

### **What is a constitution?**

A constitution contains the fundamental principles that outline the purpose, structure, and limits of an organization. Essentially, the constitution provides a foundation upon which an organization operates.

### **Why are student organizations required to have a Constitution?**

A student organization constitution: • Clarifies the purpose of the organization and outlines the basic structure of the organization • Provides the cornerstone for building an effective organization/group • Allows members and potential members to have a better understanding of what the organization is all about and how it functions.

### **What are Bylaws?**

Bylaws are secondary principles that govern the internal affairs of an organization. Bylaws are essentially an expansion of the articles or sections of the constitution. They describe in detail the procedures and steps the organization must follow in order to conduct business effectively and efficiently.

### **Why are student organizations required to have Bylaws?**

Bylaws, can be helpful in the organization's operations. The constitution covers the fundamental principles but does not provide specific procedures for operating your organization. Bylaws should set forth in detail the procedures your group must follow to conduct business in an orderly manner. They provide further definition to the provisions contained in the constitution and can be changed more easily as the needs of the organization change.

### **Constitution Checklist:**

- Article 1 – Name of organization
- Article 2 – Purpose of organization
- Article 3 – Authority
- Article 4 – Membership
- Article 5 – Officers
- Article 6 – Meetings
- Article 7 – University Advisor
- Article 8 – Discipline
- Article 9 – Amendments and Ratification

### **Bylaws Checklist:**

- Article 1 – Officers
- Article 2 – Powers and duties of officers
- Article 3 – Qualifications to hold office
- Article 4 – Elections

- \_\_\_ Article 5 – Executive Board/Committee
- \_\_\_ Article 6 – University Advisor(s)
- \_\_\_ Article 7 – Meetings/Voting
- \_\_\_ Article 8 – Discipline of Members
- \_\_\_ Article 9 – Non Hazing Clause
- \_\_\_ Article 10 – Impeachment
- \_\_\_ Article 11 – Vacancy of Office
- \_\_\_ Article 12 – Amendments

**CONSTITUTION for the Undergraduate Black Law Students Association at  
The Ohio State University**

**ARTICLE I NAME**

Section 1: The name of this organization shall be the **Undergraduate Black Law Students Association (UBLSA)** at the **Ohio State University**.

**ARTICLE II PURPOSE**

Section 1: The purpose of this organization is to *promote respect and support for all students, particularly students who are underrepresented in the student body, and to advocate for diversity and inclusion in the law school community and in the legal profession. In pursuing this mission, UBLSA strives to promote academic excellence and to provide the tools and resources necessary for students to expand their professional network within the legal field and to prepare students and aid them in their law school application process.*

The specific goals of UBLSA are :

1. *to promote and assist in the attainment of the academic needs and goals of racially and ethnically diverse pre-law students*
2. *to articulate and promote the professional needs and goals of racially and ethnically diverse pre-law students*
3. *to foster and encourage professional competence*
4. *To focus on the relationship of the racially and ethnically diverse attorney in the American legal structure*
5. *To instill in the racially and ethnically diverse pre-law student a greater awareness of and commitment to the needs of the greater community*

**ARTICLE III AUTHORITY**

Section 1: This organization is a recognized student organization at The Ohio State University and adheres to all campus policies as set forth in The Ohio State University Code of Student Conduct and the Ohio State University Student Organization Policies and Guidelines.

Section 2: This organization will establish bylaws to govern administrative and procedural matters (such as time and location of meetings, etc.). Bylaws shall not conflict with this constitution. Bylaws may be adopted, amended, or temporarily suspended by a majority vote

present at an organization meeting where a quorum is present (5 day advance notice is required).

#### ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Membership shall be open only to Ohio State University Undergraduate College students however everyone is welcome to attend the general body meetings and events offered by UBLSA.

Section 2 Eligibility for membership or appointed or elected student officer positions may not be limited on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability. The organization shall have no rules or policies that discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, color, age, gender, gender identity, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or disability.

#### Article V OFFICERS

Section 1 The required minimum number of officers for the Undergraduate Black Law Students Association shall be a PRESIDENT, VICE- PRESIDENT, SECRETARY AND TREASURER. The board may vote to establish additional positions at its discretion such as; PUBLICIST, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR, and PROGRAM DIRECTOR. There can be no more than 7 executive officers.

Section 2 In order to run for office in UBLSA, members must have a minimum cumulative grade point average (g.p.a) of 3.0.

Section 3 While in office officers must maintain a 3.0 GPA and must not have below 3.0 for more than one semester.

Section 4 Officers must be a matriculated student and be in good standing with his or her college.

Section 5 All officers serve for a term of ONE (1) YEAR or until their successors shall be duly elected and qualified. All officers are required to train their successors and pass along any information pertinent to the position being filled.

Section 6 Any officer who, during the term of his/her office, ceases to be a voting member, or fails to maintain his/ her status as a matriculating undergraduate/graduate (exception University organizations) student maintaining a 3.0 g.p.a., in good academic and disciplinary standing with their respective college, shall be removed from his/her office and a replacement shall be elected.

## Article VI MEETINGS

Section 1: Regular meetings shall be held weekly during the academic year. Meeting day, time and location shall be decided by unanimous majority vote of the executive board. (*suggestion: traditionally meetings are held every Wednesday at 6:30 pm in the Hale Hall Hall of Fame Room*)

Section 2: Special meetings may be called by the President or a majority of the Executive Committee. All members must be given a minimum of 24 hours' notice prior to the meeting time.

Section 3: Business cannot be conducted unless a quorum of the membership is present. A quorum for this organization is defined as a majority of the voting membership.

Section 4 Members must be present to vote.

Section 5 In order to vote, a member must be in good standing. "Good standing" constitutes having met the meeting attendance requirement, academic requirement, and the expectations outlined in the UBLSA Honor Code.

## ARTICLE VII UNIVERSITY ADVISOR(S)

Section 1 The Undergraduate Black Law Students Association shall have a University Advisor who will be a full- or part-time member of the University faculty, staff, or administration. The advisor will fulfill the responsibilities specified in the Ohio State University Student Organization Advisor Handbook. Advisors shall serve on an academic year basis or until their successor has been selected.

## ARTICLE VIII DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

Section 1 All members of the Undergraduate Black Law Students Association are expected to uphold the rules and regulations of the Ohio State University Student Code of Conduct and adhere to the policies and procedures set forth in the Ohio State University's Student Organization Policies. Additionally, members are expected to uphold the values agreed to in the UBLSA Honor Code.

Section 2 Members that violate the Student Code of Conduct, the Student Organization policies, or the UBLSA Honor Code may face disciplinary action at the discretion of the Executive Board by  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote.

Section 3: A violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the Student Organization policies, or the UBLSA Honor Code is grounds for sanctions up to suspension or expulsion from the organization, or retroactive revocation of the title of Alumna/use of the organization. Any sanction may be initially recommended by the organization leadership to the Executive Board,

and after notice and opportunity for a brief hearing, action may be initiated by the President, without such notice, depending on the facts and circumstances. Thereafter, the defendant can be reprimanded by sanctions up to and including expulsion if after review, it is determined that a violation has occurred. After a recommendation for sanctions has been given by the organization Executive Board the defendant may not attend any future UBLSA events until the matter has come to a close. After sanctions have been issued, the defendant may make a final appeal to the President of UBLSA to review the decision at his or her discretion with board final approval.

#### ARTICLE V AMENDMENTS

Section 1 Proposed amendments to this constitution shall be presented to the Executive Board in writing, one meeting prior to the meeting where the amendment will be voted upon.

Section 2 Constitution amendments require approval by two-thirds of the voting members present at a regular board meeting. The amendment shall be effective immediately unless otherwise stipulated in the amendment.

**Bylaws of the Undergraduate Black Law Students Association at  
The Ohio State University**

Section I The required minimum number of officers for the Undergraduate Black Law Students Association shall be a PRESIDENT, VICE- PRESIDENT, SECRETARY AND TREASURER. The board may vote to establish additional positions at its discretion such as; PUBLICIST, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR, and PROGRAM DIRECTOR. There can be no more than 7 executive officers.

Section II Powers and Duties of Officers:

- a. The President shall serve as the chief executive officer of the organization, shall preside at all meetings of the organization and shall prepare the agenda for meetings. The President shall have other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the organization. The President shall participate in the yearly President's Training offered by the Student Life Office.
- b. The Vice President shall preside at organization meetings in the absence of the President. The Vice President shall perform all legal duties assigned by the President. The Vice President shall assume the office of President if the office becomes vacant.
- c. The Treasurer shall handle all financial affairs and budgeting of the organization, maintain all necessary accounting records, and prepare financial reports. The Treasurer shall collect all and revenue and submit it to the Director of Student Life for deposit. The Treasurer shall work with the Director of Student Life to maintain the finances of the organization. The Treasurer shall participate in the yearly Treasurer's Training offered by the Student Life Office.
- d. The Secretary shall take minutes at all meetings of the organization, keep these on file, and submit copies to organization members upon request. The Secretary shall be responsible for all organization correspondence and shall keep copies on file. The Secretary shall maintain membership records for the organization.
- e. Duties of any additional elected or appointed officers are determined by Executive Board discretion and organization needs.

Section III Qualifications necessary to hold office in the Undergraduate Black Law Students Association are as follows:

- a. The Ohio State University's policies require that to be eligible for office, candidates must be in good academic and disciplinary standing and regularly enrolled students at the University. Additionally, students must have at least a 3.0 g.p.a and agree to the UBLSA Honor Code to be eligible to hold an office.

b. No member may hold more than one office. No member may serve more than two years in the same office.

#### Section IV Elections

a. Elections are held near the end of spring semester and shall take place at a regularly scheduled meeting of the organization at which a quorum is present. At least one week's notice shall be provided for any meeting at which an election is to be held.

b. Nominations for officers shall be made at the regular meeting immediately preceding the election. Nominations may also be made from the floor immediately prior to the election for each office. Members may nominate themselves for an office.

c. Officers shall be elected by majority vote. If no candidate receives a majority vote, a runoff election shall be held between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes.

d. Votes shall be cast by secret ballot; however, when there is only one candidate for an office, a motion may be made to elect the candidate.

#### Section V Executive Board/Committee

a. The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected and appointed officers, with the advisor(s) serving as non-voting member(s).

b. The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the organization between meetings and is authorized to take action when action must be taken prior to the next meeting.

c. The Executive Committee shall report to the membership all actions taken between meetings. Except when it is too late to do so (such as when a contract has been executed), any actions taken by the Executive Committee may be rescinded or modified by the membership by a majority vote.

#### Section VI University Advisor(s)

a. The advisor shall fulfill the responsibilities specified in the Ohio State University Student Organizations Handbook. Advisors shall serve on an academic year basis or until their successor has been selected.

b. The advisor shall participate in the Student Life Advisor training/recertification process yearly.



## Section VII Meetings and Voting

- a. Regular meetings shall be held weekly during the academic year. Meeting day, time and location shall be decided by unanimous majority vote of the executive board. (*suggestion: traditionally meetings are held every Wednesday at 6:30 pm in the Hale Hall Hall of Fame Room*)
- b. Special meetings may be called by the President or a majority of the Executive Committee. All members must be given a minimum of 24 hours notice prior to the meeting time.
- c. Business cannot be conducted unless a quorum of the membership is present. A quorum for this organization is defined as a majority of the voting membership.
- d. Members must be present to vote. Absentee or proxy voting is not permitted.
- e. In order to vote a member must be in good standing.(Outlined in the Constitution)

## Section VIII Discipline of members

- a. When a member believes that another member has engaged in conduct that is detrimental to the organization, a conversation should be held with either the Organization Adviser or the Executive Board Members.
- b. If warranted, a written charge may be filed with the Director of Student Life. The Director of Student Life shall review the charge(s) and may conduct a preliminary investigation if deemed appropriate. If the preliminary investigation concludes that misconduct appears to have occurred, the Director of Student Life work with the Executive Committee to determine if any sanctions are warranted. Possible sanctions may include expulsion, suspension, or lesser sanction(s) including, but not limited to, a reprimand, removal from office, a fine or other corrective remedies.
- c. A violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the Student Organization policies, or the UBLSA Honor Code is grounds for sanctions up to suspension or expulsion from the organization, or retroactive revocation of the title of Alumna/use of the organization. Any sanction may be initially recommended by the organization leadership to the Executive Board, and after notice and opportunity for a brief hearing, action may be initiated by the President, without such notice, depending on the facts and circumstances. Thereafter, the defendant can be reprimanded by sanctions up to and including expulsion if after review, it is determined that a violation has occurred. After a recommendation for sanctions has been given by the organization Executive Board the defendant may not attend any future UBLSA events until the matter has come to a close. After sanctions have been issued, the defendant may make a final appeal to the President of UBLSA to review the decision at his or her discretion with board final approval.

### Section IX Non-Hazing Clause

- a. The laws of the state of Ohio concerning hazing shall be observed.
- b. Hazing shall be defined as participating in or allowing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act that creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person. A forced or coerced activity shall also be considered hazing when the initiation or administration into, or continued affiliation with, a university organization is directly or indirectly conditional upon performing the activity. In no event shall the willingness of an individual to participate in such an activity serve as defense in cases of hazing.
- c. Actions and activities, which are explicitly prohibited, include, but shall not be limited to the following:
  - i. Any activity that creates a substantial risk of physical or mental harm.
  - ii. Paddling, beating, or hitting individuals.
  - iii. Wearing anything designed to be degrading or to cause discomfort.
  - iv. Depriving individuals of the opportunity to obtain a minimum of six hours of sleep per day, proper and adequate means, or access to means, of maintaining body cleanliness.
  - v. Activities that interfere with an individual's academic efforts by causing exhaustion or loss of reasonable study time.

### Section X Impeachment

#### **ANY MEMBER MAY INITIATE OFFICERS REMOVAL BY THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE.**

- a. Petition Executive Board with signatures of 1/3 of all voting members petition should state reason for removal.
- b. Executive Board shall then notify officers and call for removal vote within fourteen days of the filing of the petition.
- c. Memberships shall be notified at least one week prior to removal vote meeting.
- d. At the meeting for removal, the petition's stated grievances shall be made public and the officer charged shall be allowed to respond to the charges of the petition.
- e. Removal from office shall require a vote of 2/3 of all voting members.

### Section XI Vacancy of Office

- a. In case of resignation or removal of any officer, an interim acting officer shall be appointed by the Executive Board.
- b. The President shall call for an election within fourteen days after vacancy of any office.

c. Elections shall be conducted as stated in the bylaws.

d. Should the office of President become vacant, the Vice-President should complete the President's unexpired term and call for an election for Vice-President consistent with elections process set forth in the bylaws.

#### Section XII Amendments

a. Proposed amendments to these bylaws shall be presented to the membership, in writing, one meeting prior to the meeting where the amendment will be voted upon. [Optional]: The Executive Committee and/or Bylaws Committee shall review and make recommendations on all bylaw revisions prior to consideration by the membership.

b. Bylaw amendments require approval by two-thirds of the voting members present at a regular meeting. The amendment shall be effective immediately unless otherwise stipulated in the amendment.

These bylaws were adopted on \_\_\_\_\_ and most recently revised on \_\_\_\_\_