



To: Catherine Dauvergne, Q.C., Dean of the Peter A. Allard School of Law (“Allard Law”)
From: The UBC Black Law Students’ Association (“UBC BLSA”), and additional signatories appended below
Date: June 21, 2020
Re: Addressing white supremacy, anti-Black racism, and systemic racism at Allard Law; Recruiting and supporting a more diverse student body

We would like to start by acknowledging that our meeting in June 2020 is part of an ongoing conversation between the law school and student equity groups. Allard Law has recently made some positive strides toward diversity and inclusion but there remains much to do. Meaningful action is now required to reverse the legacy of white supremacy in our legal institutions. This includes addressing continued barriers faced by Black and other racialized prospective and current law students, and increasing their representation within the student body. With that in mind, BLSA UBC has put together the following list of recommendations for Allard Law with a focus on Black students that will create positive outcomes for the wider law school. This list is not exhaustive; it has and will continue to benefit from the input of stakeholders from a wide range of interest groups and experiences.

Our aim in providing these recommendations is to direct the discussion towards tangible action on the part of the school. We expect Allard Law to also reflect internally on its role, both historically and presently, in perpetuating white supremacy through policies, practices, and curriculum. We also ask that the law school identify additional ways to enact substantive systemic change and implement support for Black and historically marginalized students. This list should be seen as a starting point and an identification of priorities of the Allard Law student body. It is our hope that the administration will engage with and respond to our recommendations promptly and publicly, and also that they undertake and continue to involve BLSA and other stakeholders in whatever initiatives develop.



Recommendations

Supporting Black Youth prior to law school:

1. **Host and fund an annual conference for prospective Black law students**
 - a. Full-day or half-day followed by a reception
 - b. Dean to make conference introduction and welcome
 - c. Engage Black lawyers in BC with volunteer opportunities
 - d. CSO / Admissions/ Student services facilitation in partnership with BLSA
2. **Offer increased programming for Black high school and prospective students**
 - a. Increased funding and ongoing partnership with the **Legal Ed Bootcamp**
 - b. Possibly integrate with the **Legal Education Outreach (LEO)** student club to offer more programming
 - c. Develop programming focused on introducing high school students from target neighbourhoods to the legal profession through courthouse visits, firm tours, tutoring and workshops by law students, events at the law school (health regulations permitting), virtual events, and law student mentors
 - d. **Offer a free LSAT preparation course** for high-potential, low-income prospective Black law students with a maximum class size of 20 students for adequate one-on-one time with the instructor
3. **Review and share data with stakeholders on the number of Black applicants admitted to Allard Law in past years and annually moving forward** to understand the ongoing lack of representation of Black law students and address barriers to entry
 - a. Review the reported stories of Black law students (enclosed) to better understand the continued barriers to success at Allard Law
 - b. Review the Admissions Committee Resource Guide (“ACRG”) (enclosed)
 - c. Consult with the ACRG research team to discuss the guide and other tools
 - d. Consider unconscious bias training for the Admissions Committee

Supporting Black and racialized law students:

4. **Hire an Independent Equity Officer (“IEO”)** to advocate for Black and other racialized students and create or enhance programming related to diversity and inclusion at Allard Law (for Faculty and students)
5. **Mandate training on anti-Black racism, systemic discrimination, and white supremacy for current and future faculty and staff** including around race-based trauma, how to appropriately talk to equity groups about systemic racism, and how best to support these groups
6. **Have the administration reflect on 1L ethics training and how racialized students experience it** with the help of the IEO, paying particular attention to revising the training to avoid re-traumatizing students and oversimplifying the issues
 - a. **Rethink Equity, Diversity and Dialogue day:** consider hiring consultants who specialize in leading this type of work and not restricting it to a single day, but emphasizing that these topics are important every day



- b. **Rethink Diversity session in orientation:** provide support for orientation coordinators in the form of consultants who specialize in leading this type of work
 - c. **Reinforce both of these initiatives with wider curriculum changes**
7. **With the assistance the Career Services Office (“CSO”), establish programming that facilitates contact between Black JD alumni and current Black JD students**
- a. Consider using the CBA mentorship program or the “Alumni Dinner” programs as examples for this initiative.
8. **Request the CSO address barriers to firm recruitment for Black and racialized students** such as the idea of “firm culture” and “fit” which is often synonymous with having participated in elite activities or predominantly white spaces
- a. Consider using the Resource Guide for Firms (enclosed) as a starting point

Curriculum changes to educate on white supremacy and systemic anti-Black racism

9. **As Dean, commit to working with Allard Law professors to reflect on anti-Black racism, Black history, and white supremacy in law (particularly in BC), and how to include this content in their curriculum (particularly for 1L students)**
- a. Include supports for professors in doing this, such as annual training with Black consultants and historians
 - b. Seek guidance from professors on what would be beneficial for them
 - c. Set a target date for the implementation of curricular changes (preferably the 2021 fall term)

Funding and promoting research on white supremacy and anti-Black systemic racism in Canada

10. Evaluate and consider how the law school can encourage scholarship in these areas; particularly dismantling white supremacy, addressing anti-Black systemic racism within the criminal justice system, barriers for Black and other racialized students in law schools and the broader legal community
- a. Hire at least one Black professor who undertakes this research within the next two years.
 - b. Seek Research Assistant Grants/Fellowships from alumni donors to offer Black students upon admission
 - c. Create a fund for research on these themes and ensure future project funding prioritizes this research
 - d. Create a scholarship to fund future graduate student undertaking research related to these topics and themes



In addition to the above recommendations, we are enclosing three resource guides created by members of the Allard Law community for the law school, specifically for admissions, the CSO and law school counsellors. We ask that these tools be shared with the appropriate departments and individuals.

We reiterate that these recommendations, while comprehensive, are a starting point. Nevertheless, we do expect Allard Law to adopt and release an action plan for these and other meaningful initiatives by the 2020 Fall Term. The incoming Allard Law students deserve to know they are entering a progressive law school that welcomes all identities and is willing to critically reflect to make improvements.

Sincerely,

Dinah Holliday

UBC BLSA President

UBC Law Student Group Signatories:

- 1. Allard Law and Business Society**
- 2. Allard Law Women's Caucus**
- 3. Black Law Students Association**
- 4. Environmental Law Group**
- 5. Indigenous Law Students Association**
- 6. Law Students for Decriminalization and Harm Reduction**
- 7. OutLaws**
- 8. South Asian Law Students Association**
- 9. Students for Mining Justice**
- 10. UBC Law Student Society**

Enclosed

- Reported anonymized stories of Black law students from the Black Law Students Admissions Survey
- Committee Resource Guide
- Firm Resource Guide
- Resource Guide for Counselling Services
- Resource Guide for Career Services Office
- Resource List for Allies