

Black Law Student Census Report

2022-2023

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14 FEBRUARY 2023



BLACK LAW STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
L'ASSOCIATION DES ÉTUDIANTS
NOIRS EN DROIT DU CANADA

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About the Black Law Students' Association of Canada (BLSA Canada):

BLSA Canada is the pre-eminent, national, student-run non-profit organization committed to supporting and enhancing academic and professional opportunities for Black law students. In 1991, a small but dedicated group of Black law students founded BLSA Canada to foster community and increase professional development opportunities for Black law students. BLSA Canada's scope is wide-ranging and its impact is immense. BLSA Canada hosts an annual National Conference (the single largest gathering of Black law students in Canada), the Isaac Moot (the only student-run, for-credit law school moot), and the Civil

Law Symposium (the single largest gathering of Black civil law students in Quebec). BLSA Canada has also delivered anti-Black racism initiatives, held impactful panels and workshops, and called on universities, institutions, and government bodies to advance racial justice. With chapters in 23 of the 24 Canadian law schools, BLSA Canada serves as an advocacy organization that builds a promising future for aspiring Black legal professionals while celebrating the Black communities' diverse heritages, histories, cultures, and contributions to the Canadian mosaic.

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Questions and corrections

Please send all questions and corrections to: advocacy@blsacanada.com.

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Introduction

Black law students that attend or attended a Canadian law school often describe being the only Black person in their class section¹ or year.²

Unlike the United States, where the American Bar Association (ABA) publishes Required Disclosures that details law school enrollment data on gender, race, and ethnicity,³ Canadian institutions have often cited privacy legislation and organizational precedent as reasons to withhold publishing race-based data.⁴ It is not lost on marginalized communities, often characterized as overexaggerating the harms they face, that when hidden statistics are revealed, the hard truth becomes more difficult to ignore.⁵ As stated by Dr. Onyenyechukwu Nnorom: “[Canadians] like to pretend we’re colourblind, which is very problematic, because

we’re not colourblind and we’re not gender blind – we’re just blind at realizing that there is a problem and doing something about it.”⁶ With anecdotes from current and former Black law students and personal lived experiences in mind, past and current BLSA Canada members sought to understand Black law students’ experiences in Canadian law schools. Thus, this report seeks to: quantify the extent to which Black law students are represented in law schools, now and historically; discuss if and what progress is being made; and propose insights and recommendations that law schools ought to consider.

This exercise is important because the effects of who is or is not admitted into Canadian law schools are vast. As the gatekeepers to the legal profession, the decisions of Canadian law schools largely determine the composition of Canada’s future lawyers, judges, general counsels.⁷ Who is or is not admitted into law school directly impacts our justice system. Moreover, the underrepresentation of Black people in law schools is a long-standing problem that starts before Black law students step foot in law schools. Law schools with no holistic admissions processes or limited recruitment or outreach in racialized communities create environments conducive to the underrepresentation of racialized law students.⁸ Many law schools do not

1 See Michael St. Patrick Baxter, “Black Bay Street Lawyers and Other Oxymora” (1998) 30:2 *Canadian Business Law Journal* 267; Kayla Smith & Charles Campbell, “Why We Need More Black Students In Canadian Law Schools” Huffington Post (11 March 2019), online: <https://www.huffpost.com/archive/ca/entry/why-we-need-more-black-students-in-canadian-law-schools_ca_5cd58cace4b07bc729791b6a>.

2 See Queen’s Law, “Addressing systemic racism and increasing Black representation in the legal profession, a student’s perspective” (18 February 2021), online: <<https://law.queensu.ca/news/Addressing-systemic-racism-and-increasing-Black-representation-in-the-legal-profession-student-perspective>>.

3 American Bar Association, “Various statistics on ABA approved law schools” (2022), online: <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/statistics/>.

4 Sarah Kriekle, *Gatekeeping Admissions : Access to Justice and Inclusive Admissions Processes* (2022) 31 *Dalhousie Journal of Legal Studies* 85 at 111.

5 Adam Carter, “Community members denounce Toronto police apology for increased use of force as meaningless” CBC News (15 June 2022), online: <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-police-race-statistics-apology-community-response-1.6489688>>; Paola Loriggio, “Toronto police told to explore if race-based data could be used to investigate individual officers” CBC News (22 June 2022), online: <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-police-race-data-individual-commissioner-1.6497638>>; Mike Hager, “B.C. introduces law to collect data on race” *The Globe and Mail* (2 May 2022), online: <<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-bc-passes-law-to-collect-data-on-race/>> (Quoting Professor June Francis: “These inequities were hidden. When you said ‘It exists’ people would say ‘How do you know that? Where is [the data]?’”).

6 Tavia Grant, “How Canada’s racial data gaps can be hazardous to your health” *The Globe and Mail* (11 February 2019), online: <<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-how-canadas-racial-data-gaps-can-be-hazardous-to-your-health-and/>>.

7 See Dawna Tong & W. Wesley Pue, “The Best and the Brightest: Canadian Law School Admissions” (1999) 37:4 *Osgoode Hall L J* 843 at 845; Sarah Kriekle, *Gatekeeping Admissions : Access to Justice and Inclusive Admissions Processes* (2022) 31 *Dalhousie Journal of Legal Studies* 85 at 98-100.

8 See Sarah Kriekle, “Gatekeeping Admissions : Access to Justice and Inclusive Admissions Processes” (2022) 31 *Dalhousie Journal of Legal Studies* 85 at 105, 117; Aaron N Taylor, “The Marginalization of Black Aspiring Lawyers” (Spring 2019) 13:3 *FIU L Rev* 489 at 496-497.

Introduction

have admissions panels, law student cohorts, faculty members, advisory councils, or mentorship programs that reflect the diversity of Canada.⁹ Ryan Watkins, a Partner at Whitten & Lublin in Toronto, noted that the significant costs of a law school education and the heightened focus of admissions officers on GPA and LSAT scores, rather than considering a person's distinct and valuable lived experiences, has hindered law schools from becoming more diverse.¹⁰

To be clear, Black law students are not inherently less intelligent or less capable of achieving high LSAT scores and GPAs. When this report considers the limitations of admissions programs that solely weigh LSAT and GPA scores, it asks both: (1) what systemic barriers exist that make attaining the highest scores more attainable for those with more privilege to dedicate more time to their studies; and (2) whether high LSAT scores and GPAs truly dictate what makes a good lawyer.

When Black law students leave law school, they enter a legal profession where they are underrepresented too. Logically, Black people's underrepresentation in law schools leads to Black people's underrepresentation in the legal profession. According to 2018 data from the Law Society of Ontario, 3.2 percent of lawyers are Black, despite Black people making up 4.7 per cent of Ontario's population.¹¹ There is a disparity in partnership hiring committees that consist of racialized people who either purposefully or subconsciously "promote

those who look and think like them."¹² Racialized in-house counsel earn \$12,000 dollars less than their white counterparts.¹³

In addition to existing inequities that Black lawyers and law students have historically faced, Black LGBTQ2S+, neurodivergent, and gender-diverse law students face increased marginalization and career hurdles. An intersectional approach that considers race in addition to gender, sexual orientation, class, neurodivergence experiences is critical to understanding why Black law students and lawyers face nuanced challenges. For further context, there are few Black women in senior positions at law firms.¹⁴ Jenelle Ambrose, who is an in-house counsel with Grant Thornton and President of the Black Female Lawyers Network, notes that this is because Black women grapple with various obstacles that hinder advancement within the profession.¹⁵ She explains that "Black women face a double bind because of their race and gender."¹⁶ Thus, even though Black women outnumber Black men in law school, they are often paid less once they become lawyers.¹⁷ There

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.* Refer also to Melayna Williams, "For Women of Colour, There's a Gap Within the Pay Gap", (8 February 2018), online: <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/for-women-of-colour-theres-a-gap-within-the-pay-gap/>.

¹⁴ Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, "Diversity by the Numbers: The Legal Profession Unpacking Hegemonic Masculinity in the Culture of Private Practice Law," (Vancouver, British Columbia, 2018). See also Hadiya Roderique, "Black on Bay Street: Hadiya Roderique Had it All. But Still Could Not Fit in", *The Globe and Mail* (4 November 2017), online: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/hadiya-roderique-black-on-bay-street/article36823806/>.

¹⁵ Refer to Christine Dobby, "Why Are There Still so Few Black Lawyers on Bay Street?"

¹⁶ See Angelyn Francis, "Hadiya Roderique on the Gender Pay Gap From the Law Firm to Academia", (8 February 2018), online: <https://www.macleans.ca/society/hadiya-roderique-on-the-gender-pay-gap-from-the-law-firm-to-academia/>. Refer also to Christine Dobby, "Why are There Still so Few Black lawyers on Bay Street?". See also, Akua Carmichael, "Anti-Black systemic Racism in Legal Profession", (16 July 2020), online: *The Lawyer's Daily* <https://www.thelawyersdaily.ca/articles/20022/anti-black-systemic-racism-in-legal-profession-akua-carmichael>.

¹⁷ See Eman Bare, "Law Has a Diversity Problem. Can Start-up Firms Help Fix It?", (22 December 2021), online: *Canadian Business – How*

⁹ See Rebecca Zandbergen, "Why is Western University's new law advisory council so white?" *CBC News* (15 December 2021), online: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/why-is-western-university-s-new-law-advisory-council-so-white-1.6284980>.

¹⁰ See Ryan Watkins, "Why so Few Black Partners in Canada's Top Law Firms?" *The Lawyer's Daily* (10 August 2020), online: <https://www.thelawyersdaily.ca/articles/20461>.

¹¹ See Christine Dobby, "Why Are There Still so Few Black Lawyers on Bay Street?", *The Globe and Mail* (17 July 2020), online: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-why-are-there-still-so-few-black-lawyers-on-bay-street/>.

is minimal Canadian data on the number of LGBTQ2S+ person(s) pursuing legal education, let alone the intersectional percentage of Black LGBTQ2S+ law students.¹⁸ However, some data suggests that some members of the LGBTQ2S+ community may be less likely to advance to leadership positions in Ontario law firms. Similarly, there is limited knowledge about Black neurodivergent law students, but an understanding that law students with learning differences often face ableism and struggle to receive appropriate accommodations.¹⁹

Why Collect Race-Based Data?

Collecting race-based data brings attention to systemic issues and helps to identify strategies that will advance racial justice.

According to Grace-Edward Galabuzi, Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at Toronto Metropolitan University, race-based data allows us to study, review, collect, and achieve more equitable practices and remedies.²⁰ Numerous Canadian human rights organizations and governments also express the importance of race-based data collection.²¹ In regularly allowing this data

to be collected appropriately and with care, there will be further attention paid to systemic barriers that exist.²² It is precisely in this sense that our report purposefully:

- (1) quantifies the representation of Black law students in Canada;
- (2) identifies and challenges systemic barriers;
- (3) considers historical disadvantages; and
- (4) discusses ways to advance substantive equity.²³

Second, documenting the progress being made by law schools applauds particular law schools who are shifting towards more equitable admission processes and fostering inclusive law school environments.²⁴ For example, law schools that institute Black-conscious admissions processes provide visibility for Black applicants to discuss their lived experiences. This also establishes a holistic admissions process intended to address systemic barriers that may ultimately lead to the underrepresentation of Black lawyers.²⁵

Reviewing and considering race-based data in Canada is important, particularly in the legal sector. Doing so provides an opportunity for the Canadian legal sector to recognize and promote the diversity and perspectives of future, racialized legal professionals. Doing so recognizes that Black students are not inherently

to Do Business Better <<https://www.canadianbusiness.com/ideas/lack-of-diversity-in-law-canada/>>.

18 See Asher Alkoby and Pnina Alon-Shenker, "Out of the Closet and up the Ladder? Diversity in Ontario's Big Law Firms" (2017) 34:2 Windsor Yearbook on Access to Justice 40 at 45.

19 Lorin MacDonald, "How the Legal Community Can Better Support Lawyers with Disabilities", (21 October 2022), online: Canadian Lawyers Magazine <<https://www.canadianlawyermag.com/news/opinion/how-the-legal-community-can-better-support-lawyers-with-disabilities/370864>>; Ray Adlington, "Conversation With Lawyer Living With a Disability," (June 2019), online (Podcast): Canadian Bar Association <<https://www.cba.org/Podcast/Transcripts/Lawyer-living-with-a-disability>>

20 Jolson Lim & Grace-Edward Galabuzi, "We Need More Race-based Data to Tell Stories That Matter," online: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives <<https://monitormag.ca/articles/we-need-more-race-based-data-to-tell-stories-that-matter/>>.

21 See "Disaggregated data collection in B.C.: The Grandmother Perspective", online: British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner <<https://bchumanrights.ca/publications/datacollection/>>; Ontario Human Rights Commission, "Racism and Racial Discrimination:

Data Collection (Fact Sheet)", online: <<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/racism-and-racial-discrimination-data-collection-fact-sheet>>. Government of Nova Scotia, "Race-based Data in Healthcare: Fair Care Project", (11 November 2021), online: Race-based Data in Healthcare <<https://novascotia.ca/race-based-health-data/>> Last Modified: 2022-12-02.

22 Refer to Watkins, "Why so Few Black Partners in Canada's Top Law Firms?"

23 See Ontario Human Rights Commission, "Racism and Racial Discrimination: Data Collection (Fact Sheet)."

24 "Black Students Admissions Process", online: University of Calgary Faculty of Law <<https://law.ucalgary.ca/future-students/admissions-jd-programs/future-black-students>>.

25 *Ibid.*

Introduction

less intelligent or deserving of a legal education. Historical context shapes present-day stories. The underrepresentation of Black people in law schools and the legal profession can be understood by examining their complex history of subjugation throughout Canadian history.²⁶ In part, there is, of course, enslavement and its legacy that lay the foundation for the over-surveillance and over-policing of Black people in the current day.²⁷ Institutions also cultivate anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination in our society, culture, laws, and attitudes through rules, legislation, traditions, and language.²⁸

BLSA Canada is aware of institutional practices that perpetuate in racial or implicit bias.²⁹ It also recognizes that, without this report, it would remain difficult to apply evidence-based changes for redressing issues, such as discrimination in law schools. Therefore, we must recognize that when there are historical considerations situated alongside contemporary facts, our society benefits from a better understanding of racial and ethnic disparities, including how to resolve these disparities.³⁰

26 "Black Canadians, Law and the Racial State", (4 February 2022), online: University of Manitoba Faculty of Law <<https://news.umanitoba.ca/black-canadians-law-and-the-racial-state>>.

27 See Kyle G Brown, "Slavery's Long Shadow: The Impact of 200 Years of Enslavement in Canada", (5 July 2018), online: CBC News <<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/slavery-s-long-shadow-the-impact-of-200-years-of-enslavement-in-canada-1.4733595>>; Afua Cooper, "Acts of Resistance: Black Men and Women Engage Slavery in Upper Canada, 1793-1803" (2019) 99:1 The Ontario Historical Society (Forging Freedom: In Honour of the Bicentenary of the British Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade) 5-17; Canadian Human Rights Commission, "Anti-Black Racism in Canada: Time to Face the Truth", (2 June 2020), online: <<https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/resources/anti-black-racism-canada-time-face-the-truth>>.

28 See also Delores V. Mullings, Anthony Morgan & Heather Kere Queleng, "Canada the Great White North where Anti-Black Racism Thrives: Kicking Down the Doors and Exposing the Realities" (2016) 53:1 Phylon (1960-) 20-41.

29 Hussain, Muhammed Muazzam, "The Policy Efforts to Address Racism and Discrimination in Higher Education Institutions: The Case of Canada" (2022) Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal, online: <<https://cepsj.si/index.php/cepsj/article/view/965>>.

30 Ellis Choe, "Black Students Call for Change at the University of

Calgary's Faculty of Law", (26 June 2020), online: CBC News <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/black-students-university-calgary-law-school-diversity-1.5629241>>.

Methodology

This report is a population “census.” It outlines the percentage of Black law students across Canada. There are explanatory models of the comprehensively distinct data sets for each cohort in JD programs, BCL/JD (Civil), JD/JID programs, LLB programs, and other joint law degrees. This report’s underlying theoretical framework is rooted in Critical Race Theory (CRT), which posits that deconstructing racial disparities calls for data, narrative, and storytelling that contextualizes the issues under consideration.¹ CRT can facilitate race-conscious research to uncover the inequities experienced by marginalized peoples.²

This report is largely constrained to identifying Black law students in entry-level law degrees. We considered data on first-year, second-year, third-year, fourth-year law students. This included largely full-time students and a small number of reduced course-load students. This report includes testimonials from Black law students who evaluate the current climate of representation at their school. This report also identifies Black holistic admissions processes, scholarships, and bursary opportunities available at certain schools. There are recommendations for addressing the ubiquitous lack of diversity, scholarships, and employment opportunities for students.

Methodological approaches summarized in this report draw attention to various themes which raise important issues for future research: How are law schools addressing the minimal representation of Black law students in their programs? What is the

current percentage of Black law faculty members across Canada? What EDI strategies could law faculties include in their programs? These questions and issues are worth challenging. However, this starts with law schools identifying gaps in their admissions processes, making efforts to do outreach in Black communities, and admitting more Black students and genuinely awarding them with opportunities (i.e. mentorship, scholarships, career development) that will contribute to a more diverse legal profession.

Methods

From 2022 to 2023, BLSA Canada conducted a race and population-based study of Black students in Canadian law schools. The data from this report is collected through: annual demographic student surveys from faculty, admission council members, and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) advisors; records kept and estimates made by Black law students; and data from the Law School Admission Council. BLSA Canada recorded and transcribed reports sent through emails and calls from August 2022 to January 2023.

From August to November 2022, BLSA Canada asked 23 Canadian law schools for data on the number of Black law students (JD and graduate-level students) in their faculties. We requested the following information:

1. The number of Black law students currently enrolled in your faculty, preferably disaggregated by gender, year, and program
2. The total number of law students currently enrolled in your faculty, preferably disaggregated by gender, year, and program
3. The number of Black law students enrolled in your faculty per year over the last 10 years, preferably disaggregated by gender, year (1L/2L/3L/etc),

¹ See Carol Aylward, “Take the Long Way Home” R.D.S. V. R. The Journey (1998) 47 U.N.B. L.J. 249 at 253-254.

² See Maleeka Munroe, “The need for race-based data in Canada” (June 2022), online: <<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/utmj/article/download/38223/29670/103647>> at 31.

Methodology

and program

4. The total number of law students enrolled in your faculty per year over the last 10 years, preferably disaggregated by gender, year, and program

BLSA Canada stressed that a number of Canadian law faculties collect and publicize race-based data on law students in annual “Class Profiles.” We also noted that, for law faculties that do not collect this data, an estimate is also welcome as we are hoping to work with local Black Law Students’ Association chapters and/or Black law students to gauge this number as well. We received varying numbers, in the form of numbers taken from internal surveys, LSAC information, and estimates.

We asked 24 BLSA chapters situated in 23 law schools to cross-check the numbers sent in by schools or, where we received no data, to provide their own estimates. We also asked BLSA chapters to provide us with their insights on what their faculty was or was not doing to ensure adequate representation of Black law students. We wanted to understand how BLSA chapters felt about their school’s current representation of Black law students in your faculty. Another question we asked local BLSA chapters was whether their faculty had scholarships or bursaries set aside specifically for Black law students or any holistic admissions processes that allowed aspiring Black law students to provide further context on information on their unique life experiences.

We received responses from 23 BLSA chapters and 22 law schools. All data received was collected and merged into a single Excel database that was relied on in compiling this report.

Further, in considering data about the general population data, this report includes the last census conducted by the Government in Canada in 2021. The report writers calculated the different averages for

each city and province law schools were located, and considered differences between Census data and the number of Black law students currently enrolled.

Limitations

Although every reasonable effort was made to present current and accurate information, BLSA Canada cannot make any absolute guarantees about the content or accuracy of the numbers in this report. Many numbers are based on estimates from law schools and Black law students.

The report writers sought to identify as much disaggregated data that considered gender and year of matriculation in addition to race, but a number of law schools did not collect disaggregated data, much less current records for the number of Black students at each school. In some cases, we were unable to collect data from schools and our data only reflected information from local BLSA chapters. This was primarily due to the lack of response and communication from certain schools. Thus, this report may not accurately report specific numbers. However, records with missing race and gender data were included in the analysis with context when applicable. The analysis was largely performed on the number of admitted applicants from 2022. Some schools were able to provide 10-year records.

The data discussed does not consider the particularly low representation of Black, male-identifying law students in Canada. For example, two law schools in British Columbia only have 1 Black law student identifying as male first-year, compared to 4 and 13 Black law students identifying as female. This information may represent the mismatch theory which demonstrates an important discussion around the position of gender and race in law schools.

We have not published any data that breaks down the percentage of Black non-binary, genderqueer, and

trans people(s). Recognizing the barriers for Black LGBTQ2S+ candidates in law school enrollment is an important signifier of deeply rooted issues related to marginalization.

Key Terms



Access Category, Discretionary Category, Inclusive Admission Category

All terms that reference a holistic admissions process that considers discretionary factors in addition to, or in tandem with, grades

BCL

Bachelor of Civil Law

BComm/JD

Bachelor of Commerce and Juris Doctor

EDI

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Entry level law program

A graduate-entry or baccalaureate-entry professional degree in law

JD

Juris Doctor

JD/JID

Joint Degree Program in Canadian Common Law and Indigenous Legal Orders

JD/MBA & GDB

Master of Business Administration and Graduate Diploma in Business

JD/MPA

Juris Doctor and Master of Public Administration

Joint MBA/JD program

Master of Business Administration and Juris Doctor)

LLM T

Master of Laws in Taxation

LLM CL

Master of Laws Common Law

LLM

Masters of Law

MA(Econ)/JD

Master of Arts in Economics and Juris Doctor

Overview of Findings

Law Faculty	Percentage of Black Law Students in entry-level law program	Percentage of Black people in City the faculty is situated in	Percentage of Black people in Province the faculty is situated in
Dalhousie University, Schulich School of Law	7.55% ¹	4.68%	2.91%
Lakehead University, Bora Laskin Faculty of Law	0.5% ²	5.40%	1.96%
McGill University, Faculty of Law	8.40% ³	7.93%	4.97%
Queen's University, Faculty of Law	2.8% ⁴	1.96%	5.40%
Thompson Rivers University, Faculty of Law	0.2% ⁵	1.00%	1.16%
Toronto Metropolitan University, Lincoln Alexander School of Law	12.83% ⁶	9.48%	5.40%
Université de Moncton, École de droit	9.46% ⁷	8.24%	1.57%
Université de Montréal, Faculté de droit	1.60% ⁸	7.93%	4.97%
Université du Québec à Montréal, Faculté de science politique et de droit	— ⁹	7.93%	4.97%
Université de Sherbrooke, Faculté de droit	2.31% ¹⁰	3.02%	4.97%
Université Laval, Faculté de droit	1.05% ¹¹	4.00%	4.97%

1 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

2 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

3 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

4 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

5 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

6 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

7 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

8 This number is based on data from / estimates made by the University's local BLSA chapter.

9 We were unable to identify any relevant data from the UQAM faculty of law or BLSA chapter.

10 This number is based on data from / estimates made by the University's local BLSA chapter.

11 This number is based on data from / estimates made by the University's local BLSA chapter.

Law Faculty	Percentage of Black Law Students in entry -level law program	Percentage of Black people in City the faculty is situated in	Percentage of Black people in Province the faculty is situated in
University of Alberta, Faculty of Law	0.73% ¹²	5.76%	4.26%
University of British Columbia, Peter A. Allard School of Law	4.53% ¹³	1.55%	1.16%
University of Calgary, Faculty of Law	7.95% ¹⁴	5.16%	4.26%
University of Manitoba, Robson Hall Faculty of Law	2.51% ¹⁵	4.99%	3.56%
University of New Brunswick, Faculty of Law	1.45% ¹⁶	2.82%	1.57%
University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law (Common Law Stream)	4.82% ¹⁷	8.33%	5.40%
University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law (Civil Law Stream)	— ¹⁸	8.33%	5.40%
University of Saskatchewan, College of Law	1.38% ¹⁹	2.78%	2.05%
University of Toronto, Faculty of Law	4.24% ²⁰	9.48%	5.40%
University of Victoria, Faculty of Law	2.52% ²¹	1.28%	1.16%
University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Law	3.00% ²²	4.13%	5.40%
University of Windsor, Faculty of Law	5.41% ²³	5.78%	5.40%
York University, Osgoode Hall Law School	8.1% ²⁴	9.48%	5.40%

12 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

13 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

14 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

15 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

16 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

17 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

18 The local BLSA chapter was unable to assist in gauging this number.

19 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

20 This number is based on data from / estimates made by the University's local BLSA chapter.

21 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

22 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

23 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

24 This number is based on data from / estimates made by faculty representatives and the University's local BLSA chapter.

Findings

Dalhousie University, Schulich School of Law

37

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program¹

490

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program²

7.55%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

2.91%

Percentage of Black people in Province³

4.68%

Percentage of Black people in City⁴

1 A representative from Schulich Law noted that 9 students were accepted into the JD program in 2020 and 9 in 2021. DBLSA (the Dalhousie Black Law Students' Association) believed there were 37 total Black law students in the JD program at Schulich Law. DBLSA noted that there were 26 upper year students (2Ls and 3Ls, with part-time students) and at least 8 1Ls.

2 A representative from Schulich Law confirmed that the total number of law students in the law faculty's JD program is between 480-500 students.

3 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

4 Statistics Canada, "Halifax: Nova Scotia [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

Scholarships and Bursaries available

DBLSA (the Dalhousie Black Law Students' Association) notes that the main scholarship available for specifically Black students is through the IBM Initiative. This scholarship not only reserves seats for Black law students but also provides funding or partial or full tuition waivers and other professional development supports. Aside from this scholarship, the only other type of discretionary award that relates specifically to Black law students is the Justice Corinne Sparks Award often given to a student involved in DBLSA and based on community service. Otherwise, DBLSA is not aware of any other awards or scholarships that specifically target Black law students.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

DBLSA noted that the school maintains a presence of Black and Indigenous students through the Indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq Initiative, which allocates 6 seats to Black students, with a preference for African Nova Scotian students, and six seats to Indigenous students, with a preference for Mi'kmaq students.

DBLSA noted that Schulich Law's admissions office states that they take a holistic approach to reviewing applications. Students can speak to challenges faced or alternatively positive experiences they've had that don't relate to academics. The school doesn't have a minimum LSAT score needed for student acceptance. Students can provide extra documentation that could explain the circumstances around LSAT score.

Student Perspectives

DBLSA provided that the representation of Black students appears to have increased somewhat in the last years, with a push in the school's general admissions policy to incorporate an EDI mandate. DBLSA noted that the faculty has tried to recognize the diversity of prospective and current law students through their admissions offices.

Dalhousie University, Schulich School of Law

DBLSA provided that there is now a faculty council EDI committee made in response to a Black Lives Matter motion. There is a DBLSA permanent rep on the law student council, in the law student society. The law student society is also in process of trying to create an additional EDI position appointed from the different equity-seeking groups on the law school campus.

DBLSA also noted that there have been changes to the curriculum to better address racialized issues in various courses. They welcomed the introduction of a mandatory Critical Race Theory course and African Nova Scotian Legal History course for incoming 1Ls. The Julius Alexander Isaac Moot was also recently adopted as a competitive moot course.

Changes have been made to the curriculum of different courses, particularly first-year and other mandatory courses, to incorporate discussions of race particularly as they pertain to Black and Indigenous experiences. However, an ongoing challenge is meaningfully implementing these changes when not all members of faculty have the same level of education or cultural awareness in guiding these discussions. Some students have felt some change has been performative. For example, one can prescribe readings on Africville in property law but if the professor is not well-equipped to discuss the irrelevant issues, they can be glossed over. There have also been issues in the classroom at times in handling discussions of race and discriminatory comments made by other students. There also continues to be some backlash to different EDI-focused initiatives, at least at the level of the student body.

There are challenges that the school is still working towards addressing. Overall, the school is trying to cultivate a culture more receptive to Black law students.



Findings

Lakehead University, Bora Laskin Faculty of Law

1

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁵

195

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁶

0.50%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

5.40%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁷

1.96%

Percentage of Black people in City⁸

5 A representative from the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law noted that 3 students identified as Black entering their 1st year of law from 2017-2021, based on a 53% response rate for the survey. The representative noted that 1 student identified as Black entering their 1st year of law in 2022 based on OLSAS data.

BLSA Lakehead confirmed that the school currently has one law student enrolled as a 1L and they understand they are the only Black law student.

6 A representative from the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law estimated that the Faculty accepts about 65 students per year for its 3-year JD program.

7 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

8 Statistics Canada, "Thunder Bay: Ontario [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

Lakehead University, Bora Laskin Faculty of Law

Scholarships and Bursaries available

The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law noted that it has no scholarships, awards or bursaries specifically for Black-identifying students. However, it does have several awards that seek to recognize equity-seeking groups by prioritizing candidates from historically disadvantaged groups. Such scholarships include:

- The Law Society of Upper Canada/LexisNexis Education Equity Award, awarded annually to a student enrolled in either second or third year in the J.D. program and who is a member of a visible minority group, an Indigenous person, a person with a disability or LGBTQ student
- Blakes Scholar Award, with additional selection criteria that may include membership in a historically disadvantaged group as outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, involvement in the community, participation in extracurricular activities in the University or at Law School, and whether a student has multiple responsibilities and limited support.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law consulted with BLSA Lakehead in amending its admissions Personal Statement criteria. In the past, candidates were asked to comment on their connection and experience with the faculty's three mandate areas: Aboriginal & Indigenous Law; Environmental and Natural Resources Law; and Small Town Practice with the IPC. After speaking with BLSA Lakehead, the Faculty realized this framing may be limiting to Black and racialized applicants, as they may have faced systemic barriers to inclusion within the mandate areas. The Personal Statement now includes the following:

We recognize that it may be more difficult for Black and racialized applicants to situate their application given the long history of conceiving settler-Indigenous relations as a relationship between First Peoples and white people.

In light of this history, we want to clarify that we invite reflections on Indigenous-Black

Lakehead University, Bora Laskin Faculty of Law

relations and the role of racialized people in reconciliation and decolonization. We welcome the thoughts of applicants on the historical exclusion of Black and racialized communities from environmental protection and natural resource development. We also welcome applicants' thoughts on the challenges and contributions of Black and racialized communities in small-town practice or as sole practitioners.g to Black and racialized applicants, as they may have faced systemic barriers to inclusion within the mandate areas.

Bora Laskin Faculty of Law does not have a dedicated Black law student admissions process.

Student Perspectives

BLSA-Lakehead is unable to provide the specific logistics of the admission process internally but noted it is hoping to work closely with admissions to ensure that Black students have an equal opportunity during the application process. It has been mentioned that recruitment occurs across and beyond the GTA in order to reach as many diverse students as possible. Although Bora Laskin takes a holistic approach regarding admissions, BLSA Lakehead hopes the measures of expanding the Personal Statement mandate take further consideration of Black students.

Findings

McGill University, Faculty of Law

49

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁹

583

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program¹⁰

8.40%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

4.97%

Percentage of Black people in Province¹¹

7.93%

Percentage of Black people in City¹²

9 Approximate total of BCL/JD students from Black Law Students' Association of McGill.

10 Approximate total of BCL/JD students from Black Law Students' Association of McGill.

11 Statistics Canada, "Québec [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X202100, Ottawa online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

12 Statistics Canada, "Montréal (Census metropolitan area): Québec [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X202100, Ottawa online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

Scholarships and Bursaries available

According to representatives of BLSA McGill, the faculty currently offers a scholarship for Black and Indigenous law students called the Stikeman Elliott Diversity Scholarship. Additionally, BLSAM in collaboration with Dentons Montreal has gotten approval for one that should be available for the next academic year.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

According to representatives of BLSA McGill, the McGill Faculty of Law's admission process is holistic as students provide a CV, personal statement and two reference letters. As well as an interview for prospective CEGEP students. There is not a separate application stream for Black students, but students are encouraged to self-identify in their personal statement. Students can also write a letter of extenuating circumstances.

Student Perspectives

We were unable to gather enough student perspectives in time for the report's publication.

Findings

Queen's University, Faculty of Law

14

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program¹³

496

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program¹⁴

2.80%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

5.40%

Percentage of Black people in Province¹⁵

1.96%

Percentage of Black people in City¹⁶

13 The BLSA Queen's Law chapter confirmed that the school currently has ten Black law students in 1L, one in 2L, and three Black law students in 3L. Not counted, BLSA Queen's Law also noted it has two students in the LLM Program. Thus there are 14 Black students in the JD program and 16 Black students in the JD and LLM program.

14 The BLSA Queen's Law Chapter confirmed that the school currently has a total of 496 students.

15 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>

16 Statistics Canada, "Kingston: Ontario [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page>>.

Scholarships and Bursaries available

The Queen's University Faculty of Law noted that it has one bursary specifically for Black law students. This is the Cecil Allan Fraser Bursary. This fund was established in June 2020 by the Black Law Students' Association ("BLSA") Queen's Chapter and the Queen's Pre-Law Society in memory of Cecil Allan Fraser, B.A. 1958, LL.B. 1961. The bursary is financial needs based and the recipient must be enrolled in the JD degree program or a combined JD degree program in the Faculty of Law at Queen's University.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

The Queen's University Faculty of law now has a dedicated admission process for Black law students. The Faculty of Law has a Black Student Application category. This category considers personal or professional experiences of the applicant with the goal of building a more diverse class cohort. Considerations include:

- academic performance,
- LSAT results,
- employment history,
- letters of reference, and
- a Personal Statement

The Admissions Committee uses this material to judge whether an applicant can undertake the JD degree program successfully. To be competitive in the admission process, you should have at least a B+ average (GPA of 3.5) in the top 2 years of your undergraduate degree program at a full course load and an LSAT score of at least 155. The committee may consider other evidence of academic ability in addition to these academic standards. They stated that the Admissions Committee will endeavor to make decisions on completed applications early in the admission cycle for this category.

Student Perspectives

The BLSA Queen's Law Chapter has stated that historically, the representation of Black students

Queen's University, Faculty of Law

at Queen's Law has been comparatively low to other Canadian Law schools. They further stated in the demographic profile for the class of 2024, there were so few Black students admitted that the group was not statistically represented. However, they confirmed that the 2022 cohort is the largest Queen's Law has been for some time, with a total of 10 students. They believe that this increase is a direct result of the implementation of the "Black Student Applicant Category," an initiative the BLSA members of Queen's Law class of 2023 advocated for.

Findings

Thompson Rivers University, Faculty of Law

1

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program¹⁷

347

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program¹⁸

0.20%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

1.16%

Percentage of Black people in Province¹⁹

1.00%

Percentage of Black people in City²⁰

17 TRU BLSA Chapter and a representative from the Faculty confirmed that out of 347 JD students, there is currently 1 Black law student. In the 2022 fall period, there were only 2 Black students.

18 A representative from the Faculty noted that there are 350 JD students. However, the TRU BLSA Chapter confirmed that there are 347 law students. They also confirmed that they do not collect race-based data. This is mentioned in the following statement: "TRU does not collect diversity data outside of sex (moving forward though it will only be gender that is collected but not shared with anyone making decisions about files). The only racial data collected is for Indigenous students. Therefore we have no way of knowing how many Black students have applied, have been offered a seat, and how many have attended our school in the last 10 years."

19 Statistics Canada, "British Columbia [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

20 Statistics Canada, "Kamloops, British Columbia [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

Thompson Rivers University, Faculty of Law

Scholarships and Bursaries available

As of 2023, the Thompson Rivers University, Faculty of Law (TRU) BLSA Chapter noted that TRU Law launched its first-ever scholarship dedicated for an incoming Black law student:

Name: Black Future Lawyer Award

Amount: \$5,000 per year for the next 5 years

This scholarship will be awarded annually to an incoming student enrolled at TRU Law who is Black and has overcome hardship to attend law school. If there are no candidates that fit this description, preference will be given to a Black student enrolled in 2L or 3L based on GPA, and lastly if no candidates fit the preferences, the award will go to an incoming student that belongs to a racialized group, based on GPA.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

The TRU BLSA Chapter confirms that the “TRU Law’s Admission Committee takes a holistic admissions approach regardless of the candidate, especially those of a minority group, being Black and Indigenous students. There is a possibility for a better and improved approach to reviewing Black law student applications” in the future.

Special Consideration Applicant:

“Because of special circumstances in life, your application may not be as competitive as a regular applicant and you may seek admission under the Special Consideration category. This category of admission usually requires supplemental documentation. Examples of special circumstances in life include: disability or special needs, financial disadvantage, age (over 30), membership in a historically disadvantaged group, residency in a small and/or remote community, or any other factors that you would ask the Admissions Committee to consider.”²¹

²¹ Thompson Rivers University, “FAQs”, TRU Law, online: < <https://www.tru.ca/law/admissions/faqs.html> >.

Student Perspectives

A statement from TRU's BLSA Chapter noted that:

"Both TRU's BLSA Chapter and TRU Law's Admissions Committee are trying to improve and create transparency in how the committee reviews applications from prospective Black law students. A sub-admissions committee was created, consisting of a Black TRU Law professor, a TRU Law professor on the Equity Committee, the Admissions Manager, and the President of TRU's BLSA Chapter. They are currently constructing a report to be provided to the Admission Committee. While details cannot be provided, however, the goal is to present an application process that is not overshadowed by bureaucracy and can be easily implemented by the Admission Committee itself."

Findings

Toronto Metropolitan University, Lincoln Alexander School of Law

59

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program²²

460

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program²³

12.83%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

5.40%

Percentage of Black people in Province²⁴

9.48%

Percentage of Black people in City²⁵

22 A representative from the Lincoln Alexander School of Law confirmed that there are 59 Black Law students in their programs. There are 12 students in third year, 27 students in second year, and 20 students in their first year.

23 A representative from the Lincoln Alexander School of Law confirmed that there are 460 students enrolled across 1L, 2L, and 3L at the institution.

24 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ontario, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>

25 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Toronto, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

Toronto Metropolitan University, Lincoln Alexander School of Law

Scholarships and Bursaries available

The following scholarships are provided by generous external donors for Lincoln students:²⁶

1. The BlackNorth Initiative Scholarships
2. Enbridge Award for Black Law Students
3. The Canadian Association of Black Lawyers Award
4. BLSA Black Excellence Award
5. The Canadian Association of Black Lawyers Award
6. The Santan and Omega De Mello Community Leadership Award
7. Adan Dubet Law School Award

26 Toronto Metropolitan University, "Scholarships & Awards" Lincoln Alexander School of Law, online: <<https://www.torontomu.ca/law/admissions/scholarships-awards/>>.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

The Lincoln Alexander School of Law's admission process includes a personal statement portion that allows applicants to discuss equity factors, work/life experience, and diversity factors if they apply. An applicant can apply under the Access Category if they identify as a Black person, 2SLGBTQ+ person, a person with a disability, a racialized person or if they are a part of another historically disadvantaged and/or underrepresented group. If an applicant applies under this category, they are able to expand on their unique experiences in their application."²⁷

27 Toronto Metropolitan University, "Application Requirements" Lincoln Alexander School of Law, online: <<https://www.torontomu.ca/law/admissions/application-requirements/>>.

Student Perspectives

A representative from the BLSA- Lincoln Alexander Chapter provided the following statement:

The current representation of Black law students at Lincoln Alexander School of

Toronto Metropolitan University, Lincoln Alexander School of Law

Law is adequate, especially for a school of its size. It would be a rarity for a Black law student to be the only one in their classroom. In addition, there are some Black staff at our school from the admissions office to professors to the Dean.

Findings

Université de Moncton, École de droit

14

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program²⁸

148

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program²⁹

9.46%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

1.57%

Percentage of Black people in Province³⁰

8.24%

Percentage of Black people in City³¹

28 Approximate from AEND of l'Université de Moncton.

29 Confirmed total from Faculty of Law.

30 Statistics Canada, "New Brunswick [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

31 Statistics Canada, "Moncton: New Brunswick [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

Université de Moncton, École de droit

Scholarships and Bursaries available

There are no scholarships or bursaries allocated specifically for Black students.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

l'Université de Moncton includes a holistic process for admissions.

Student Perspectives

A statement from Moncton's BLSA Chapter noted that:

“Pour l’instant, notre faculté n’est pas proactive dans la défense des droits des étudiants noirs. Nous n’avons pas de plateforme ou de soutien qui nous sont dédiés. Toutefois, l’association des étudiants noir en droit était rassuré que la faculté de Droit est disposée à nous soutenir s’il le faut. Je pense qu’il faudrait alors que nous en tant qu’association établissons une liste des besoins des étudiants noirs en droit inscrits à l’Université de Moncton.”

Findings

Université de Montréal, Faculté de droit

20

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program³²

1249

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program³³

1.60%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

4.97%

Percentage of Black people in Province³⁴

7.93%

Percentage of Black people in City³⁵

32 Approximate from AEND UdeM.

33 Total number from AEND UdeM

34 Statistics Canada, "Québec [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X202100, Ottawa online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

35 Statistics Canada, "Montréal (Census metropolitan area): Québec [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X202100, Ottawa online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

Université de Montréal, Faculté de droit

Scholarships and Bursaries available

Par ailleurs, il existe plus d'une dizaine de bourses à l'admission offertes par différents donateurs, mais aussi des bourses pour des étudiants de deuxième ou troisième année.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

L'université de Montréal a adopté une vision qui promeut la diversité afin de changer le visage de la faculté pour les prochaines années. En effet, elle participe à un projet pilote dans lequel, les étudiant.es noir.es qui ne se qualifient pas selon les critères d'admission auront dorénavant l'opportunité de mettre en avant les particularités de leur parcours et de leur histoire afin de défendre leur candidature lors d'une entrevue.

Student Perspectives

Par ailleurs, l'université de Montréal a inauguré une murale en l'honneur des communautés noires dans le hall principal de notre faculté afin d'accentuer le sentiment d'appartenance des étudiantes noires.

Findings

Université de Sherbrooke, Faculté de droit

30

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program³⁶

1300

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program³⁷

2.31%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

4.97%

Percentage of Black people in Province³⁸

3.02%

Percentage of Black people in City³⁹

36 Approximate from AEND from l'Université de Sherbrooke.

37 Approximate from AEND from l'Université de Sherbrooke.

38 Statistics Canada, "Québec [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X202100, Ottawa online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

39 Statistics Canada, "Sherbrooke (Ville): Québec [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X202100, Ottawa online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

Université de Sherbrooke, Faculté de droit

Scholarships and Bursaries available

Les bourses offertes à la faculté soulignent l'excellence et l'engagement des étudiants et étudiantes. Bien que quelques-unes visent les personnes étudiantes autochtones, aucune pour l'instant ne s'adresse spécifiquement aux personnes étudiantes noires.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

Le processus d'admission du baccalauréat en droit ne présente pas une approche holistique auprès des personnes candidates noires.

Student Perspectives

A statement from the USherbrooke BLSA Chapter noted that:

“L'Association a pour objectif principal de favoriser l'inclusion et l'intégration des étudiants issus de la communauté noire au sein de la faculté de droit de l'Université de Sherbrooke. Elle a aussi pour objectif de contribuer à la visibilité des personnes noires au sein de la communauté juridique et de sensibiliser la communauté étudiante aux enjeux systémiques qui affectent directement les juristes issus de la communauté noire. Pour parvenir à la rencontre de ses objectifs, l'association utilise divers médiums, principalement les plateformes de réseaux sociaux pour captiver, mais surtout sensibiliser la communauté étudiantes, dans son ensemble, à l'inclusion des étudiant(e)s de la communauté afro-canadienne de la faculté. Que ce soit à travers le partage de publications informatives, de conférences offertes par des juristes de carrières ou encore de soirée de discussion ou sociale permettant aux étudiant(e)s non seulement de reconnaître la place des juristes noir(e)s sur la scène juridique canadienne et québécoise, mais aussi en favorisant un esprit de partage, d'apprentissage et de fraternité pour tous.”

Findings

Université Laval, Faculté de droit

10

Number of Black Law
Students in entry-level
law program⁴⁰

950

Total Number of Law
Students in entry law
program⁴¹

1.05%

Total Number of Law
Black Students in
entry law program

4.97%

Percentage of Black
people in Province⁴²

4.00%

Percentage of Black
people in City⁴³

⁴⁰ Approximate from AEND Laval.

⁴¹ Approximate from AEND Laval.

⁴² Statistics Canada, "Québec [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X202100, Ottawa online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

⁴³ Statistics Canada, "Québec, Ville (V)" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X202100, Ottawa online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page>>.

Université de Laval, Faculté de droit

Scholarships and Bursaries available

The Laval BLSA chapter noted there is one privately funded, merit-based scholarship for incoming Black law students: la Bourse Bansoba-Nour.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

Admissions are almost exclusively grades based.

Student Perspectives

A student from l'Université Laval offered the following:

"I'm currently not aware of any Faculty driven initiatives that have been put in place to attract black students to our law school. However, a merit based scholarship for first-year Black law students (funded by private donors) named la "Bourse Bansoba-Nour" was established in the fall of 2022 in the hopes of attracting and supporting new black law students."

Findings

University of Alberta, Faculty of Law

4

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁴⁴

547

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁴⁵

0.73%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

4.26%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁴⁶

5.76%

Percentage of Black people in City⁴⁷

44 The Dean for the University of Alberta Faculty of law confirmed that it does not have an official record of the number of Black law students enrolled in the JD program because this information is not required on the law school's application form. Since 2020, the faculty has annually conducted a voluntary demographic survey of students. The University of Alberta BLSA Chapter confirmed that there is currently one Black graduate student, one NCA student, one JD, two 2L, and one student in her second year in the JD/MBA.

45 A representative from the Faculty of Law and the University of Alberta BLSA Chapter confirmed that there is an estimate of 547 JD students. There are 185 students in their first-year, 183 students in their second-year and 179 students in their third-year. Also, there are 20 graduate students.

46 Statistics Canada, "Alberta [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X202100, Ottawa online: <<https://census.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page>>.

47 Statistics Canada, "Edmonton: Alberta [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X202100, Ottawa online: <<https://census.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page>>.

University of Alberta, Faculty of Law

Scholarships and Bursaries available

A representative of the University of Alberta's Faculty of Law confirmed that there are scholarships and bursaries that prioritize for Black law students. These include:

1. The Family Bar Diversity and Equality Award in Law. The award is to the tune of \$13,500 and is awarded to a student who identifies as a member of a Visible Minority with satisfactory academic standing enrolled in any year of a Juris Doctor degree.
2. Robert L. Phillips KC Award in Law. This award is to the tune of \$2,500. It is Awarded to students who are of African descent and who self identify as Black, African-Canadian, African-American, of Afro-Caribbean or Afro-Lanx heritage or students who are First Naon, Inuit, or Metis people of Canada in accordance with the Constitution Act, 1982, Part 2, Section 35(2) with satisfactory academic standing enrolled in any year of a Juris Doctor degree. Selection based on academic standing and indicated financial need.
3. Violet King Henry Award. The development of this award is still in progress.
4. The Faculty of Law - University of Alberta's Opportunities Award in Law. There is a projected funding of \$248,000 for this award in 2023. Preference given to students who identify as members of equity-deserving groups.
5. Scotiabank Award for Law Students. This is an award to the tune of \$30,000 (\$10,000 for each year of the 3 years JD program). It is awarded to a student with satisfactory academic standing in the first year of a Juris Doctor degree. Selection is based on academic standing, demonstrated work or voluntary experience supporting Visible Minorities, marginalized and/or disadvantaged groups. Preference is given to a student who identifies as a member of a Visible Minority and/or who is First Nation, Inuit, or Métis person of Canada in accordance with the Constitution Act, 1982, Part 2, Section 35(2).

Holistic Admissions Processes?

A representative of the University of Alberta's Faculty of Law confirms that there is currently no holistic admission process but a comprehensive review of their admissions processes is currently underway. One of the central purposes of that review is to determine how the current admissions processes might be revised to increase opportunities for prospective students from historically under-represented groups.

Student Perspectives

The students of University of Alberta's Faculty of Law have stated that since 2020, the Faculty of Law has been pursuing several initiatives to increase representation of Black law students, including:

- Seeking scholarship /award funding specifically for Black law students (see #3 below)
- The Faculty's student recruitment officer has participated in virtual events hosted by other institutions for Black prospective law students (including Carleton and the University of Toronto) and has been working with the U of A BLSA on hosting an event for Black U of A prospective students

A representative of the University's BLSA chapter has stated that the chapter is small and young and that efforts this year have centered around the creation of a stronger community atmosphere for the Black/African students in their halls. The Faculty has recruited two new Black law professors who come from diverse and stimulating backgrounds. All of the initiatives the BLSA has taken this year have been supported and encouraged. But the size of the chapter does create its own inherent difficulties. It is hard to be underrepresented among the student population. They are seeking to expand their presence on campus.

Findings

University of British Columbia, Peter A. Allard School of Law

26

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁴⁸

574

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁴⁹

4.53%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

1.16%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁵⁰

1.55%

Percentage of Black people in City⁵¹

48 A representative from Peter A. Allard School of Law noted that they have 14 first-year law students in the 2022-2023 period. They did not give the percentage of Black law students for 2L and 3L. The UBC BLSA estimated that there are 16 Black law students in 1L within their local chapter. They also confirmed that in 2L there are 8 Black law students and in 3L there are 2 Black law students. Approximately two Black graduate students attend the law school.

49 An EDI representative from Peter A. Allard School of Law confirmed that there are 199 Juris Doctorate students in first-year. There are 136 graduate students. In total there are 574 Juris Doctorate students (1L, 2L, 3L, and joint-degree programs).

50 Statistics Canada, "British Columbia [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

51 Statistics Canada, "Vancouver, British Columbia [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

University of British Columbia, Peter A. Allard School of Law

Scholarships and Bursaries available

A representative from the Faculty confirmed that they have 2 awards specifically for Black students:

1. Peter A. Allard School of Law Entrance Award for Black Students
2. St. Pierre, Romilly, Nathanson Entrance Award in Law for Black Students

The faculty also has 3 awards for IBPOC students:

1. Catherine Chow Award in Law for IBPOC Students
2. Edwards, Kenny & Bray Award in Law for IBPOC Students
3. Kevin B. Westell Award in Law for IBPOC Students

Holistic Admissions Processes?

A representative from the Faculty and the UBC BLSA Chapter confirmed they do not have a Black admissions program. The Faculty representative did state their commitment to diversity and ensuring their “students are drawn from across society, we collect demographic data through a JD 1L Student Survey.” They also have a Discretionary category for students with learning differences, economic disadvantages, and other societal barriers. This application is specifically “designed to provide the opportunity for applicants of this nature to receive individual and exceptional scrutiny of their special circumstances for these candidates to be able to join and contribute to the richness and diverse nature of the academic community and ultimately to the practice of law in the society that is served by the Allard School of Law.”

The UBC BLSA Chapter stated that:

“Allard’s application process has two main categories through which Black students may apply; General and Discretionary. In the General category, it allows students to provide personal statements on equity and diversity, and other experiences which have prepared the student for studying law. The Discretionary category’s

University of British Columbia, Peter A. Allard School of Law

statement allows for a more comprehensive account of personal history, qualities, and attributes that an applicant may find relevant. The admissions committee for this category notes that they may take into account relevant factors like: personal challenges, membership in a historically disadvantaged group, contributions to a community, and other relevant factors.”

Student Perspectives

The UBC BLSA Chapter statement:

“Allard has put some effort towards increasing the number of black students at the law school, and we are grateful for the effort and achievements of faculty allies and past students. However we do believe that more can be done towards this initiative. There needs to be a more institutionalized process in place to attract black applicants and keep the number of black law students at Allard at a respectable level. Additionally we believe that more support can be provided black students to support their academic and professional development while attending the law school.”

“In the past few years, Allard has demonstrated dedication to remedying its historical underrepresentation of Black law students. We are grateful for the effort and advocacy of faculty allies and past UBC BLSA members and executives, without whom progress may not have come as quickly. However we do believe that more can be done towards increasing Black representation at Allard. We hope to see an institutionalized Black applicant process in place to attract Black applicants and maintain focus on representation. Additionally, while we recognize Allard’s commitment to diversity, we hope to see that same commitment towards greater inclusivity and creating a sense of belonging moving forward. Black students deserve support in their academic and professional development while attending the law school.”

Findings

University of Calgary, Faculty of Law

31

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁵²

390

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁵³

7.95%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

4.26%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁵⁴

5.16%

Percentage of Black people in City⁵⁵

52 The University of Calgary's BLSA Chapter provided that about 1174 students had enrolled in the JD program over the past 3 years. A representative of the University of Calgary's BLSA chapter confirms that there are currently 39 Black law students enrolled.

53 A representative of the University of Calgary's BLSA chapter confirms that there are currently 390 law students enrolled.

54 Statistics Canada, "Alberta [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

55 Statistics Canada, "Calgary: Alberta [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

University of Calgary, Faculty of Law

Scholarships and Bursaries available

A representative of the University of Calgary's BLSA chapter confirmed that its faculty of law has scholarships and bursaries available for Black law students. These include:

1. Faculty of Law Undergraduate Award of Excellence for Indigenous, Black and Racialized Persons: Valued at \$10,000 each, Based on academic merit, Offered to one (1) Indigenous, Black and Racialized Person entering their first year of the JD program.
2. Inter Pipeline Awards: Valued at \$10,000 each. Based on academic merit, Offered each year to one (1) Indigenous student and one (1) Black student entering their first year of the JD program.
3. Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP Award for BIPOC law students: Valued at \$10,000, Based on academic merit, For a student who is Black, Indigenous or a Person of Colour (POC), Offered annually to an undergraduate student entering the JD program.
4. Agnes Stephanson Cooke Law Bursary: Offered annually to an undergraduate student enrolled in the Faculty of Law, JD Program Financial need, Black student, Actively involved in supporting diversity and equality in the legal profession.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

A representative of the University of Calgary's BLSA chapter confirmed that the faculty of law has a holistic general admissions process. The representative and a faculty representative noted that Black students may also apply through the Black Student Admissions Process (BSAP) which was introduced for the Fall 2021 admissions cycle in collaboration with the UCalgary's Black Law Students Association. In the online application, all applicants are asked to indicate if they self-identify as Black. If you answer yes to that question, you are eligible for the BSAP review process. There are no additional supporting documents required to verify your Black identity under the BSAP. After you self identify, you will be invited to complete an optional personal essay of up to 1,000 words. The personal essay will not be given a specific weight but, instead, will be taken into account as part of your overall file review within our comprehensive

University of Calgary, Faculty of Law

admissions process. Examples of what you may choose to share in this space include your connection to Black culture (“culture” being understood not to be monolithic but personal to one’s experience, fluid and multi-faceted), and/or the impact of institutional, structural or personal racism on you and/or your family. They start by considering your application using our regular competitive criteria. If necessary, we’ll automatically provide you a second consideration if you’ve self-identified as Black in your application. This assessment will be completed by up to two members of the Black Students Admissions Process Sub committee which includes members of the BLSA, Black law faculty and Black members of the wider legal community. They currently have eleven members of the Black legal community who sit on this sub-committee as well as Black student and Black faculty representation on our Admissions Committee. This second process is intended to ensure that those with a similar lived experience to Black applicants are involved in admission decisions and help applicants feel supported. The same competitive admissions criteria are taken into account in this second assessment. You will receive either an offer, regrets, or waitlist notification based on the highest scores given to your application between the two review processes.

Student Perspectives

A representative of the University of Calgary BLSA stated that in 2020, she was one of just three Black 1L students among a total of six in the entire student body. Following the introduction of the BSAP process in 2021, today they have a total of 31 Black law students at the BLSA, 29 of which are in the JD program—that is over a 350% increase in just two years. The impact of this growth is immeasurable and will undoubtedly alter the landscape of the legal profession in a meaningful way. The BLSA representative noted this was possible because of “the dedication of past and present BLSA leadership, and the commitment from our faculty to have a student body that mirrors the diversity of our community. The faculty’s support has matched the growth of our membership, and we continue to work together to make law school accessible for Black students.”

Findings

University of Manitoba, Robson Hall Faculty of Law

8

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁵⁶

319

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁵⁷

2.51%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

3.56%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁵⁸

4.99%

Percentage of Black people in City⁵⁹

⁵⁶ A representative from the University of Manitoba BLSA Chapter stated that the overall number of Black students is likely about 8, with 5 being the current members of the BLSA Manitoba Chapter. They also noted that the University of Manitoba has a lower number of Black students and an even a smaller amount that apply to law school.

⁵⁷ A representative from the University of Manitoba noted that there are about 319 JD students that attend the Robson Hall Faculty of Law.

⁵⁸ Statistics Canada, "Manitoba [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

⁵⁹ Statistics Canada, "Winnipeg: Manitoba [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

Scholarships and Bursaries available

A representative of the University of Manitoba's BLSA chapter noted that the faculty of law has no scholarships, awards or bursaries specifically for Black-identifying students. However there is the David Sowemimo scholarship, which open to all students including students with disabilities, Indigenous students and international students

Holistic Admissions Processes?

A representative from the University of Manitoba's BLSA chapter confirmed that the faculty of law has a holistic admission process but it is for applicants that have faced barriers to education, notwithstanding the age requirement. Black students are able to apply through this admission process, however, the representative cannot confirm if race is a major factor taken into consideration in determining admission.

Student Perspectives

Students at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Law recognize that due to the low number of black students, the school has been unable to do much to ensure adequate representation. They confirm that the University has a low number of black students and the Faculty of Law has an even lower number that apply to the law school. They hope that the BLSA conference can change this by creating awareness and as the BLSA Manitoba is relatively young, they believe they still have a lot to learn. The BLSA Manitoba is hoping to discuss with other chapters at the conference on how it can change this so there is more black representation even when current members of the chapter are gone

Findings

University of New Brunswick, Faculty of Law

4

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁶⁰

267

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁶¹

1.45%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

1.57%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁶²

2.82%

Percentage of Black people in City⁶³

60 UNB BLSA noted that there appears to be 4 Black students in UNB Law's JD program: three 2Ls and 1 3L.

61 A representative from the Faculty noted that there are 92 first-years students that are registered each year. There is also an approximate total of 265-270 JD students enrolled.

62 Statistics Canada, "New Brunswick [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

63 Statistics Canada, "Fredericton, New Brunswick [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

Scholarships and Bursaries available

We did not hear back from a faculty or BLSA representative on scholarships and bursaries available specifically to Black or racialized students.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

A representative from the Faculty confirmed they do not have a Black admissions program, but they offer a Discretionary category with three sub-categories: Significant Achievement, Disability and Diversity.

The representative stated the following:

“Applicants are encouraged to select the admissions category that best reflects their current status. In establishing these categories, UNB Law seeks to increase access to legal education and the legal profession by persons who have limited academic credentials but distinctive and sustained life achievement. The goal is to enhance the opportunity for disadvantaged groups to acquire legal assistance from members of their own group and to increase the social and cultural diversity of the student body and the legal profession.”

Student Perspectives

UNB BLSA noted that the school’s Dean has been very active in trying to increase the number of black law students. He has met with their chapter a few times this year and has let us know that we have his support and has asked us how the faculty can help increase the number of Black students in the law faculty, and make the faculty a more inclusive space for Black students.

Findings

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law (Common Law)

55

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁶⁴

1140

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁶⁵

4.82%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

5.40%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁶⁶

8.33%

Percentage of Black people in City⁶⁷

64 A representative from the uOttawa Faculty of Law - BLSA Chapter estimated that there are 26 Black-identifying students in their Chapter. However, they are not able to collect a full list of Black-identifying students within uOttawa law and this number would be a very rough estimate. On February 21st 2023, a representative from the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law noted: "Numbers from our incoming student surveys show that we have approximately 55 students who self-identified as Black in our Programme de common law en français and the English Common Law Program combined. This number is an estimate because we do not have 100% response rate and some students chose not to answer some or all related questions in the survey."

65 A representative from the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law confirmed that there are 871 students enrolled in the English Common law stream. On February 21st 2023, a representative from the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law noted the current student population is 1140 in the faculty's French and English JD programs.

66 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ontario, online.

67 Statistics Canada, "Ottawa, Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law (Common Law)

Scholarships and Bursaries available

A representative of the University of Ottawa's Common Law BLSA chapter confirmed that its faculty of law has the following scholarships available for specifically Black students:

1. Common Law Section Students Community Enhancement and Anti-Racism Action Fund
2. Black Students Law Scholarship
3. Common Law Black Students Entrance Scholarship
4. Law Society of Upper Canada Education Equity Bursary (Visible minority)

They also noted there are additional scholarships for Black, Indigenous and racialized students.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

A representative of the University of Ottawa's Common Law BLSA chapter confirmed that students can include an autobiographical sketch and a personal statement in their applications to UOttawa to provide further context on information from their unique life experiences.

Student Perspectives

A representative from the uOttawa Common Law BLSA Chapter provided the following statement:

uOttawa supports Black law students by providing scholarships for Black students

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law (Common Law)

to which students can apply to at the beginning of the school year. There are also funding opportunities for Black first year students entering law school. The faculty can better support Black law students with additional funding opportunities, additional internship and work opportunities, and law courses addressing diversity, for example.

Findings

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law (Civil Law)

--

Number of Black Law
Students in entry-level
law program⁶⁸

--%

Total Number of Law
Black Students in
entry law program

--

Total Number of Law
Students in entry law
program

5.40%

Percentage of Black
people in Province⁶⁹

8.33%

Percentage of Black
people in City⁷⁰

68 A representative from the uOttawa Faculty of Law - BLSA Chapter could not confirm the number of black students enrolled in the BCL program at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law. They estimated there are more than 11 black-identifying students. However, this number is in no way indicative of the total number of Black law students in the faculty's entry level law program.

69 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ontario, online.

70 Statistics Canada, "Ottawa, Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law (Civil Law)

Scholarships and Bursaries available

We did not hear back from a faculty or BLSA representative on scholarships and bursaries available specifically to Black or racialized students.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

A representative from uOttawa BLSA's civil law chapter identified the following scholarships as aimed at supporting Black law students:

1. Dorothea Dadson scholarship for student from a racialized community
2. Black Students Law Scholarship
3. PARCOURS DE VIE EXCEPTIONNEL
4. Bansoba scholarship
5. Law Society of Upper Canada Education Equity Bursary
6. The faculty also has a multi-year scholarship for black students: Bourse de la Faculté de droit pour les étudiantes et étudiants noirs

A representative from the BLSA chapter commented that when Black students apply, they can note that they identify as "POCs." They provided the following:

"In some cases, I believe it is after the admission, applicants can talk to the faculty about any particular situation that we might have (economic background, financial difficulty, or any other issues related to race that you might face IN school, etc). If applicants want to provide further context on information on your unique life experiences, the applicant can do it if they are already a student at the faculty. For instance, during workshops, events that concern POCs at the faculty, etc."

However, the representative does not believe that this can be done during the admission process:

"If you are raised by a single parent, you will be able to make it known during the admission process by selecting that you only have 1 parent."

Student Perspectives

We were unable to receive further student insights.

Findings

University of Saskatchewan, College of Law

5

Number of Black Law
Students in entry-level
law program⁷¹

363

Total Number of Law
Students in entry law
program⁷²

1.38%

Total Number of Law
Black Students in
entry law program

2.05%

Percentage of Black
people in Province⁷³

2.78%

Percentage of Black
people in City⁷⁴

71 A representative from the University of Saskatchewan's BLSA Chapter confirmed that there are a total of 5 black law students currently enrolled in the JD program. Specifically, 1 in 1L, 2 in 2L, and 2 in 3L.

72 A representative from the University of Saskatchewan's BLSA Chapter confirmed that there are a total of 363 students currently enrolled in the JD program.

73 Statistics Canada, "Saskatchewan [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ontario, online.

74 Statistics Canada, "Saskatoon, Saskatchewan [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ontario, online.

Scholarships and Bursaries available

A representative of the University of Saskatchewan's BLSA Chapter confirmed that there are no scholarships or bursaries specifically for Black law students.

Holistic Admissions Processes?

A representative of the University of Saskatchewan's BLSA Chapter confirmed that there is no holistic admission process specifically for Black law students. The admissions process is based on LSAT scores and a 500-word personal statement. However, there is a discretionary application process that permits additional information for any applicant that is able to highlight circumstances relating to being educationally disadvantaged.

Student Perspectives

Students at the University of Saskatchewan's Faculty of Law have stated that there is no specific initiative to ensure the representation of black law students. Although the admission committee has discretionary consideration for law school applicants that are educationally disadvantaged, there is still more weight given to the applicant's LSAT score. The students believe that the university could do better at ensuring representation by showing black students and more diversity in general on the website, and by offering specific scholarships or grants to attract and support the success of black law students. They believe it reduces the quality of the law school experience to feel like an outsider having almost no one to whom one can relate.

Findings

University of Toronto, Faculty of Law

27

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁷⁵

637

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁷⁶

4.24%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

5.40%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁷⁷

9.48%

Percentage of Black people in City⁷⁸

75 A representative from the University of Toronto Faculty of Law - BLSA Chapter estimated that there are 27 Black-identifying students at the faculty.

76 The total number of students is derived from the JD First year class profile data on the UofT law website.

77 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ontario, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

Scholarships and Bursaries available

1. The Micheal Kelly Memorial Award,
2. Excellence is Black (Open to all undergraduate students)
3. Siobhan Amani Alexander Memorial Scholarship - To be awarded to a Black woman accepted into the first year of law school who shows dedication to the pursuit of excellence.
4. Albert Cohen Memorial Award - To be awarded to (a) full-time, undergraduate student(s) at the University of Toronto on the basis of financial need in the Faculty of Law with preference given to students that are first in their family to attend law school. Additional preference will be given to Black students.
5. Robert M. Yalden Award - To be awarded to (a) full-time, undergraduate student(s) at the Faculty of Law on the basis of financial need. Preference will be given to Indigenous and/or Black students in the J.D. program.
6. The Michael Kelly Memorial Award - Scholarship to be awarded to a Black student entering the LL.B. programme, on the basis of academic excellence, commitment to community and financial need.
7. Bereskin & Parr LLP Bursary - The Bereskin & Parr LLP Bursary will be awarded to a JD student entering 1L who identifies as Black or Indigenous, with financial need. Preference will be given to those students with a post-secondary degree in a STEM discipline (Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics.)
8. BCE Black Future Lawyers/Future of Law Lab Summer Fellowships - Awarded one U of T Law student (\$14,000 for 14 weeks). Law students associated with the Black Future Lawyers Program will be encouraged to apply.
9. Lida Lorito Bursary - To be awarded to a full-time undergraduate student with preference will be given to Black and Indigenous students enrolled at the Faculty of Law with additional preference given to support Black or Indigenous students who are first in family to attend law school.
10. Laura Fric Bursary

Holistic Admissions Processes?

Black students applying to U of T Law may submit an optional essay through the Black Student Application Process (BSAP). BSAP allows for better recognition of the unique perspectives and experiences of Black individuals and their Black communities. The BSAP is an important

University of Toronto, Faculty of Law

part of U of T Law's commitment to ensuring that legal education is accessible to talented students from all segments of Canadian society and that the legal profession represents the diverse communities that lawyers serve.

Student Perspectives

The BLSA UofT Chapter provided the following statement:

The University of Toronto Faculty of Law is working hard to ensure adequate representation by working closely with BLSA U of T on a number of initiatives. Further, current Black undergraduate students who are interested in becoming lawyers are invited to sign-up for membership in the Black Future Lawyers (BFL) initiative. As early as their first year, Black students in an undergraduate degree program at any post-secondary institution may participate. UofT Law provides for free to BFL student members: mentoring, networking and shadowing with Black lawyers and law students; workshops, speakers, admissions and financing information; LSAT preparation, an annual conference and a paid full-time summer internship.

Findings

University of Victoria, Faculty of Law

11

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁷⁹

436

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁸⁰

2.52%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

1.16%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁸¹

1.28%

Percentage of Black people in City

78 A representative from the University of Victoria Faculty of Law noted that they do not currently collect race-based data (with the exception of Indigenous applicants). The Faculty stated the following: "This information is not always 100% accurate as not all Indigenous people choose to self-identify on the UVic application form." BLSA UVic confirmed that the school currently has nine JD students: five are 1Ls, four are 2Ls, one is 3L and one is 4L. Two students are in the JD/JID program.

79 A representative from the University of Victoria Faculty of Law confirmed that for both undergraduate programs (Juris Doctor (JD) and the Joint Degree Program in Canadian Common Law and Indigenous Legal Orders (JD/JID)) there are a total of 436 law students.

80 Statistics Canada, "British Columbia [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalog no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

81 Statistics Canada, "Victoria, British Columbia [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalog no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

University of Victoria, Faculty of Law

Scholarships and Bursaries available

The University of Victoria Faculty of Law noted that it has no scholarships, awards or bursaries specifically for Black-identifying students. However, it does have some awards that seek to recognize Indigenous people(s), racialized groups, and equity-seeking or marginalized people(s). Such scholarships include:

1. BIPOC Professional Development Fund - \$5,000.00
2. Entrance Scholarships and Awards
3. Harper Grey LLP Diversity Award – \$1,000
4. Life in Law Diversity Award – \$1,000
5. One Heart for Reconciliation Award – Value varies
6. Scotiabank Entrance Scholarship for Law Students – \$10,000 (renewable)
7. Edwards, Kenny & Bray Award for BIPOC Students in Law - \$2,000
8. Inuit Women or Two-Spirit Legal Scholar Award - \$20,000 (renewable)
9. JFK Law LLP Indigenous Legal Orders Scholarship - \$5,000

While a representative from the Faculty was unable to answer all of our requests, they did inform BLSA Canada that we could receive concrete disaggregated data in subsequent years. They also stated the following:

“The Faculty of Law at the University of Victoria is deeply committed to equity, diversity, inclusivity and justice in our student body, legal education and legal profession. As a result, we have implemented a Diversity Data Collection Pilot Project which began in September 2022. The purpose is to capture diversity data to better understand our student population and to enable the building of better and more supportive services, practices and supports as a result.”

Holistic Admissions Processes?

A BLSA representative informed that there is currently no Black admission program, however, the BLSA Chapter and the Faculty are in the process of considering whether to include one.

University of Victoria, Faculty of Law

The Faculty does provide an Inclusive Admission (formally called Discretionary Category) for applicants whose: “outstanding applicants to both the Juris Doctor (JD) and Juris Doctor/Juris Indigenarum (JD/JID) programs. It is designed to account for the fact that General Admission may exclude from consideration deserving applicants who bring valuable skills, experiences and abilities to our Faculty and the legal profession. In particular, this traditional approach does not acknowledge the systemic and personal barriers that exist in many forms, and which generate inequities that can have significant impacts on academic opportunities and metrics. Nor does it acknowledge that challenging such obstacles and barriers often involves demonstrating an exceptional skillset of particular relevance to our Faculty and its focus on training a more diverse and inclusive profession.”

Student Perspectives

A BLSA Chapter representative noted that:

The representation of Black law students in our faculty is improving. When I started law school, I was the only Black student in my year. But in the class of 2025/2026, there are 4 Black students. Our faculty is also currently considering a Black admissions pathway. The proposal was unanimously passed at the first stage and is currently awaiting approval from the university's senate. I think this is promising. But in addition to creating the Black admissions pathway, the school needs to do more to attract and retain Black students. Hiring more diverse professors and having scholarships for Black students would help make the school a place where Black students want to be.

Findings

University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Law

18

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁸²

600

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁸³

3.00%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

5.40%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁸⁴

4.13%

Percentage of Black people in City⁸⁵

82 A representative from the University of Western Ontario Faculty of Law estimated that there are 18 Black law students currently enrolled. A representative from the University of Western Ontario's Faculty of Law and BLSA Western confirmed that across the 18 Black-identifying students enrolled, there are four in 1L, eleven in 2L, and three in 3L.

83 A representative from the University of Western Ontario Faculty of Law and the BLSA Western Chapter estimated that there are 600 students currently enrolled.

84 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

85 Statistics Canada, "London, Ontario [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalog no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

Scholarships and Bursaries available

The University of Western Ontario Faculty of Law noted that it has two bursaries specifically for Black-identifying students. Such bursaries include:

1. The Gurmukh Family Bursary in Law
2. The Violet King Award established by BLSA Western's 2020-21, 2021-22 President Rivannah Brown

Holistic Admissions Processes?

The University of Western Ontario's Faculty of Law's upcoming application cycle will be the first time it incorporates a Black Law Students' Application Package category. The Faculty has agreed to implement this in response to BLSA Western's Calls to Action this year. The Faculty has indicated that they would like to work with BLSA Western and BFL Western to develop criteria and work on the implementation of this Black Admissions category.

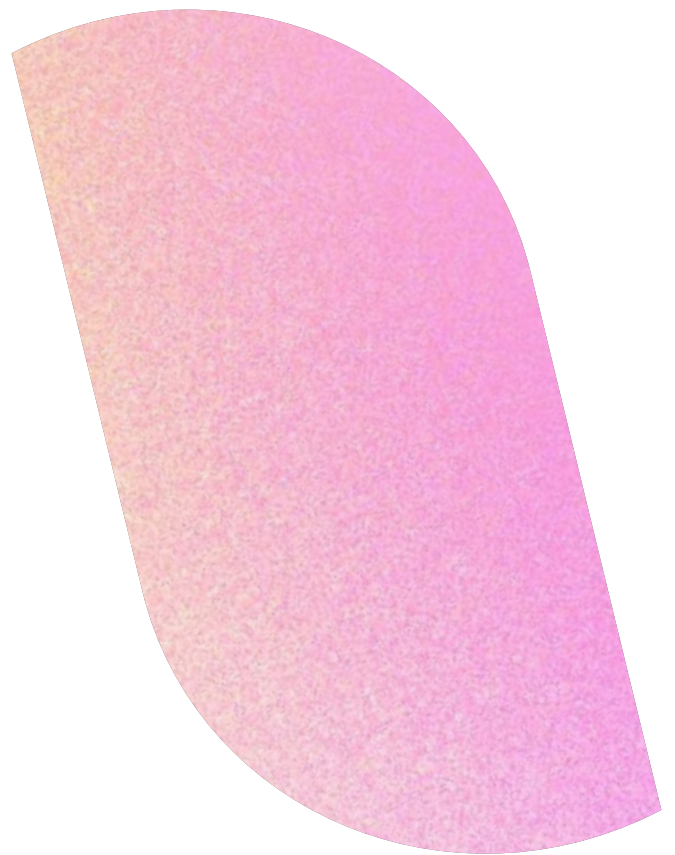
Student Perspectives

Students of the University of Western Ontario's Faculty of Law have stated that in the 2022-23 academic year, Western Law has been forced to adopt and make some changes as a response to racist incidents that came to light in the Faculty of Law this year. These incidents included a Professor saying the n-word in a lecture and another Professor making racist, recruit-related comments to a number of BIPOC students. BLSA Western released a statement with calls to action to Faculty in September 2022 that they hoped would address the issues of underrepresentation of Black law students at Western Law. The BLSA Western students noted that:

"Western Law agreed to work with us to implement the calls to action, and have agreed to hire an EDI professional in the law school and to implement a Black pathway to admissions. They would still like to see a more effective process that is less onerous

University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Law

on students to report incidents of racism or other discrimination within the Faculty that will be actioned quickly. We would like to see more Black staff in teaching positions and within administration in the Faculty of Law. We would also like to see better training of current and new professors and a new curriculum that incorporates critical race theory and a more intersectional approach into teaching the mandatory courses such as Criminal Law, Torts, Contract Law, etc.”



Findings

University of Windsor, Faculty of Law

39

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁸⁶

721

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁸⁷

5.41%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

5.40%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁸⁸

5.78%

Percentage of Black people in City⁸⁹

86 A representative from University of Windsor confirmed that there are 11 1L students. This includes 7 female and 4 male Black law students. In 2L, there are only 11 women-identifying law students. In 3L, there are 17 Black law students. This includes 8 female and 9 male law students.

87 A representative from University of Windsor confirmed that there are 721 undergraduate law students and 4 LLM students.

88 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

89 Statistics Canada, "Windsor, Ontario [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalog no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

University of Windsor, Faculty of Law

Scholarships and Bursaries available

1. Scotiabank Scholarship for Law Students
2. Howie Sacks & Henry LLP Racialized Student Scholarship
3. Honourable Julius Alexander Isaac Scholarship
4. Enbridge Black Law Student Award
5. Thora Ellis Espinet Bursary
6. Delos Rogest Davis K.C. Memorial Award (Community involvement)
7. Judge Juanita Westmoreland-Traore Leadership Scholarship (Involvement in the black community and the wider university community)
8. SLS Student Run Black/Indigenous Scholarship Fund
9. ABR Professional Development and Training Grant
10. Law Society of Upper Canada Education Equity Awards (Visible minority)

Holistic Admissions Processes?

We did not receive further information from a Windsor Law representative or BLSA Windsor chapter representative.

Student Perspectives

We did not receive further information from a BLSA Windsor chapter representative.

Findings

York University, Osgoode Hall Law School

77

Number of Black Law Students in entry-level law program⁹⁰

952

Total Number of Law Students in entry law program⁹¹

8.10%

Total Number of Law Black Students in entry law program

5.40%

Percentage of Black people in Province⁹²

9.48%

Percentage of Black people in City⁹³

90 A representative from the Osgoode Law's BLSA Chapter (BLSA Osgoode) estimated that there are 77 Black students in the faculty; 32 students in 1L, 27 students in 2L, and 18 students in 3L.

91 A representative from Osgoode Law confirmed that there are 297 in 1L, 318 students in 2L, 335 students in 3L, and 2 students in 4L.

92 Statistics Canada, "Ontario [Province]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, Ontario, online: <<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>>.

93 Statistics Canada, "Toronto, Ontario [Census metropolitan area]" Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population (15 December 2022) Statistics Canada Catalog no. 98-316-X2021001, Ottawa, online.

York University, Osgoode Hall Law School

Scholarships and Bursaries available

1. Scotiabank Award for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion,
2. Torkin Manes LLP Bursary
3. BLSA LSAT Bursary
4. Frederick Homer Alphonso Davis (OHFA) Bursary (2021)
5. The Resilience Bursary
6. Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP Access Bursary (Not black specific but black students facing social, educational, and/or economic barriers may qualify)
7. Law Society Education Equity Awards (for visible minorities)

Holistic Admissions Processes?

There is no separate category for Black Applicants in the Osgoode Application process. There is an optional section in the personal statement that asks about equity OR diversity where a student can speak to their race if they choose to. The admissions process has sections specifically dedicated to equity, work and diversity.

Student Perspectives

A BLSA Osgoode representative noted that the chapter has launched a new initiative, Raise the Black Bar, to create more career opportunities in the legal profession for Black students. This past November, 100 Black high school students across the Toronto District School Board visited Osgoode to learn about diverse career opportunities in law, pathways to law school and financial aid. BLSA Osgoode plans to continue to expand RTBB in the coming years, through long-term mentorship, skills building, and continued career exploration. Through RTBB, BLSA Osgoode furthers its aim to create a whole new generation of Black law students and Black lawyers.

Insights and Recommendations

Black-conscious admissions processes matter

There is a benefit to having inclusive, access, and discretionary categories. They provide an alternative or supplement for applicants who do not meet specific grading percentages, LSAT scores, and who experience certain cultural, socioeconomic, medical or physical barriers. However, a problem with general categories is that Black law students are often grouped in these categories without any regard for their lived experiences. For example: a Black neurodivergent student who is applying in the same Access category as a white, neurotypical student. The admissions council can see that both are competing for a spot, but who will be selected based on their criteria?

As marginalized peoples whose generations have struggled from the reverberations of slavery and colonization—in different parts of the world including Canada—and other discriminatory legislative policies, it is important to provide an equitable application process specifically for Black law applicants or in consultation with the Black legal community.¹ As

seen in this report, Black law students are often underrepresented in law schools and the legal profession.

Therefore, BLSA Canada calls upon law schools to incorporate Black-conscious admissions categories. Redressing the history of Black, African, Caribbean Canadians in this country is a first step in considering not only an apology, but productive results. There is recognition for Black admission programs in medical schools across Canada, so why not for law?

Key benefits to a Black application process:

1. Removes blind spots. Black applicants can express their individuality and life experiences, without being overshadowed by other important racialized applicants and their circumstances.
2. It is not about quotas. Law schools show they care more about diversity, rather than applying numerical requirements when they consider the systemic barriers and lived experiences of Black law applicants.
3. There is intersectional imposter syndrome. To consider race and learning differences in law school may help admission councils, law professors, and law firms understand that Black neurodivergent people(s) have admirable qualities needed for an ideal legal professional.

Recommendations:

1. Waive admission fees for those experiencing

¹ Kyle G Brown, "Slavery's Long Shadow: The Impact of 200 Years of Enslavement in Canada", (5 July 2018), online: CBC News <<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/slavery-s-long-shadow-the-impact-of-200-years-of-enslavement-in-canada-1.4733595>>. Jonathan Jamie Bradburn, "The Story of Ontario's Last Segregated Black School", (26 February 2018), online: TVO Today <<https://www.tvo.org/article/the-story-of-ontario-s-last-segregated-black-school>>; "Anti-Black Racist History in Canada: 1911 Order Sought to Stop Blacks from Immigrating", (1 July 2020), online: CityNews Toronto <<https://toronto.citynews.ca/2020/07/01/anti-black-racism-canada-immigration/>>. Forani, "Systemic Silence: Canada's Ignored History of Slavery", CTV News (11 June 2020), on-

line: <<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/systemic-silence-canada-s-ignored-history-of-slavery-1.4980143>>.

Insights and Recommendations

socioeconomic disadvantages. Some law schools are currently applying this method, but it should be widespread.² Sometimes admission costs for Black and other racialized law students are difficult to pay. Thus, having an exemption would help ease some financial burden.

2. Work with your local BLSA Chapters on creating a Black Admissions Application or Black-conscious admissions processes. Addressing institutional issues that Black law students face can only be done with first-hand experience and Black-led involvement. Implementing the insights from local chapters on how the application should be structured will help alleviate some barriers to racial and gendered diversification.

Scholarships, bursaries, and LSAT programs specifically targeted at aspiring and current Black law students are needed

A law school degree is expensive, and Black Canadians face a racial wealth gap. The average income for Black Canadians is over \$10,000 less than non-racialized Canadians.³ The unemployment rate among Black

Canadians is about 70% higher than that among non-visible minority Canadians.⁴ While law school can be an avenue to economic mobility, students burdened with untenable debt have limited career flexibility and may be more likely to have poor academic performances or drop out. Working long hours leaves less time for studying, volunteering, and networking. Scholarships and bursaries alleviate these barriers.

Moreover, aspiring students with access to private tutors, resources to pay for LSAT courses and numerous retakes, prime textbooks, and time to volunteer are well-placed to receive scholarships. A number of law schools and BLSA chapters have started to host LSAT programs for low-income students which help improve their LSAT scores and likelihood of acquiring entrance scholarships. Some schools currently have no scholarship offerings for specifically Black law students. The important work of diversifying the legal profession and making strides toward racial justice requires financial support and collaboration.

Law schools must support their local Black Law Students' Associations

BLSA Canada urges law schools to support their local BLSA chapters. BLSA chapters host events and

² "LSAT and OLSAS Application Fee Waivers", online: University of Toronto Faculty of Law <<https://www.law.utoronto.ca/jd-admissions-fee-waiver>>.

³ Tyra Forde, "Five Charts That Show the Impact of Anti-Black Racism

in Canada" (25 May 2021) Globe and Mail, online: <<https://www.the-globeandmail.com/featured-reports/article-five-charts-that-show-the-impact-of-anti-black-racism-in-canada/>>.

⁴ Marcus Medford, "Racism, Real Estate and The Ever-Widening Racial Wealth Gap In Canada" (2 January 2023) By Blacks, online: <<https://byblacks.com/news/item/3321-racism-real-estate-and-the-ever-widening-racial-wealth-gap-in-canada>>.

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initiatives that support their members in pursuing social, cultural, sport, and recreational activities. Supporting these chapters includes, but is not limited to: permitting Chapters to independently fundraise and maintain a bank account; supporting chapter events and programs; seriously considering local Calls to Action for administrative change; and sponsoring travel and accommodation for chapter members to participate in BLSA events and gatherings.

Simply seeing other law students that look like you and knowing you are not alone creates a stronger sense of wellbeing. BLSA chapters ensure Black law students have localized supports, community solidarity, and a refuge from anti-Black racism. Their presence on law school campuses are essential and the peer support received through chapter events and initiatives reduce mental health burdens.

Law schools should hire more Black law Professors

The minimal representation of race and gender in the legal profession cannot be understated, but law schools are no exception. Many law faculties recognize the importance of diversity through action plans and equity statements, yet there is little data that show their results. BLSA Canada calls upon law schools to look beyond criteria for hiring entry-level candidates who come from specific law schools, PhD programs, and federal-court clerkships. Many law professors do not fit within the traditional hiring model. ⁵Therefore, we recognize that retaining a

more racially and culturally diverse law faculty best serves students, who may thrive in institutions that reflect their backgrounds and are more responsive to their needs.⁶ A diverse faculty assists students with diverse role models and mentors.⁷ Many scholars indicate that faculty diversity contributes directly to educational quality and better educational outcomes for all students.⁸ Thus, BLSA Canada asks that law schools hire more Black law professors. These legal educators are unburdened with knowledge contrary to universal views about the Canadian legal landscape. They are also more aware of social restraints and the intersectional barriers that Black law students may face beyond “imposter syndrome.”⁹

Setting the tone for hiring more Black law professors must go beyond equity statements and into action. This includes seeking candidates through diversity workshops and advertising in Black-developed publications, partnerships with Black-led organizations such as the Black Law Students Association and Canadian Association of Black Lawyers to identify hiring pools for promising candidates, and networking with existing Black faculty members and other institutions for candidate referrals. BLSA Canada also encourages law schools to create Department Hiring Committees (DHCs) that include EDI training when

⁵ See Meera E Deo, “Trajectory of a Law Professor” (2014) 20:2 Mich J Race & L at 443-4.

⁶ Ibid. See also Terrell Strayhorn, “‘Tellin’ the Truth in Their Own Words”: A Critical Race Qualitative Analysis of Ethnic Minority Law School Students’ Experiences” (2022) 7:1 Am J Qualitative Res at 29; Refer also to Deborah Archer, “Race-Conscious Admissions Policies Are Crucial to an Equitable Society”, (1 February 2022), online: Bloomberg Law <<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/race-conscious-admissions-policies-are-crucial-to-an-equitable-society>>.

⁷ Crystal J Collins & William Allan Kritsonis, “National Viewpoint: The Importance of Hiring a Diverse Faculty” (2006) 3:1 National Journal For Publishing And Mentoring Doctoral Student Research at 6.

⁸ Ibid at 2.

⁹ Henry J Richardson III, “Black Law Professors and the Integrity of American Legal Education” (1975) 4:3 National Black Law Journal 496; “UWindsor Law Faculty Announces Steps to Tackle Anti-Black Racism”, (12 January 2021), online: CBC News <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/windsor-university-anti-black-racism-1.5868955>>.

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“recruiting and selecting new faculty with different perspectives, experiences and knowledges.”¹⁰ This enables us to understand and hear from diverse perspectives, which creates a legal institution that supports positive relationships and communication.

Law schools must incorporate more critical discussions of race led by informed instructors in their curriculums

Some instructors use racial ambiguity to discuss rule applications or doctrinal frameworks. When there is an opportunity to discuss race, it also appears that instructors either use the wrong language or avoid racial discussions altogether.¹¹ This objective attempt, fails to broaden the parameters of respect, reflection, and how the concepts of race and racism are inextricably linked in our Canadian history. It also excludes racial perspectives. When instructors use effective teaching strategies, there is an opportunity for students to recognize racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in law. ¹²Implementing race-conscious

pedagogy in legal education will further discussions on ethical advocacy and racial awareness. Instructors can demonstrate cultural consciousness by incorporating racial diversity into their courses and facilitating reasonably productive class discussions about race where applicable.¹³ Instructors can consider moving away from color-blind conversations by integrating curriculum development teams that address representation and help all students imagine themselves on both sides of a legal issue.¹⁴

To avoid narrowly framed discussions, instructors may also encounter teaching methods such as the enduring understanding approach.¹⁵ According to Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, enduring understandings is defined as “specific inferences based on big ideas that have lasting value beyond the classroom.”¹⁶ This is just one method which focuses on responsive engagement, vulnerability, and oral communication of cultural experiences. Fostering conversations about race in this way provides two solutions. First, Black and other IPOC students are invited to incorporate their racial identity and experiences into their comments, without being put on the spot or signalled as token representatives of their community. Second, there is an opportunity to break down stereotypes through a critical gaze and provide alternative ways of presenting materials and conducting classes.¹⁷

10 “Recruiting & Hiring Diverse Faculty Guidelines”, online: Toronto Metropolitan University <<https://www.torontomu.ca/equity/resources/recruiting-hiring-diverse-faculty-guidelines/>>.

11 Jennifer La Grassa & Tahmina Aziz, “Some students and faculty outraged after UWindsor prof uses N-word during class”, (30 October 2020), online: CBC News <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/university-windsor-professor-anti-black-racism-1.5782461>>.

12 “Racial Awareness”, (8 May 2017), online: Yale: Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning <<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/RacialAwareness>>.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Nataliya Braginsky, “History of a Social Construction: How Racism Created Race in America” 2 *Fellows of the Yale New Haven Teachers Institute* at 2-4, 5, 7.

16 Grant Wiggins, Grant P. Wiggins & Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design* (ASCD, 2005) Google-Books-ID: N2EfKlyUN4QC.N4QC.

17 Daryl G. Smith & Natalie B. Schonfeld, “The Benefits of Diversity: What the Research Tells Us” (2000) 5:5 *About Campus* at 18.

Law schools should heed calls to implement mandatory Anti-Black Racism and EDI training for faculty and student body

Black people experience a number of societal harms and have limited access to financial and educational resources.¹⁸ One can look to racial profiling, the lack of Black-led community programs and government funding, and the disproportionate representation of Black people in carceral spaces. Without reflecting overtly on the negative and subjective views of damaged-centred narratives, BLSA Canada acknowledges that for some Black Law students, these underlying issues are intergenerational. For others, these issues feel amplified by present realities. Black law students have a wide range of upbringings and personal experiences.

BLSA Canada believes that anti-Black racism workshops, EDI resources, and equity advisory committees are a fantastic opportunity for students and law faculties to mitigate barriers like discrimination and bias. These should not be

'buzzwords' or performative speeches that do not bring about effective change that some purport. It prioritizes different perspectives on approaching and finding solutions.¹⁹ Diversity focuses on communities and the person. As a discourse on social exclusion, it challenges the invisibility of equity-seeking groups and understands the unique characteristics of a person's culture, learning or physical differences, social norms, and lived experiences.²⁰ With particular emphasis on Black and minority ethnic visibility, Professor Terrell Strayhorn of Higher Education and Women's, Gender & Sexuality, notes that diversity enhances intergroup relations, which "aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority."²¹

Equity recognizes differences and implements appropriate practices that support individuals. It is not about treating everyone the same way. In opposition to the stereotype that Black people have not "tried hard enough," equity means including quantitative insights from Black communities and allies wishing to increase representation in Canada's legal profession. However, this requires a heightened awareness of historical legal constraints and legislative barriers that prevented Black people(s), Indigenous people(s), and equity-seeking individual(s) from having a fair access to a legal education.²² Inclusion, while similar to diversity, focuses on the collective.²³ It creates a culture that gives voice to the silenced, respects multiplicity, and

18 See Wanda Thomas Bernard & Holly Smith, "Injustice, Justice, and Africentric Practice in Canada" (2018) 35:1 Canadian Social Work Review / Revue canadienne de service social 147–156; UN Human Rights Council Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent & UN Human Rights Council Secretariat, "Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its Mission to Canada" (2017) UN Digital Library, online: <<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1304262>>.

19 "Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI)", online: Justice Institute of British Columbia <<https://www.jibc.ca/teaching-learning/equity-diversity-inclusion-edi>>.

20 Zoe Johansen-Hill, Larissa Meredith-Flister & Coleman Owen, "Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession" (2019) Dean's Forum: Access to Justice and Dispute Resolution.

21 "Diversity Defined", online: Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion <<https://ccdi.ca/our-story/diversity-defined/>>.

22 "Diversity Defined", online: Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion <<https://ccdi.ca/our-story/diversity-defined/>>.

23 See "Diversity Defined."

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strives for equitable opportunities for all.²⁴

BLSA Canada proposes that anti-Black racism—along with EDI programs—designs and workshops into law schools, law firms, and government positions will create an equal opportunity to learn attentively and celebrate our differences. This means incorporating anti-Black strategies that recognize systemic barriers, microaggressions, and microassaults. These training workshops should not simply be antidotal learning spaces, where one can scroll through EDI and anti-Black racism PowerPoints, or listen to an EDI video for 1 hour. Instead, it should provide comprehensive tools that promote collaboration and civic engagement. This includes workshops for unlearning anti-Black racism and debunking cultural myths. This also includes equal opportunities workshop that identifies experiences of institutional racism.

Many studies show the importance of EDI and its benefits. This includes:

- (1) representational diversity can increase feelings of trust and engagement.²⁵
- (2) Professions with above-average diversity have higher innovation revenue than those with below-average diversity.²⁶
- (3) Feelings of inclusion with a commitment to diversity can lift engagement by 2.01x.²⁷

24 "Equity, Diversity & Inclusion at UCalgary Law," online: University of Calgary Faculty of Law <<https://law.ucalgary.ca/about/equity-diversity-inclusion>>.

25 Trong Luu, Chris Rowley & Thanh Vo, "Addressing Employee Diversity to Foster Their Work Engagement" (2018) 95 Journal of Business Research.

26 Rocio Lorenzo et al, "How Diverse Leadership Teams Boost Innovation", (18 July 2020), online: Canada - EN <<https://www.bcg.com/en-ca/publications/2018/how-diverse-leadership-teams-boost-innovation>>.

27 Waiter, is That Inclusion in My Soup? A New Recipe to Improve Business Performance, Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission (Sydney: Australia, 2013).

Law schools also have a vested interest and would accrue a competitive advantage in understanding neurological differences.²⁸ This includes acknowledging the importance of thought diversity and opportunities for advancement in the legal profession, while also addressing inadequate exposure to Black neurodiverse law mentors, workshops, and networking opportunities for such law students.²⁹

Law schools must make their physical environments more accessible and inclusive

In consulting with a number of BLSA Canada chapters, Black law students find value in Black representation and discussions on issues particularly impacting their communities. BLSA Canada asks law schools to introduce more portraits of Black lawyers and legal trailblazers in their faculties. The vast majority of those

28 Canadian Bar Association of British Columbia, "Neurodiversity in Law", (2023), online: <https://www.cbapd.org/details_en.aspx?id=BC_BC23A2J02W>.

29 See also the American Bar Association and the Law Society of the the Law Society of England and Wales's websites. Both have insights on disentangling social barriers and promoting neurodivergent-framed legal environments. Refer to M. Suzanne Hartness & John D Bowers, "Neurodiversity in the Practice of Law", (1 November 2020), online: American Bar Association <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/publications/law_practice_magazine/2020/nd20200/nd20hartnessbowers/>; The Law Society of England and Wales, "Disabled Solicitors Network", (2023), online: The Law Society of England and Wales <<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/lawyers-with-disabilities/>>; See also, Nancy Doyle, "The Intersection Of Race And Neurodivergence: 'The Black Dyspraxic' Shares On Overcoming Barriers", (7 August 2020), online: Forbes <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/dnancydoyle/2020/08/07/the-intersection-of-race-and-neurodivergence-the-black-dyspraxic-shares-on-overcoming-barriers/?sh=37b65d2354c0>>.

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depicted in portraits, statues, and photographs in law faculties are white. BLSA Canada asks law schools to invite more Black-led organizations to speak to students—year-round, not solely during Black History Month.

Law schools should collect and assess race-based data

BLSA Canada calls on all law faculties and application centres to request optional, disaggregated data regarding race from applicants. The failure to collect or consider the implications of race-based data or adherence to supposedly colour-blind analyses do not, in burying race, counteract racist discourses.³⁰ Addressing inequality begins with seeing and naming difference.³¹

³⁰ See Bernie D. Jones, "Critical Race Theory: New Strategies for Civil Rights in the New Millenium" (2002) 18 Harv Blackletter L J 1 at 82-83.

³¹ See Joshua Sealy-Harrington, "The Alchemy of Equality Rights" (2021) 30:2 In Constitutional Forum 53 [Sealy-Harrington] at 77.

Conclusion

Having heard stories from past and current Black law students, the writers of this report were not surprised by the finding that Black law students are underrepresented in a number of Canadian law schools. This report found widespread racial disparities within most law schools participating in this study. Census data provides that many provinces have an increasing Black population, but little to no Black law students. Although the reasons for this are complex and deep-rooted, one part of the answer is simple. Black law students need a more supportive educational environment. Many law schools do not have scholarships specifically for Black law students. There appears only to be two Black admissions programs in Canada, even though there are 24 law schools. This is despite some law schools considering the future implementation of Black admission programs. Although there is no data percentage on whether the lack of diversity plays a role in the scholastic performance of Black law students directly, student perspectives show that the presence of support from faculties and admissions councils is of primary importance.

Equally important, four out of the five civil law faculties in Québec did not respond to our requests for information to inform this report. Through BLSA Canada's initiatives, we emphasize the need for research that provides a precise picture of Black law students' experiences in all Canadian law schools. Progressive initiatives to publish and consider race-based data may better inform legal institutions about systemic racism and the experiences of Black law students in Québec.¹ This information would help

inform actions and interventions that could improve equity and mitigate certain racial myths.² We hope there will be more future engagement from faculties to consider and discuss the experiences of Black French-speaking law students and Black French-speaking communities who are a minority within a minority.³

BLSA Canada also emphasizes the important contribution of Akitsirag Law School to the legal profession. The program promotes diversity of Inuk and other Indigenous people(s) in law and increases the number of lawyers in Nunavut.⁴ We support their initiatives as allies and acknowledge our overlapping and complex history in Canada.⁵ We also understand the importance of legal education, funding resources, and visibility for Black and Indigenous people(s).

We conclude by noting that the underrepresentation of Black law students at a school is not inherently

¹ See Jean-Claude Icart, *Historical Perspectives on Racism in Québec* [Research and Writing [...], Conseil des relations interculturelles,

ed (Montréal, 2007).; Verity Stevenson, "Quebec's heated Debate Over Professor's Suspension Overlooked Black Voices, Students Say", (22 October 2020), online: CBC News <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/debate-over-suspension-overlooked-black-voices-students-1.5773114>>; See also Benjamin Shingler, "Black Community Hopeful Racial Profiling Lawsuit Will Lead to Change in Montreal", (13 August 2019), online: CBC News <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/racial-profiling-class-action-montreal-police-black-coalition-1.5245390>>.

² Claire Loewen, "As Premier Denies Systemic Racism, Black Quebecers Point to Their Lived Experience", (2 June 2020), online: CBC News <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/systemic-racism-police-brutality-quebec-1.5594071>>.

³ Yoann Emian, "Une minorité dans une communauté minoritaire" (8 February 2023), online: < <https://nationalmagazine.ca/en-ca/articles/the-practice/legal-education/2023/une-minorite-dans-une-communauté-minoritaire>>.

⁴ "Prospective Students: Akitsirag Law School Society", online: <<https://sites.google.com/a/akitsirag.ca/akitsirag/students-1#TOC-Do-I-need-to-write-the-LSAT->>.

⁵ See Zainab Amadahy & Bonita Lawrence, "Indigenous Peoples and Black People in Canada: Settlers or Allies?" in Arlo Kempf, ed, *Breaching the Colonial Contract: Anti-Colonialism in the US and Canada Explorations of Educational Purpose* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2009) 105.

indicative of the school's commitment to EDI processes and racial justice. These numbers in this report must be considered in the context of demographic surveys, Black-conscious admissions processes and scholarships, and internal efforts to address anti-Black racism and make schools more inclusive. The collection of race-based data is not a panacea alone. However, it is important in helping to better understand how systemic racism affects the admission of prospective Black law students into law schools. Considering race-based data in the context of student perspectives, regional demographics, and limited EDI initiatives aids in understanding how certain actions or inactions propagate underrepresentation. Race-based data helps paint a fuller picture of the underrepresentation and experiences of prospective and current Black law students. It helps us identify ways through which we can eliminate or overcome barriers. To neglect this information is to allow for issues regarding race and gender to persist and go unaddressed.

The aim of this report is not to simply announce the racial disparities in law schools but rather to reveal the ways in which our legal sector and educational system needs improvement. Our research shows that Canada need more Black law students, especially in certain universities in the Prairies, northern Ontario, and New Brunswick, but "integration" alone is not enough to make substantive change. Law schools must repurpose themselves with resources and faculties that are diverse and value Black lived experiences. It is time to establish a climate where Black law students are no longer considered the "few" or the odd ones out.

The culture in legal education must also consider developing strategies and choosing interventions that increase collaboration and overall Black law student success and performance. Effective reform requires a shift from racial tolerance in "discretionary or access" color-blind disguises in applications to genuine pathways for Black equity and opportunity. In the admissions processes, this includes admission fee waivers for Black law students. Inside the law

building, this includes reflections of Black lawyers and legal trailblazers, Black law student scholarships, and race-based data that is voluntary, safe, and culturally sensitive. Hiring committees must also recruit Black law professors that reflect Canada's multicultural diversity. There must also be anti-black racism models in legal pedagogy and collaboration with local BLSA chapters, who have valuable insights and novel solutions that would make law schools more equitable. We believe that implementing a pluralistic approach will lay a foundation for more equitable, inclusive, and diverse law schools.



Black Law Student Census Report

2022-2023

