

BLACK AMERICAN LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

UNIVERSITY OF AKRON CHAPTER

PREAMBLE

We, the students of The University of Akron Chapter of the Black American Law Students Association, in order to form a more perfect brotherhood and sisterhood, provide for the common interest, promote the general welfare, and secure the bond of unity to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution.

Article I

Name and Purpose

1 – Name – This organization shall be called the Black American Law Students Association if The University of Akron, School of Law. The organization is an affiliate of the Regional and National bodies of the same name.

2 – Purpose – The purposes and objectives of this association, which are correlated to those of the national body, shall be to advance the welfare and interests of Black and other minorities by:

1. Providing minority students with information about law school, e.g. financial assistance and curriculum alternatives
2. Preparing an adequate orientation program for new minority students
3. Developing a sense of unity among the members of the organization.

Article II

Government

1 – Officers – The power to govern shall be vested in five (5) officers:

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Treasurer
4. Recording Secretary
5. Corresponding Secretary

who shall hold office and discharge their duties as prescribed herein.

2 – Committees – There shall be the following standing committee:

1. The Executive Board

All other committees shall be formed during the course of the year.

(2A) Composition of Standing Committee

(2A1) The Executive Board shall be composed of the treasurer president, vice president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary. There will also be at least two (2) members from the incoming first year class to be elected by a majority vote from the first year membership.

(2B) Duties and Conduct of Committees

(2B1) The Executive Board shall at the discretion of the president, or upon its own motion, investigate, formulate, and recommend policy, guidelines for consideration. Such Board shall exercise control and arbitrate conflicts among other ad hoc committees operating in the name of the organization. A report of the Board meetings shall be made by the president to the general body. If a recommendation by the Executive Board has been adopted with less than a 5-vote majority, the minority shall have the option of concurrently presenting a minority opinion.

In the absence or incapacitation of the president, the Executive Board shall be empowered to make binding executive decision within the province of those expressly granted to the president. In the event that a regular or special meeting of the organization may not be convened in time to make organizational decisions in a situation of emergency, the Executive Board shall be empowered to render such decision for the body. Such decisions made by the Executive Board under conditions of emergency are voidable by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the total membership. In the event that the Executive Board cannot be convened, the president is empowered to make the decision, and such decision is voidable by the Executive Board. Those members of the Board who dissent will not be held accountable for the decision.

3 – Duties, Power, Obligation, and Qualification of Officers

(3A) The president shall be at least a second (2nd) year law student or a first (1st) year student who shall attain the status of second year law student upon entering the fall term. The president shall call and preside at meetings, call special meetings or emergency meetings, create ad hoc committees, release all official BLASA statements and execute all other duties necessary to carry out the office of the presidency.

(3B) The vice-president shall be a second (2nd) year law student or a first (1st) year student who shall attain the status of second year law student upon entering the fall term. The vice-president shall preside over meetings in the absence of the president. In the event of vacancy in the presidency, the vice-president shall preside over a special election, as prescribed in the Bylaws, and shall also serve as acting president until such election is conducted.

(3C) The treasurer shall collect and disburse organizational funds and dues, shall keep records of expenditures and revenue and shall attach a financial statement to the minutes of the regularly scheduled meetings; such records shall be made public upon request.

(3D) The recording secretary shall be responsible for the taking of minutes at regular, special and emergency meetings as well as Executive Board meetings; shall be responsible for circulating or making available an agenda of each regularly scheduled meeting prior to the meeting; shall present at each regular the minutes of the last regular meeting; and shall be responsible for all such other duties consistent with the office of recording secretary. The recording secretary shall also be responsible for all internal organizational communication.

(3E) The corresponding secretary shall be responsible for all external communications. In conjunction with a staff secretary, where there is one, the corresponding secretary shall answer all correspondence to BALSAs and post correspondence and other notices on the bulletin board. In the event of a vacancy of

office, i.e., president, vice-president, etc., the corresponding secretary shall call a special election.

4 – Nomination, Election, and Installation of Officers

(4A) All nominations for the officer of president, vice-president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and treasurer, shall be confirmed at a special meeting not later than the second week in April. Nominations shall be accepted from the floor on the day of the special meeting only when there are less than two (2) candidates for any office. A nominee shall not be a candidate for more than one office. No write-in candidates shall be accepted.

(4B) Elections for the offices of the Executive Board shall be held during the third week in April. Such election shall be by secret ballot and conducted by the president.

(4C) The president and a non-candidate member shall be responsible for counting ballots and posting results.

(4D) New officers shall work with the existing officers of the Board for the remainder of the spring semester, and assume their offices as of June 1. (June 1st following the April election)

(4E) in case there are no nominations for an office, the highest elected officer shall in his or her discretion appoint or accept a volunteer, who shall have all the duties and powers of an elected officer, for the vacant office.

5 – Impeachment

(5A) Any officer may be impeached by the organization for failure to execute his duties as enumerated in the Constitution and/or Bylaws of the organization.

(5B) In order to impeach an officer, charges against the officers must be filed in writing with the president, or if such impeachment is against the president, with the vice-president. Such charges must be listed and must be signed by at least 25% of the voting members of the organization.

(5C) Once charges have been brought against an officer, the officer against whom the charges have been filed must be notified by the officer with whom the charges were filed, and this same officer shall establish a date at which a hearing before the full body shall be convened. At such a hearing, the accused party shall have an opportunity to defend himself. 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.

(5D) At the conclusion of such hearing, to be presided over by the president or vice-president, the membership of the organization shall vote to impeach or dismiss charges against the accused officer.

(5E) A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the organizational membership shall be required to impeach an officer.

Article III
Membership

1 – Only students at The University of Akron School of Law who pay dues to the BALSAs organization are to be allowed membership without regard to race, color, creed, or national origin.

(1A) Only members shall have the right to vote and to hold office, others may participate in the activities that the organization undertakes.

(1B) Dues shall be as defined and outlined in the Bylaws.

Article IV
Bylaws

1 – Bylaws – The Bylaws of the BALSAs shall be adopted by a majority vote of the organization’s membership. Thereafter, it shall require a majority vote of the membership at a regularly scheduled meeting to adopt, amend, or repeal any Bylaw of the organization.

Article V
Amendments to the Constitution

1 – Any member of the organization shall, if he-she desires, propose amendments to the Constitution. However, one-third (1/3) of those in attendance at a regular or special meeting of the organization must concur as to the desirability of such an amendment as proposed by a member. Notice of the proposed amendment shall be in writing and given to all members of the organization one (1) week prior to voting. The amendment shall be passed and approved by no less than two-thirds (2/3) of all voting members of the organization at a regular or special meeting.

Article VI
Effective Date

1 – Effective Date – This Constitution and its accompanying Bylaws shall take effect twenty-four (24) hours after ratification by a majority of the voting members and the faculty approval.

2 – This constitution was ratified by a majority of the voting members on _____ at _____, and thereby, became effective at _____ on _____.

BY-LAWS

1. Specific Meeting Date: Regularly schedules meetings shall be held on Monday of every other week in the absence of a “fair and substantial” reason not to have one.
2. Each new member shall receive a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws.
3. Any member who wants to include an item on the agenda should submit such item to the recording secretary at least seventy-two (72) hours before the meeting.
4. The president and treasurer may from time to time jointly, not severally, allocate monies for necessary operational supplies not to exceed \$25.00 annually.
5. Anyone requesting funds for any purpose must present their request before the body for a vote. Funds shall be granted if a majority of the members agree by a mandate of their vote.
6. Reimbursement of any funds is contingent upon the approval of a majority of the members, where no prior consent was obtained pursuant to Bylaw #5.
7. Expenditures for remembrances (hospitalities, wedding, funeral of immediate family member) shall not exceed \$5.00 from the treasury. (This does not include personal donations).
8. The incumbent president shall preside over the election of new officers and keep the voting polls open for at least six hours the day of the election.
9. A special election will be held in the event of a vacancy in the presidency. The election shall be held within two weeks of the vacancy.
10. The president may appoint and commission a member to act as a BALSAs representative or agent in unusual circumstances, but such member’s authority shall not exceed the exigency of the situation.
11. The Executive Board shall be responsible for planning the budget.
12. Meetings shall be announced at least 48 hours in advance.
13. Dues shall be determined by the local chapter.
14. At least four members of the Executive Board shall be present of their meetings.
15. A majority of those present at any meeting shall have the power to vote on and pass any motion presented.

16. The Business Judgment Rule: any discretionary decision made by the president for the purpose of administering and managing the Chapter's affairs that is responsible and made in good faith shall be binding upon the organization.

17. Only first-year law students who are members of The University of Akron BALSAs may elect at least two law students out of the first year classes to represent them on the Executive Board Committee. The election shall be conducted and supervised by a first year law student appointed by the president, and such appointee may hold the election in any manner within his/her discretion, but subject to the restriction that the votes be cast by secret ballot.