



NATIONAL BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
1225 11th Street NW * Washington, D.C. 20001-4217 * (202) 842-3900

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

Name

This organization shall be known as the NATIONAL BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED (hereinafter referred to as the “Association” or “NBLSA”).

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of this Association shall be to utilize the collective resources of the member chapters to:

- Articulate and promote the professional needs and goals of Black Law Students;
- Foster and encourage professional competence;
- Focus upon the relationship of the Black Law Student and the Black Attorney to the American legal structure;
- Instill in the Black Attorney and Law Student a greater awareness and commitment to the needs of the Black community;
- Influence the legal community to bring out meaningful change to meet the needs of the Black community;
- Adopt and implement a policy of economic independence;
- Encourage Black Law Students to pursue careers in the judiciary; and
- Do all things necessary and appropriate to accomplish these purposes.

ARTICLE III

Membership

Eligibility for Membership: General Membership may consist of all matriculated Law Students at an American Member law school or of an “at large” chapter, who are committed to the purpose of this organization as stated in Article II of this constitution.

Section 1

Classification for Membership:

- A. General Membership: General Membership shall consist of all matriculated Law Students at an American Chapter Member law school, or of an “at large” chapter as defined herein.
1. Chapter Membership: Chapter membership shall consist of: 1) any American Law School whose petition is approved by the National Executive Board for admittance, or 2) any Law Student in the same locale whose petition is approved by the National Executive Board for admittance.
 - i. Active Membership: Active membership of this Association shall consist of all member chapters that have fulfilled the payment of its dues obligations for that fiscal year, which entitles them to all rights and privileges of this Association defined herein.
 - ii. Inactive Membership: Inactive membership shall consist of any chapter that does not fulfill the requirement of Article III, Section 1(A)(1)(i) of the Constitution.
 2. At large Chapter: An at-large chapter is any active chapter that is not conjoined within an American Member law school, but is recognized by NBLSA to be entitled to all rights and privileges of this Association defined herein.
- E. Regional Membership: Regional membership shall consist of six geographical areas to be designated as follows: Western, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast, Rocky Mountain, and Southern. Regional membership shall be recognized where petition of a proposed region, consisting of any chapter, group of chapters, or any law student in the same locale is approved by the National Executive Board for admittance.
1. The **Western Region** shall be composed of the following states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.
 2. The **Mid-Atlantic Region** shall be composed of the following states: the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey (southern), Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

3. The **Midwest Region** shall be composed of the following states: Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, N. Dakota, Ohio, S. Dakota, Kansas, and Wisconsin.
4. The **Northeast Region** shall be composed of the following states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey (northern), New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.
5. The **Rocky Mountain Region** shall be composed of the following states: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.
6. The **Southern Region** shall be composed of the following states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Section 2

- A. Active membership of this Association shall consist of all member chapters that have fulfilled the payment of its dues obligations for that fiscal year, which entitles them to all rights and privileges of this Association defined herein.
- B. Inactive membership shall consist of any chapter that does not fulfill the requirement of Article III, Section 2(A) of the Constitution.
- C. Associate Membership: Associate membership of this Association shall be limited to law graduates and designated members of associate organizations. Associate organizations are those organizations listed in Article I, Section 1(A)(4) of the Bylaws, and other organizations that promote the black lawyer and law student, as determined by the National Executive Board.
- D. Honorary Membership: Honorary membership shall be extended to any person nominated by the general membership and approved by a simple majority vote of the national Executive Board.
- F. Chapter membership shall consist of: 1) any American Law School whose petition is approved by the National Executive Board for admittance, or 2) any Law Student in the same locale whose petition is approved by the National Executive Board for admittance.
- G. Regional membership shall consist of six geographical areas to be designated as follows:

Western, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast, Rocky Mountain, and Southern.

1. The **Western Region** shall be composed of the following states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.
2. The **Mid-Atlantic Region** shall be composed of the following states: the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey (southern), Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.
3. The **Midwest Region** shall be composed of the following states: Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, N. Dakota, Ohio, S. Dakota, Kansas, and Wisconsin.
4. The **Northeast Region** shall be composed of the following states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey (northern), New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.
5. The **Rocky Mountain Region** shall be composed of the following states: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.
6. The **Southern Region** shall be composed of the following states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

An “at-large” chapter is any chapter that is not conjoined with an American Member law school, but is recognized by NBLSA to be entitled to all the rights and privileges of this Association defined herein.

- A. College Student Division: The composition of the National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA) is to include a Pre-law student division as a sub-section entitled the College Student Division (hereinafter CSD). The CSD is to serve solely as a liaison program between the prospective law students and active members in good standing of NBLSA.

Section 3

Rights of Membership: Only general members of Active chapters shall have the right to be a delegate, the right to hold national office, and the right to compete in the FDMCC.

- A. Associate Members may participate in all activities of the Association except those enumerated in this section. Associate members may participate as non-voting members in all other activities of this Association.
- B. Honorary Members and College Student Division Members may enjoy the same rights as

Associate Members.

Section 4

Duties of Membership: Regular participation in the activities of this Association is incumbent upon each member chapter.

Section 5

Payment of Dues: In order to constitute active membership, as stated in Article III, Section 2(A), each chapter shall remit payment of dues. Dues shall be submitted no later than the registration period of the National Convention of each year. The amount of the dues required of each chapter and the rules governing payment are to be determined by Article VIII, Section 1.

ARTICLE IV

Officers

Section 1

Eligibility of Officers: Persons eligible to hold an office of the National Executive Board (hereinafter referred to as the “National Board”, or the “Board”) of this Association must be a member of an active chapter of the Association for the entire term.

Section 2

Classification of Officers: The Officers of this Association shall be a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, a Director of Community Services, an Attorney General and the elected Regional Director from each member region. These Officers shall perform duties prescribed by these Bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by this Association.

Classification of Officers Elect: The officers elect of this association shall be a Chairperson (President) and Vice-Chairperson (Vice-President). These chairs elect would be non-voting members of the national board with all rights and privileges of any other non-voting member.

Section 3

Election of Officers

- A. **National Officers:** The Chair, Vice-Chair, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Community Services, and Attorney General shall be elected by a majority of the voting delegates at the National Convention. Such election will be coordinated by a National Credentials Committee.
- B. **Regional Directors:** Each of the six regions of the Association shall elect by a vote of their respective memberships one Regional Director. Such elections will be coordinated by a Regional Credentials Committee, pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Constitution and/or Bylaws of his or her region.

Section 4

Terms of Office: The officers shall hold office for a term of one (1) year. A term of office shall commence May 1st and shall terminate April 30th of the following year.

Term of Office for the National Officer Elect: The officers elect shall hold office, as officers elect, for a term beginning at the national convention election and terminate on April 30th of the same year.

ARTICLE V

National Executive Board

Section 1

Composition: The officers of the Association shall be designated the National Executive Board and shall be composed of the following members: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Community Services, Attorney General, and the elected Regional Director from each member region.

Section 2

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

- A. The Board shall have the power to create such staff positions and such committees as it deems necessary to carry out the business of the Association. Such staff persons and

committee chairpersons shall be appointed by the National Chairperson from the active membership subject to the approval of the Board.

1. Appointed members are considered Board members to the extent that they may have the power to make motions at National Board meetings, if recognized, but are not considered Board members for the purpose of establishing quorum or voting on any programs, business projects or matters of the Association.
- B. Any decision of the Board shall be made at a duly called meeting at which there is a quorum.
- C. Pursuant to Article X of this Constitution, the Board is empowered to discipline any officer who is negligent in the discharge of his or her duties to the Association.
- D. The Board of Legal Advisors of the Association shall be appointed by the Chairperson s subject to the approval of the Board.

Section 3

Board Approval: Board approval is defined as an affirmative simple majority vote by the National Executive Board.

Financing: This Association shall be financed primarily by dues, fund-raising activities, donations, and grants. The National Board of NBLSA shall be required to financially subsidize all six (6) of its National Academic Retreats.

ARTICLE VI

Committees

Section 1

- A. The Standing Committees of the Association shall be the Constitution and Bylaws committee, the Convention Arrangements Committee, the Credential and Membership Committee, the Elections Committee, the Grievance Committee, the Resolutions committee, the Rules Committee, the International Committee (formerly the WEB DuBois Committee and the South African Task Force - adopted at the March, 1992 Convention), and the alumnus committee.
- B. Such other committees, Standing or Special shall be appointed by the National Chairperson as the Board or the Association shall from time to time deem necessary to carry on the work of the Association.

- C. The chairpersons of all Standing and Special Committees, shall be appointed by the National Chairperson, subject to the approval of the Board.
- D. The Board may delegate such appointive powers as are necessary to facilitate the organization and operation of a committee.
- E. Standing committees of this association shall consist of regional representatives from the regional boards. Regional board members with substantially similar titles and or job responsibilities shall serve on national committees with their national counterpart.
The national board member will chair these standing committees. Regional directors may appoint another officer to attend committee meeting in the place of the titled person is not present.

ARTICLE VII

Meetings

Section 1

National Executive Board Meetings: There shall be no less than four board meetings annually, excluding the National Convention. All officers are required to attend or send a representative to every Board meeting.

Section 2

National Convention: The Board shall convene a meeting each spring, which shall be known as the “National Black Law Students Association National Convention” (hereinafter referred to as the “National Convention”). The National Convention shall not convene during the Spring Multi-State Professional Responsibility Exam. The Program of Action, consisting of the resolutions passed by the general assembly and developed annually at each National Convention, is binding on the Administration elected at that Convention.

ARTICLE VIII

Financial Affairs

Section 1

Dues: All local chapters shall pay dues pursuant to Article III, Section 4(A) of this Constitution. The National Board shall determine this amount. Every year the national board will set a

regional dues structure that will apply to every region. That amount will be added to the national dues structure to make a single payment. Every region shall have a check mailed to them by the national treasurer for the portion of the dues nationals has collected once every two weeks. The national treasurer will be relieved of this duty as of the last week in November. (S)He will resume this weekly payment schedule for the first week in January. During the time the treasurer is not required to send regular regional dues checks, any regional officer may request a list of new chapters that have paid their dues.

Exception to Payment of Dues: In the event that a member is unable to meet the dues requirement, due to extenuating circumstances, that chapter may petition the Board for waiver or modification of dues payment. The chapter shall submit a written explanation and an alternative proposal for waiver or modification of said dues to the Chairperson of the Credentials and Membership Committee, the National Secretary, the national Treasurer, and its respective Regional Director, who shall then evaluate the merits of the proposal and present a report at the following board meeting. At that meeting, the board shall determine by a two-thirds vote whether to accept, reject or modify the chapter's petition.

- A. During the interim between filing of the petition and evaluation by the Board, the member chapter is to have active status.
- B. Waiver of modification of the dues payment requirement by the Board, and compliance therewith, will satisfy the dues payment for that fiscal year.

Section 2

Registration Fee: Each chapter in attendance at the National Convention must register, and remit registration fees for each Chapter Delegate to the Association Convention. The amount of the fee and the rules governing payment are to be determined by the Board.

Section 3

Charter Fee: There shall be a charter fee to be paid to the Association at the time of charter application. The Board may waive this requirement in cases of extremely extenuating circumstances.

- A. The procedure for chartering chapters shall be as follows:
 - 1. Upon request, the NBLSA Executive Board shall send a copy of the NBLSA Constitution and a charter application.
 - 2. Upon receipt of a completed and signed charter application the application shall be approved pursuant to Article III, Section 2(E) of the NBLSA Constitution.

3. Upon approval, the NBLSA Executive Board shall issue a certificate of charter.

Section 4

Moot Court Entry Fee: The National Treasurer shall remit fifty percent (50%) of the Frederick L. Douglass Moot Court Competition entry fees collected from each region, back to the respective region for the administration of the competition.

Section 5

Final Report: A final full disclosure of all funds received and disbursed within any given fiscal year, including those received and disbursed at the National Convention, shall be disseminated by the Board to all chapters and non-chapter members prior to the first regularly scheduled National Executive Board meeting.

Section 6

Financial Report: A financial report of money in the National Treasury shall be made by the Board to the Assembly at the National Convention. The financial records of the Association shall be submitted annually to a certified public accountant for audit immediately after the first regularly scheduled Board meeting. This audit report shall be completed within the first sixty (60) days of the new fiscal year.

Section 7

Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of the Association shall commence June 1 and terminate May 31 of the following year.

ARTICLE IX

Voting

Section 1

Appointment: Each chapter shall be represented at the National Convention in accordance with the number of members in the chapter. Chapters with ten (10) members or less shall have one (1) vote; chapters with more than ten (10) members but less than twenty-five (25) members shall have two (2) votes; chapters with twenty-five (25) members but less than fifty (50) members shall have three (3) votes; chapters with fifty (50) members but less than seventy-five (75)

members shall have four (4) votes and chapters with seventy-five (75) or more members shall have five (5) votes. But under no circumstances will the number of votes per chapter be less than one (1) or greater than five (5).

Section 2

Proxy: Each chapter giving its proxy must comply with the following provisions:

- A. The chapter must be pre-registered for the National Convention.
- B. The chapter must present a written proxy to be certified by the National Recording Secretary.

ARTICLE X

Disciplinary Proceedings

Procedure: The Association is empowered to make and enforce its own rules and to require that its members and officers refrain from conduct injurious to the Association or its purposes. The Board shall have the power to censure its members, staff persons and committee members. Enforcement of any disciplinary action is pursuant to Article V, Section 2 of this constitution.

Review: All disciplinary measures shall be reported by the Board to the General Assembly at the National Convention and are thereupon subject to review General Assembly.

ARTICLE XI

Parliamentary Authority

Procedure: The Association is empowered to establish its rules of order through the adoption of some form of parliamentary authority.

ARTICLE XII

Mandatory Projects

The following projects are mandatory: The Annual National Frederick L. Douglass Moot Court Competition, the Annual National Convention, the Sandy Brown Memorial Scholarship

Competition, the Adopt-a-School Program, the National Convention Community Service Project, the National Academic Retreat for First Years, the Black Law Institute Fund-raiser Luncheon at the National Convention, a regional student recruitment fair, and a Dean's Roundtable.

ARTICLE XIII

Constitutional Amendments

Section 1

Adoption: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Association shall be adopted by a simple majority vote of the Assembly.

Section 2

Amendments:

- A. Amendments to the National Constitution or Bylaws shall be passed according to the rules below:
 - 1. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS: shall be passed at the Annual National Convention Plenary Session(s) upon receiving a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the General Assembly.
 - 2. BYLAWS AMENDMENTS; shall be passed at the Annual National Convention Plenary Session(s) upon receiving a simple majority vote of the General Assembly.
- B. Constitutional and Bylaw Amendments to the NBLSA Constitution shall be ratified and take effect immediately upon adoption by a simple majority of the General Assembly on the final day of plenary business.

Effective Date: The Constitution and Bylaws of the Association or any amendment thereof, shall become effective immediately upon ratification, except where an alternative date is specified therein.

BYLAWS
ARTICLE I

Officers

Section 1

- A. National Chairperson: The Chairperson of this Association shall be responsible for:
1. Exercising general authority over the business and activities of this Association;
 2. Chairing all National Board meetings; and
 3. Presiding over the General Assembly; and
 4. Serving as the National Black Law Student Association representative to the boards of such organizations as the: National Conference of Black Lawyers, Council on Legal Education Opportunities, CODE I-Black Law Institute, African Bar Association, National Bar Association, and other such organizations as the Board or Assembly shall assign; and
 5. Co-signing with the National Treasurer all checks issued by this Association; and
 6. Serving as an ex-officio member of all Association committees; and
 7. Appointing an Executive Director, and such other staff persons and committees in accordance with Article V, Section 2(A) of the Constitution; and
 8. Overseeing the implementation of a Community Service Project to be conducted during the National Convention; and
 9. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as the Board or the Assembly may assign.
- B. National Vice-Chairperson: The Vice-Chairperson of this Association shall be responsible for:
1. Exercising general executive authority over the business and activities of this Association, and chairing all National Executive Board meetings in the event of the incapacity or absence of the National Chairperson; and

2. Appointing a National Moot Court Review Board (“NMCRB”) of at least three (3), but no more than five (5), attorneys, with a minimum of one year of litigation experience, to review the problem, rules and materials prepared by the National Vice Chair and give oral feedback, provided that:
 - a. The National Vice Chair is charged with the preparation, dissemination, and operation of the FDMCC. He/She has the ultimate decision making authority over the problem subject to ultimate approval of the National Executive Board;
 - b. The NBCRB is an external sub-committee of the NBLSA National Executive Board and reports directly to the National Vice Chair. The National Vice-Chair is charged with the fiduciary duty of reporting findings, comments, and concerns of the NMCRB to the National Chair and the Executive Board; and
 - c. All committee meetings shall create a report of the minutes, including comments and voting results.
3. Appointing a National Moot Court Specialist (“NMCS”), who should be located in the city where the upcoming National Convention will be held. However, this is not a requirement for serving in the position. The National Moot Court Specialist shall serve on the National Moot Court Review Board, but shall not be counted as an attorney for the purposes of meeting the requirements of Article I (1)(B)(2). The National Moot Court Specialist must be a NBLSA member in good standing to serve and his/her appointment is subject to approval of the National Executive Board; and
4. Coordinating the Annual Frederick L. Douglass Moot Court Competition provided that:
 - a. A preliminary substantial draft of the Frederick L. Douglass Moot court competition Problem shall be completed by July 25th of each year of competition; and
 - b. A final draft of the Frederick L. Douglass Moot Court Competition Problem shall be completed by the end of the third week of August of each year of competition; and

- c. The Frederick L. Douglass Moot Court Competition shall be distributed to all schools via the NBLSA Website and/or a widely acceptable computerized legal research database (e.g. Westlaw or Lexis-Nexis) by September 15th of each year of competition; and
5. The National Vice Chair shall actively seek accreditation and recognition for the Frederick L. Douglass Moot Court Competition among legal institutions, organizations, and the legal community; and
6. Serving as an ex-officio member of the Board of Governors of American Bar Association 's Law Student Division ("A-LSD") and appointing, when necessary, a NBLSA member in good standing to serve as a liaison to the A-LSD. The A-LSD liaison shall be appointed by the National Vice-Chair, subject to approval of the National Executive Board; and
7. Determining the initial registration fee for the FDMCC and presenting it to the National Executive Board for approval. An external funding mechanism for the competition shall be established to differ the cost of running the competition. The National Vice Chair should factor in amount of dues, location of the National Convention and any other fiscal matter bearing on the cost of participating in the FDMCC; and
8. Service as an ex-officio member of the Hispanic National Bar Association 's Law Student Division (AHNBA-LSD@) and appointing, when necessary, a NBLSA member in good standing to serve as a liaison to the HBNA-LSD. The HBNA-LSD liaison shall be appointed by the National Vice Chair, subject to approval of the National Executive Board; and
9. Conduct an Annual Vice Chair 's Meeting in August of each year where the Regional Vice Chairs (or persons charged with administration of the FDMCC at the regional level, if none then the regional director) will be charged to attend. The purpose and schedule of the annual meeting is:
 - a. To instruct all regional vice chairs on the proper administration of the competition at the regional level; and
 - b. To go through the rules and procedures of communication, competition, eligibility, and the like; and
 - c. Disseminate one (1) copy of the Regional Host Instruction Manual, as amended, to each regional vice chair; and

- d. To advise or instruct the regional vice chairs on any other administrative, fiscal, procedural, or otherwise that is pertinent to the competition; and
- e. The Annual Vice Chairs' meeting began in 1999 and shall follow the following order:
 - (1) Northeast B 1999
 - (2) Rocky Mountain B2000
 - (3) Southern B 2001
 - (4) Western B 2002
 - (5) Mid-Atlantic B 2003
 - (6) Midwestern B 2004, etc.; and

- 10. Serving as an ex-officio member of all National Association committees; and
- 11. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as the National Chairperson, the Board or the Assembly may assign.

C. *National Second Vice-Chairperson*: The Second Vice-Chairperson of this Association shall be responsible for:

- 1. Exercising general executive authority over the business and activities of this Association, and chairing all National Executive Board meetings in the event of the incapacity or absence of the National First Vice-Chairperson; and
- 2. Appointing a National Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Review Board (NMTRB) of at least three (3), but no more than five (5) attorneys, with a minimum of one year litigation experience, to review the problem, rules and materials prepared by the National Second Vice-Chair and give oral feedback, provided that:
 - (a) The National Second Vice-Chair is charged with the preparation, dissemination, and operation of the Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Competition (TMMTC). He/She has the ultimate decision-making authority over the problem subject to ultimate approval of the National Executive Board; and
 - (b) The NBCRB is an external sub-committee of the NBLSA National Executive Board and reports directly to the National Second Vice-Chair. The National Second Vice-Chair is charged with the fiduciary duty of reporting findings, comments, and concerns of the NMTRB to the National Chair and the Executive Board; and

3. Appointing a National Mock Trial Specialist (NMTS), who should be located in the city where the upcoming National Convention will be held. However, this is not a requirement for serving in the position. The National Mock Trial Specialist shall serve on the National Mock Trial Review Board, but shall not be counted as an attorney for purposes of meeting the requirements of Article I, Section (1)(B)(2). The National Mock Trial Specialist must be a NBLSA member in good standing to serve and his/her appointment is subject to approval of the National Executive Board; and
4. Coordinating the Annual Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Competition provided that:
 - (a) A preliminary substantial draft of the Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial competition problem shall be completed by July 25th of each year of the competition; and
 - (b) A final draft of the Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Competition Problem shall be completed by the end of the third week of August of each year of the competition
 - (c) The Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Competition shall be distributed to all schools via the NBLSA website and/or a widely acceptable computerized legal research database (*e.g.*, Westlaw® or Lexis-Nexis®) by September 15th of each year of the competition; and
5. The National Second Vice-Chair shall actively seek accreditation and recognition for the Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Competition among legal institutions, organizations, and the legal community; and
6. Determining the initial registration fee for the TMMTC and presenting it to the National Executive Board for approval. The National Second Vice-Chair should factor in amount of dues, location of the National Convention and any other fiscal matter bearing on the cost of participating in the TMMTC; and
7. Conduct an Annual Second Vice-Chair's Meeting in August of each year where the Regional Second Vice-Chairs (or persons charged with administration of the TMMTC at the regional level, if none then the regional director) will be charged to attend. The purpose and schedule of the annual meeting is:
 - (a) To instruct all regional Second Vice-Chairs on the proper administration of the competition at the regional level; and

- (b) To go through the rules and procedures of communication, competition, eligibility, and the like; and
 - (c) Disseminate one (1) copy of the Regional Host Instruction Manual, as amended, to each regional Second Vice-Chair; and
 - (d) To advise or instruct the regional Second Vice-Chairs on any other administrative, fiscal, procedural, or otherwise that is pertinent to the competition; and
 - (e) The National Second Vice-Chair shall determine the location of the Annual Second Vice-Chairs' meeting
8. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as the National Chairperson, the Board or the Assembly may assign.

D. National Recording Secretary: The Recording Secretary of this Association shall be responsible for:

- 1. Maintaining and distributing the minutes and agenda for all meetings of the Board and the Assembly; and
- 2. Evaluating alternative dues petitions pursuant to Article VIII, Section 2 of the Constitution; and
- 3. Distributing a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws for this Association to;
 - (a) Each Board member at the first Board meeting; and
 - (b) Each chapter registered at the National Convention;
- 4. Serving as an ex-officio member of all Association committees;
- 5. Utilizing audio and/or video technology to record Plenary and NBLSA Board meetings; and
- 6. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as the National Chairperson, the Board, or the assembly may assign.

E. National Corresponding Secretary: The Corresponding Secretary of this Association shall be responsible for:

1. Coordinating internal and external communication of information; and
2. Issuing communication requiring a response at least thirty (30) days prior to the time needed to meet the deadline,
 - (a) These communications shall be issued with a reply card and returned with the time restraints set forth in such communications; and
3. Publishing and circulating a national newsletter entitled, THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT, twice during the term of office,
 - (a) The National Corresponding Secretary shall solicit the commitment of one chapter to produce and circulate the newsletter to all chapters. That chapter shall be known as the National Newsletter Chapter; and
 - (b) Each Regional Director shall submit an edited article to the Regional Secretary at each National Board Meeting including the National Board Transition Meeting; and
 - (c) The National Newsletter Chapter shall be reimbursed by the National Board for all production costs; and
 - (d) Chapters that fail to pay national dues shall receive only one newsletter, until their financial responsibilities are fulfilled; and
4. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as the National Chairperson, the Board, or the Assembly may assign.

F. National Treasurer: The Treasurer of this Association shall be responsible for

1. Handling all funds and securities of this Association and ensuring that they are deposited in such facility, and in such manner, as the Board may designate; and
2. Assuring that entries are regularly made in the financial records, accounting for all funds received and disbursed by this Association; and
3. Submitting the financial records of this Association to a certified public accountant, pursuant to Article VIII, Section 4 of the Constitution; and
4. Making regular financial reports to the Board; and

5. Co-signing, with the National Chairperson, all checks issued by this Association; and
6. Evaluating alternative dues petitions pursuant to Article VIII, Section 2 of the Constitution; and
7. Filing annual corporate reports on behalf of the Association; and
8. Filing annual IRS tax-exempt organization forms; and
9. Establishing mailings of the Treasurer's Report to all National and Regional Board members and chapter chairpersons in June, September, December, and March. This accounting shall be the sole responsibility of the National Board and shall consist of a full disclosure of the National Organization.
 - (a) the term "full disclosure" means a delineation of amounts received and dispersed indicating all dates and parties involved; and
10. Disseminating an annual accounting to all Regional Directors and Chapter Chairpersons; and
11. Submitting an Association Budget for the year at the first regularly scheduled Board meeting, to include;
 - (a) Statement of accounts; and
 - (b) Statement of unpaid bills with explanation; and
 - (c) Statement of transfers between accounts; and
 - (d) Statement of income; and
 - (e) Detailed account of how all funds were used; and
 - (f) Detailed account of all anticipated expenses based on future program needs, history, and accounting for emergencies; and
12. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as the National Chairperson, the Board, or the Assembly may assign.

G. National Director of Community Services: The Director of Community Services shall be responsible for:

1. Coordinating and executing all community affairs project undertaken on a National or Multi-Regional level; and
2. Providing for the recognition of six chapters, one from each region, who have developed model community service programs; and
3. The publication of an annual Community Service Handbook or supplement to be distributed to all chapters,
 - (a) an outline of the model programs recognized during the National Convention shall be published in the Handbook; and
4. Organizing the Community Service Project to be conducted during the National convention; and
5. Sending information on the Black law Institute to Chapters on a yearly basis; and
6. Administering the Nelson Mandela Scholarship for pre-law students of African decent and the Sandy Memorial Scholarship for members of the Association who write outstanding essays on the National Convention theme; and
7. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as the National Chairperson, the Board, or the Assembly may assign.

H. Regional Directors: The Regional Directors shall be responsible for:

1. Exercising general executive authority over the business and activities of his or her respective region; and
2. Disseminating National and Regional information throughout his or her region; and
3. Implementing Nationally Mandated Projects, in accordance with Article XII of the Constitution, on a regional level, including conducting a community service project at their respective regional conventions; and
4. Organizing regional conventions pursuant to Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws; and Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as the National Chairperson, the Board, or the assembly may assign; and
5. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as the National Chairperson, the Board, or the Assembly may assign.

6. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as assigned by the constitutions and/or Bylaws of his or her respective region.

I. **National Moot Court Specialist:** The duties of the National Moot Court Specialist will include, but are not limited to:

1. Serving as an appointed member of the National Executive Board, to be appointed by the National Vice Chair; and
2. Assisting the National Vice-Chair in preparing and administering the National Frederick Douglass Moot Court Competition; as well as assisting the National Vice Chair in pursuing accreditation and broadening recognition and certification of the Frederick Douglass Moot Court Competition; and
3. Supervising, under the auspices of the National Executive Board, the grievance for the National Rounds of the Frederick Moot Court Competition; including, but not limited to, ensuring impartial members serve on the grievance committee and facilitating their understanding of the rules such that grievances are handled without undue prejudice; and
4. Where practical the National Moot Court Specialist should attend law school in or around the city where the National Convention is located. However, this is not a requirement for serving in the position; and
5. Performing such other duties as the National Chair, the National Vice-Chair, or the National Executive Board shall assign.

J. *Attorney General:* The Attorney General shall be responsible for:

1. Researching current legal issues facing the African-American Nation; and
2. Preparing memoranda to increase the Association's awareness of legal issues; and
3. Preparing Amicus Curiae briefs to support cases affecting the African-American Nation; and

3. Working with all chapters to lobby the United States Congress, bring public attention to the issues of reparations to Black people in America, and be at the forefront in the struggle for reparations to Black people in the United States of

America.

- K. Legislative Liaison: The Legislative Liaison shall be responsible for:
1. Coordinating with members of Congress to define issues affecting the Black Community; and
 2. Preparing memoranda to be distributed nationally regarding Congressional issues that affect the Black community; and
 3. Coordinating NBLSA participation and lobbying efforts regarding such issues; and
 4. Planning NBLSA participation in the Congressional Black Caucus annual Conference; and
 5. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as assigned by the Constitution and/or Bylaws of his or her region.

Section 2

Succession of Officers: In the event that the National Chairperson is unable to complete a term of office, the National Vice-Chairperson shall automatically rise to the position of National Chairperson for the remainder of the term. If the Vice-Chairperson is unable to fulfill this duty, an acting Chairperson will be elected by simple majority vote of the Board. In the event that any other National Officer is unable to complete a term of office the Board shall elect a replacement to serve the remainder of the term. Such election will be coordinated by the Board. If a Regional Director is unable to complete a term of office, a replacement will be chosen pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Constitution and/or Bylaws of his or her region. In the event that no such provision exists, the manner of succession shall be determined by the region.

Election Procedures: Those members seeking election to National Offices shall be required to sign a statement before being officially recognized as a candidate. That statement will include; 1) a statement of the fiduciary duty of Board Members of the Association; 2) a description of the duties of the particular office; and 3) a pledge to fulfill Article III, Section 1 of the Bylaws.

ARTICLE II

Committees

Section 1

Duties of Committees

A. Constitution and Bylaws Committee: A Constitution and Bylaws Committee composed of no less than six (6) members shall be appointed at the first regular Board meeting following the Annual Convention.

1. Formulate and distribute guidelines and procedures governing the manner in which proposed constitutional and bylaw amendments are to be a) structured or written b) submitted, and c) distributed; and
2. Put proposed constitutional and bylaw amendments in proper form, eliminating duplication where similar amendments are offered in logical sequence; and
3. Coordinate and supervise the constitutional and bylaw amendment session.

B. Convention Arrangements Committee: A Convention Arrangements Committee composed of no less than six (6) members shall be appointed at the first regular Board meeting following the annual convention. It shall be the duty of this committee to plan and submit the proposed schedule of meetings, procedures, and special events of the convention for the following year.

1. A convention report shall be submitted to the Board for its approval no later than the last regular meeting before December 31st. The National Chairperson, the Chairs of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws, Credentials and Membership, Elections, Grievances, Resolutions and Rules shall be ex-officio members of the Conventions Arrangements Committee.

C. Credentials and Membership Committee: A Credentials and Membership Committee composed of no less than six (6) members shall be appointed at the first regular Board meeting following the annual convention. It shall be the duty of this committee to:

1. Coordinate and supervise the registration procedure at the National Convention; and
2. Determine the membership classification of each chapter upon registration; and

3. Formulate and distribute information as to the authorized number of votes per chapter; and
 4. Authorize voting delegates and alternate delegates; and
 5. Approve all proxy certifications.
 6. Candidates currently seeking election to a National Office of the Association are barred from membership on the Credentials and Membership Committee.
- D. Elections Committee: An Elections Committee composed of no less than six (6) members shall be appointed at the first regular Board meeting following the annual convention. It shall be the duty of this committee to:
1. Formulate and distribute qualifications, guidelines, and procedures governing; a) candidate eligibility and b) campaign activities; and
 2. Determine the eligibility of each candidate
 3. Candidates currently seeking election to a National Office of the Association are barred from membership on the Elections Committee.
- E. Grievance Committee: A Grievance Committee composed of no less than six (6) members shall be appointed at the first regular Board meeting following the annual convention. It shall be the duty of this committee to:
1. Formulate and distribute guidelines and procedures governing the manner in which grievances are to be: (a) structured, (b) submitted, and (c) received and coordinate and supervise the grievance resolution process.
- F. Resolutions Committee: A Resolutions Committee composed of no less than six (6) members shall be appointed at the first regular Board meeting following the annual convention. It shall be the duty of this committee to:
1. Formulate and distribute guidelines and procedures governing the manner in which resolutions are to be a) structured or written, b) submitted, and c) distributed; and
 2. Put resolutions in proper form, eliminating duplications where similar resolutions are offered and ensuring that all resolutions relating to a specific subject will be offered in a logical sequence; and
 3. Coordinate and supervise the resolutions sessions.

- G. Rules Committee: A Rules Committee composed of no less than six (6) members shall be appointed at the first regular Board meeting following the annual convention. It shall be the duty of this committee to formulate, distribute and prepare for adoption a group of rules known as the “Standing Rules of the Convention.” These usually contain both parliamentary rules relating to the conduct of business and non-parliamentary rules.
- H. International Committee: An International Committee composed of no less than three (3) and no more than six (6) members of the National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA) and no less than three (3) and no more than six (6) members of the Black Law Students Association of Canada (BLSAC) shall be appointed at the first regular Board meetings of the respective organizations, following the annual convention. One of these members must be the National Chairperson of the respective organization. It shall be the duty of this committee to:
1. Formulate and implement ways to create a partnership between NBLSA & BLSAC, and
 2. Plan group events for the organizations.

ARTICLE III

Meetings

Section 1

National Executive Board Meeting: Each incoming Board shall establish, before the adjournment of the Convention, the time and place of the first regular Board meeting, to be held no later than June 30th. At the first regular Board meeting the National Chairperson shall determine the meeting schedule, subject to the approval of the Board.

- A. Board members are required to attend or send a representative to all national Board meetings.
- B. Board members who do not attend meetings shall be expelled from the National Board.
1. In case of expulsion, the national Board will select a new At-Large Board member or request the particular region to select a new regional representative to the Board.
 2. Expulsion will be publicized in The 14th Amendment

3. The Board has total discretion to expel.
4. The Board shall not expel members with extenuating circumstances, e.g., financial inability to attend, or sudden illness.

Section 2

National Convention General Assembly: The regular meeting of the Association during the spring shall be known as the Annual National Convention General Assembly. It shall be for the purpose of conducting the business of the Association, electing officers, receiving reports, staff members, and committees.

- A. The term “General Assembly” of “General Membership” (hereinafter referred to as the “Assembly”) shall mean a meeting composed of a representative of the member chapters.
- B. All powers not specifically delegated to the officers and members of this Association reside with the Assembly.
- C. All Association business subject to a vote of the Assembly will be determined by a simple majority vote of a quorum unless otherwise provided.
- D. All issues decided by the Board may be subject to review by the Assembly. The Assembly may revise, overrule, or modify and such decision by a two-thirds vote. Notice of a petition to review must be submitted to the Board no less than thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.
- E. Convention Administration: The Board shall have the powers to call an Annual Convention, pursuant to Article V, Section 2 of the Constitution.
 1. The National Chairperson shall appoint a Committee Chair, and with the Board, shall oversee all Convention Arrangements, pursuant to Article V, Section 2 of the Constitution.
 2. At each National Convention, the time and place of the next National Convention shall be announced prior to adjournment.
 5. The location for the convention will be based on the following rotation schedule:
 - (a) Western
 - (b) Northeast
 - (c) Rocky Mountain

- (d) Mid-Atlantic
- (e) Southern
- (f) Midwest

and, if due to extremely extenuating circumstances, a region is unable to host the Convention at its prescribed time, the choice of Convention site shall be made by the Board.

- F. Regional Directors shall maintain sign-in/out sheets during plenary sessions of the Convention. Chapters are required to be represented in the plenary sessions seventy-five percent (75%) of the time. Chapters who do not fulfill this requirement will not be allowed to vote for candidates for national offices.

Section 3

Special Meetings: Special meetings may be called by the National Chairperson or by the Board. The purpose of the meetings shall be stated in the call. No business shall be transacted except that announced in the call of the special meeting. At least fifteen (15) days notice shall be given in order to call a special meeting.

Section 4

Regional Convention General Assembly: Each Region shall convene a regional convention at least once each year prior to the National Convention, pursuant to the Constitution and/or Bylaws of the region.

Section 5

Quorum:

- A. National Executive Board: A quorum of the Board shall consist of a simple majority.

NOTE: For the purposes of this document, a simple majority establishing a quorum shall be defined as one more than half of the elected officers of the Board.

- B. General Assembly: A quorum of the Assembly is a simple majority of the active chapters registered at the National Convention.

Section 6

National Academic Retreat for First Years: A National Coordinator appointed by the National Chairperson shall coordinate the National Academic Retreat. The Retreat shall be implemented in each region of NBLSA on a rotating basis. The rotation schedule shall follow the schedule outlined in Article III, Section 2(E)(3) of these Bylaws. (Adopted at the March, 1994 National Convention).

- A. In conjunction with the National Academic Retreat, each of the remaining regions shall also hold a retreat, designated to be held within the respective region.
- B. All retreats (both National and Regional) shall be held in the month of September October.
- C. As a service to the dues-paying membership of NBLSA, no additional fees shall be charged to participants.

Section 7

National Convention Election Procedures: Standardized election procedures help to secure the opportunity for as many members of the Association as possible to participate in the governance of the Association.

- A. Campaign materials shall not be displayed nor distributed with 30 feet of plenary sessions, not to include special elections meetings.
- B. No candidate shall exceed the set monetary limit, excluding travel expenses, established by the elections committee, and campaign materials shall not exceed standard poster size.
- C. Current National Executive Board members shall not:
 - a. Campaign on behalf of other National Board members running for office while serving in their official capacity, and
 - b. If running for office, preside or serve as Parliamentarian in any meeting or on any committee concerning elections, election procedures or campaign activities.
- D. Voting for candidates shall no be held until the final official day of the general assembly meeting.

ARTICLE IV

Financial Affairs

Section 1

Financing: This Association shall be financed primarily by dues, fund-raising activities, donations, and grants. The National Board of NBLSA shall be required to financially subsidize all 6 of its National Academic Retreat.

Section 2

Financial Efforts: All National financial efforts shall be for the benefit of all members and chapters in accordance with rules promulgated by the Board.

NOTE: At the end of each Board term, the National Treasurer shall allocate one-half of all funds on hand to the retirement of the National Debt of this Association. This provision shall be self-executing without Board action, only in such cases where the amount of debt exceeds the amount of funds available for the appropriation.

Section 3

Bonding: The following officers and committee members shall be bonded by a certified bonding agency: National Chairperson, National Treasurer, Convention Coordinator, Convention Arrangements Committee Chairpersons, and the Convention Treasurer.

ARTICLE V

Voting

Section 1

Simple Majority Vote: For the purpose of this document, a simple majority vote shall be defined as: at least one more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, excluding blanks and abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting at which a quorum is present.

Section 2

Two-Thirds Vote: For the purpose of this document, a two-thirds vote shall be defined as: at least two-thirds of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, excluding blanks and abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting at which a quorum is present.

Section 3

Three-Fourths Vote: For the purpose of this document, a three-fourths vote shall be defined as: at least three-fourths of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, excluding blanks and abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting at which a quorum is present.

ARTICLE VI

Disciplinary Proceedings

Section 1

Grounds: Failure to perform the duties of the office as prescribed in this Constitution and Bylaws, or conduct detrimental to the well being of this Association shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

Section 2

- A. Recommendation: A National Board member or any member of NBLSA may submit to the Board a written recommendation that an officer be disciplined for conduct described in Section 1 of this Article and Article X of the Constitution.
- B. Hearing: The Board, acting on such recommendation, voting by a simple majority may call a hearing on the merits of the recommendation at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting or at a special meeting to determine whether there are grounds for disciplinary action against the officer in question. Such officer shall be given reasonable, written notice and an opportunity to defend him/herself at said hearing.
- C. Discipline: If grounds for disciplinary action exist, censure or impeachment of the officer in question shall be appropriate.
- D. Censure: Censure shall be in order upon two-thirds vote of the Board.

Section 3

Impeachment: Impeachment is in order upon a two-thirds vote of the Board or a two-thirds vote of the General Membership.

ARTICLE VII

Parliamentary Authority

Section 1

Robert's Rules of Order: The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Bylaws and any special rules of order the Association may adopt.

Section 2

Parliamentarian: One or more persons shall be appointed by the National Chairperson, subject to the approval of the Board to serve in the position of an Advisor to advise and counsel the National Chairperson and the Board on parliamentary procedure of this Association.

Section 3

Interpretation: The Parliamentarian, shall be the final authority, subject to Article III, Section 2(D) of these Bylaws, to decide all questions of interpretation and construction of the parliamentary authority and procedural rules of this association. The Parliamentarian shall be responsible for providing all delegates with the current procedural rules.

Amended April 2003