

CONSTITUTION

Black Law Students Association

The Ohio State University Michael E. Moritz College of Law 55 W. 12 Avenue, Columbus, OH
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ARTICLE I. NAME

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. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL AFFILIATION

This chapter is a part of the National Black Law Students Association (hereinafter referred to as “NBLSA”) and the Mid-West Region and Sub-Region 1 as stated in the Midwest Regional Bylaws. As a part of the Midwest Region, this chapter shall abide by Article II, Section 2 of the Midwest Regional Bylaws.

ARTICLE III. 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 black law students;
 - b. Encourage and foster professional competence;
 - c. Strengthen the relationship between the black law student and the practicing black jurist;
 - d. Instill in the black legal community a greater awareness and commitment to the needs of the black community as a whole;
 - e. 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 black community;
 - f. Adopt and implement a policy of economic independence;
 - g. Influence black students to pursue careers in the judiciary; and
 - h. 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 minority students in enrolling and graduating from law school;

- c. Provide minority students with information about law school such as financial assistance and curriculum alternatives
- d. Prepare an adequate orientation program for new minority students; and
- e. Develop and promote a sense of unity among members of the Association.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

A. Eligibility for Active Membership:

- a. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. Rights of Inactive Members:

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

ARTICLE V. EXECUTIVE BOARD

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

B. 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

C. 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 meeting 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 the TWEN site,
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. 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:
3. The special election shall be held within two (2) weeks after the vacancy,
4. 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
5. The voting polls for the special election shall be open no longer than twenty-four (24) hours on the day of said election
6. Acting as compliance officer to ensure all requirements are met in order for the Association to be eligible for regional and national recognition,
7. Organizing and executing events for Black History Month, 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. 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,

5. Receiving presidential approval before issuing any checks on behalf of the Association,
 6. 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,
 7. Chairing a Fundraising Committee that will use discretion in all fundraising activities to ensure a monetary gain for the organization, and
 8. 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 ^[SEP] 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. Organizing and updating the bulletin board of the Association,
 6. Coordinating internal and external communication of information,
 7. Issuing communications requiring a response of at least thirty (30) days prior to the time needed to meet the deadline,
 8. Posting correspondence and other notices on the bulletin boards in the Associations' lounge and on the wall near the lockers,
 9. Calling a special election in the event of a vacancy of office,
 10. Managing all email accounts, and
 11. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President or Board may assign.
- e. Programing Chair: The Programing Chair will be responsible for:
1. Planning and executing the Soul Food Luncheon
 2. Organizing and Preparing the annual Spring Banquet. Duties include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Choosing and contracting with the facility, caterer, speaker, and entertainment for the event,

3. Working in conjunction with the Vice President,
 4. 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
 5. Assisting the Vice President in planning and executing activities for Black History Month,
 6. Communicating with Vice President to ensure requirements for regional/national awards are met, and
 7. 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 are not limited to:
 - a. Spring 3L send off,
 - b. First Year orientation in conjunction with the Board,
 - c. Annual first of the year get together, and
 - d. Holiday Party.
 2. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President of the Board may assign.
- ii.
- 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-6-8 community service opportunities per semester for the

Association, including but not limited to:

- a. Moritz Day of Service
 - b. Pre-Law Shadowing Day
 - c. Canned food and/or Toy Drive
2. Ensure that our service projects align with our local chapter and Regional Community Service initiatives in conjunction with the Vice President, and
 3. 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. Performing other functions and exercising further duties as the President or the Board may assign.

D. Election of Officers:

- a. Nominations: All nominations for the offices of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Community Service Chairperson, Programming Chairperson(s), ~~Vice Programming Chairperson~~, Community Service Chairperson, Social Chairperson, 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.
 - i. A nominee shall not be a candidate for more than one office
 - ii. No write-in candidates shall be accepted during this nomination period.
 - iii. 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.
 - i. 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.

1. Votes shall be casted by a secret ballot on TWEN.
 2. All opposed and unopposed officers shall be elected by a simple majority of active voting members.
 3. 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.
- ii. Elections for the offices of 1L representatives shall be held before the end of the second week of October.
1. Elections shall be conducted by the President.
 2. Candidates are determined on a voluntary basis.
 3. Candidates must be active members of 1L class.
 4. 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:

1. New officers shall assume office twenty-four (24) hours after the final counting and verification of ballots cast.
2. 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.

E. 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 (C) 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.

F. 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.

G. 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 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

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

- A. Executive Board Meetings: The Board shall meet at least once every month. a. Additional meetings may be scheduled at the President's discretion.
- B. General Body Meetings: The General Body shall meet at least once every month.
 - a. Additional meetings may be scheduled at the President's discretion.

ARTICLE VII. DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

- A. The Association is empowered to create and enforce rules that require its members and officers to refrain from conduct that may injure the Association.
- B. 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.
- C. 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 VIII. CONSTITUTION ADOPTION & AMENDMENTS

- 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.

ARTICLE IX. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Association and its members shall not discriminate against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined by age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

ARTICLE X. EFFECTIVE DATE

- A. Effective Date. This Constitution and its accompanying amendments shall take effect twenty-four (24) hours after ratification by a majority of the voting members.
- B. This Constitution was ratified by a majority of the voting members on October 20, 1976 at 6:00 p.m., and thereby, became effective on October 21, 1976, at 6:00 p.m. Amended 1982, 1985, 2001, 2003, 2005. Reorganized and amended on May 29, 2012 at 11:00 p.m. Amended March 4, 2019 at 12:25pm. (/s/ Yohana Mihreteab, President the 2018-2019 academic year).
- C. This Constitution was ratified by a majority of the voting members on October 20, 1976 at 6:00 p.m., and thereby, became effective on October 21, 1976, at 6:00 p.m. Amended 1982, 1985, 2001, 2003, 2005. Reorganized and amended on May 29, 2012 at 11:00 p.m. Amended on April 9, 2017 at 12:30 p.m. Amended on March 6, 2019 at 12:06 p.m.