by: reviewing the program schedule; showing video clips; viewing excerpts from specific shows; and reporting on employment and corporate challenges and achievements.

The annual review of in-house production focuses on ensuring that a balanced presentation of issues is being achieved, both within each episode and across the season. Specific commentary on achievement with respect to cultural diversity in the on-air presentation is also requested.

ii. Please indicate the communities and/or groups from whom input and feedback has been received.

Lists of VisionTV's Board of Directors and the active members of the MPMG are on file with the Commission.

We receive comments from thousands of viewers each year, from coast-to-coast, representing a diversity of faith communities and cultural backgrounds.

In 2004, we actively solicited feedback from the leaders of all of the major faith institutions in Canada.

iii. Who within the organization reviews this input and feedback.

The Senior VP Programming and the COO attend MPMG meetings to receive and review feedback. They also attend meetings of the Board of Directors, along with the President & CEO.

Feedback from viewers is received and sorted by our Audience Relations Coordinator. The Vice-President of Communications is then responsible for reviewing and sharing comments with other members of the executive management team as appropriate. Survey data is also managed by the VP of Communications who meets regularly with the Senior VP Programming to review and discuss the results.

The President & CEO received feedback from Canadian faith leaders directly.

iv. How is the input and feedback being used?

The input is used to shape our program schedule and make adjustments to ensure we are achieving appropriate levels of balance and diversity. Ultimately, we hope the feedback will confirm VisionTV's success in achieving our cultural diversity objectives.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

We are in the process of reviewing the JSIC's recommendations on best practices and implementing where feasible improvements to our own procedures with respect to diversity. We have not imposed specific timelines for implementation as some of the recommendations appear to be cost prohibitive and will require careful management if they are to be added to VisionTV's cultural diversity practices.

(E) If applicable please describe any new initiatives including those that might have resulted from work in this area.

Website

The VisionTV website was updated in 2004 to enhance the promotion of programs that celebrate cultural diversity. We have also worked directly with a number of Mosaic clients to improve their web presence and our links to their sites.

Dialogue with Faith Institutions and Faith Media

Feedback from faith leaders indicated a need for increased dialogue among faith institutions and the media. VisionTV is supporting the efforts of the Canadian Centre for Faith and Media in this regard and will be participating in its annual conference in 2005. We will also be endeavouring to engage other faith broadcasters in dialogue to examine how we, as a niche industry within Canadian broadcasting, might better reflect Canada's spiritual and cultural diversity.

ONE: the Body, Mind and Spirit channel

As VisionTV has adopted cultural diversity as a core value, and VisionTV provides all management services for the operation of ONE, all aspects of VisionTV's corporate plan apply to ONE with the following exceptions:

- a. Board of Directors for ONE is not required to have multifaith representation
- b. VisionTV's Code of Ethics does not apply directly to ONE (cultural diversity is, however, an important element of the Guidelines for Independent Producers which does apply to ONE)
- c. Any reference to initiatives arising from or related to in-house production do not apply to ONE as it is not presently engaged in any in-house production
- d. The Mosaic Program Management Group does not presently have a role in advising on ONE programming, although it is available as a possible resource
- e. Increasing faith group representation is not an initiative for ONE

ONE has achieved remarkable success in developing a program offering that enhances the diversity of the broadcast system. We will continue to look for new and innovative ways to expand VisionTV's leadership in reflecting the cultural diversity of Canada through the management of our affiliated channels and undertakings.

We trust you will find this report helpful in evaluating VisionTV's success in achieving the diversity objectives set out in our corporate plan. Please contact the undersigned if you require any further information.

Yours truly,

VisionTV: Canada's Faith Network

Per: 

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cc. Jane Britten, Senior Policy Analyst Social Issues, Broadcasting