

Jan Lindsay, QC
President
Law Society of British Columbia
845 Cambie Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 4Z9

Via Email: jlindsay@lindsayllp.ca

January 21, 2014

Dear Ms. President:

RE: Accreditation of Trinity Western University School of Law

We, the undersigned human rights and equality-seeking organizations, write to urge the Law Society of British Columbia to implement an open and transparent process for determining whether to accredit a School of Law at Trinity Western University.

We understand that the Law Society of British Columbia is now considering what action it will take with respect to the accreditation of Trinity Western University's proposed School of Law. Many members of the public and the legal profession have raised concerns about TWU's discriminatory admission and regulatory policies. As you may already know, TWU proposes to establish a law school that is closed to individuals whose sexuality has expression outside of marriage between a man and a woman. TWU also restricts the reproductive freedom of its community members. **It is essential that the Law Society employ a full and transparent decision-making process in relation to the issue of accreditation of this proposed School of Law. Such a process must provide for and enable a full and open debate over the issues raised in connection with TWU's application.**

The Law Society, as a self-regulating body that exercises a critical gatekeeper function in deciding who qualifies to become a lawyer in BC, must adhere to decision-making processes that reflect the public interest. **In this case, when such a key issue of discrimination and access to legal education is concerned, it is in the public interest to meet substantive procedural requirements of due process—public notice that such a decision is being made and allowance for input from the public and the profession into the decision-making process.** This would follow other national procedures for consideration of the issue of TWU accreditation: for example, the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society Council has committed to public hearings in connection with this matter and has already sought input from members of the bar directly.

This matter has the potential to attract a great deal of attention from members of the profession and the public. The Law Society's process for receiving this feedback must therefore be thorough, accountable and transparent.

Please provide a copy of this letter to each of the benchers of the Society.

Thank you. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

BC CEDAW Group

BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre

Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights

Community Legal Assistance Society

Justice for Girls

Lawyer's Rights Watch Canada

Pivot Legal Society

Poverty and Human Rights Centre

QMUNITY—BC's Queer Resource Centre

**Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Conference Section of the Canadian Bar Association –
BC Branch**

UBC Centre for Feminist Legal Studies

UBC Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice

West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (West Coast LEAF)

Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (National LEAF)