



### In This Issue

[From the President](#)

[In the News](#)

[Member News](#)

### Upcoming Events

**January 15**  
**[Navigating the Corporate Governance Maze](#)**  
**[Register](#)**

### Past Events

[December event summary](#)  
Putting Together the Pieces:  
2015 Outlook

### Check Out NIRI-Chicago's Mobile App

[Download on iOS](#)  
[Download on Android](#)

### Photo of the Month



(l to r) Anita Novak, James Christman, Kevin Kelly, Lori Lauber and Mary Jo Bohr

### From the President



Welcome to 2015! The year has certainly started with a blast, both with bone-chilling temps and chilly market performance. I hope some of you had the chance to visit warmer climes. For me, it was a "staycation," getting caught up with my children who were home from college, hitting the movies and visiting the exhibit of

holiday trees from around the world at the Museum of Science and Industry. Returning to the workday world, early indications suggest the sharp decline in oil prices will be a major story of the year. While it remains to be seen how badly this affects global growth, it seems certain that we'll all become better educated on this and other complicated geopolitical issues.

As we turn to finalizing fourth quarter results, writing shareholder letters and moving into proxy season, the timing is ripe for our January 15 program on [Navigating the Corporate Governance Maze: Mitigating Risk in the Modern World](#).

In recent years, corporate governance advocates have upped their efforts to target S&P 500 companies on a variety of issues. As a result of their campaign efforts, more than 90% of those companies have annual elections of directors, and more than 94% have some form of majority voting. Now, these same activists are turning their sights on the Russell 3000, where only 43% of companies have annual elections of directors and just 49% have some form of majority voting. In addition, these activists are expanding their target issues to include political contribution disclosures, sustainability proposals, and many other corporate governance issues with varying levels of support. It's critical that IROs understand these trends, current best practices and what may be advocacy overreach.

Join us for a compelling panel discussion on how small and

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large companies alike can proactively prepare for -- and defend against -- such activists. Our distinguished panelists include Francis Byrd, former director of Corporate Governance at TIAA-CREF, TerriJo Saarela, corporate governance officer at the State of Wisconsin Investment Board, and Joel Trotter, partner at Latham and Watkins, with FTI's Steven Balet serving as moderator for the program. It is certain to be an informative session, so I hope to see you there. Doors open for networking at 4:30 p.m., with the program beginning at 5 p.m. Please join us for a cocktail reception following the program, as well. [Register](#).

On a final note, a new year invites reflection and tempts us to make resolutions and set new goals. As you think about your goals, please consider becoming more involved with NIRI-Chicago as a way to give back professionally. Whether it's serving on our annual IR Workshop committee, helping to coordinate a monthly program or participating on the chapter board, you'll gain leadership experience, new knowledge and connections. If you're interested in serving, reach out to me or any of our board members for more information. Like so many other forms of giving, the rewards surely outweigh the commitment.

In the meantime, have a happy, healthy and prosperous 2015. We look forward to seeing you on the 15th.

Regards,

[Lisa Micou Meers](#), CFA  
NIRI-Chicago President

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### In the News

- Are shareholders [obsolete](#)?
- Buyside [headwinds](#) for the research industry.
- [Hedge fund robots](#) crushed human rivals in 2014.
- Social and environmental [issues](#) expected to crop up at more 2015 annual meetings.
- Study: Institutions, shareholders are [too lenient](#) on executive pay.
- [Study](#): Investor day best practices..

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### NIRI-Chicago Member News

Welcome to NIRI-Chicago's newest member: **Mary Kate Boyce**, financial analyst, investor relations, McDonald's Corporation; and **Dana Hall**, senior manager, IR communications, Baxter International.

**Heather Kos** (formerly of Navistar) is now VP of IR and external corporate communications at Ingredion, replacing **Aaron Hoffman**, who moved to VP of IR for Illinois Tool Works.

**Larry Larsen** is now senior vice president at Greentarget Global Group.

NIRI-Chicago member **Matt Ragas**, Ph.D. of DePaul University and his colleague Ron Culp have published the new book, [Business Essentials for Strategic Communicators](#). Use the order code PM14THIRTY to receive a 30% discount when ordering directly off the [publisher's website](#) (Palgrave.com). Ragas and Culp also recently authored the article [Public Relations and Business Acumen: Closing the Gap](#) for the Institute for Public Relations.

[Share](#) your news (job changes, awards, interesting articles) -- and thanks for reading the MEMBER CONNECTION.

Maryellen Thielen  
Vice President, Communications  
NIRI-Chicago