



Faculty of Law

University of Windsor

Proposal for a Standing Committee on Equity and Diversity

5 October 2010

At the Inclusivity Forum held at the Law Faculty on 10 February 2010, the external speakers suggested that we create an equity committee to discuss issues related to equity and diversity at the Faculty. Several members of faculty and students agreed this would be a useful step in moving us forward after the divisiveness created by the invitation of a controversial speaker and other incidents at the Faculty. The creation of an equity committee has also been recommended as good practice for legal organizations by the Canadian Bar Association (see “The CBA Equity and Diversity Guide and Resource Manual for Successful Law Firms and Legal Organizations”, 2007, p. 11).

At the instigation of Associate Dean Water, an ad hoc committee on equity and diversity was formed with a view to advising the Law School administration and making suggestions to Faculty Council. The current faculty members on the committee are Profs. Jacobs, Mohammed, and Waters. The staff representative is Cathy Milec. The student representatives, selected by an SLS sub-committee after a rigorous process, are Natalie St. Pierre Hansen (Law III), Morgan Koch (Law III), Steven Lewis (Law II) and Reema Patel (Law III). Assistant Dean Herlehy also sits on the committee given her role in student services and she and Ms. Patel have been selected as co-chairs by the Committee. This ad hoc committee has been working well and is currently in the process of suggesting changes to the discipline policy and the need for a response protocol when instances of hate and discrimination (racist graffiti in the Law building for example) impact on members of the Windsor Law community.

The Committee recommends that Faculty Council create a standing committee on equity and diversity. It also asks that, for the 2010-2011 academic year, the current committee members remain in place (with the addition of a Law I representative to be selected by the Committee upon application). Future faculty members of the committee should be appointed by Faculty Council and student members should be selected through a procedure established by the Committee in consultation with the SLS. Law Faculty staff should also choose a representative and the Associate and Assistant Deans should sit on the Committee *ex officio*. The composition of the Committee should reflect the diversity of the Windsor Law community and have representatives with experience and/or expertise on equity and diversity matters. While Faculty Council may refer specific issues to the Committee, the agenda of the Committee should normally be left to members, with a clear realization that the Committee acts in an advisory rather than decision-making capacity. In addition to the discipline code and a response protocol, other issues which the current committee would like to address are recommendations to the Academic Orientation Committee and the Speakers’ Committee.