



The South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre

Halifax's only full-time gender justice centre.
6286 South St.
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 1T8

Phone: (902) 494-2432

Email: volunteer@southhousehalifax.ca or outreach@southhousehalifax.ca

January 17, 2014

Dear Nova Scotia Barristers' Society,

We are writing to express our support for the OutLaw Society in their expression of disapproval for Trinity Western University's proposed law school. The South House is Halifax's only full-time gender justice centre. We are funded by Dalhousie and King's University students, and serve students and the broader Halifax community. We provide resources, information and support to our members, and a considerable amount of our programming is focussed on addressing homo-, bi-, and transphobia.

Discriminatory policies contribute to the inaccessibility of law school not only for gay and lesbian students, but for all LGBTQ people. In addition, these policies contribute to the systemic and institutionalized violence that members of these communities face. Because they are routinely the target of violence and discrimination, members of the LGBTQ population regularly come into contact with the justice system. Given historical discrimination, and slow progress towards equity, it's no surprise that many distrust the legal system. Silence on a policy that discriminates against gay, lesbian and bi students will simply serve to wear down trust that LGBTQ people have in the legal system as a whole. Therefore, it is imperative that the Barristers' Society take a stand against these oppressive policies. We echo OutLaw's request that you oppose Trinity Western University's Nova Scotia accreditation, and encourage you to create an accreditation requirement in Nova Scotia that prevents any law school from discriminating on a constitutionally protected ground, such as sexual orientation. We urge you, as representatives of the legal profession to reassert your commitment to creating a legal system that is inclusive, accessible and safe(r) for all LGBTQ people.

Our society, including the legal profession, still has a long way to go until we can truly say that we are inclusive and accessible to marginalized and oppressed people. Taking a stand on this issue is key, and is an important step towards making all LGBTQ people feel that the legal system is working to protect their rights. We hope that you take this opportunity to reaffirm your commitment to non-discrimination, and access to education.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

The Board and Staff of the South House

Jean Ketterling
Jude Ashburn
Ann Harvey
Laura Ovens
Elizabeth O'Brien
Alex Killham
Ezra O'Brien
Lily Corne Klein
Hannah Milley
Jacqueline Vincent