



NOVA SCOTIA  
BARRISTERS' SOCIETY

## LEGAL LEGACIES & BRIDGES (LLB):

*African Canadian and Aboriginal Law  
Student Mentorship Programme*



**Mentor Handbook**



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### *African Canadian and Aboriginal Law Student Mentorship Programme*

## Mentor Handbook

Nova Scotia Barristers' Society  
Centennial Building  
1101-1645 Granville Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 1X3  
Telephone: (902) 422-1491  
Facsimile: (902) 429-4869  
Web Page: <http://www.nsbs.ns.ca>



**Congratulations!** You are embarking on a very rewarding endeavor. As a mentor you will play an important role in the professional development of students. Your mentorship with students will motivate and inspire the choices they make in their academic and professional lives. The focus of this project is to provide African Canadian and Aboriginal law students exposure to the legal environment.

**The goals of Legal Legacies & Bridges (LLB) are:**

- To increase the opportunities for articling and employment of African Canadian and Aboriginal law graduates.
- To provide an opportunity for lawyers 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 law firm experience and participation in a law firm culture.
- 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 MENTOR YOU ARE A...

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*Role Model* – As a role model who has gone through the articling process and practices law, students can learn from your experience.

*Career Guide* – As someone who has already established a legal career, you have the experience in the development of your own career. Students will appreciate your advice and benefit from the possible professional networks that this mentorship might produce.

*Information Source* – Information regarding the bar, or courses pertinent to an area of practice, is important to students who are not familiar with all aspects of the legal profession.

*Intellectual Guide* – The study of law is intellectually challenging. As a practitioner, your insights on legal questions will provide students with a perspective not normally obtained in an academic environment.

## ACTIVITIES MIGHT INCLUDE:

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- providing an introductory tour of your law office;
- attending law office meetings (e.g. case management), and other functions with student;
- guiding student 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 student;
- attending law school functions and receptions for participants;
- attending legal functions such as Continuing Legal Education or Canadian Bar Association events with the student;
- lunches or coffees; and
- anything that you feel is beneficial to the mentorship.

## HOW LONG IS THE MENTORSHIP COMMITMENT?

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We hope that there is ongoing contact and communication between you and the students for at least a few months. **LLB** facilitates and builds a professional relationship that will last beyond the student's legal studies, perhaps continuing into his or her legal career.

## COSTS

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

## PROFESSIONAL GUIDE

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We believe 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?

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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 student, arrangements would be made to find another match.

## **SUGGESTIONS?**

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We would like to hear your ideas about activities in which **Legal Legacies & Bridges** could be promoted. If your colleagues are interested in becoming a mentor please refer them to us.

## **PARTICIPANT COMMITMENT**

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### **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 and 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?

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

**Sherida Sherry Hassanali, Equity Officer**

Nova Scotia Barristers' Society

1101-1645 Granville Street

Halifax, NS B3J 1X3

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*Acknowledgements*

*A special thanks to Lisa Neily for design, layout and production of this handbook.*