



NOVA SCOTIA
BARRISTERS' SOCIETY

LEGAL LEGACIES & BRIDGES (LLB):

*African Canadian and Aboriginal Law
Student Mentorship Programme*



Student Handbook



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Nova Scotia Barristers' Society
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THE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Congratulations! You are embarking on a very rewarding endeavor. The **Legal Legacies & Bridges: African Canadian and Aboriginal Law Student Mentorship Programme (LLB)** will provide you with a potential link between the student and the practice of law. By being matched with a mentor, you will gain exposure to the legal community and to legal practice. You may opt for either one or two mentors; a general and/or IBM alumni mentor.

The goals of Legal Legacies & Bridges are:

- To increase the opportunities for articling and employment of African Canadian and Aboriginal law graduates
- To provide an opportunity for law firms to benefit from exposure to and the work product of African Canadian and Aboriginal students

The objectives of LLB are:

- To provide African Canadian and Aboriginal law students opportunities for practical experience in a professional legal environment.
- To provide African Canadian and Aboriginal law students opportunities to benefit from discussions with practising lawyers regarding their work and the students' course selections, where appropriate.
- To provide law firms with a pool of highly competitive graduates with practical experience in the legal environment.

AS A STUDENT YOU ARE AN/A...

Observer – You will be able to observe your mentor in both court and the office and benefit from her or his efficiency and effectiveness.

Learner – As a student you will have the opportunity to learn the “ins and outs” of the legal profession.

Listener – By listening to your mentor's feedback you will gain a perspective not normally obtained in an academic environment.

YOUR MENTOR IS A...

Role Model – who has gone through the same articling process and practices law. You can learn from her or his experience.

Career Guide – who has already established a legal career. You will gain from his or her experience towards the development of your own career, and benefit from the possible professional networks that this mentorship might produce.

Information Source – who can provide you with information regarding the bar, or courses pertinent to an area of practice.

Intellectual Guide – who, as a practitioner, has insights on legal questions that will provide you with a perspective not normally obtained in an academic environment.

ACTIVITIES

We request a commitment of two hours per week from your busy schedule. With some coordination, we are sure that meaningful activities beneficial to both you and your mentor can be accomplished.

Activities might include:

- an introductory tour of your mentor's law office;
- attending law office meetings (e.g. case management), and other functions with your mentor;
- mentor providing guidance through small research files, with attention to discussions of results and course of action;
- attending discovery examinations and witness preparation sessions;
- attending court with your mentor;
- attending law school functions and receptions for participants;
- attending legal functions such as Continuing Legal Education or Canadian Bar Association events with mentor;
- lunches or coffees with mentor's colleagues; and
- anything that you feel is beneficiary to the mentorship.

HOW LONG IS THE MENTORSHIP COMMITMENT?

We hope that there is ongoing contact and communication between you and the mentor for at least a few months. **LLB** facilitates and builds a professional relationship that will last beyond your legal studies, perhaps continuing into your legal career.

COSTS

Legal Legacies & Bridges involves volunteer mentors and students who generously dedicate time to help make the project a success. As much as we would like to reimburse you for the expenses incurred, we expect you and your mentor to cover respective expenses.

PROFESSIONAL GUIDE

We believe that mentorship is a worthwhile and rewarding experience. As responsible legal professionals, we respect the rules of conduct guiding the profession. We therefore acknowledge and recognize the professional standards established by the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society.

WHAT IF THE MATCH DOESN'T WORK OUT?

If you feel the mentoring relationship is not achieving the goals of this project, you are under no obligation to continue it. If there is a mutual understanding between you and your mentor, arrangements would be made to find another match.

SUGGESTIONS?

We would like to hear your ideas about activities in which the **LLB** could be promoted.

PARTICIPANT COMMITMENT

STUDENT

- Will participate in the programme throughout the duration of the session.
- Will spend at least 2/3 hours per month with mentor/firm.
- Where possible, will engage in open and frank discussion with mentor/firm regarding the mentoring relationship.
- Will co-operate with the Equity Officer through regular communication.
- Will sign mentorship programme commitment agreement.
- Will participate in confidential evaluation of programme following the session.

LAWYER/FIRM

- Will commit to participating in the programme throughout the duration of the session.
- Will expose student to areas of law practised in the firm and to the lawyers who work in those areas.
- Will have at least 2 contacts per month (2-3 hours by email, meeting or telephone) with student.
- Where possible, will engage in open and frank discussion with student regarding concerns with difficulties should they arise.
- Will co-operate with the Equity Officer through regular communication.
- Will sign mentorship programme commitment agreement.
- Will participate in a confidential evaluation of programme following the session.

EQUITY OFFICER

- Will discuss interests and expectations with participants and will match students with lawyers/firms on that basis.
- Will maintain regular communication with participants.
- Will encourage open and frank communication between students and mentors/firm and will act as intermediary only when necessary.
- Will be available as a resource person for all participants.
- Will conduct a confidential evaluation of the programme following the session.
- Will prepare a report on each session.

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS?

If you have any concerns about mentorship or questions about the **Legal Legacies & Bridges: African Canadian and Aboriginal Law Student Mentorship Programme**, please contact:

Sherida Sherry Hassanali, Equity Officer

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All the best!

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