The Diversity Committee began the year with a review of our charge, some talk about expanding the definition of minority and a discussion of possible Diversity Symposium topics. The Committee consisted of Carla Evans (Chair), Beau Steenken (Vice-Chair), Geraldine Amparo Cepeda, Michele Lucero, Ulysses Jaen, Yasmin Sokkar Harker, Wei Fang, Board Liaison Ronald Wheeler, and Staff Liaison Paula Davidson.

In reviewing the Committee charge we decided that the word celebrating would better convey our intent than the word exploiting in the second item of our charge. The AALL Board approved our action item to make the sentence read “Celebrating the benefits and possibilities of a diverse and complex membership.”

Several attendees at the 2012 CONELL Marketplace inquired about whether LGBT or people with disabilities could apply for the Minority Leadership Development Award. Currently the award is limited to minorities as defined by the US government. We discussed changing the definition and submitted an action item requesting Board input. The Board wanted the Committee’s thoughts before moving on the action item. We did not discuss this topic further this year, but may want to revisit the issue in the future.

The bulk of our time was spent on choosing a topic and finding speakers for the Diversity Symposium. The 2013 Symposium was titled Affirmative Action, Banned Book and Mexican American Studies: The Current State of Diversity and Education in America. Our speakers were Theresa Cropper, Chief Diversity Officer for Perkins Coie; Richard Delgado, Seattle University School of Law Professor and Jean Stefancic, Seattle University School of Law Professor. The Symposium was completely absorbed into the educational programming process this year. The program was well attended as was the reception following the program.

We received 8 applications for the Minority Leadership Development Award. This is a large increase over the past few years. We attribute the increase to the streamlined application requirements and the continued efforts to publicize this award more widely. This year’s application deadline was March 1st but should be changed to February 1st to coincide with the application deadline for other awards. There was confusion over who selects the mentor for the award winner because no one was sure who was responsible or who chose past mentors. This year’s MLDA winner is Ann Lee, KM Content Coordinator at Debevoise & Plimpton and Janice Henderson is her mentor.

Additionally, we continued our presence at CONELL Marketplace and in the Activities Area at the annual meeting. We also updated the Diversity Committee brochure and the Diversity Bibliography. Committee members Beau Steenken and Michele Lucero published an article in the February 2013 Spectrum titled Into the Breach with AALL’s Diversity Committee – Law libraries’ struggle to achieve diversity goals.

Carla Evans
Chair 2012-2013