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Leveraging Law Schools: Breaking Down Silos to Enhance Access to Justice

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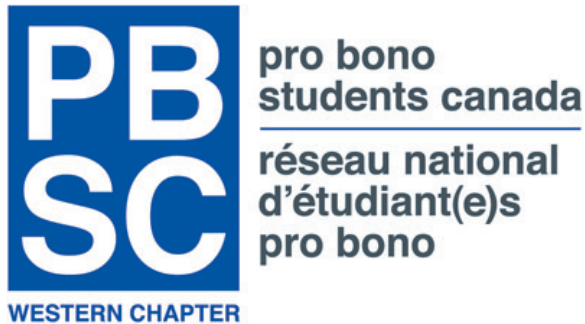
Executive Summary

By having their clinics work together, as well as with PBSC and social agencies, law schools can leverage these partnerships to expand their clinical programs and improve access to justice.

The Current Situation

- Student legal clinics in all common law jurisdiction law schools except in NB
- Pro Bono Students Canada has chapters in all but two law schools
- Many law schools have other specialty clinics – Queen's, Ottawa, many others
- Law school clinics are nimble and can experiment

Relationship Between Student Clinics and PBSC



- In most law schools, totally separate with little coordination
- How do they differ?
- How are they similar?

Social Agencies

- Many clinics have relationships with social agencies
- UVic – Inmates and aboriginal outreach
- UofT - Satellite clinics
- Western – PLE, CMHA

Leverage: $2 + 2 = 22$

- Financial leverage: borrowing resources from another party to buy assets
- How can leverage apply to law schools?



Leverage = Partnerships

- Working together we can do more than we can do separately
- Kinds of partnerships:
 - Joint projects
 - Sharing resources and information
 - Referrals

What Kind of Partners?

- Other faculties
- Public libraries
- Social agencies for homeless, mental health, food banks, addictions, youth, and others
- Multicultural organizations
- High schools
- Other community clinics
- Private bar

The Western Experience: Joint Projects with PBSC

- Small Claims Court Project (held in library)
- High School Project
- Public Legal Education Program (for social agencies)
- Eviction Prevention Program
- **Without cooperation, programs would not exist or would be smaller**

The Western Experience: in the Community

- Innovation Works building
- Partnerships with social agencies:
 - CMHA (mental health)
 - Salvation Army (homeless)
 - Mission Services (addictions)
- Fanshawe College
- Working on partnership with Faculty of Health Sciences
- Office hours, referrals, public legal education

Using Technology at Western to Leverage Access to Justice

- Podcasts
- Email blasts
- Coming: remote video for providing services to smaller centres and First Nations (with community clinics and social agencies)



Lessons Learned

1. Look for partners who serve your potential clients
2. Build bridges and relationships
3. Keep in touch with partners
4. Training is essential
5. More than one path to justice
6. Look at using technology



Questions?

Small Group Discussion

- Identify possible partners in communities or universities
- Issues to be considered in coming to an agreement
- New ideas on using technology to expand our reach
- Possible research topics with partners



Thank you!



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