**MIDDLE EASTERN LAW STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

**CONSTITUTION**

***Article I: Name, Purpose and Non-Discrimination Policy of the Organization.***

**Section 1: Name:** The name of the organization shall be Middle Eastern Law Students Association (MELSA).

**Section 2: Purpose:** The Middle Eastern Law Student Association at Moritz works with the primary goal of fostering an inclusive environment for students of Middle Eastern and their allies interested in Middle East culture and legal affairs. The purpose of this organization is to create a space for students to share and celebrate their cultures, speak freely on legal, social, and political topics in the region and beyond, and connect with Middle Eastern attorneys in the community.

The Middle Eastern Law Student Association plans to hold various events throughout the year, ranging from discussions and symposiums, to lunches and cultural activities. MELSA will work to cultivate companionship and open dialogues with students of all backgrounds, and warmly welcomes all law students to participate.

**Section 3: Non-Discrimination Policy**:  MELSA is **not** affiliated with a specific religion or country and does **not** require members to be of Middle Eastern descent. MELSA does not discriminate 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 bases under the law, in its activities, programs, admission, and employment.

As a student organization at The Ohio State University, the Middle Eastern Law Student Association expects its members to conduct themselves in a manner that maintains an environment free from sexual misconduct. All members are responsible for adhering to University Policy 1.15, which can be found here: [*https://hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/policy115.pdf*](https://hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/policy115.pdf)

If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at [*http://titleIX.osu.edu*](http://titleix.osu.edu) or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleIX@osu.edu.

***Article II: Membership: Qualifications and Eligibility Criteria***

**Section 1: Membership**: Membership will be open to anyone who is enrolled at the Ohio State University who is (1) a law student, or (2) a graduate or professional student with a strong interest in the legal and political affairs of the Middle East.

Members of MELSA will be given the opportunity to connect with other Moritz students of Middle Eastern descent, as well as allies who are interested in learning more about, and discussing, aspects of Middle Eastern law, politics, and culture. Additionally, Students will network with fellow Middle Eastern-American lawyers and explore the importance of diversity in the United States legal sector. Finally, MELSA members will participate in seminars, workshops and lectures on Middle East foreign relations, current events and professional development.

As required by the guidelines for student organizations, 90% of the membership of a student organization must include current Ohio State University students. Active members and Executive Board members are able to make decisions regarding the membership of the community and other non-student members of an organization. Community or other non-student members may be temporarily suspended with a majority vote of the Executive Board.

**Section 2: Dues and Collection Procedures:** MELSA’s fiscal year shall be from August 1st through July 31st. The amount of annual dues shall be determined prior to August 1st for the following year. Dues shall not exceed $**20**, but will be decided on a year-by-year basis.

The disbursement of dues shall not be based on religious or political beliefs, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, ancestry, disability, pregnancy, or marital/parental status.

***Article III: Methods for Removing Members and Executive Officers***

**Section 1:** **Grounds for Removal or Replacement:** If a member engages in behavior that is detrimental to advancing the purpose of this organization, violates the organization’s constitution or by-laws, or violates the Code of Student Conduct, university policy, or federal, state or local law, the member may be removed through a majority vote of the officers in consultation with the organization’s advisor.

Any elected officer of the chapter may be removed from their position for cause. Cause for removal includes, but is not limited to: violation of the constitution, failure to perform duties, or any behavior that is detrimental to advancing the purpose of this organization, including violations of the Student Code of Conduct, university policy, or federal, state, or local laws. The Executive Committee may act for removal upon a two-thirds affirmative vote of the executive board in consultation with the organization’s advisor.

In the event that the reason for member removal is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or cannot otherwise be shared with members (e.g., while an investigation is pending), the executive board, in consultation with the organization’s advisor, may vote to temporarily suspend a member or executive officer. Upon removal of said member, the executive board will appoint a replacement.

**Section 2: Voting Procedure**: In the event that a MELSA officer has taken action that is grounds for removal, an in-person vote shall take place among the entire membership. A vote of two-thirds will be required to reach a majority. Only members of good standing may vote. Proxy voting may be allowed via email under the supervision of the organization advisor or the Assistant Dean of Students.

***Article IV: Organization Leadership***

**Section 1: The Executive Board:** MELSA’s Executive Board shall include a President, Vice President, Secretary, Community Service Chair, three 1L Representatives, and an Academic Chair/2L Ambassador. These positions will be considered the organization officers. All officers **must be** members of MELSA **and** Moritz law students. All officers must cooperate with one another and work closely to ensure that MELSA’s goals are met. Those chosen to hold the positions of President, Vice President, or Secretary may only have a maximum of two positions per person, per year.

**Section 2: The President**:

1. The President shall be the chief executive officer.
2. The President shall guide MELSA toward the realization of its purpose and objectives.
3. The President shall direct and coordinate administrative and organizational matters.
4. The President shall act as a liaison between the students of the organization and the College of Law administration and faculty.
5. The President, with the help of the Vice President and the approval of the Executive Board, shall direct the budget.
6. The President shall create ad hoc committees for the organization as necessary.
7. The President shall report the result of all elections no more than 24 hours after a vote.
8. Vacancies in offices will be filled by appointment by the President, with approval of the Executive Board by a majority vote.
9. The President will keep and have available updated copies of the constitution and bylaws.

**Section 3: The Vice President**

1. The Vice President shall assist the President with administrative and organizational matters, such as keeping minutes for all meetings and tracking membership status. The Vice President will maintain a master file of the meeting minutes for distribution to the officers.
2. The Vice President shall, with the President, monitor MELSA’s operation and schedule to ensure the timely completion of tasks and events.
3. The Vice President, with the President, shall coordinate communication with the Executive Board.
4. The Vice President shall, with the President, organize plans for general events/activities of the year. The Vice President will work directly with the Events Chair to ensure the performance and completion of plans and events.
5. The Vice President shall oversee the election process each term, and may appoint a neutral MELSA member for assistance.
6. The Vice President shall direct and coordinate the execution of general events and activities of the year, including the promotion of said events and activities.
7. The Vice President shall ensure the performance and completion of the plans.
8. The Vice President shall create and maintain social media accounts on behalf of MELSA.
9. The Vice President shall perform other duties as directed by the President and Vice President, and as approved by the Board.

**Section 4: The Secretary**

1. The Secretary shall keep a current record of all financial transactions.
2. The Secretary shall develop quarterly reports containing a list of all receipts and disbursements and distribute them among the membership.
3. The Secretary will oversee all fundraising events and use direction in all such activities to ensure monetary gain for the organization.
4. The Secretary will be responsible for checking the accuracy of all bills and invoices and making payments on behalf of the group correctly and on time.
5. The Secretary will perform other duties as directed by the President and Vice President, and as approved by the Executive Board.

**Section 5: Academic Chair**

1. The Academic Chair shall be responsible for organizing academic support services and distributing study aids and materials among the membership.
2. The Academic Chair shall maintain an updated list of outlines to be shared with the membership each term.

**Section 6: Community Service Chair**

1. The Community Service Chair shall direct and coordinate the execution of community service related events and activities of the year.
2. The Community Service Chair shall seek out volunteer opportunities for MELSA members.
3. The Community Service Chair shall ensure performance and completion of the plans for community service related events of the year.
4. The Community Service Chair will perform other duties as directed by the President and Vice President, and as approved by the Board.

**Section 7: 1L Representatives**

1. Three 1L Representatives will be chosen, or one from each section: Scarlet, Grey, and Buckeye.
2. The 1L Representative shall represent MELSA to the 1L class and address concerns by the class to members of the 1L class to the Board.
3. The 1L Representative will act as liaison between MELSA and the 1L class to announce events and workshops.

**Section 8: 2L Ambassador**

1. The 2L Ambassador shall provide a historical perspective of the organization to the existing Board.
2. The 2L Representative shall act as a liaison to fellow second and third year students and encourage engagement with MELSA.
3. The 2L Ambassador will promote MELSA through networking and social events.

***Article V: Election/Selection of Organization Leadership***

**Section 1: Officer Terms:** The term of office for all positions shall be from election to office through the election for the following year, or graduation if sooner. Election of officers shall be held **annually**. Notice shall be given at least one month before the election meeting. Nominations shall be initiated from email and elections done by a ballot during the final week of March. The person receiving a simple majority vote will be elected. No officer shall serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

**Section 2: Officer Transitions**: The term of office for a newly elected officer shall commence 24 hours after elections are completed. All outgoing officers shall assist in the new administration’s transition for one month after elections are completed.

**Section 3: Officer Vacancies:** Any vacancy of an officer position which may occur in an office shall be filled by appointment by the President, pending ratification by the majority of the Executive Board. Where vacancies occur in an office, all officers of the Executive Board shall work together to accomplish performance of duties of the unfilled positions. If an officer was elected during a special election, or appointed by the President, said officer will hold office until the next general election.

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 President, or highest elected officer, shall appoint or accept a volunteer, who shall have all the duties and power of the officer of the vacant position.

***Article VII: Advisor: Qualification Criteria***

The Advisor shall be a faculty member at Moritz. The Advisor shall be responsible for providing guidance to the organization and working with the Vice President and Treasurer to ensure transparency.

***Article VIII: Meeting and events of the Organization: Required meetings and their frequency***

One general meeting will occur monthly. The Executive Board shall determine the times for regularly scheduled meetings. Notice shall be given at least one week prior to each regular business meeting. The Executive Board may call special or emergency meetings with less than 24 hours notice.

For MELSA events, attendance at all or 50% of events hosted may be required for membership each academic term, except for summer. The Board shall determine event attendance.

***Article IX: Attendees of Events of the Organization: Required events and their frequency***

The organization reserves the right to address member or event attendee behavior where the member or event attendee’s behavior is disruptive or otherwise not in alignment with the organization’s constitution.

***Article X: Method of Amending Constitution: Proposals, notice, and voting requirements***

Any proposed amendments should be presented to the organization in writing and should not be acted upon when initially introduced. Upon initial introduction, the proposed amendments should be read in the general meeting, and then read again at a subsequent general meeting. The amendment will be read a final time at the general meeting in which the votes will be taken, and will require a two-thirds majority of voting members of the entire voting membership of the organization, present or not. The constitution should not be amended easily or frequently.