

# DIVERSONOMICS | EPISODE 5 - BUILDING A BETTER WORKFORCE THROUGH INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT

07 December 2016

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For episode five of Diversonomics co-hosts Roberto Aberto and Sarah Willis interview Cristie Sutherland, the Director of Student and Associate Programs in Gowling WLG's Calgary office. They discuss the firm's recruitment process and why it's not only important to hire the best candidates, but to put diversity and inclusion at the forefront of these important decisions. Cristie also shares her story of being an immigrant to Canada and how that's shaped her path to following the law and now hiring future lawyers for the firm.

## EPISODE TIP

"...above everything be yourself. Life is too short to expend the kind of energy it would take to try to be one person at work and another person outside of work. Frankly, I think you are robbing yourself and you'd be robbing [your workplace]." - Cristie Sutherland, Director of Student and Associate Programs at Gowling WLG, Calgary



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## Transcript

**Roberto:** Welcome to Diversonomics. The podcast about all things diversity in the legal profession. I am your co-host, Roberto Aburto, a lawyer at Gowling WLG in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, practicing in municipal law and litigation and one of Gowling WLG's co-chairs of our National Diversity and Inclusion Council.

Sarah: I'm your co-host, Sarah Willis also of Gowling WLG practicing in commercial litigation, including professional liability. I'm normally in Ottawa but I'm currently practicing across the pond in our Birmingham, England office. Today we are going to look at diversity and inclusion from a student recruitment and an associate development perspective.

**Roberto:** We are lucky today. We have with us, well she is in Calgary, Cristie Sutherland, who is the Director of Student and Associate Programs for Gowling WLG's Calgary office. Cristie oversees the recruitment, orientation, mentoring and evaluation programs for associates and students in the Calgary office and is well plugged in for the Firm in that regard.

Sarah: In addition to her internal role Cristie also liaises with law students, law schools and law student organizations and oversees the student recruitment process, generally. Cristie also sits on the National Diversity and Inclusion Council. She is the chair of the Recruitment and Retention Working Group which I understand is a very big duty. We are very excited to welcome Cristie to the show today and to have the opportunity to speak with her.

**Cristie:** Thank you. I am happy to be here.

**Roberto:** Great Cristie. Can you tell us a little bit about your background. I know a lot of lawyers come from different backgrounds and experiences. How did you end up in a career, initially, practicing law?

**Cristie:** It was something I always had in mind. I had always considered it. I enjoyed school. I meandered a little bit. I got some funding to do grad work between undergrad and ultimately going to law school and so I did that. Got a bit disenchanted with the idea of continuing in more schooling at that point. So I ended up working at a big customs brokerage trade services logistics company as a market analyst for a few years.

It was about 3 years in that I decided that law was really what I wanted to do and it was at the same time that I was moving out to Calgary for family reasons so it all came together that I applied and ended up in law school. What I initially thought what I wanted to do from when I was fairly quite young eventually came to be some years after the initial plan was hatched.

**Roberto:** I certainly didn't grow up dreaming to be a municipal lawyer talking about zoning bylaws but funny how life works out

Sarah: You didn't?

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## EPISODE GUEST

### Cristie Sutherland

Cristie Sutherland is the Director of Student and Associate Programs for Gowling WLG's Calgary office. She oversees recruitment and mentoring programs for associates and students, and is a chair of Gowling WLG's Diversity Council Recruitment and Retention Working Group.

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