

## REPORT OF THE EQUITY COMMITTEE – 2004

### 1. Symposium on the Ethical, Political, and Legal Issues Surrounding Same-Sex Marriages

In the context of the annual meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association held at the University of Manitoba, the Equity Committee organized a round-table panel and presentation on the philosophical questions raised by the issue of same-sex marriage. The round-table, entitled “*Will You Marry Me?*” *Symposium on the Ethical, Political and Legal Issues Surrounding Same-Sex Marriages*, was awarded a 1000\$ grant from the Canadian Federation for Humanities and Social Sciences for the purpose of offering financial compensation to the panelists for their travel costs. This joint session is a first time collaboration between the *CPA Equity Committee*, the *Canadian Gay and Lesbian Studies Association* (Jean B. Noble, president) and the *Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy* (Karen Houle, president). The Committee would like to thank Jean B. Noble, Karen Houle, Shelley Tremain, Richard Vallée as well as Louise Morel for their help and support in the preparation of the event.

Given the importance of the public debate surrounding the issue of same-sex marriage, and given the Committee’s mandate to promote the awareness of equity issues, we felt this round-table presentation was an ideal venue to broaden the Committee’s perspective. Not only is it extremely topical, it is also an opportunity to promote a philosophical reflection on some of the key issues which our society faces today. The speakers, who each have a particular expertise and perspective on same-sex marriage, will facilitate a larger philosophical reflection on some fundamental questions of equity which have ethical, political and legal dimensions. This discussion will also highlight the historical, institutional, religious and feminist perspectives which are raised by the issue of same-sex marriage; these in turn, can help those who are participating to identify more clearly questions of discrimination as they are related to this issue. We would like to thank the following speakers for kindly accepting our invitation to participate in this round-table: Margaret Denike (Nipissing University), Leslie Green (Osgoode Law School, York University and visiting professor University of Texas), John Thorpe (University of Western Ontario, president of the CPA) and Karen Wendling (University of Guelph).

### 2. Hiring Equity Toolkit

Following the recommendations of the Equity Committee of 2002 on the relevance and usefulness of a hiring toolkit (see 2002 report, *Final recommendations*), and further to the activities of last year’s Committee (see 2003 report), a document promoting equitable hiring practices within CPA philosophy departments will be made public during the Summer of 2004 and will also be available on the CPA web site.

A first version of this document was read by all the members of the Equity Committee during 2003. However, because certain modifications were suggested in the original version in English, and because of the delay required for the French translation of the modified document, the report was not circulated earlier as was initially predicted. The final report will be made public this Summer and will constitute the starting point of a national survey of hiring practices; this will be part of the Equity Committee’s work for 2005.

Here are some excerpts from last year’s report (June 2003) which will put in context the posting of the document on the CPA’s web page:

“[...] With the support of the Association President and the Ottawa office, we circulated a survey to member Departments, asking what measures have worked for them in attracting diverse candidate pools, bringing strong ‘designated group’ candidates to campus, and hiring members of designated groups. Twenty-five departments responded to our survey, and many included relevant Departmental and University equity plans with their responses.

The goal of the Equity Toolkit is not to endorse some single approach to equity in hiring, but rather to make visible the range of techniques and approaches that have enabled Departments to move concretely

toward meeting commitments to increasing the representation of women, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, and aboriginal people on faculty.

The toolkit [...] reviews how member Departments have furthered goals of equity in hiring at eight stages of the hiring process: defining the position; advertising; canvassing and networking; defining a long-list; defining a short-list for campus visits; handling campus visits; deliberating about an offer; and completing the hire. Discussion of various tools and approaches (drawing upon survey results, though without attribution to particular Departments) will be supplemented by excerpts from Departmental and University equity policies/plans where these seem especially useful or innovative.

Our hope is that the web-based Hiring Equity Toolkit can grow and change, reflecting ongoing innovation and success of member Departments in putting into practice their goals of increasing the diversity of philosophy faculty. The Equity Committee therefore welcomes and recommends continuing contributions from member Departments to the toolkit.”

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