



**Association of  
American Law Schools**

# **Creating A Diversity Tech Law Pipeline Program**

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Section on Technology, Law & Legal Education

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# Welcome

## Leanne Fuith

Professor and Dean of Career and  
Professional Development,  
Mitchell Hamline School of Law

Co-Chair, Webinar Committee,  
AALS Section on Technology, Law  
& Legal Education



# Logistics

- Format
- How to ask questions
- Webinar will be recorded and available for on-demand viewing
- Handout will be emailed
- Survey

# Speaker

## Browne Lewis

Dean, North Carolina Central  
University School of Law



# Increasing Diversity in the Tech Law Space

# The Growth of the Tech Law Industry

Intellectual Property (IP) and other technology-related areas of law are the fastest growing legal practice areas.

In recent years, IP has accounted for nearly 20% of legal job openings despite the fact that IP attorneys constitute a small percentage of the legal profession.

According to the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) records, less than 3% of attorneys are registered as patent attorneys.

# The Lack of Diversity

The American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA)'s data indicates that the field of IP law is mostly white and male. In 2017, AIPLA reported the following demographic information with regards to IP attorneys in law firms:

1.8%-Black/African American

2.5%-Hispanic/Latinx

Less than .5%-Native American

# Purpose and Functions of Diversity Pipeline Programs

- Purpose: to provide opportunities for members of underrepresented populations to gain the tools necessary to enter the field of law.
- Function
  - Students are exposed to skills they will need in law school (outlining, briefing cases)
  - Students are provided mentors
  - Students are given experiential learning opportunities
  - Students participate in a mock trial competition



# Preliminary Decisions With Regards to Scope

What is technology?

-IP vs. Technology (backgrounds of targeted students, targeted stakeholders)

What is diversity?

-Diversity and inclusion vs combatting systemic racism

What is your is the targeted populations?

-Middle school, high school, college

What is the duration of the program?

-Boot camp, Summer etc., two or three years

# Identify the barriers faced by your targeted student population

Lack of educational resources-technology divide, basic educational skills

Lack of financial resources-paying for law school

Lack of opportunity/access-diverting the pipeline

Lack of confidence-STEM is scary; imposter syndrome; stereotype

# Unique Challenges of Creating a Tech Law Diversity Pipeline

Creating interest in the targeted population

Finding faculty and staff to participate

Defining the scope of the project

Lack of human and financial resources

# Key Components that a Tech Law Diversity Pipeline Should Include

Some type of pre-assessment tool

Information session with tech vendors to discuss the technology relevant to the practice of law

Strong mentorship program that includes law students and attorneys

Wellness/mindfulness discussions (imposter syndrome, racial healing etc.)

Experiential learning opportunity (opportunity to observe the day in the life of a law student and the day in the life of a practicing attorney; internship opportunities; exposure to actual law school classes)

Professionalism and ethics workshops (time-management, budgeting, ethical behavior etc.)

LSAT prep and other academic interventions including workshops focusing on grammar, research and technology

Strong data collection device to track student process

# NCCU STEM Pipeline Program

Decided to focus on racial diversity by reaching out to students already attending HBCUs

Decided to focus on juniors and seniors attending HBCUs with strong engineering and computer science programs

We are getting commitments from 25 tech law corporations, law firms, and non-profits to provide us with paid summer internships

Part of the program will be virtual to have a student cohort that is geographically diverse

We are creating a database of tech law mentors

The program will have a social justice component that focuses on law and policy

Students will take two pre-law courses (Writing for Lawyers and First Year Experience)

# Questions & Answers



Browne Lewis  
[blewis39@nccu.edu](mailto:blewis39@nccu.edu)

# Upcoming Section on Tech Summer Webinars

The Law & Life Online – *June 2*

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) – Promise and Pitfalls – *June 9*

Top 5 Lessons Learning about Teaching from Pandemic – *June 16*

Cybersecurity – *June 23*

Cyberlaw, Plain View, and Officer Inadvertence – *June 30*

# Wrap Up

Survey – Your Feedback is Important!

Please consider joining the Section on Technology,  
Law and Legal Education

Thank you for your attendance!