



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

2023-2024 Funding Report

Prepared by:
Wayne Cente
National Treasurer 2023-2024

As We Rise, We Lift



A Note From Our *Alumni*

Dear BLSA Canada Sponsors,

As proud alumni of the Black Law Students' Association of Canada (BLSA Canada), we're thrilled to witness the enduring impact and growth of our organization. BLSA Canada remains steadfast in its commitment to empowering Black law students and professionals nationwide.

From its humble beginnings to becoming a cornerstone of diversity and advocacy in the legal community, BLSA has continually evolved, leaving an indelible mark on our profession. Through initiatives such as conferences, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities, BLSA has reshaped the landscape of diversity and inclusion in law.



Our alumni remain deeply grateful for the sense of belonging and support that BLSA provided us. The bonds forged within BLSA have not only enriched our professional lives but have also fostered lasting friendships and networks. With each success and milestone achieved by BLSA Canada, we are reminded of the enduring impact of our shared experiences.

We are confident that BLSA Canada will continue to thrive, nurturing future generations of Black leaders in law and beyond. As alumni, we stand ready to support and champion BLSA's mission, ensuring its continued success and legacy of empowerment.

With sincere appreciation,

- BLSA Canada Alumni

*Together we
change the face of
Law.*

A Note From the Outgoing *Board*

Dear BLSA Canada Members & Supporters,

As outgoing BLSA Canada board members, we are incredibly proud of our achievements this year. We were steadfast in our commitment to support and enhance academic and professional opportunities for Black law students across Canada.

One of the highlights of our term was organizing the largest stand-alone pre-law exposition, which provided invaluable insights and opportunities for pre-law students to engage with law students and legal professionals. Our Civil Law symposium brought together civil law students and legal professionals to discuss emerging topics in the legal field and opportunities to network.



The Julius Alexander Isaac Moot competition showcased the exceptional talents and hard work of law students across the country, promoting excellence in legal advocacy. Our flagship event, the 33rd National Conference, was the largest gathering of Black law students and legal professionals in Canada. The Conference fostered relationship-building opportunities and facilitated discussions about emerging topics in the legal field. We are immensely proud of the Conference's resounding success.

We are confident that the incoming board will continue making a positive impact in our community through new and innovative ways.

As we transition to the next phase of our lives, we remain committed to lifting others as we rise. We are grateful for the tremendous opportunity to serve our community.

- BLSA Canada National Board
(2023-2024)

Empowering *Change*

Table of *Contents*

The Black Law Students' Association of Canada (BLSA Canada) is a national student-run organization founded in 1991. We are committed to supporting and enhancing academic and professional opportunities for Black law students in both official languages. This commitment extends to Black high school and undergraduate students and the community generally through our mentorship initiatives and our scholarship program: BLSACares.

BLSA Canada and its chapters at law schools nationwide are concerned with challenges faced by the Black community as they relate to the legal system. Launching various initiatives to promote increased representation of Black students in law schools and assist in facilitating their success is a priority. We are proud to provide opportunities for formal and informal discussions about many subjects, including legal policy issues, effective career strategies, evolutions in substantive law and access to justice for marginalized groups.

We reflect the diversity of the African/Black/Caribbean experience and welcome allies from all backgrounds who also seek to make a meaningful contribution to the furtherance of justice.

| | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| 4. | <u>Highlights From 2023-24</u> | 21. | <u>BLSA Canada Partners</u> |
| 5. | <u>Our Mandate & Impact</u> | 22. | <u>Looking Forward to BLSA 40</u> |
| 7. | <u>Annual Financials</u> | 23. | <u>Message from Incoming President</u> |
| 8. | <u>Pre-Law Expo</u> | 24. | <u>Incoming Board of Directors</u> |
| 9. | <u>Francophone Events</u> | | |
| 12. | <u>Isaac Moot</u> | | |
| 13. | <u>National Conference</u> | | |
| 15. | <u>Attendee Testimonials</u> | | |
| 19. | <u>Chapter Fund</u> | | |
| 20. | <u>Awards & Scholarships</u> | | |



Highlights From 2023-24

This year has been our best yet, marked by record-breaking attendance and achievements that have exceeded expectations.



PRE-LAW EXPO



Our **inaugural stand-alone pre-law expo** drew over 100 students, reinforcing our commitment to Black student access to legal education.

LE SYMPOSIUM EN DROIT CIVIL



The 8th edition of the BLSA Civil Law Symposium was the **largest ever**, receiving unparalleled support from sponsors and attendees!

JULIUS ALEXANDER ISAAC MOOT



The **largest ever Isaac Moot** expands to two courthouses to facilitate all 24 teams!



WE HOSTED OUR LARGEST EVER CONFERENCE...**AGAIN!**

ALUMNI RELATIONS

We've made significant progress in bolstering our alumni network with the appointment of our inaugural Director of Alumni Relations. Through collaborations with chapters, we funded alum mixer events across the country, fostering connections between members and alumni. Additionally, we organized our **first-ever** Alumni Retreat and introduced initiatives such as the Alumni Leadership Award, establishment of an alumni database, and research efforts, marking important milestones in our alumni engagement efforts.

BLSA FORTY

Our board embarked on a strategic planning process to establish organizational priorities for the next six years. BLSA forty is **BLSA Canada's first long-term strategic plan** – a vision and path forward to BLSA Canada's 40th anniversary. This plan centers around four key pillars: innovation and collaboration, dedicated advocacy, community empowerment and support, and strong governance and fiscal responsibility. Developed by the 2023-2024 National Executive, the BLSA 40 Strategic Plan provides insight into the future trajectory of BLSA Canada and the collective achievements possible through our shared mission.

ADVOCACY WEEK

We held our **first non-partisan advocacy week**, shaping political discourse by meeting with politicians to address issues affecting Black law students and our community, proposing solutions, and advocating for legislative action.

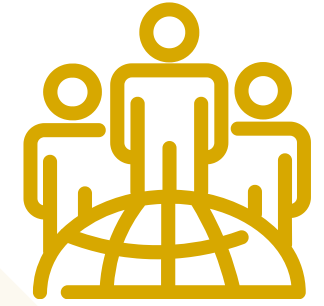
BLSA CANADA PODCAST

We launched a podcast series addressing vital issues for Black law students and professionals in Canada. This six-episode project, covered topics from mental health, to diversity in legal education, to financial barriers in law school.



Our Mandate & *Impact*

For more than three decades, BLSA Canada has stood as the leading advocate for Black law students across the nation. We serve as a steadfast support system, passionate champions, and catalysts for opportunities for Canada's next generation of Black legal professionals. As a national non-profit operated entirely by dedicated full-time student volunteers, the excellence of our endeavours reflects our unwavering dedication to the communities we represent.



Mentorship

BLSA Canada recognizes the importance of mentorship in fostering the success of Black law students. The organization facilitates connections between students and legal professionals, creating opportunities for mentorship and guidance. Through mentorship programs, networking events, and alumni engagement, BLSA Canada ensures that students have access to experienced mentors who can provide advice, support, and valuable insights into navigating the legal profession.



Community

BLSA Canada aims to foster a sense of community and belonging among Black law students across the country. This involves creating spaces where students feel supported, understood, and empowered to thrive academically, professionally, and personally. Through various events, meetings, and social gatherings, BLSA Canada provides opportunities for students to connect, network, and build meaningful relationships with their peers. By nurturing a strong sense of community, BLSA Canada strives to create a supportive environment where students can share experiences, seek advice, and celebrate achievements together.



Experience

BLSA Canada provides its members with opportunities to gain practical experience and enhance their skills through events such as the Julius Alexander Isaac Moot for common law students and the Negotiation Competition for civil law students. These events offer students the chance to participate in simulated legal proceedings, develop advocacy skills, and network with legal professionals and peers. By engaging in these experiences, BLSA Canada members can build confidence, expand their knowledge, and prepare for future career opportunities in the legal field.



Support

At its core, BLSA Canada is dedicated to supporting Black law students on their journey toward a successful legal career. The organization recognizes the unique challenges and barriers that Black students may face within the legal profession and is committed to providing assistance and resources to help overcome these obstacles.

Our Mandate & *Impact*

Our audacious goals were met by the incredible collaboration and generosity of the Board, Volunteers, Partners, Sponsors, Schools, and community supporters. We have been fortunate to have the opportunity to afford each portfolio an increased annual budget to maximize its impact.

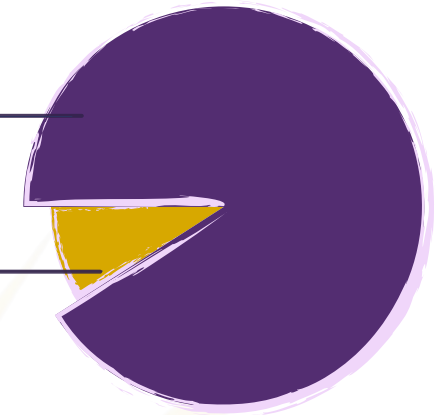
BLSA Canada prioritizes transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct in governing the organization and managing resources for maximum impact and long-term sustainability. We aim to build trust, confidence, and professionalism within our organization through these principles.

96%

of revenues support our programming.

4%

goes toward our operational expenses



Contributions Received 2023-24



Mentorship

- Pre-Law Expo
- CABL x BLSA Mentorship Program
- National See Yourself Here Panel
- Personal Statement and CV Review
- Bilingual Clerkship Open House
- Various Panels and Workshop lead by our Partners



Community

- BLSA Canada Conference
- BLSA Canada Retreat
- CABL Gala
- Alumni Mixer
- BLSA x NBLSA Welcome Back Chapter Social & Speed Networking
- NEBSA Regional Retreat & Convention
- NBLSA Convention



Experience

- Julius Alexander Isaac Moot
- Civil Law Negotiation Competition
- Advocacy Week



Support

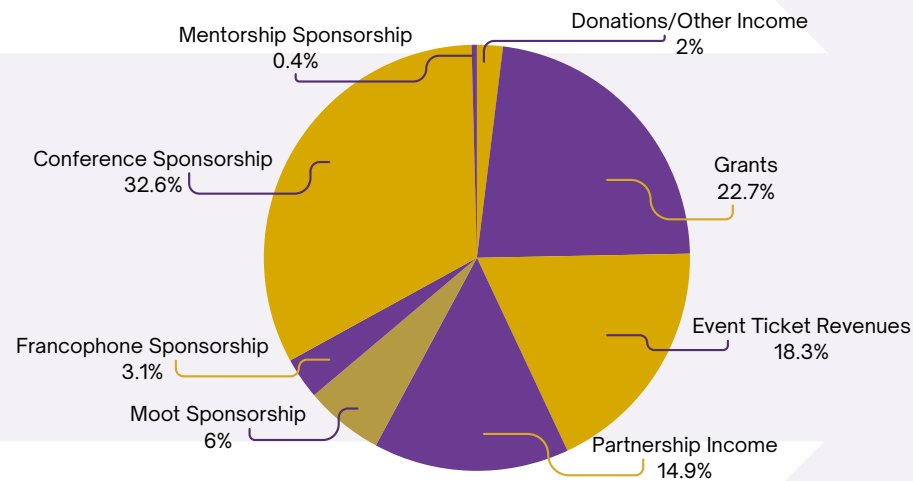
- Civil Law Symposium
- Summer Firm Hop
- BLSA Canada Chapter Fund
- BLSA Canada Advocacy Podcast Series
- Black (Canadian) Law Journal
- JD Bridges
- BLSA Canada - Chapter Finance 101 Guide
- Pre-Law Scholarship
- BLG x BLSA Scholarship
- BMO x BLSA Scholarship

Annual *Financials*

BLSA Canada secured its highest-ever sponsorship support for the third consecutive year.

For the third year in a row, BLSA Canada accomplished the impressive milestone of securing the highest sponsorship funds in the organization’s history.

SOURCES OF INCOME*



* Please note that BLSA Canada's year-end is March 31. We are in the process of finalizing and auditing our financial statements. Income reflects funding received within this fiscal year and may differ from committed amounts.

EXPENDITURE

We are sustainable, transformative and impactful.

| | | |
|-----|----------------------------|--------------|
| 4% | Operational Expenses | \$34,573.45 |
| 77% | Conference Expenses | \$638,750.59 |
| 9% | Moot Expenses | \$77,166.00 |
| 4% | Francophone Expenses | \$32,834.35 |
| 2% | Chapter Fund Disbursements | \$17,794.94 |
| 1% | Mentorship Expenses | \$5,504.70 |
| 3% | Other Programming Expenses | \$28,175.26 |

TOTAL EXPENDITURES
\$834,799.29

A Note From Our *Sponsorship Director*

I want to express immense gratitude and appreciation for our incredible sponsors and partners.

BLSA Canada simply could not offer the amazing events and programs we continue to provide without the help of our sponsors. Your financial and non-financial contributions are an investment in the future of Black law students who will continue to recognize that your organization makes a conscious effort to support our growing community.

BLSA Canada is creating meaningful change and continues to offer optimal opportunities for professional development and advancement to our member base. I have every confidence that next year’s executive team will continue this legacy.



Haben Dawit
Sponsorship Director

Pre-Law Expo

First-Ever Stand-Alone Pre-Law Expo

The BLSA Canada Pre-Law Expo is an annual event designed to provide aspiring Black law students with valuable insights and resources to navigate their journey into law school and the legal profession. This inaugural stand-alone pre-law expo drew over 100 students, reinforcing our commitment to Black student access to legal education. The event brings together current law students, legal professionals, and representatives from law schools across Canada to offer guidance, mentorship, and information about pursuing a legal career.

Sponsors / Parrains :

Networking and Lunch sponsor / Sponsor du réseau et du déjeuner

OSLER

Lunch provided by / Déjeuner offert par :



LSAT sponsors / Parrainage du LSAT



Firm sponsors / Parrainage de l'entreprise



Attendees have the opportunity to engage in panel discussions, workshops, and networking sessions aimed at addressing various aspects of the law school application process, academic preparation, career paths in law, and the challenges and opportunities facing Black students in the legal profession. Through interactive sessions and one-on-one interactions with law school representatives and legal professionals, attendees gain valuable insights into the admissions process, academic requirements, extracurricular opportunities, financial aid options, and strategies for success in law school and beyond.

Additionally, the Pre-Law Expo provides a supportive and inclusive space for networking, mentorship, and building connections within the legal community.

We greatly thank the Lincoln Alexander School of Law for hosting this momentous event. Together we were able to create a crucial platform for empowering and equipping Black individuals with the knowledge, resources, and support they need to pursue and succeed in a legal career, while promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the legal profession.



Shanice Teape
Mentorship Director



Expenditures

| | |
|--|------------|
| Meals, Venue and Travel | \$3,628.58 |
| Scholarship, Prizes and Award | \$1,545.00 |
| Materials, Decor and Promotional Items | \$334.12 |

\$5,504.70



Francophone *Events*



CIVIL LAW SYMPOSIUM

The 8th Annual BLSA Canada Civil Law Symposium was an unparalleled success, setting a new benchmark with its record-breaking attendance. Held at the Université de Montréal last October under the inspiring theme "*The hardest thing is to dare,*" the event convened legal professionals and students from across the nation to explore pivotal issues in civil law. Panels and workshops delved into pressing topics like access to justice, human rights, and environmental law, providing attendees with invaluable insights from esteemed figures, including judges, lawyers, and government officials.

Beyond its substantive discussions, the symposium served as a dynamic platform for students to forge connections and explore career pathways in civil law. This achievement is a testament to our team's dedication, the Francophone committee, and the unwavering support of our sponsors.

Expenditures

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Meals, Accommodation and Travel | \$16,747.71 |
| Material and Promotional Items | 3,512.76 |
| Services and Fees | 1,589.98 |
| | \$21,850.45 |



Nadreyfi Vagba
Francophone Director



Delice Betukumesu
Pre Law Student

Last fall, I attended my very first BLSA event, the Civil Law Symposium. This experience was a golden opportunity for any student in my shoes. The Symposium gave me the chance to network with other students and professionals in order to build relationships.

As a pre-law student who will be the first in her family to enter this field, I greatly appreciated the connection I developed with the community. I had the chance to share my fears and aspirations, as well as learn from several legal figures in civil law. This event also served as a personal confirmation of my future. All the conversations I participated in reinforced my desire to pursue legal studies after my graduation this academic year. I am extremely grateful to everyone who helped make this incredible symposium possible.



Sarah Zongo
University of Ottawa, 2L

The BLSA events have been an enriching contribution to my academic career. Among these, the Civil Law Symposium had a significant impact on me. It was the first time I would find myself surrounded by plenty of jurists and future jurists with diverse backgrounds.

The experience reinforced my belief that the field of law was the best choice for me. Moreover, the civil negotiation competition was an enriching experience on a personal level. It enabled me to discover a new field: technology and intellectual property. Taking part in this event also pushed me to surpass myself. I gained a lot of knowledge and had the opportunity to learn more about the habits and customs of legal practice, thanks to my mentor. She (my mentor) showed us how to think innovatively, which, for someone with a very methodical approach, broadened my horizons.



Francophone *Events*



NEGOTIATIONS COMPETITION

The 2nd Annual BLSA Canada Negotiations Competition immerses participants in intricate legal scenarios, fostering the refinement of negotiation skills essential for navigating complex legal landscapes. Through interactive negotiations, law students engage in strategic discussions and decision-making processes, honing their abilities to communicate effectively and think critically. Facilitated by experienced judges and legal professionals, the competition provides invaluable feedback and networking opportunities, empowering participants to elevate their negotiation expertise and excel in their future legal careers.



Number of Teams: 8
Number of Schools: 5



Expenditures

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Meals, Accommodation and Travel | \$4,683.87 |
| Material and Promotional Items | \$1,203.07 |
| Scholarships | \$4,250.00 |
| Registration Associated Fees | \$846.96 |
| | \$10,983.90 |

Scholarship Winners

Best Negotiation Teams

- 1st: Moustapha Kone & Julian Menga \$1,000
- 2nd: Franck Lékagne & Fretzy Simeon \$700

Best Negotiator - Presented by CAIJ

- 1st: Franck Lékagne \$500
- 2nd: Aaron Siry \$350
- 3rd: Dylan Mesidor \$200

Best Written Submission

- Tied: Franck Lékagne & Fretzy Simeon \$500
- Tied: Dylan Mesidor & Aaron Siry \$500

Best Collaboration

Dylan Mesidor & Aaron Siry \$500

 **\$4,250** in scholarships



Dylan Méridor
Université Laval, 2L

One word can describe my experience at BLSA Canada events this year: enriching. The various activities I took part in allowed me to grow not only as a future lawyer but also as a black person.

The Civil Law Negotiation Competition, held on January 27, 2024, was my first opportunity to experience the practical side of law in a concrete way. Along with my teammate Aaron, I had the opportunity to put myself in the shoes of a lawyer and defend my client's interests against other students. The competition was a success, not only for BLSA Canada, but also for our team, as evidenced by the many prizes we won.

Thank you to BLSA Canada, to all the organizers and to all the sponsors. I'm grateful to have had the chance to represent Université Laval in these two events, and I look forward to doing the same in the years to come!



Moustapha Koné
Université de Montréal, 1L

My participation in the negotiation competition organized by AEND Canada contributed to the enrichment of my university career on several levels. Engaged in negotiation with other students on a series of legal issues related to the protection of personal information and intellectual property, I was able to develop new areas of interest within the field of law.

Being a first-year student, I was initially unfamiliar with the rules and techniques of negotiation. However, I had the support of my mentor throughout my preparation. Additionally, I had the chance to receive constructive comments from the jury members on my participation, which allowed me to set new goals.

Finally, the people I met during this event gave me a sense of belonging to a community. From this experience, I can say that I emerged enriched on a personal and academic level.



Francophone *Sponsors*



SYMPOSIUM DE DROIT CIVIL
COMMANDITAIRES
CIVIL LAW SYMPOSIUM SPONSORS

Logos of sponsors for the Civil Law Symposium Commanditaires, including:

- DIONNE SCHULZE
- Barreau de Montréal
- Stikeman Elliott
- 大成 DENTONS
- NRF
- HERITT AVOCATS | ATTORNEYS
- OSLER
- DAVIES
- Blakes
- Clyde & Co
- CLYDE & CIE CANADA
- BCF
- GOWLING WLG
- LANGLOIS
- SOQUIJ
- MORENCY SOCIÉTÉ D'AVOCATS
- Woods
- Intelligence juridique
- Latitude
- Université de Montréal

CONCOURS DE NÉGOCIATION
EN DROIT CIVIL
CIVIL LAW NEGOTIATION COMPETITION

En partenariat avec la faculté de droit de
Université d'Ottawa

Faculté de droit
Faculty of Law

Les commanditaires et partenaires de l'AÉND
Canada

Logos of sponsors for the Civil Law Negotiation Competition, including:

- Barreau de Québec
- Blakes
- DENTONS
- JURISTES POWER LAW
- NRF
- SOQUIJ
- Intelligence juridique
- Woods
- CLYDE & CO
- CLYDE & CIE CANADA
- CAIJ

Julius Alexander Isaac *Moot*

Canada's only student-run for credit law school Moot

The Julius Alexander Isaac Moot is renowned for providing unparalleled experiential learning; our moot stands as Canada's sole student-run for-credit competition with a focus on critical race theory. It is named after the late Chief Justice of the Federal Court, Julius Alexander Isaac, who was the first Black Judge to sit on the Federal Court of Canada.

The Moot witnessed an unprecedented turnout, with nearly 25 participating teams showcasing its growing prominence in legal education. Esteemed judges, including Honourable Michelle O'Bonsawin of the Supreme Court of Canada, Chief Justice Michael Tulloch of the Ontario Court of Appeal, and Honourable Justice Donald McLeod of the Ontario Court of Justice, further elevate the competition's prestige. To accommodate the expanded participation, we extended the moot to both the Ontario Court of Justice and the Ontario Court of Appeal, marking a pivotal milestone in its history. Additionally, the event boasted 24 factum graders from various Canadian law schools and over 100 volunteers to judge the preliminary round, including ten justices from across the country, underscoring the widespread support and recognition within the legal community.



Expenditures

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Courthouse Rental and Services | \$21,422.95 |
| Meals, Accommodation/Venue and Travel | 44,603.31 |
| Materials, Decor and Promotional Items | 9,077.59 |
| Other Services and Fees | 2,062.15 |

\$77,166.00

Cindy Kamau
Moot Director

ISAAC MOOT SPONSORS
COMMANDITAIRES D'ISAAC MOOT

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Workplace Lawyers



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GP GOLDBLATT
PARTNERS



National Conference

We made history AGAIN...

The Black Law Students' Association of Canada (BLSA Canada) hosted its largest-ever conference this year, bringing together over 600 attendees nationwide. The conference provided a unique opportunity for Black law students and legal professionals to network and learn about critical issues impacting Black communities in Canada. One of the event's highlights was a moderated conversation with Dr. Angela Davis.

Dr. Angela Davis is a political activist, scholar, and author known for her work in civil rights and feminism. She has been a prominent figure in the fight against systemic oppression. Attendees had the opportunity to hear Dr. Davis speak about how to challenge injustice, advocate for equality, and effect meaningful change in their communities.

Attendees also had the opportunity to participate in the Black Owned Marketplace, which featured 15 diverse, Black-Owned small businesses from in and around the Greater Toronto Area. This platform not only provided exposure for these entrepreneurs but also offered attendees the chance to contribute directly to the economic empowerment of Black communities. Our diverse range of vendors included a Black-owned bookstore, A Different Booklist, and novelty convenience store, @Jayy's Cheers Convenience.

In addition, the BLSA Canada conference featured a range of panels, workshops, and keynote speeches that explored issues facing Black legal professionals and our communities. Attendees heard from prominent speakers, including lawyers, Judges, community members, and policymakers, who shared their perspectives, experiences, and advice.

The conference also provided a platform for law students to network and connect with legal professionals nationwide. Attendees had the opportunity to attend career fairs, participate in mock interviews, and meet with representatives from top law firms and legal organizations.

Overall, the BLSA Canada conference was a tremendous success, bringing together a diverse group of legal professionals and students to learn, network, and build skills needed for success. This year's BLSA Conference not only provided a platform for critical dialogue and reflection but also emphasized the vital role of legal professionals in advancing social justice and supporting our communities. Dr. Davis' work is a poignant reminder of the collective power we possess to effect meaningful change, both within the legal profession and society at large.

Adjoa Osei-Yeboah
Conference Chair



Expenditures

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Meals and Refreshments | \$252,609.64 |
| Accommodation | 203,679.17 |
| Material, Decor & Promotional items | 55,424.53 |
| AV and Mobile App | 36,430.20 |
| Services and Speaker Fees | 45,342.85 |
| Scholarships & Awards | 21,000.00 |
| Student Travel & Subsidies | 12,555.66 |
| Shipping, Insurance & Other Fees | 11,708.54 |
| Total: | \$638,750.59 |



National Conference



IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE



Over 600 Conference Attendees

- BLSA Canada welcomed over 400 Students from its 23 chapters
 - We had representatives from the National Black Law Students' Association of the United States, the Black Medical Students Association of Canada and the National Indigenous Law Students' Association of Canada, as well as Black prelaw students at the largest-ever Conference
- Approximately 200 Non-Students attended this year's conference
 - Supported by 50 Expert Panelist and Speakers
 - BLSA hosted esteemed lawyers, judges, policymakers and other influential members of the legal profession



Over 700 Gala Attendees

- BLSA Canada filled the room with its largest ever Annual Gala
- Toronto welcomed THE DR ANGELA DAVIS for a once in a lifetime Keynote Speech and Conversation
- Our list of honourable guests ranges from Toronto's Mayor, Olivia Chow, to the Hon. Dr. Jean Augustine and the Hon. Chief Justice Tulloch of the Ontario Court of Appeal



12 Panels & Workshops

- Provided opportunities for Black law students to learn the skills and competencies needed to succeed in their careers and law school, which will contribute to decreased attrition and professional and academic excellence.
- Featured panels supported Black women and queer people practicing law, as well as discussions focusing on strategies to address mental health and financial challenges in the legal field.



85% of Cost Subsidized for Students

- We are committed to making the Conference accessible for all law students.
- A record-breaking amount of students were able to attend the conference for less than the cost of a one-night stay at the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel.



2 Keynote Lunchens

- As We Rise, We Lift Keynote Luncheon - *Presented by Scotiabank*
- Violet King Women of Excellence Luncheon

Attendees were inspired at the keynote luncheons by influential figures within the Black community, and particular recognition and appreciation were given to Black women within the legal community at the Violet King Women of Excellence Luncheon. Attendees were motivated to give back to their communities.



Career Fair

- 38 Employers joined our largest and most diverse Career Fair
- Included 8 non-for-profits and government employers
- Addressing racial inequalities in hiring is a significant barrier to ameliorating inequality in the profession, and our Conference provides an excellent opportunity for legal employers to identify and recruit diverse talent.
- Attendees also had the opportunity to capture professional headshots at no cost to them.



3 Dedicated Networking Events

- Building robust networks is instrumental to a successful career. The Conference was an unmatched opportunity for students to network and build community. Students had a safe forum for dialogue, learning, and developing new skills. Events included:
 - BLSA Canada's Welcome Reception and Games Night
 - CABL YLD x BLSA Canada Networking Cocktail Mixer
 - Pre-gala cocktail reception

Attendee *Testimonials*

Perspectives from a 1L



Gabrielle Gonsalves
Osgoode Hall Law School

BLSA Canada has been an invaluable resource throughout my law school journey.

From informative panels shedding light on diverse legal perspectives to the enriching experience of the National Conference, BLSA has continuously fostered an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and promotes professional growth.

The opportunities BLSA Canada has provided me with have not only expanded my professional network but also cultivated lifelong friendships with people who push me to be the best version of myself.

I am truly grateful for the support and opportunities BLSA Canada has provided, which have undoubtedly enhanced my legal education and helped me to see that there is a place for me within the historically monolithic legal community.

Overall, the organization has helped me foster a community to learn and grow, where I am confident and all intersectionalities are celebrated.



Perspectives from a 2L



Joycelyn Martey
Lincoln Alexander School of Law

BLSA Canada's initiatives have been the cornerstone of my law school journey, providing invaluable support

and opportunities for growth. From insightful career panels to engaging firm hops, each event has offered unique perspectives and networking opportunities crucial for navigating the legal landscape. The national conference stands out as a highlight. I have been able to interact with industry leaders and peers from all over Canada, and I have gained practical insights on how to navigate the legal profession.

Moreover, the support received from my BLSA chapter has been instrumental in my personal and professional development. Through mentorship programs, social events, workshops, and advocacy efforts, BLSA has created an environment where I feel empowered to excel and contribute meaningfully. As a result, I've gained confidence, expanded my network, and honed essential skills vital for my future career. BLSA Canada has truly made a profound impact and will always be a highlight of my law school journey.



Perspective from a 3L



Aisa M Saho
Osgoode Hall Law School

The Black Law Students Association of Canada Annual Conference provides a vital platform for learning, growth, and

community building. It serves as a beacon of inspiration, showcasing exemplary Black legal professionals who embody the success I aspire to achieve. The conference offers an opportunity for Black students nationwide to exchange knowledge, refine core values, and chart career paths amidst a supportive environment.

I particularly enjoyed the Sister to Sister session as it creates a safe and intimate space for Black women lawyers and law students to share our unique experiences and support each other in reaching our professional goals.

Beyond the enriching educational experience, the Conference is also a much-needed reprieve, offering moments of joy after the rigours of academia. I'm grateful to the dedicated executive team and sponsors for their commitment to affordability and accessibility, ensuring that this event remains accessible to aspiring Black lawyers like myself!



Attendee *Testimonials*



Eugene Anekwe III

Wilfrid Laurier & University of Waterloo

First-year undergraduate student (Pre-law)

This year, I had the honour of attending the BLSA National Conference as a pre-law student. Before I arrived, I was extremely nervous to meet all the older and more experienced law students; however, from the moment I entered the conference room, I felt warmth and kindness of the amazing BLSA team.

I had never met a Black lawyer before, and for a while, it was hard to believe that I could be that one day. The welcoming environment they fostered made me feel at home and inspired me to believe that I could achieve all my dreams of being a lawyer then judge. The incredible people I got to meet that weekend helped me break out of my small-town shell, and now I have a new goal of becoming the National President of BLSA Canada.

I would like to sincerely thank the BLSA team for such a life-changing experience, and I am excited to officially join the team very soon.



Chrysanthe King

Lincoln Alexander School of Law, 2L

Attending BLSA Canada's events, particularly the Firm Hop and conference panels, has profoundly impacted my law school journey.

The wealth of insights, networking opportunities, and exposure to a diverse range of legal careers provided by these events has not only broadened my perspectives but also solidified my career aspirations. Being part of BLSA Canada has enriched my academic experience significantly, offering a sense of community and belonging within the legal field that is both empowering and inspiring.

I am deeply appreciative of BLSA Canada's commitment to fostering inclusivity and excellence among law students across the nation. None of this would be possible without the generous support of our sponsors, to whom I extend my deepest gratitude for making these transformative experiences a reality.



CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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Silver • Argent



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Table Sponsors



Law Foundation *Grants*

Law Foundation of Ontario



Law Foundation of British Columbia



Law Foundation of Nova Scotia



New Brunswick Law Foundation



Law Foundation of Manitoba



Canadian Race Relations Foundation



BLSA Canada Chapter *Fund*

The BLSA Canada Chapter Fund is a program that provides financial support to BLSA Canada Constituent Chapters to help them host events or attend conferences. The purpose of the fund is to ensure that BLSA Canada chapters can continue to provide valuable educational and networking opportunities for their members. Constituent chapters can apply to the fund for subsidies to help offset the costs associated with attending conferences or hosting events, such as guest speaker fees, venue rental fees, and catering costs. By contributing to the BLSA Canada Chapter Fund, sponsors can help support the growth and development of future Black lawyers and legal professionals in Canada by enabling them to participate in valuable learning and networking opportunities.

Disbursements in the 2023–2024 school year...

| | |
|--|------------|
| Dalhousie University, Schulich School of Law | \$478.66 |
| Faculté de droit de l'Université d'Ottawa (Civil) | \$2,100.00 |
| Lakehead University, Bora Laskin Faculty of Law | \$840.00 |
| Toronto Metropolitan University, Lincoln Alexander School of Law | \$4,580.56 |
| Université de Moncton, École de droit | \$1,656.85 |
| Université de Sherbrooke | \$369.89 |
| Université du Québec à Montréal | \$1,233.39 |
| University of British Columbia, Peter A. Allard School of Law | \$360.34 |
| University of Calgary, Faculty of Law | \$2,298.46 |
| University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law (Common) | \$1,626.00 |
| University of Toronto, Faculty of Law | \$1,875.39 |
| York University, Osgoode Hall Law School | \$375.39 |

TOTAL: \$17,794.94

Thank You!



The Black Law Students' Association at the Lincoln Alexander School of Law ("BLSA Lincoln") was created in 2020 and has now become one of the largest chapters in Canada. With over 60 active members, we have been able to host over 20 plus events and initiatives in the past year. Since launching, we have won BLSA Canada's Large Chapter of the Year 2022/23 for most engaged chapter in Canada and the Student Association of the Year at our law school.



We would like to give a huge thank you to all the sponsors for contributing to BLSA Lincoln in the past year. We have been grateful for all those who believe in our mission and values, as we were able to use the Chapter Fund for a number of different events. This year, with the help of the Chapter Fund, we hosted a BLSA GTA Mixer with UofT and Osgoode and an Alumni Mixer. We will be hosting an event where current Black law students and professionals will discuss their career and the law school journey for pre-law students.



The Dalhousie Black Law Students' Association (DBLSA) in Halifax, Nova Scotia has been fostering a supportive environment for Black law students for the past decade, dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusivity within the legal community. With a record membership of 41 members this year, DBLSA provides a platform for connecting, sharing experiences, and accessing tailored resources. Advocating for fair representation and addressing systemic barriers, DBLSA plays a vital role in supporting Black legal professionals. Partnering with the Nova Scotia Chapter of the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers (CABL-NS), DBLSA co-hosted an in-person mixer and networking event, facilitating interaction between current and prospective law students and practicing lawyers. Your support is crucial in advancing DBLSA's mission, and we deeply appreciate your commitment to supporting initiatives that positively impact the legal community.



Scholarships that Leave an *Impact*



BLSA Canada Award Recipient—

“I would like to express my deepest and sincerest thanks for this honour. Your support has been a lifeline for myself and so many others and in many ways, being a recipient of this year’s scholarship is a truly a full circle moment. —”

BLSA Canada Scholarships



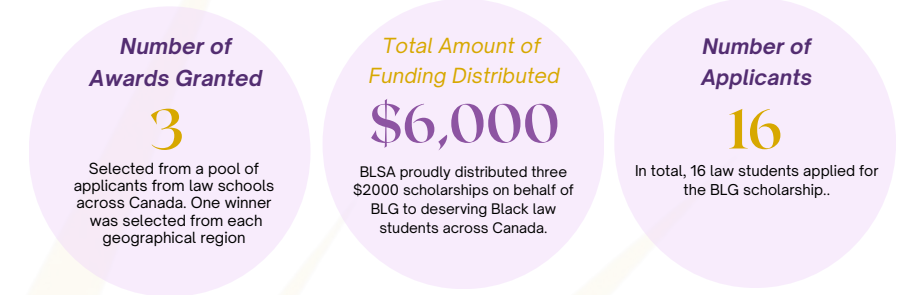
The BLSA Canada Pre-Law Scholarships provides financial assistance and supports aspiring Black law students across Canada. Law school is an extremely expensive endeavour, and every bit helps. BLSA Canada is proud to open scholarship applications to students who self-identify as black and have completed a minimum of three years at a recognized university in a program leading to a law degree. With the support of CAIJ and our other esteemed sponsors, the Civil Law Negotiation Competition was afforded the opportunity to grant \$4250 in scholarship to top competitors.



Award Recipients

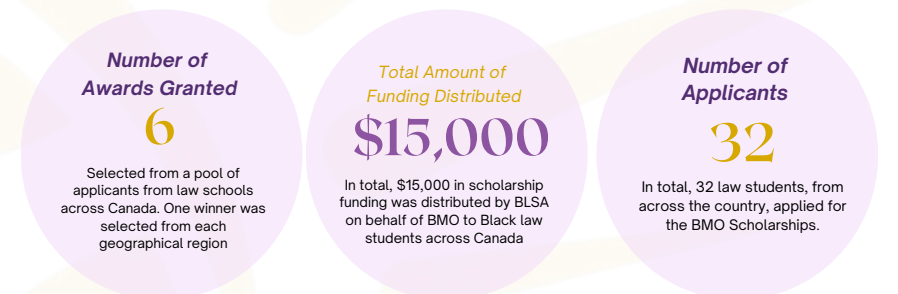
- **Pre-Law Scholarship**
- **Daniella Chukwu**
- **Success Ogboue**
- **BLG Scholarship**
- **Fatima Suleiman**
- **Lesly Archelery**
- **King Kaya Beckford**
- **Civil Law Negotiation Scholarship - Page 9**
- **BMO Scholarship - Raising the Bar**
- **Anne-Clara Sanon**
- **Michee Kisémbó**
- **Sara Ali**
- **BMO Scholarship - Community Leader**
- **Jennifer Démosthène**
- **Ommu-Kulsoom Abdul-Rahman**
- **Pearlie Kamwa**

Borden Ladner Gervais Scholarship



Building on the success of last year, we are delighted to announce the continuation of our partnership with BLG for the second consecutive year, bringing three scholarships aimed at providing financial aid and support to exceptional Black law students across Canada. These scholarships continue to recognize the outstanding achievements of Black law students who embody leadership, academic excellence, and a strong commitment to social justice. Through the BLG BLSA scholarship initiative, we reaffirm our dedication to investing in the success of Black law students, solidifying BLG's position as a champion for diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

Bank of Montreal Scholarship



BMO and BLSA Canada proudly partnered once again to grant a total of \$15,000 in scholarships to support Black law students across Canada. This year, the scholarships were distributed as follows: six scholarships worth \$2,500 each. Three of these scholarships were awarded to third-year law students as part of the "Raising the Bar Scholarship" initiative, while the remaining three scholarships were designated for upper-year students under the "Community Leader Scholarship" program. BMO and BLSA Canada recognize the financial barriers faced by radicalized students pursuing legal education and aim to alleviate this burden through these scholarships.



BLSA Canada *Partners*

The BLSA Canada Partner Program serves as a cornerstone of our organization, fostering meaningful collaboration with leading law firms committed to our mandate. Through this program, we have created a robust network of partners who help us provide our members and the broader community with unmatched personal and professional development opportunities.

Partners play a vital role in supporting our initiatives, providing long-term financial contributions, mentorship opportunities, and resources tailored to the unique needs of our community. In return, partners gain access to a diverse talent pool, networking opportunities with future legal professionals, and the chance to demonstrate their commitment to diversity and inclusion within the legal sphere.

The program operates on the principles of transparency, accountability, and mutual benefit, with partners and BLSA Canada working together to achieve shared goals and objectives. By collaborating with our partners, we can amplify our impact, drive positive change, and enhance the legal profession for all. Together, we are building a brighter and more equitable future for Black law students and professionals in Canada.

BLSA Canada continues to standardize its partnership model. Under this model, each partner commits to a set annual contribution for a minimum three-year partnership term and receives equitable benefits tailored to their needs and objectives. This structured approach fosters stronger partnerships and maximizes the impact of our collective efforts in driving positive change within the legal profession.

In the upcoming year, we aim to recognize and celebrate our partners who renew their commitments and consistently exceed expectations by introducing Platinum Partner Benefits. As we continue to strengthen our existing partnerships, we are actively exploring new avenues for collaboration with forward-thinking law firms that share our commitment to changing the face of the legal profession. By expanding our network and forging strategic alliances, we can amplify our collective voice and effect meaningful change in the legal profession and society at large.



Husoni Raymond
National President



Wayne Cente
National Treasurer



Bennett Jones



Looking Forward to

BLSA Forty



Leveraging 33 years of history as an innovative force for change within Canada's legal community, BLSA Canada is introducing a strategic blueprint grounded in four interconnected pillars. This strategy aims to elevate BLSA Canada's national presence and reinforce our commitment to our members and wider community.

1

Dedicated Advocacy

BLSA Canada Will

1. Advocate for policy and legislative changes to eliminate anti-Black racism.
2. Provide resources and support to address systemic barriers.
3. Organize awareness campaigns and events highlighting racial justice issues.

2

Innovation & Collaboration

BLSA Canada Will

1. Foster a culture of innovation and collaboration within BLSA Canada's chapters and provide resources and support to address systemic barriers.
2. Forge strategic partnerships with external organizations and stakeholders.
3. Leverage technology to streamline communication and program delivery.
4. Collaborate with other student organizations, legal associations, and community groups to amplify its impact.

3

Community Engagement & Support

BLSA Canada Will

1. Expand outreach efforts to Black high school and undergraduate students.
2. Implement charitable programs to support underserved communities.
3. Strengthen institutional knowledge, pride, and alumni relationships.
4. Expand for programming

4

Governance & Fiscal Responsibility

BLSA Canada Will

1. Continue to adopt good Governance practices
2. Maintain fiscal responsibility
3. Continue to build and implement new financial management mechanisms;
4. Seek out grants and other funding sources to diversify income
5. Obtain Audited Financial Statements.

Incoming President's *Address*



Dear Sponsors, Partners, and Supporters,

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples—Popular Quote." Over the past 33 years, BLSA Canada has embodied this sentiment, generating ripples that have positively impacted the lives of hundreds of Black law students. As a national non-profit organization operated entirely by dedicated full-time Black law students nationwide, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to advocacy, mentorship, and community empowerment through high-quality programming.

I wholeheartedly express my gratitude to the outgoing board under the leadership of the 2023–2024 National President, Husoni Raymond. Their exceptional innovation and collaboration have left an indelible mark on our organization. Their efforts led to the largest conference in our history, with over 700 gala attendees. They also organized the largest pre-law expo and hosted the largest student-run competitive moot, with representation from 13 law schools. As we carry forth their legacy, we are armed with a comprehensive long-term strategic plan and vision, aligning all 23 local chapters and members toward common goals and objectives.

This year, our focus will center on enhancing membership engagement and fostering collaboration, providing support and empowerment, and dedicated advocacy. We deeply understand and acknowledge Black law students' intersecting and diverse needs. We will continue supporting our members from the Francophone communities, the Prairies, the West Coast, the Atlantic region, and Central Canada. While law school presents unique opportunities, it also poses distinct challenges, particularly for Black law students who contend with issues of anti-Black racism, representation, and access. We are resolute in our dedication to championing the nuanced experiences of our members.

"If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together - African Proverb." We express heartfelt appreciation to our sponsors, national partners, alums, volunteers, and every individual and organization that has generously contributed their time and resources to equip us to come this far. We eagerly anticipate strengthening our existing partnerships and forging new ones to enhance our service to our members. Our collaboration and work this year will transcend mere partnership, symbolizing a shared journey toward tangible progress. I am enthusiastic about the pivotal role each of us will play in transforming this vision into reality. Cheers to pushing boundaries, dismantling barriers, and actively contributing to fostering a more inclusive legal profession.

Warm regards,

Janet (Jay Jay) Johnson
Incoming National President, 2024–2025
Osgoode Hall Law School



BLSA Canada Outgoing *Board*

Husoni Raymond, President

Osgoode Hall Law School

Desron Harry, Chair

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law

Wayne Cente, Treasurer

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law

Haben Dawit, Sponsorship Director

Osgoode Hall Law School

Nadreyh Vagba, Francophone Director

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law

Shanice Teape, Mentorship Director

Osgoode Hall Law School

Aye-Lama Bah, Advocacy Director

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law

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Université de Sherbrooke Faculty of Law

Chyna Brown, Communication Director

University of Calgary, Faculty of Law

Adjoa Osei-Yeboah, Conference Chair

Lincoln Alexander School of Law

Cindy Kamau, Moot Director

Osgoode Hall Law School

Lillith Ampadu, National Secretary

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law

Janet (Jay Jay) Johnson, Professional Development Director

Osgoode Hall Law School

Tom Ndekezi, Common Law Representative

University of Victoria, Faculty of Law

Keyana Joseph, Civil Law Representative

University of Montreal

Mardochee Célestin, Alumni Relations Director

Université de Moncton, Faculty of Law

BLSA Canada Incoming *Board*

Janet (Jay Jay) Johnson, President

Osgoode Hall Law School

Jeremiah Bowers, Chair

Lincoln Alexander School of Law

Zack Pendedah, Treasurer

Schulich School of Law

Keyana Joseph, Francophone Director

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law

Keren Harrison, National Secretary

University of Windsor Faculty of Law

Alexis Riley, Communication Director

Lincoln Alexander School of Law

Crystal Witter, Mentorship Director

Schulich School of Law





On behalf of BLSA Canada I would like to share my deep gratitude for your unwavering support, which has been instrumental in our journey. Your generosity has truly been a blessing, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

~ Wayne Cente, National Treasurer 2023-24



Contact Us

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