

Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination 2002-2003 Annual Report

I. COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

CSOGID is the State Bar's standing Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination. The Committee was established in 1993 with fifteen exceptional founding members. At that time, CSOGID was the first state bar committee in the country focusing on sexual orientation issues.

CSOGID is charged with the following: advising the Board of Governors on sexual orientation and gender identity bias in the legal system, in the delivery of legal services, in the profession and in the administration of justice; serving as a liaison between the State Bar and LGBT attorneys; identifying and encouraging the entry, advancement and equal opportunity of LGBT individuals in the legal profession; identifying and encouraging LGBT attorneys to become active participants in the administration and governance of the State Bar; providing reports to the State Bar on the status of LGBT individuals in the legal profession and state bar activities; producing programs and materials to address the elimination of bias on behalf of LGBT persons in the legal profession and in State bar governance; providing comments on rules of court or legislation when requested; and studying and reporting to the Board of Governors on the delivery of legal services to LGBT individuals.

II. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair:	J. Robert Force	Los Angeles
Vice Chair:	Jeffrey Erdman	Los Angeles
Members:	Mark Abelsson	Los Angeles
	Oliver Cleary	San Diego
	Beth Collins	Los Angeles
	Jane Gelfand	San Francisco
	Douglas Heumann	San Luis Obispo
	Steven Donald Muni	Sacramento
	Robert Rancourt	Irvine
	Eugene Stuart	San Francisco
	J. T. Swanson	San Francisco
	Danielle Tillman	Los Angeles

III. SCHEDULED MEETINGS:

CSOGID scheduled six meetings throughout the year as follows:

- Saturday, November 16, 2002 (Los Angeles)
- Tuesday, January 21, 2003 (teleconference)
- Friday, March 21, 2003 (Long Beach)
- Thursday, April 24, 2003 (teleconference)
- Monday, June 2, 2003 (teleconference)
- Saturday, September 6, 2003 (Anaheim at State Bar Annual Meeting)

IV. 2003 WORK PLAN:

A. Legal Career Day:

The Legal Career Day project is designed to increase student interest in pursuing legal careers in student populations which are under-reached or under-served and which do not traditionally consider a career in law as an option. This year, consistent with the committee's goals, CSOGID identified target schools and found opportunities to access classrooms through "Teach for America". A pamphlet was drafted describing famous lawyers as a means of generating interest in the profession. CSOGID also identified other existing literature to use in the project, such as the ABA's curriculum called "Dialogue on Brown v. Board of Education."

The committee attended two career days in 2003, the first at Fairfax High School, and the Second at a community college in the San Luis Obispo area. These were "job fair" type environments, and the committee determined that classroom presentations would be a more effective means to achieve the goal of increased awareness and interest in the legal profession as a career option. The committee has determined that it will need to develop a resource list for students, create an evaluation form for students who attend a legal career day program, create a speaker's packet and develop a speaker's bureau. The work will continue in 2004 as indicated below in the 2004 workplan section.

B. Best Practices:

The Best Practices project seeks to identify legal employers with existing best practices programs designed to increase recruitment and retention of LGBT persons. The committee preliminarily identified several governmental and private legal employers with existing programs, identified literature that may be useful as a resource guide, and outlines for training.

This is an ongoing project, and in the 2004 year, further development of the program and supporting resources will occur.

V. PUBLICATIONS

“Becoming 18”: CSOGID submitted its requested changes and updates to certain sections of the State Bar publication regarding the legal rights and responsibilities that individuals have when they reach the age of majority in the State of California. The changes and updates pertain to issues of particular concern to LGBT youth.

“Registered Domestic Partners in California”: CSOGID finalized the brochure detailing the rights of registered domestic partners which was completed and distributed at the annual meeting in the Fall of 2003. Shortly after publication, significant new legislation was enacted granting broad new rights and responsibilities to registered domestic partners in the State of California. With the new laws to go into effect on January 1, 2005, the committee will be updating the brochure as appropriate to keep the brochure current.

VI. SEMINARS AND MCLE PROGRAMS

CSOGID was presented two MCLE programs as follows:

- “Transgender Legal Issues: What Practitioners Need to Know” (2 hours MCLE, including 1 hour of Elimination of Bias) Co-sponsored by Public Law Section.
- “Legal Implications for Gay and Lesbian Parenting” (2 hours MCLE).

VII. SPECIAL PROJECTS

Committee Recruitment Activities: CSOGID continued to reach out to other State Bar Committees in an effort to coordinate recruitment and to increase representation of LGBT persons in State Bar leadership. Letters were sent to each standing committee, section and commission offering and requesting assistance in identifying and recruiting qualified and suitable candidates.

AOC Collaboration: CSOGID continued to have a representative of the committee attend meetings and provide input and comment as requested.

Diversity Awards: Coordinated with other Access and Fairness Committee chairs to review nominations and prepare recommendations to the Diversity Awards Committee for selection of awardees.

Work Plan: The Committee prepared and submitted the 2004 work plan.

VIII. FUTURE PLANS (2004 Workplan)

As noted in its 2004 Work Plan, CSOGID will be involved in the following projects:

- **Legal Career Day:** Implement college and high school legal career days in conjunction with other Access & Fairness Committees to increase student interest in pursuing legal careers. Work with State Bar staff to update website to include information on Legal Career Day.
- **Best Practices:** Identifying law firms and governmental offices with working recruitment and retention programs, publicizing these programs, and making the program descriptions available for replication. Develop materials and begin drafting brochure for publication.
- **Initiate communication with Office of Legislative Council** to clarify and identify areas where CSOGID can be of assistance, consistent with the committee's charge, in commenting on proposed legislation which relates to opportunities for or discrimination against LGBT attorneys and the legal profession.
- **Recruitment:** Ongoing recruitment efforts to increase LGBT applicant pool and contacting each State Bar Section and Committee Chair to offer assistance in recruitment process.
- **Diversity Awards:** Participate in nomination and selection of candidates for annual diversity awards.
- **Ongoing:** continuing with the development and distribution of publications and presentation of MCLE programs.

Submitted by:

J. Robert Force, Chair, 2002-2003