

Black Law Students Association

Student Organization Constitution

ARTICLE I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

This organization shall be known as the Black Law Students Association of The Ohio State University Michael E. Moritz College of Law (hereinafter referred to as “the Association” and “Moritz College of Law”).

ARTICLE II. ORGANIZATION PURPOSE

- A. In accordance with both the National and Regional bodies, the Purpose of the Association is to:
- a. Articulate and promote the professional goals and needs of BLSA members;
 - b. Encourage and foster professional competence;
 - c. Instill in the legal community a greater awareness and commitment to the needs of the diverse community as a whole;
 - d. Encourage American law schools, legal fraternities, and other related associations to use their expertise to influence social, economic, and political change that meets the needs of the diverse community;
 - e. Adopt and implement a policy of economic independence;
 - f. Influence BLSA members to pursue careers in the judiciary; and
 - g. Do all things necessary and possible to accomplish the purposes above.
- B. At the Moritz College of Law, the Association will also
- a. Partake in mandatory programming set out by the National Body which includes:
 - i. The Annual National Fredrick L. Douglass Moot Court Competition,
 - ii. The Annual National and Regional Convention
 - iii. The Sandy Brown Memorial Scholarship Competition,
 - iv. The National Convention Community Service Project,
 - v. The National Academic Retreat for First Year Students,
 - vi. The regional student recruitment fair, and
 - vii. A national student recruitment fair.
 - b. Assist BLSA members in enrolling and graduating from law school;
 - c. Provide BLSA members with information about law school such as financial assistance and curriculum alternatives
 - d. Prepare an adequate orientation program for new BLSA members; and
 - e. Develop and promote a sense of unity among members of the Association.

ARTICLE III. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Section A. Harassment and Discrimination, including Sexual Misconduct

The Black Law Students Association agrees that it will not engage in sexual misconduct nor any harassment or discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or

expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, protected veteran status or any other basis in accordance with the Student Organization Registration Guidelines.

Section B. Hazing

The Black Law Students Association agrees to maintain a zero-tolerance policy for hazing, in compliance with Ohio State University and Collin's Law. All members must conduct themselves in a manner that supports an environment free from hazing. Hazing includes any activity, regardless of consent, that causes or creates a substantial risk of physical, mental, or emotional harm or humiliation to any individual as part of membership or affiliation with the student organization. If found responsible for hazing, members and/or the organization may face disciplinary actions.

Section C. Bylaws

The Black Law Students Association retains the right to maintain separate bylaws to outline the day-to-day operations of the organization and to clarify policies and procedures otherwise not included in the previous articles. Bylaws and/or other guiding documents may not take precedence over the requirements set forth by local, state, and federal laws, The Ohio State University's regulations, policies, and procedures, and the Council on Student Affairs (CSA) Student Organization Registration Guidelines. Organizations may make amendments and changes to the bylaws without consulting the Ohio Union & Student Activities department, and changes to bylaws do not require approval. All elements of organizational bylaws shall be consistent with the organization's currently approved constitution on file and CSA constitution requirements.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section A. Membership Eligibility

Only students enrolled at the Moritz College of Law who pay national and/or local dues every academic year (in accordance with the national due date) and are committed to the Purpose of the Association as stated in Article II are to be allowed active membership of the Association.

Section B. Member Selection

All students enrolled at the Moritz College of Law who pay local dues each academic year are selected as members.

A. Eligibility for Inactive Membership:

- a. Any student enrolled at The Moritz College of Law, or any other college at The Ohio State University, who does not pay dues (in accordance with the national due date), but are committed to the Purpose of the Association as stated in Article III are to be allowed inactive membership to the Association.

B. Right of Active Members:

- a. Only active members of the Association shall have the right to vote.
- b. Only active members of the Association shall have the right to hold office.
- c. Only active members of the association shall have access to the outline bank of the Association.

- d. Only active members of the Association shall have the right to serve as a delegate to both the annual Regional and National Conventions.
- e. Active members of the Association shall have the right to participate in the activities the Association undertakes.

C. Rights of Inactive Members:

- a. Inactive Members of the Association shall have the right to participate in the activities the Association undertakes.

Section C. Membership Timeline

Members can join at the beginning of each academic year by attending the first general body meeting and paying dues.

Section D. Member Removal

A member may be removed for not paying dues or not being enrolled at the Moritz College of Law. A member may be removed if their conduct is not in accord with University policies at the discretion of the Executive Board of The Black Law Students Association.

ARTICLE V. ADVISOR

Section A. Advisor Duties and Responsibilities

Advisor shall be responsible for overseeing the activities and events of The Black Law Students Association.

Section B. Advisor Term

The Advisor shall serve for the entire year term.

Section C. Advisor Selection

The Advisor shall be chosen by majority vote of the Executive Board of The Black Law Students Association each year.

Section D. Advisor Replacement

If for any reason the Advisor need be replaced, the replacement shall be chose by majority vote of the Executive Board of The Black Law Students Association.

ARTICLE VI. ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP

Section A. Officer Positions

Executive Board: The power to govern shall be vested in the Executive Board (hereinafter referred to as the “Board”) of the Association.

A. Composition of the Board: The Board shall consist of the following officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Fundraising Chairperson, Social & Banquet Chairperson, Professional Development Chairperson, at least one (1) but no more than two (2)) 1L Representatives, and 3L Advisors

B. Description of Officers:

a. President: The President of the Association shall be responsible for:

1. Delivering an oral report of all Board meetings to the general body,
2. Calling and presiding over all meetings including special meetings, emergency meetings, and general body meetings,
3. Creating ad hoc committees for the Association when necessary,
4. Releasing all statements related to the Association to the general body,
5. Managing a site for the organization's elections and documents
 - a. The organization will no longer be using TWEN and will transfer elections and documents to a more accessible site, with the assistance of the Secretary.
6. Serving as a liaison between the Association and other student organizations at large (be it undergraduate or graduate),
7. Acting as Liaison between the Association and the following:
 - a. Moritz College of Law Administration, and Faculty,
 - b. Moritz College of Law Student Organization Leaders,
 - c. Faculty Advisor of the Association,
 - d. 1L Representatives,
 - e. NBLSA Midwest Regional Director, and
 - f. NBLSA National Directors
8. Executing all other duties necessary to carry out the office of the presidency.

b. Vice President: The Vice President of the Association shall be responsible for:

1. Presiding over all meetings in the absence of the President,
2. Leading General Body Meeting programming and scheduling,
3. Overseeing the 1L Reps and having check-ins with the 1Ls,
4. Being the point of contact for the school administration,
5. Overseeing a special election in the event of a vacancy in the office of the President, and serving as acting President until such election is conducted:
 - a. The special election shall be held within two (2) weeks after the vacancy,
 - b. The advisor of the Association or a Faculty member of the Moritz College of Law shall count the ballots with the Vice President who shall oversee the special election, and
 - c. The voting polls for the special election shall be open no longer than twenty-four (24) hours on the day of said election.
6. Organizing and executing events for Black History Month in conjunction with the Programming Chair,
7. Acting as compliance officer to ensure all requirements are met in order for the Association to be eligible for regional and national recognition, and
8. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President or the

Board
may assign.

- c. Treasurer: The Treasurer of the Association shall be responsible for:
1. Handling all funds and securities of this Association and ensuring they are deposited in such facility, and in such a manner, as the Board may designate,
 2. Assuring that entries are regularly made in the financial records,
 3. Accounting for all funds received and disbursed by the Association,
 4. Working with the President to create a budget allocation sheet to be shared with the next executive board,
 5. Making regular financial reports to the Board in written form that shall be attached to the minutes of all regularly scheduled Board and general body meetings,
 6. Receiving presidential approval before issuing any checks on behalf of the Association,
 7. Submitting an Association Budget for the year at the first regularly scheduled Board meeting to include:
 - a. Statement of accounts
 - b. Statement of unpaid bills with explanation,
 - c. Statement of transfers between accounts,
 - d. Statement of income,
 - e. Detailed account of how all funds were used,
 - f. Detailed account of all anticipated expenses based on future program needs, history and accounting for emergencies,
 8. Chairing a Fundraising Committee that will use discretion in all fundraising activities to ensure a monetary gain for the organization, and
 9. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President or the Board may assign.
- d. Secretary: The Secretary of this Association shall be responsible for:
1. Maintaining and distributing the minutes and agenda for all meetings of the Board and general body,
 2. Retaining a copy of the updated Constitution for the Association for each active member upon the payment of dues,
 3. Keeping record of attendance (sign-in sheets) at all BLSA activities,
 4. Providing a paper or electronic copy of Constitution upon request of an active member,
 5. Coordinating internal and external communication of information,
 6. Issuing communications requiring a response of at least thirty (30) days prior to

the time
needed to meet the deadline,

7. Calling a special election in the event of a vacancy of office,
 8. Managing all email accounts, and
 9. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President or Board may assign.
- e. Programming Chair: The Programming Chair will be responsible for:
1. Planning and executing the Soul Food Luncheon
 - a. The date for the Soul Food Luncheon should be selected over the summer and the administration should be informed to prevent conflicts.
 2. Planning Family Day and the BLSA Retreat,
 3. Assisting the Vice President in planning and executing activities for Black History Month,
 4. Planning BLSA Bootcamp
 - a. The Social Chair will plan the happy hour
 5. Monitoring the school calendar for scheduling events to avoid conflicts,
 6. Being the point of contact for any collaborations with other organizations on campus,
 7. Working in conjunction with the Vice President,
 8. Directing outside solicitation from firms, organization, and community members for the banquet (these monies would then be funneled to the Treasurer for recording purposes and collection into a separate account), and
 9. Communicating with Vice President to ensure requirements for regional/national awards are met, and
 10. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President or Board may assign.
- f. Social Chairperson: The Social Chairperson of the Association shall be responsible for:
1. Chairing a Social Committee that will host four (4) social events per semester for the Association, including but not limited to:
 - a. Spring 3L send off,
 - b. BLSA Bootcamp happy hour directly following BLSA Bootcamp,
 - c. Annual first of the year get together, and
 - d. Holiday Party (Friendsgiving / Fall Friendly Potluck)
 2. Planning at least 1 off-campus social events per month of each semester (RSVP required and the date should ideally be a consistent established day every month of the school year, unless conflicts exist eg. The First Friday of every month, but may reschedule if necessary.),
 3. Planning the UBLSA/BLSA Game Night,
 4. Ordering food for each GBM, and
 5. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President of the Board may assign.

- g. Professional Development Chairperson: The Professional Development Chairperson of the Association shall be responsible for:
 - 1. Disseminating information regarding dates and deadlines (including RSVP) for professional development, including but not limited to: OCI materials, BAR Exam applications, mock interviews, the Washington, D.C. program, the Oxford Program, professional mixers, lectures and seminars, and Judicial Clerkship information,
 - 2. Organizing meetings geared towards acclimating law students, in particular black law students, to new professional engagements, including but not limited to interviewing skills, networking, resume and cover letter writing,
 - 3. Keeping a professional employment database of summer employment and graduating black law students,
 - 4. Developing, establishing, and maintaining educational programs that will enhance and further the capabilities of minority students in the Moritz College of Law,
 - 5. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President of the Board may assign.

- h. Community Service Chair: The Community Service Chair shall be responsible for:
 - 1. Planning 1 community service opportunity per semester for the Association, including but not limited to:
 - a. Martin Luther King Day of Service
 - b. Pre-Law Shadowing Day
 - c. Canned food and/or Toy Drive
 - 2. Compiling a list of service opportunities to be shared with the general body at the beginning of each semester for individuals to serve if desired compiling,
 - 3. Ensure that our service projects align with our local chapter and Regional Community Service initiatives in conjunction with the Vice President, and
 - 4. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President of the Board may assign.

- i. 1L Representatives: The 1L Representative(s) of the Association shall be responsible for:
 - 1. Consulting with fellow first year students who are members of the Association and communicating to the Board issues and problems that the first-year students may be encountering at the Moritz College of Law,
 - 2. Creating all flyers for events the Association presents
 - 3. Updating all social media platforms with updated pictures of events the Association hosts or attends
 - 4. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President or the Board may assign.

- j. 3L Advisor: The 3L Advisor(s) of the Association shall be responsible for:
 - 1. Providing historical context and perspective to the existing board,
 - 2. Acting as a liaison to fellow third year students and encouraging their engagement

with the Association,

3. Planning a bar exam panel in the spring, with alumni panelists from the most recently graduated class who passed the bar. The purpose of the programming would be to discuss their bar prep journey with current BLSA members, specifically 3Ls. The current 3L advisor may contact the preceding 3L advisor to connect with potential panelists on the current advisor's behalf.
4. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President or the Board may assign.

C. Powers of the Executive Board: The Board shall have a general power to administer any and all programs, business projects, and matters related to the Association.

- a. The Board shall have the power to create appointed positions and committees as deemed necessary to carry out the business of the Association. Such appointed persons must be officially appointed by the President from the active membership of the Association, before assuming the position of said position.
- b. In the absence or incapacitation of the President, the Board with consent of the Vice President (who at this time would serve as acting President) shall have the power to make binding executive decisions with the province of those expressly granted to the President.
- c. The Board shall have the power to render decisions for the body in the event that a regular or special meeting of the organization may not be convened in a reasonable time to make organizational decisions in cases of emergency.
 - i. Such decisions are voidable by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the total active members.
 - ii. If Board cannot be convened, the President is empowered to make such emergency decisions, and such decisions are voidable by a simple majority of the Executive Board.
- d. Pursuant to Article VII (B) of this Constitution, the Board shall have the power to discipline any general body member who prevents the Association from exercising the Purpose outlined in Article III.
- e. Pursuant to Article VII I of this Constitution, the Board shall have the power to discipline any officer who is negligent in the discharge of his or her duties to the Association or prevents the Association from exercising the Purpose outlined in Article III.
- f. Board approval is defined as an affirmative simple majority vote by the Board members.

D. Term of Office: The elected Officers shall hold office from a term of one (1) academic year.

- a. A term of office shall commence twenty-four (24) hours after elections are completed for new officers.
- b. A term of office shall terminate twenty-four (24) hours after elections are completed for new officers.
- c. All outgoing officers shall assist in the new administration's transition for one month after elections are completed.
- d. No officer shall serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.
- e. If an officer was elected during a special election, or appointed by the President, said officer will hold office until the next general election.

E. Duties of the Executive Board: In addition to the Board's duty to develop and encourage the Purpose of the Association in Article III, the Board shall:

- a. Attend each Board meeting and submit an oral report to be recorded by the Secretary. If a Board member is unable to attend, he or she must submit a written report to the President or the President's designees at least twenty-four (24) hours before the scheduled meeting.
 1. All expected absences not communicated to any Board member are considered unexcused and subject to disciplinary action unless decided otherwise by the Board.
- b. Notify the general body and Board of any prospective meeting at least one (1) week in advance to the desired meeting date and time.
- c. *Officer Transitional Meeting*: Each outgoing officer shall add on to an existing or make a complete and final status report to the incoming Board at the Officer Transitional Meeting to be held during the third week of April. This report should list:
 1. Accomplishments,
 2. Location of materials relevant to the respective office, and
 3. A description of all unfinished materials, assignments, and event planning.
- d. The outgoing Board shall turn over all pertinent paperwork, reports, information, financial records, and money to the incoming Board by the end of the third complete week of April. Each Board officer shall prepare a neat and orderly folder or binder complete with all this information to turn over to their respective successor at the Officer Transitional Meeting.
 - 1.

Such paperwork, reports, information, and records must be prepared and ready for delivery to the newest board members by the day of the general elections

Section B. Officer Eligibility

To be an Executive Officer, an individual must be enrolled in the Moritz College of Law and have paid dues for that year.

Section C. Officer Selection Process

Election of Officers:

- A. Nominations: All nominations for the offices of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Community Service Chairperson, Programming Chairperson(s), Community Service Chairperson, Social Chairperson, 3L advisor(s), and the Professional Development Chairperson shall be confirmed at a special meeting no later than five (5) days prior to the end of the first week in April.
 - A. A nominee shall not be a candidate for more than one office.
 - B. No write-in candidates shall be accepted during this nomination period.
 - C. The last day of the nomination period shall be on the day of elections.
- B. Elections: Elections for the offices of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Social Chairperson, Professional Development Chairperson, Community Service Chair, Programming Chair and the 3L Advisor(s) shall be held before the end of the second week in April.
 - A. Elections shall be conducted by the President unless the President is running for an office, in which case it shall be conducted by a Board member not running for an office, the advisor of the Association, or a faculty member of the Moritz College of Law.
 - A. Votes shall be casted by a secret ballot electronically

- B. All opposed and unopposed officers shall be elected by a simple majority of active voting members.
 - C. Along with the President, the advisor of the Association or a faculty member of the Moritz College of Law shall be responsible for counting ballots and posting results of the election.
- B. Elections for the offices of 1L representatives shall be held before the end of the second week of October.
- A. Elections shall be conducted by the President.
 - B. Candidates are determined on a voluntary basis.
 - C. Candidates must be active members of their class.
 - D. Along with the President, the advisor of the Association or a faculty member of the Moritz College of Law shall be responsible for counting ballots and posting results of the election.

C. Installation of Officers:

- A. New officers shall assume office twenty-four (24) hours after the final counting and verification of ballots cast.
- B. In the event that there are no nominations for an office or a candidate does NOT receive a simple majority of active voting members, the highest elected officer shall appoint or accept a volunteer, who shall have all the duties and power of an elected officer, for the vacant office.

Section D. Officer Removal

1. The Association is empowered to create and enforce rules that require its members and officers to refrain from conduct that may injure the Association.
2. The Association shall enforce any action necessary to discipline any general body member or officer who prevents the Association from exercising the purposes outlined in Article II.

A. Impeachment:

- a. Any member of the Board may be impeached by the Association for failure to execute the duties as enumerated in the Constitution of the Association.
- b. To impeach a member of the Board, charges against that member must be filed in writing with the President. If such impeachment is against the President then the Vice President shall serve as the presiding party. Such charges must be listed and signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the active members of the Association.
- c. Once charges have been brought against a Board member, the Board shall establish a date at which a hearing before the full body shall be convened.
 1. The President shall have the duty of scheduling the impeachment hearing.
 - a. If the President is being charged, the Vice President will be responsible for such scheduling duties.
 2. Such hearing shall not be called less than seven (7) days after notification to the accused officer, and not more than twenty-one (21) days after said notification.
 3. The President and advisor of the Association (or faculty member of the

Moritz College of Law), shall preside over such hearing.

4. At such hearing, the accused party shall have an opportunity to defend him or herself against said charges.
- d. At the conclusion of such hearing, the active members of the Association shall vote whether to impeach or dismiss charges against the accused officer.
- e. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active members of the Association shall be required in order to impeach an officer.

ARTICLE VII. ORGANIZATION DISSOLUTION

Section A. Dissolution Requirements

Dissolution shall occur by majority vote of the current Executive Board of The Black Law Students Association with approval from current Advisor.

Section B. Dissolution Procedures, including Assets and Debts

All assets and debts must be turned over to the Moritz College of Law in the case of Dissolution.

ARTICLE VIII. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Section A. Amendment Process

- A. Adoption: The Constitution shall be adopted by a simple majority vote the active members of the Board.
- B. Amendments: The Constitution may be amended provided:
 - a. Written copies of proposed amendments are submitted to the Board with a reasonable amount of time prior to voting.
 - b. The active member proposing the amendment shall have one-third (1/3) of the Board both:
 1. In attendance at a Board meeting of the Association, and
 2. Concurring as to the desirability of such an amendment.
- C. Any constitutional amendment shall be passed and approved by no less than a simple majority of present Board members of the Association at a Board meeting.
- D. All amendments shall be labeled “Amendment (insert respective roman numeral)” and shall appear within this same document following Article X. Furthermore, the date of the Amendment’s enactment shall be included following the text of said Amendment.