



Women in Film and Television-Toronto to launch Business Learning Initiative, a new certificate program for the film and television community

(TORONTO – Thursday, July 13, 2006) Women in Film and Television-Toronto (WIFT-T), in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, is pleased to announce the launch of **The Business Learning Initiative** (BLI), the first-ever standardized business training certificate program for film and television professionals. The Ministry's participation will allow for the development of the curriculum and the piloting of the program over a three-year period, with a rollout scheduled for 2009.

A program under WIFT-T's training branch, The Centre for Media Professionals (CMP), **The Business Learning Initiative** will equip new and emerging film and television professionals with the business skills required to succeed in the Canadian entrepreneurial media workplace and the increasingly competitive global environment.

"This year, WIFT-T takes a significant leap forward with the CMP **Business Learning Initiative**," said Sue Sheridan, WIFT-T Interim Executive Director. "This innovative training solution, delivered in partnership with industry support, will offer practical skills development programs to an entrepreneurial sector at affordable rates and convenient times year-round."

The CMP has grown to be an essential service of WIFT-T, attracting increasing numbers and offering much-needed and relevant professional development to the industry at large. **The Business Learning Initiative** will offer participants, many of whom are not in a position to leave work in order to upgrade skills, personalized and flexible training that is central to lifelong learning for film and television professionals. Leading industry professionals who are actively involved in screen-based media will teach the courses working together with senior academic personnel.

Diane Davy, President of Castledale Inc., a consulting firm specializing in business and marketing strategies for the cultural industries, has been appointed Program Director and will oversee **The Business Learning Initiative**, working with an industry steering committee to develop the curriculum, training objectives and policies. The steering committee will be chaired by Kirstine Layfield, Executive Director, Network Programming, CBC Television, and will be made up of professionals from the industry including:

Trina McQueen - President, Hutton-Belleville Inc.

Margaret O'Brien - Chief Financial Officer & Chief Operating Officer, Barna-Alper Productions Inc.

Kit Redmond - Vice President, RTR Media

The Business Learning Initiative will address well-documented skills gaps reported in the WIFT-T employment study: *Frame Work: Employment in Canadian Screen-Based Media - A National Profile*, the first Canadian study of its kind to measure diversity, skills and employment in the film, television and new media industries. The report provides a snapshot of work trends in the Canadian screen-based media industry today - who is working, how we work, and our preparedness for an increasingly global future. For a copy of the report, visit www.wift.com.

Women in Film and Television – Toronto (WIFT-T) is a leading internationally affiliated professional organization that recognizes, trains and advances women in screen-based media. WIFT-T offers a year-round slate of skills development, networking events and industry awards, providing the tools to succeed in Canada's global entertainment industry. In operation for 20 years, WIFT-T serves both women and men in Canadian screen-based media, connecting them to close to 10,000 leading film, television, and new media professionals worldwide.

For more information, please contact:

Women in Film and Television – Toronto (WIFT-T)

416-322-3430 ext. 221

wift@wift.com

www.wift.com