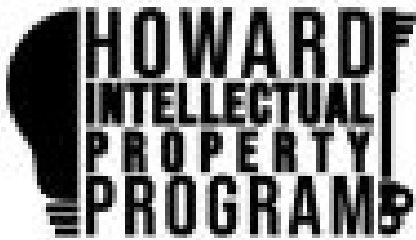




HBCU UNPAID INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) INTERNSHIP GRANT PROGRAM 2024-2025



SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
LAW CENTER



NC Central
UNIVERSITY
Technology Law & Policy Center



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
Thurgood Marshall School of Law

INTERNSHIP GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The 2024-25 HBCU Unpaid Intellectual Property (IP) Internship Grant Program was conceived with the INTA Foundation as a supplement to our Annual HBCU IP and Tech Law Summit, which is hosted in conjunction with the Howard University School of Law Intellectual Property Program, North Carolina Central University Technology Law & Policy Center, Southern University Law Center and Thurgood Marshall School of Law.

Under this grant program, we sought to enable students enrolled in a participating HBCU law school to work as unpaid interns for public interest organizations in connection with trademark, copyright, and other IP matters. This grant program supported students who would not be able to participate in an unpaid internship without receiving additional monetary support. Selected students received a stipend between \$2,500 and \$5,000 to support their work as an unpaid intern for a public interest organization.



LETTERS FROM GRANT RECIPIENTS



CORTEZ COLLINS

HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

My name is Cortez Collins and I am a rising 3L at Howard University School of Law with a concentration in intellectual property, entertainment, and sports law. I have developed experience in trademark analysis, NIL issues, and contract negotiation through coursework and practical training. I currently serve in leadership and editorial roles that support underrepresented voices in the legal profession. I aspire to build a career in talent representation, leveraging this legal expertise to protect creative and athletic professionals and expand access within the industry.



CORTEZ COLLINS

HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

Because of your support, I was able to fully engage in hands-on legal work that sits at the intersection of intellectual property, athlete advocacy, and social equity. From working with top collegiate brands to contributing to legal scholarship and attending game-changing conferences, this summer prepared me to be not only a strong legal professional, but a more informed and purpose-driven advocate.

As a legal intern at Learfield, I supported the company's brand protection and NIL strategy during a transformative time for college sports. One of my core responsibilities was drafting cease-and-desist letters on behalf of Learfield's NCAA and Greek organization clients to stop infringing uses of their marks. I also helped combat counterfeiting on platforms like Etsy and Faire, where I applied the Rogers v. Grimaldi test to determine whether sellers might claim an expressive use defense. Where no valid defense existed, we initiated takedowns to preserve licensing revenue.

In parallel with my internship, I worked as a legal editor with the Copyright Society, where I contributed to articles analyzing emerging issues in copyright law. I'm currently collaborating on articles exploring trademark law in the toy industry, helping to refine scholarship that blends IP doctrine with questions of cultural impact, child welfare, and design innovation.

I gained practical experience in trademark and copyright enforcement, trade secret protection, NIL negotiation strategy, and legal writing, all with a focus on protecting the rights and stories of marginalized communities.

Thank you for investing in my future. Because of you, I am even more committed to using IP as a tool for economic empowerment, advocacy, and justice.

GEORGE HARRIS

HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

George Harris is a recent graduate of Howard University School of Law, Class of 2025. With a deep commitment to advocacy, education, and entertainment law, he has cultivated a diverse academic and professional background that bridges the legal, communication, and arts sectors. Before pursuing law, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Performance Studies from Kennesaw State University, where he also obtained a certificate in Music and Entertainment Business. Furthering his education, George earned two master's degrees: a Master of Science in Strategic Communication and a Master of Education in Special Education. At Howard University School of Law, George has been an active member of several student organizations, including the Sports and Entertainment Law Student Association, HUSL OUTlaw, and Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity. He also served as a Howard University School of Law Student Ambassador, helping to connect prospective students with the law school community. His dedication to civil rights and advocacy led him to participate in the NAACP's 2022 Voter Protection Project in Philadelphia, where he worked to protect voter rights during a critical election cycle. Additionally, he has been involved with the Young Black Lawyers' Organizing Coalition and the Howard University Spring Break Alternative Program, further demonstrating his passion for public interest work and legal activism. As he approaches the next phase of his legal career, he remains dedicated to leveraging his experiences to make meaningful contributions to both the legal and entertainment industries.



GEORGE HARRIS

HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

This award is more than just financial assistance—it is an investment in my ability to fully engage with my legal education and professional development in intellectual property (IP) law. Without financial support, I would have to take on a part-time job to cover essential expenses such as rent, utilities, and food. Balancing multiple jobs alongside an internship and coursework would not only divide my time but also limit my ability to make the most of this amazing opportunity to intern at the Institute for Intellectual Property & Social Justice (IIPSJ). This award alleviates that burden because I can dedicate my full focus on gaining hands-on experience in IP law and attending law school full time.

With this support, I can also develop a strong career portfolio that reflects my commitment to intellectual property law. This includes writing articles about professionals in the field, conducting interviews with practicing patent, copyright, and trademark attorneys, and expanding my network with legal professionals who share my passion for innovation and justice. These experiences are crucial as I work toward becoming an IP attorney who can advocate for marginalized communities, ensuring that creators and entrepreneurs—especially those from underrepresented backgrounds—have access to the legal protections they deserve.

Coming from a background where opportunities and resources were limited, I understand that financial support can be the difference between merely getting by and truly thriving. This award allows me to fully immerse myself in my internship, gain invaluable experience, and lay the groundwork for a successful career in intellectual property law.

RANDALL HAZARD

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

A Tidewater, VA native, Randall Hazard is an Old Dominion and Norfolk State University graduate and second-year law student at North Carolina Central University School of Law.



RANDALL HAZARD

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

My primary goal in the intellectual property field is to serve my community's needs to the best of my ability. Receiving this grant gives me the opportunity to do just that. The "Legacy Project" under The National Conference of Black Lawyers is a significant initiative, with one of its key goals being the development of effective strategies and protocols for copyright and licensing agreements for over 200+ NCBL members and alumni archival materials.

My IP internship commenced with a pivotal task negotiating the archival agreement between the National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL) and the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University. This agreement was a significant milestone, as the archival materials at Howard had not been accessed since December of 1990. The organization aimed to adopt the community-centered approaches of Chaitra Powell and the "community-driven archive". To achieve this, I identified the "Freedom Archives" led by archivists and activists Nathaniel Moore and Claude Marks, a model that not only mirrored our vision but also had experience in managing archival material of a political nature like our own.

One important thing I learned during this internship is the need to develop more equitable ways of providing legal services for the protection of intellectual property. Legal representation is often inaccessible to the average person when dealing with large institutions or corporate conglomerates. Because of this power imbalance, many people give up their intellectual property rights in exchange for a small chance of financial gain. Receiving this grant award allowed me to learn on the job under the tutelage of a host of archivists, lawyers, and scholars. I had the exciting opportunity to develop the legal arrangements for endeavors that I believe have the ability to change the world. I will continue my work with NCBL and I have been further inspired to create legal scholarship that fully explores how intellectual properties and their legal arrangements can fuel change in every community.

NOAH HILL

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER

Noah, a native of Macon, Georgia, is pursuing his legal education at Southern University Law Center (SULC) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Initially intrigued by mobile app development, he explored the various opportunities at Georgia State University to learn about business, technology, and advocacy. This led him to earn his Bachelor of Science in Economics with a minor in Computer Information Systems. The knowledge he gained in his undergrad catalyzed the pursuit of a Juris Doctorate Degree. With advocacy at the forefront, he hopes to continue to be a voice for others in their business and social endeavors and help them achieve their goals and missions. In his spare time, Noah volunteers within his community at the Baton Rouge Youth Coalition and serves in various organizational roles supporting other law students at his Law Center. As his final year of law school approaches, he will intern with the Tech and Entrepreneurship clinic within SULC and get hands-on experience with client relations and legal matters. His ability to adapt and grow are qualities that will undoubtedly serve him well in intellectual property and business law.



NOAH HILL

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER

As a recipient of this award from the INTA Foundation and the Institute for Intellectual Property and Social Justice, the aid is not only financial since it permits students like me to create networks and be exposed to niche opportunities without lacking resources and support. It specifically allows minority students to fill in gaps within the industry in spaces not financially feasible for minority students. The intellectual property space needs more diversity due to stereotypical barriers. Many individuals need to be made aware of how intellectual property encompasses our daily lives, almost more than any other law sector.

The capability of IP may be limitless, but outcomes or perceptions may feel limited based on specific attributes, credentials, or resource availability. The investment in me as a law student will only be multiplied by allowing me to share my talent and knowledge. My ability to work in this capacity will further interest my peers and school and better serve those I will aid in this role. Having this unique hands-on experience will only hone my skills more efficiently and help me become closer to being an effective advocate. This will have an invaluable effect in reaching my goals of becoming an IP attorney and being able to facilitate and educate new groups of people on their intellectual property rights and abilities.

At the Southern University Tech and Entrepreneurship Clinic, I have been actively involved in the day-to-day operations. I have spent my time going through the intake process for vetting clients and ensuring their intellectual property issues are reasonable to the capabilities of the clinic and their matters are learning opportunities for the students who will be enrolled in the course. This practical approach has allowed me to hone my skills and knowledge of intellectual property topics, particularly in the context of client relationships and speaking about intellectual property to nonlawyers. I have also received a great deal of work in conducting trademark searches and reports for clients. This practical experience has shown me the exact kind of work that IP attorneys present and the different stages of the work product they must complete. In doing this, I have gained valuable experience in enhancing my writing and research skills and analytical approach to issues.

MARNITIA WALKER

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER

Marnitia Walker is a 3L at Southern University Law Center. A graduate of Prairie View A&M University, Marnitia obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. During this time she conducted several research projects that focused on the disparities faced by minorities in both the legal and medical fields. Currently, while matriculating at SULC, she has been able to accomplish a few things. Marnitia served as a regional board member for the Southwest Region of the National Black Law Students Association for two years, she is a Teaching Assistant for Contracts and was also named a National Bar Institute Law Scholar and received the HBCU NREI Scholarship from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. She is also a member of the Southern University Law Center Moot Court Board and is a mentee with The Appellate Project. She has also had the opportunity to participate in the ABBVIE Intellectual Property Legal Academy. The academy was an intensive program dedicated to teaching law students about the field of IP. Post-graduation Marnitia plans to pursue a career in Intellectual Property Law.



MARNITIA WALKER

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER

Driven by a passion for helping those in need, my unwavering commitment to providing relief and support is evident in my work. My passion is intellectual property. I want to create opportunities where those in my community can celebrate, support, and thrive by building a bridge between intellectual property and accessibility. This award will allow me to begin working on those goals without the fear of outside distractions. It will give me the time to learn my place and my footing and contribute to increasing the percentage of African American IP attorneys.

During my externship with the USPTO I was able to go through training that introduced me to what it takes to become a patent examiner, the MPEP (Manual of Patent Examining Procedure) modules such as prior art, obviousness and patentability, and what a patent application looks like. I was paired with a supervisory patent agent, and we worked on two engineering patent applications that dealt with sound waves. During this time, I learned the procedure from when a patent application is first filed, to the revision process, to the prior art process and then when the application is processed.

I learned that working in the field of IP, and especially patents, is very time consuming and requires a lot of training. There are different areas of patents depending on the area you specialize in, and if you are in an area you are unfamiliar with, the work is much harder as you need to understand the information presented to you to be efficient with your work. Overall, this experience made me want to learn more. It made me want to work harder so that I can achieve my goal and work my way into the field of IP. It reassured me and confirmed that post-graduation I want to apply for an IP LLM program to gain more knowledge and experience. This grant and this program allowed me to participate in a program that many students do not have the opportunity to do, it exposed me more to the world of IP than my regular classwork and it was an enjoyable experience.

**THANK YOU
TO OUR
SPONSOR**

INTAFoundation





INSTITUTE FOR

Intellectual Property & Social Justice

The Institute for Intellectual Property & Social Justice is a tax-exempt, charitable organization. As a 501(c)(3) organization, all contributions, grants and bequests are tax deductible.

Info@IIPSJ.org
www.IIPSJ.org