

Manitoba Bar Association  
Annual Report to Bar Council  
Equality Issues Section  
2014/15

The Equality Issues Section works toward equality within the legal system and legal profession, in particular on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, age or disability. The Section aims to:

- promote awareness of equality in the legal profession and legal system;
- develop resources to assist the legal profession in eliminating discrimination and achieving equality and diversity;
- encourage appropriate accommodation where possible; and
- monitor the status of equality and diversity in the legal profession.

The executive of the Equality Issues section met in person several times in the past year to plan the year's calendar of events and discuss and consider issues related to advancing equality within the legal profession in Manitoba.

In December, the section co-sponsored a lunchtime session with the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Conference on Awareness of gender identity and sexual orientation within the workplace. This training session was facilitated by Rainbow Resource Centre and provided 15 registrants with introductory and general knowledge about language and current issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

In March, the section coordinated a lunchtime roundtable session examining equality issues for Aboriginal, racialized, newcomer and minority lawyers. Facilitated by Priti Shah, those attending participated in a discussion about equality in the legal profession from the perspective of persons who are racialized, whether Aboriginal and/or visible minorities, and/or persons who are newer Canadians. Although attendance was lower than hoped, the session resulted in some productive brainstorming around the issues of how to better engage and create a more welcoming and supportive environment in the legal profession for individuals who are Aboriginal, racialized, newcomers or minority group members.

The Section Executive in 2014/15 consisted of the Chair and Vice-Chair, Zilla Jones as well as Executive members-at-large: Susan Benning, Eli Mitchell and Meghan Menzies. Thanks are due to all for their enthusiastic participation and contributions over the course of the past year.

Karen Dyck  
*Chair*