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Centre des carrières et du développement professionnel
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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Resource Guide

Introduction

Finding your place in a competitive legal market can feel overwhelming at the best of times. Adding on layers around “identity” and “fit” for marginalized and underrepresented groups, can leave many students, feeling confused, overwhelmed and wondering where to start. We have compiled a list of tips and resources to help guide you through the career exploration and job search process with more clarity and ease.

You can use the resources below to help you connect with organizations and legal professionals who may share similar identities, experiences, and challenges as you. Additionally, speaking to these legal professionals can help you learn from their experiences during law school and allow you to better navigate recruitment processes, as there can be increased barriers and challenges for students who are members of marginalized and underrepresented groups. The conversations with legal professionals can also allow you to gain a clearer picture of potential employers and their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

Keep in mind that these are all suggested resources and that you can also let your interests and inspiration guide you. For example, you can use the search function on LinkedIn to look for potential employers or groups to connect with and set up information meetings to gather more information.

Know Yourself

Before you start knocking on doors (virtual or not), take the time to reconnect with your fundamental values. Make a list of your top values to determine which ones you are not willing to compromise on. Determine which values need to be represented in your workplace for you to feel fulfilled. Here is a values exercise to get you started: https://www.uottawa.ca/centre-developpement-carriere/sites/www.uottawa.ca.centre-developpement-carriere/files/1ae2_-_values_-_exerciceen.pdf.

For equity-seeking students at the crossroad of various identities, look for opportunities to leverage your intersectional perspectives. We recommend looking at Part 3 of [Intersectionality in Law and Legal Contexts](#), written by Grace Ajele and Jena McGill, published by the Women’s Legal Education & Action Fund (LEAF), to learn more about the practical values of intersectional identities in legal work. While the report does not speak specifically to how students can navigate or leverage their intersectional identities when participating in legal recruitment, it provides insight into the importance of intersectional considerations in advocacy that you can point out in your cover letters and during interviews.

Questions to Guide your Search & Information Meetings

Discussing and planning your career exploration and job search process with a Professional Development Counsellor can also help you to approach the process with more assurance and confidence. Please don’t hesitate to schedule your appointment in The Source.

In the meantime, here is a list of questions to help you dig deeper into legal employer DEI initiatives and help guide the discussion during information meetings:



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Faculty of Law
Section de common law
Common Law Section

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Career and Professional Development Centre

Recruitment

Has the employer advertised in BIPOC or 2SLGBTQ+ professional publications?

Does the employer participate in community activities to enhance its name recognition among BIPOC, disabled, and 2SLGBTQ+ populations?

Is the employer offering diversity-related scholarships to law students?

Do recruiting methods include going beyond grades and looking at the personal struggles and specific hardships diverse students have overcome?

Retention

How well does the employer retain diverse talent once employees are at the organization? What strategies are used?

What kind of support does the employer offer to "diverse" students and employees?

Does the employer actively cultivate an inclusive environment so that their diverse employees feel comfortable? For example, training programs on unconscious and subtle biases to create a welcoming working environment for diverse employees.

Ranking

Are women, BIPOC, 2SLGBTQ+, and disabled employees represented in significant numbers in the following roles of an organization: managing partners, hiring partners, CEOs, chief operating officers (COOs), vice presidents, practice group leaders, diversity and inclusion professionals, and other law firm management roles?

Directories

[DiversityCanada.com](https://diversitycanada.com)

Directory of some 400 equal opportunity employers

[Eluta.ca](https://eluta.ca)

A job search engine capable of searching through Canada's top 100 employers. One of the categories for top employers is: "Canada's Best Diversity Employers".



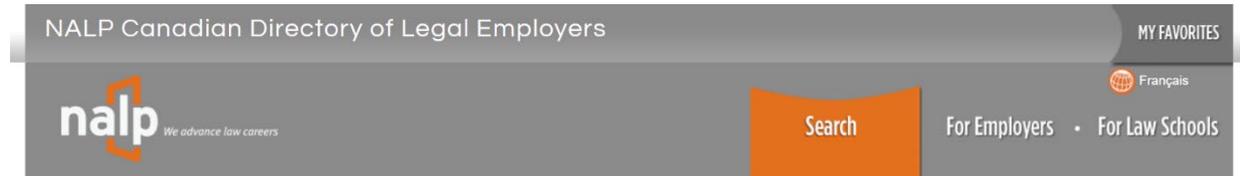
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Faculty of Law
Section de common law
Common Law Section

Centre des carrières et du développement professionnel Career and Professional Development Centre

[NALP CDLE](#)

When searching for potential employers on the NALP Canadian Directory of Legal Employers, consult the “diversity & inclusion” section of each employer’s profile. Note any observations: Are they committed to diversity, equity and inclusion? If so, are the Equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives in line with your needs?



← Back to Search Results

[NALP Directory](#)

On the American NALP Directory of Legal Employers, they collect more detailed demographic information including information about race ethnicity and sexual orientation. This information can be useful when assessing fit at a global or international firm.

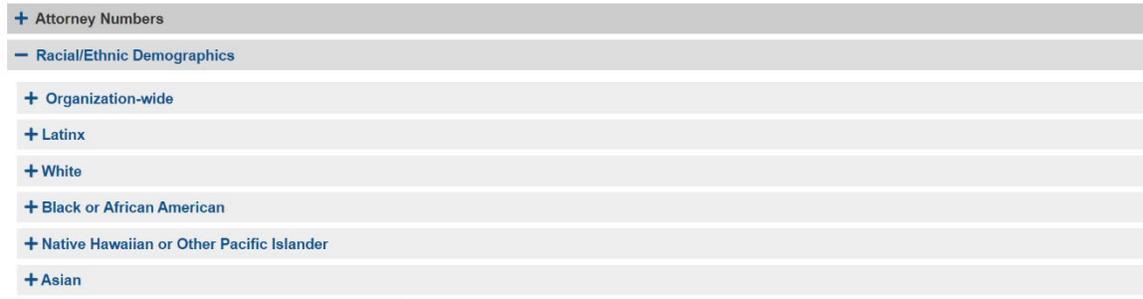


Dentons US LLP - New York, New York

<http://www.dentons.com>

Lawyer Demographics

[View All Sections](#) | [Hide All Sections](#)



Groups and Associations

[Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals](#)

A not-for-profit association of law firm professionals working in the area of diversity and inclusion. See member firms and upcoming events. You can also follow the LI group.



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Faculty of Law
Section de common law
Common Law Section

Centre des carrières et du développement professionnel
Career and Professional Development Centre

[CBA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Community Section \(SOGIC\)](#)

Works to address the needs and concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and two-spirited people within the CBA.

[CBA Women Lawyers Forum](#)

An inclusive space for women lawyers to share experiences, build skills and advocate for change in the legal profession and Canadian society. Strives to apply a gender-informed and intersectional lens to their work.

[National GC Network](#)

Black, Indigenous and People of Colour Lawyers Leading the Way.

[OBA Equality Committee](#)

The Committee has a mandate to examine the impact of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability on the OBA's by-laws, electoral processes, policies, submissions, and activities.

[OBA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Law Section](#)

Focus is on the substantive equality rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgendered and two-spirited people – through advocacy and education. A vital forum for exchange.

[OutBüro](#)

LGBTQ corporate equality and business ratings/reviews by LGBTQ employees and consumers/clients.

[Roundtable of Diversity Associations – "RODA"](#)

Toronto Lawyers Association ("TLA") and other diverse seeking lawyers associations came together to discuss the DiverseCity Report, in particular the disproportionately low number of visible minority leaders in the legal profession. Contains a list of 20 participating associations/organizations.

[Start Proud \(OutOnBayStreet\)](#)

Start Proud facilitates the professional development of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Ally (LGBTQA+) students as they transition from school to career in order to build a national network within the LGBTQA+ community.



uOttawa

Faculté de droit
Faculty of Law
Section de common law
Common Law Section

Centre des carrières et du développement professionnel
Career and Professional Development Centre

LinkedIn Groups

Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals

Canadian Association of Black Lawyers

Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce

Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers

Filipino-Canadian Lawyers Network

Ontario LGBTQ2+ Chamber of Commerce

Women General Counsel Canada

Young Bay Street Professionals

Mentorship Programs

[BLSA Legal Mentorship program](#)

The program facilitates student-lawyer mentorship by pairing Black law students with a Black legal professional who will be committed to mentoring them throughout the academic year.

[Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers](#)

Our annual speed mentoring event, the Mentor-A-Thon, takes place in the first quarter of every year. Student members have the chance to connect with experienced members of the bar through a speed mentoring session.

[First Generation Network Mentorship Program](#)

Our Mentorship Program aims to alleviate some of the disadvantages faced by first generation law students. We aim to alleviate this disadvantage by connecting first generation students with mentors who are established professionals in the legal community.

[Global Lawyers Connect Mentorship Program](#)

GLC's mentorship program supports NCA students or ITLs who are looking to secure and/or complete their articles.

[Programme de mentorat AJEFO](#)

Pilot mentoring project to encourage the next generation of French-speaking justice professionals in Ontario.

Competitions & Awards

[Canada's Best Diversity Employers](#)

This site lists the winners of Canada's Best Diversity Employers competition in alphabetical order. Several law firms and public sector legal employers appear in the list. You can also consult archived lists from previous years.



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Faculté de droit
Faculty of Law
Section de common law
Common Law Section

Centre des carrières et du développement professionnel
Career and Professional Development Centre

[Canadian Law Awards](#)

From year to year several awards under the special awards category focus on diversity and inclusion and trailblazing women. Check out the winner for the current and previous years as well as the nominees.

[Lexpert Rising Star Awards](#)

Leading lawyers under 40. Look for diversity among the leading lawyer award recipients.

[LinkedIn Top Voices 2020: Equity in the Workplace](#)

Connecting with some of the top voices in equity on LinkedIn can be a good way to start identifying groups, newsletters, individuals and initiatives supporting EDI.

[LSO Awards – Laura Legge Award](#)

The Laura Legge Award recognizes women lawyers from Ontario who have exemplified leadership within the profession. See current and past recipients.

Student Groups on Campus

Connecting with other law students and clubs at the Faculty of Law can be a good way of learning more about recruitment and potential employers, while also building connections. Upper year law students have been in the same position as you and can offer up helpful advice, especially when it comes to any questions or concerns you may have. You may be able to connect with students who were successful in landing a position with an employer that you are interested in and can listen to their experiences.

The Indigenous Law Student Governance (ILSG) is the recognized co-government of Common Law students, along with the Common Law Student Society (AÉCLSS). Both governments provide resources intended for our diverse student body.

Student Governments

[Indigenous Law Students Governance \(ILSG\)](#)

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ilsguottawa>

Email: ilsg@uottawa.ca

One of the two recognized student governments within the Common Law Section.

[Association étudiante de Common Law / Common Law Student Society \(AÉCLSS\)](#)

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/aeclssuottawa>

Email: aeclss@uottawa.ca

One of the two recognized student governments within the Common Law Section.

AÉCLSS houses many clubs that represent students with different identities. Below is a list of clubs that you can join or reach out to for support and advice during law school.

[Asian Law Student Students' Society \(ALSS\)](#)

Email: alss.uottawa@gmail.com

The Asian Law Students' Society (ALSS) provides law students with support and a channel of solidarity throughout law school.



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Faculté de droit
Faculty of Law
Section de common law
Common Law Section

Centre des carrières et du développement professionnel
Career and Professional Development Centre

[Black Law Students' Association \(BLSA\)](#)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BLSAOttawa>

Email: ottawa.blsa@gmail.com

The BLSA Ottawa is committed to creating academic and professional development opportunities for Black students in order to promote diversity and inclusion within law school and the legal profession.

[Jewish Law Students Association \(JLSA\)](#)

Fostering Jewish life on campus for University of Ottawa law students.

[Latin American Law Student Association \(LALSA\)](#)

Email: lalsacanada@gmail.com

We are a group of law students who have an interest in Latin America, Latin American Law, Latin American issues or all of the above - you don't have to be latino(a) to share your interests with us!

[Mature Students in Law Association \(MSILS\)](#)

Email: ottawamaturestudents@gmail.com

The Mature Students in Law Society (the Society) aims to provide a supportive and friendly place for mature law students and their unique needs. The Society does not distinguish or have any age criteria - anyone can be a member.

[Middle Eastern Law Student Association \(MELSA\)](#)

Email: melsa.uottawa@gmail.com

MELSA's mission is to raise awareness about Middle-Eastern affairs, and to foster a social network with the faculty's diverse student associations.

[Ottawa Hellenic Law Students Association \(OHLA\)](#)

Email: ohlsauottawa@gmail.com

[OUTLaw](#)

Email: outlaw@uottawa.ca

OUTLaw's mission is to create a safe space for LGBTQ+ identified University of Ottawa law students and their allies where they can engage in discussion, network, and promote awareness within the law school community.

[Regroupement Etudiant De Common Law En Français \(RECLEF\)](#)

Email: reclef.uottawa@gmail.com

The mission of the Regroupement étudiant de common law en français ("Réclef") is to represent the interests of Francophone and Francophile students in the University of Ottawa's French Common Law Program.



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Section de common law
Common Law Section

Centre des carrières et du développement professionnel
Career and Professional Development Centre

[South Asian Law Student Association \(SALSA\)](#)

Email: salsa.ottawau@gmail.com

The uOttawa South Asian Law Students Association (SALSA) is an equity-seeking group that provides support and awareness to issues on equity, diversity, and professional development affecting the South Asian community in the legal field.

[University of Ottawa Association of Women and the Law \(UOAWL\)](#)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/uoawl/>

Email: uoawl.afduo@gmail.com

We are a team of law students at the University of Ottawa committed to a future where the systemic barriers and inequities against womxn will be a thing of the past.

[University of Ottawa Law Students First Generation Network \(OLSFGN\):](#)

Email: olsfgn@gmail.com

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/olsfgn/>

We are a non-profit organization aiming to reduce barriers law students face who are first in their family to complete post-secondary education.

[University of Ottawa Muslim Law Student Association \(MLSA\)](#)

Email: muslimlaw.uottawa@gmail.com

The Aim and Purpose of MLSA shall be to serve as a representative body of Muslims on campus which caters to their needs, while striving to be a vibrant, integrated and contributing body within the campus community.

Wellness & Mental Health

Law school is stressful, the legal profession is stressful. Stress can lead to mental health issues like anxiety and depression. Because of the adversity and barriers that marginalized and underrepresented groups face, mental health issues can be even more common within these groups. Take care of yourself and seek out support when needed. The Faculty of Law, Common Law Section has their very own Mental Health and Wellness Counsellor. Here is a link to the Common Law mental health and wellness page for more information and resources: <https://commonlaw.uottawa.ca/en/students/student-centre/equity-and-academic-success/counselling-and-wellness>

In conclusion, don't lose sight of who you are. All of these resources and tips can help guide you on your journey to finding employers that value you, as you are. Working in an environment where you feel supported and can be yourself is essential to your wellbeing and growth as a new legal professional.

If you know of a great resource that is not included in this list, please consider sharing it with us by emailing Chantal Riendeau at criendea@uottawa.ca.



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References

Wheat vs. Chaff: Navigating the Confusing World of Employer D&I Programs, Kourtney James, NALP Bulletin April 2020