



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

CHAPTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

A. Overview

What is the Chapter of the Year Award?

The Chapter of the Year Award ("COTY") is conferred annually by BLSA Canada on a chapter that has demonstrated exceptional commitment to the mandate and vision of BLSA Canada.

The available awards are:

- Common Law - Large Chapter of the Year
- Common Law - Small Chapter of the Year
- Civil Law Chapter of the Year

Threshold for Small and Large Chapters

- A small chapter is any chapter with 30 members or less
- A large chapter is any chapter with 31 members or more
- *Note: The classification of a chapter is based on the number of chapter members registered with BLSA Canada via its registration form.*

The Points System

The COTY scoring is awarded on a 100-point scale. There are eight (8) separate scoring categories, ranging in value from 5 to 20 points.

Events or initiatives in each category are assessed on a 5-point scale. Each event or initiative can be assigned a score of 0, 2.5 or 5 points.

- Events or initiatives that are sloppily done, poorly documented or irrelevant to the category or aims of BLSA will be assigned zero points.
- Events or initiatives that are well-executed but otherwise typical or expected will be assigned 2.5 points.
- Events or initiatives that are not only well-executed but also creative, impactful and go beyond the typical expectations of a local BLSA will be assigned 5 points.
- **Being assigned 2.5 points is not a criticism but rather a sign that an event or initiative has met — but not exceeded — expectations. Expect most events or initiatives to be assigned 2.5 points. The maximum points total should be reserved for events or initiatives that display exceptional vision, planning and execution.**



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Each category will be assessed in 5-point increments. For example, a 10-point category would need two exceptional 5-point events or initiatives to receive full points. If a chapter were found to have only one exceptional event and one standard event in that same category, it would receive 7.5 points instead of 10 points (and so on). The only exception is for Attendance at All Chapter Meetings, which will be inputted by the National Chapter Representatives and assessed on a zero-sum scale.

Attendance

- Chapters considered for the Large Chapter of the Year Award are allowed zero absences at monthly chapter meetings.
- Chapters considered for the Small Chapter of the Year Award are allowed one excused absence at monthly chapter meetings.

Consideration Period for 2025 COTY Awards

Only chapter activities occurring between **March 2024 to February 2025** (i.e. conference to conference) are considered for the award. For greater clarity, any events occurring in March 2025 or later will go towards a chapter's 2026 COTY application.

Selection

The chapters with the highest average scores in each category will be conferred their respective awards at the National Conference Gala.

COTY Application

- Discretionary marks may be awarded for an application's grammatical correctness, quality of writing, formatting and if/how many high-quality pictures are included in the application. Chapters will not be awarded extra points for creative portfolios, although they are welcome.

B. Criteria

Criteria – Common Law Chapter of the Year

Note: The following criteria apply to the common law chapters of BLSA Canada. Please direct any questions to the National Common Law Chapters' Representative at membership@blsacanada.com.



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Community Outreach and Social Events [20 points]

Describe any internal chapter social events you organized and initiatives that serve the community beyond your local chapter, e.g., movie nights, dinners, panels, soup kitchen volunteering, tutoring disadvantaged kids, etc.

Pre-Law Engagement [10 points]

Describe any events or initiatives you organized that engaged with Black pre-law students (in high school, post-secondary and beyond) to encourage them to apply to law school and envision a career in law, e.g. LSAT prep, admissions information panels, application reviews, etc.

Academic Affairs [10 points]

Describe any initiatives you organized to coach and support students academically, e.g. exam preparation workshops, mentorship programs, study groups, etc.

Career & Professional Development [20 points]

Describe how your chapter supports members in meeting their professional and vocational goals, e.g. firm tours, panel discussions, mentorship programs, networking events, etc.

- Special attention will be given to programming supporting members in the OCI, la Course aux Stages and non-traditional legal careers.

Teamwork [10 points]

Describe how your chapter connects and collaborates with other BLSA chapters, BLSA Canada or other equity-deserving student organizations to coordinate events and initiatives. Examples include: a multi-chapter BLSA regional social event, multi-chapter firm hop, legal collaborations with Black student medical associations, etc.

Cultural Awareness [10 points]

Detail what steps your chapter has taken to ensure that it is equitable and inclusive. This can include equity-focused events and initiatives.

- Events focused on intersectionality are integral to honouring and supporting the diverse identities of BLSA members, e.g. a Black and Queerness social, Afro-Indigenous panel, etc.

Advocacy for Civil and Social Justice [15 points]

- Demonstrate how your chapter's programming throughout the year has contributed to BLSA Canada's commitment to addressing systemic harms affecting the Black communities within and outside the legal community.
- Note: While these initiatives may benefit members of the Black community beyond the legal profession, the activities should still be relevant to legal topics and areas of concern.



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- Examples of such initiatives may include: social media advocacy, legal reform campaigns, Know Your Rights workshops, research initiatives, and hosting talks on social and civil justice.

Discretionary [5 points]

The selection committee will award these points on a discretionary basis to recognize achievements that do not fit the above categories.

- **Note:** Attendance at all chapter presidents' meetings is mandatory to qualify for the chapter award. Another chapter representative may attend in lieu of a chapter president.



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Criteria – Civil Law Chapter of the Year

Note: The following criteria apply to the civil law chapters of BLSA Canada. Please direct any questions to the National Civil Law Chapters' Representative at membershipcivil@blsacanada.com.

Community Outreach and Social Events [20 points]

Describe any internal chapter social events you organized, as well as initiatives that serve the community beyond your local chapter, e.g. collaborating with other chapters, movie nights, dinners, panels, soup kitchen volunteering, tutoring disadvantaged kids, etc.

Academic Affairs [10 points]

Describe any initiatives you organized to coach and support students academically, e.g. exam preparation workshops, mentorship programs, study groups, etc.

Career & Professional Development [20 points]

Describe how your chapter supports members in meeting their professional and vocational goals, e.g. firm tours, panel discussions, mentorship programs, networking events, etc.

- Special attention will be given to programming that supports members in the OCI and la Course aux Stages.

Teamwork [10 points]

Describe how your chapter connects and collaborates with other BLSA chapters, BLSA Canada or other equity-deserving student organizations to coordinate events and initiatives. Examples include: a multi-chapter BLSA regional social event or firm hop, panel with student medical association, social with the Muslim students' association, etc.

Cultural Awareness [10 points]

Detail what steps your chapter has taken to ensure that it is equitable and inclusive. This can include equity-focused events and initiatives.

- Events focused on intersectionality is integral to honouring and supporting the diverse identities of BLSA members, e.g. a Black and Queerness panel.

Advocacy for Civil and Social Justice [20 points]

- Demonstrate how your chapter's programming throughout the year has contributed to BLSA Canada's commitment to addressing systemic harms affecting the Black communities within and outside the legal community.



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- Note: While these initiatives may benefit members of the Black community beyond the legal profession, the activities should still be relevant to legal topics and areas of concern.
- Examples of such initiatives may include: social media advocacy, legal reform campaigns, Know Your Rights workshops, research initiatives, and hosting talks on social and civil justice.

Attendance at the Civil Law Symposium [5 points]

The points will be awarded according to the attendance of executive members to the civil law symposium. At least 50% of your executives should be attending to get full marks.

Discretionary [5 points]

These points will be awarded by the selection committee on a discretionary basis to recognize achievements that do not fit into the above categories.

- **Note:** Attendance at all chapter presidents' meetings is mandatory to qualify for the chapter award. Another chapter representative may attend in lieu of a chapter president.



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