

BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Barbara C. Jordan Chapter

THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL OF LAW

CONSTITUTION

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Article I. INTRODUCTION

Section 1. Name

This organization shall be known as the Barbara C. Jordan, Thurgood Marshall School of Law Chapter of the Black Law Students Association (hereinafter “the organization” or “BLSA”).

Article II. PURPOSE

Section 1. Mission Statement

The agendas, activities, and policies of the organization shall be consistent with the following mission statement:

“We are an organization of *excellence* committed to making a difference in the lives of black law students and the community at large, by providing resources and activities to black law students and instilling an awareness of and commitment to the needs of the black community. Through professional competence and legal excellence, we expect *great success* in every activity we undertake.”

Section 2. Other Obligations

The organization shall be obligated to

- A. Maintain a relationship with minority alumni and other interested lawyers from the local area;
- B. Maintain active status as a chapter of the National Black Law Students Association.

Article III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility

Membership shall be open to all law students at Thurgood Marshall School of Law, who pay the designated local dues. In the event that the NBLSA (National Black Law Students Association) Constitution or rules require payment of local and national dues to be eligible for local chapter membership, said payment is required for local chapter membership.

Section 2. Rights and Privileges

Active Members shall be vested with the following rights and privileges:

- a. Ability to participate in all activities sponsored or funded by BLSA
- b. Ability to vote for the election of officers
- c. Ability to run for and hold a position as an executive officer
- d. Ability to hold a committee chair position

Section 3. Termination of Membership

Any termination of membership, whether a voluntary resignation by a member, or the involuntary termination of a membership by the Executive Board, must be in writing. Terminated members shall not be reimbursed for their membership dues.

Article IV. EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS

Section 1. Definition

The following positions constitute the Executive Board: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, Historian, and the 1L Representative.

Section 2. Authority

The executive power of the organization shall be vested in Executive Board, and the Board shall be empowered to pass any rules, policy, or agenda necessary for the efficient administration of the organization.

Section 3. Eligibility

- A. Any member may apply for a position on Executive Board.
- B. Only 1L members who have paid their membership dues by a date designated by the Executive Board may run for the position of 1L Representative.

Section 4. Candidacy

In order to run for an executive board position, all eligible candidates must submit a statement of intent outlining their respective platforms to the Vice President at a date and time specified by the Executive Board. The statement of intent must state the requested position and any other elements prescribed by the Executive Board.

Section 5. Term of Office

A. The term of office for each Executive Board Officer, with the exception of the 1L Representative, shall not commence until the last week in April following the election and shall terminate on the last week in April of the following year.

B. The term of office for the 1L Representative shall commence on the day election results are determined (not later than September 15th) and shall terminate on the last week in April of the following year.

C. Newly elected officers shall preside over the April general meeting following their election.

Section 6. Removal

A. Any Executive Board Officer shall be automatically removed from office for not maintaining active membership status.

B. Any Executive Board Official, with the exception of the President, may be removed from office upon passage of a vote of no confidence by a two-thirds majority of the Executive Board.

C. The President may only be removed from office in accordance with the procedure set forth in the Constitution of the Student Bar Association.

Section 7. Votes of No Confidence

A. A vote of no confidence allows the Executive Board, to express disfavor in an Executive Board Officer.

B. Vote of No Confidence by recall

1. A vote of no confidence by recall is used to remove an Executive Officer, with the exception of the President, from their respective positions.

2. A vote of no confidence by recall requires the passage of a two-thirds vote by the Executive Board.

3. Upon the successful passage of a vote of no confidence, the President shall appoint a member from the Executive Board, or membership, to fill the vacancy.

4. Limitations

a. Only one vote of no confidence by recall may be held per semester against an individual Executive Board Officer; and

b. Votes of no confidence shall not be held during the summer and before the third general meeting of the Fall semester.

C. No action shall be taken to restrict the right of a member of the Executive Board to call for a vote of no confidence.

Section 8. Succession

The line of succession for the presidency shall be Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, Historian, and then 1L Representative.

Section 9. President, Powers and Duties

A. The President shall have the following powers in the performance of the following duties:

1. Serve as chief executive officer and administrative officer of the organization
2. Serve as the single voice of the organization to the Law School administration and student body and to the Texas Southern University community as a whole
3. Preside over all general meetings and Executive Board meetings
4. Call special meetings of the organization
5. Appoint committee members
6. Serve on, appoint, or both serve on and appoint members to any Law School committee
7. Present the financial information of the organization to the membership by the third meeting of a given semester.

B. Powers and Duties listed in this Section are solely for the President and may not be shared with or delegated to any other executive official or member, with the exception of the Vice President.

Section 10. Vice President, Powers and Duties

The Vice President shall have the following powers in the performance of the following duties:

- A. Serve as chief assistant to the President
- B. Assume the duties of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President

C. Administer and oversee all elections of the organization

D. Preside over and manage all standing and special committees of the organization.

Section 11. Secretary, Powers and Duties

The Secretary shall have the following powers in the performance of the following duties:

A. Maintain the records of the chapter

B. Draft and dispense, upon request, the minutes of each general and Executive Board meeting

C. Maintain a directory of contact information of BLSA members and all consenting minority students at the Law School

D. Inform the membership of the meeting dates and times of general or special meetings and events

E. Schedule rooms and other necessary facilities for activities of the organization

F. Create, whenever necessary, a calendar of events to be distributed to the membership.

Section 12. Treasurer, Powers and Duties

The Treasurer shall have the following powers in the performance of the following duties:

A. Maintain the financial records of the organization in good order

B. Assist the President in the preparation of a budget

C. Collect all monies of the organization or members and deposit all monies received in the organizational account within five to ten business days

D. Dispense money for reimbursement to members

E. Provide the financial information of the organization, within a reasonable period of time, at the written request of any member

F. Pay all national and regional organizational dues

G. Oversee all standing and special committees pertaining to fiscal matters of the organization including fundraising.

Section 13. Parliamentarian, Powers and Duties

The Parliamentarian shall have the following powers in the performance of the following duties:

- A. Serve as the chief judicial officer of the organization
- B. Ensure that all actions of the Executive Board are pursuant to the text and spirit of this Constitution and any other governing documents of the organization
- C. Serve as a liaison between the membership and Executive Board by bringing all complaints and grievances of any member to the attention of the Executive Board
- D. Ensure that the general meeting is operated in accordance with this Constitution and any other procedural rules adopted by the organization
- E. Ensure that each member receives a copy of the Constitution
- F. Ensure the ethical and professional practices of the Executive Board

Section 14. Historian, Powers and Duties

The Historian shall have the following powers in the performance of the following duties:

- A. Take pictures at all BLSA sponsored and co-sponsored events; collect programs, flyers, and hand-outs relating to such events
- B. Update and maintain the files of the chapter with the assistance of the Secretary
- C. Prepare a scrapbook of the year's activities
- D. Oversee the content on the BLSA website
- E. Serve as presiding officer of the Public Relations Committee

Section 15. 1L Representative, Powers and Duties

The 1L Representative shall have the following powers in the performance of the following duties:

- A. Represent the 1L class on the Executive Board; and
- B. Serve as a member of the Education Committee.

Section 16. Dues Obligations

Executive Board Officer must have fulfilled their dues obligations to the Treasurer by a date designated by the Executive Board. Failure to meet the dues obligations shall subject the officer to revocation of membership status.

Section 17. Vacancies

The following rules shall apply when an executive official position is vacant

- A. Should a position become vacant because of the resignation of an officer, a special election shall be held seasonably to fill the vacancy.
- B. Should a position become vacant because no one ever applied for the position or chose to be elected to the position, the President shall be empowered to appoint someone to fill the vacancy.
- C. The line of succession prescribed in Article IV, Section 8, shall be used in the incapacity or absence of an executive officer and shall not be used when an officer has been removed or has resigned.
- D. The position of Vice President shall be an exception to the rule prescribed in Subsection C of this Section. In the event of the removal, resignation, or permanent incapacity of the President, the Vice President shall assume the position of the President. An election shall then be held to fill the position of the Vice President.

Article V. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees

The standing committee of the Association shall be as follows:

- A. Academic Relations. The Academic Relations Committee shall implement all educational programs of the organization.
- B. Special Events. The Special Events Committee shall plan and implement all special events of the organization.
- C. Community Service. The Community Service Committee shall locate opportunities where the organization can contribute to the community.
- D. Social/Hospitality: The Social/Hospitality Committee shall plan all the social events of the organization and express the good will of the organization through issuing cards or other mechanisms, to members of the Law School community experiencing personal hardships or celebrations.

Section 2. Special (Ad-hoc) Committees

The President shall be empowered to create special committees as deemed necessary. The only exception is the Vice President's authority to create an Elections Committee.

Section 3. Committee Chairs

A. Committee chairs shall be appointed by the President.

B. Removal

1. Committee heads shall be automatically removed from office by not maintaining active membership status.

2. Committee heads shall be removed from office with just cause at the discretion of the President.

C. Committee heads shall be called "Chair" of their respective committees.

D. The term of the committee head shall expire the last week in April. Any project that has not yet been completed shall be carried out by the former committee chair unless the incoming Executive Board state otherwise.

E. Committee chairs shall have the following powers in the performance of the following duties:

1. Act as the chief operating officer of the committee by managing all activities of the committee; and

2. Serve as presiding officer of the committee.

3. May appoint vice chairs of their respective committee to assist in the duties of office. In the absence or incapacity of the committee chair, the vice chair shall assume the duties of the committee chair.

Section 4. Dues Obligations of Committee Chairs

All committee heads of the organization shall have paid their dues obligations to the Treasurer by the October general meeting.

Article VI. MEETINGS

Section 1. General Meetings

A. All members are to be notified of a general meeting one week in advance. In the case of an emergency meeting, notice requirements are to be determined at the President's discretion.

B. The recognized form of parliamentary procedure governing the orderly transaction of business at each meeting is Robert's Rules of Order. Such procedure may be temporarily modified at any meeting by a simple majority vote of members present and voting at a general meeting.

C. Quorum necessary to conduct official business at a meeting shall consist of one-half or (50%) of the Executive Board Officers.

Section 2. Agenda

A. The President shall set the agenda for each meeting.

B. Any item of business to be placed on the agenda must be submitted to the President at least 24 hours before the general meeting at which the item is to be discussed.

Section 3. Executive Board Meetings

The Executive Board shall meet at least 24 hours before the general meeting.

Section 4. Committee Meetings

A. The various standing and special committees shall meet at a time designated by the committee chair, Vice President, or President.

B. Committee chairs shall also prepare an oral or written report of their respective planned activities at each general meeting.

C. Each committee chair shall provide a written report or progress report on their respective planned activities to the Vice President at a time designated by the Vice President.

Article VII. FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Section 1. Membership dues

A. All members shall pay dues at a time designated by the Executive Board.

B. The amount shall be determined by the Executive Board

Section 2. Budget

The President, with the assistance of the Treasurer, shall present a budget to the membership at the next general meeting following the due date for the payment of membership dues, at the second meeting of the Spring semester, and at the request of any member.

Section 3. Expenditures

A. The President shall approve all expenditures of the organization.

B. The Executive Board may veto any expenditure approved by the President by a two-thirds vote. Expenditures may only be vetoed as long as the organization has not been legally or contractually bound to perform the object of the expenditure.

C. Even though the President or Executive Board may approve of an expenditure, the Treasurer shall be empowered to actually purchase or allocate funds to the expenditure. The Treasurer shall also be empowered to overturn, amend, or revoke any approved expenditure when the expenditure is not financially prudent for the organization.

Article VIII. VOTING

Section 1. General Rules

A. Each member shall have one vote on the election of Executive Board Officers.

B. Voting may be conducted by ballot, by general consent, by electronic means, by voice, by show of hands, by rising, or by any combination of the aforementioned voting procedures.

C. Proxy votes shall not be allowed.

D. Abstention votes may be used by any member; however, the member making such votes shall be subtracted from the total number of members required for a vote.

E. Voting rules and procedures found in Robert's Rules of Order shall be applicable to the organization as long as they are supplementary or complementary to the rules prescribed in this Constitution or any other governing document of the organization.

Section 2. Elections

A. Elections for executive officials shall be held on or before March 31 of each academic year.

B. All officers shall be elected by simple majority vote of the active membership voting in an election. Where no candidate receives a simple majority of the votes, a run-off election shall be held among the candidates with the two highest vote totals.

Section 3. Other Types of Votes

Any other votes taken by the organization that may occur for any reason shall be approved by a simple majority of members present and voting in a meeting or voting in an election or any other voting procedures.

Section 4. Role of Vice President

A. The Vice President shall set the dates of elections and set the dates for the submission of electronic votes and absentee ballots.

B. All aspects of elections and voting procedures shall be administered by the Vice President, with the exception of voting procedures at meetings. Voting procedures that may arise in the normal operations of meetings shall be administered by the presiding officer of the meeting, typically the President. However, any elections that may occur at a meeting shall be administered by the Vice President.

C. In the event the Vice President is a candidate for office, elections shall be administered by an Executive Officer, as long as the Officer is not a candidate, in accordance to the following order: Treasurer, Secretary, Historian, IL Representative, and then the appointment of a general member by members present and voting at a general meeting.

D. The Vice President shall be empowered to create a committee of members to assist in the administration of elections.

Section 5. Electronic Voting

A. Electronic votes shall consist of the submission of an e-mail from qualified voting members to an e-mail account designated by the Vice President.

B. E-mails must be submitted from an e-mail account with the school's official domain name (i.e., @tsulaw.edu), or via TWEN (The West Education Network).

Section 6. Verification of Election Results, Election Commission

A. All elections shall be verified by an Election Commission before the announcement of the election results.

B. Complaints concerning the results or administration of elections shall be submitted to the Parliamentarian for resolution through the Election Commission.

C. The Election Commission shall be chaired by the Parliamentarian.

D. In the event the Parliamentarian is a candidate for office, the Election Commission shall be chaired by an Executive Officer, as long as the officer is not a candidate or serving as an administrator of elections, in accordance to the following order: Treasurer, Secretary, Historian, IL Representative, and then the appointment of a general member by members present and voting at a general meeting.

E. The composition, rules, and procedures of the Election Commission shall be outlined in the bylaws.

F. The role of the Election Commission in the election process shall differ from the role of the Vice President as administrator of elections in that the Election Commission shall act as an entity to review the actions of the Vice President and ensure the election procedures were performed pursuant to this Constitution and any rules governing the organization.

Article IX. DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

Section 1. Power

All disciplinary action shall be presented before the Disciplinary committee. The Executive Board shall have the power to recommend censorship and/or impeachment of any member of the committee.

Section 2. Disciplinary Committee

A. The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of the Vice-President and the Parliamentarian, as well as three (3) active members of the body to be designated by the President when needed.

B. In the event that the President is the subject of the disciplinary proceedings, the power to appoint will follow the appropriate chain of command. In the event that the Vice-President or Parliamentarian is the subject of the disciplinary proceeding, the officer in charge shall appoint an active member from the body to sit in their seat.

C. The Parliamentarian shall serve as presiding officer of the Disciplinary Committee.

Section 3. Procedure

A. The Disciplinary Committee receives the complaint.

B. The committee decides, upon evidence presented by the complainant and the accused, whether the issue should be presented to the body for a vote on the disciplinary action recommended by the committee, or whether the issue is moot.

C. If the issue is presented to the body, a vote by a quorum of the Executive Board shall be necessary to decide any judgment.

Article X. BY-LAWS and AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Creation of By-laws

The organization may adopt bylaws to increase the efficiency of the organization. By-laws shall be created by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting at a duly constituted meeting of the organization.

Section 2. Amendments

A. Constitutional amendments may be proposed for consideration by twenty-percent of the entire membership or by the Executive Board.

B. Proposed amendments shall become part of the Constitution after ratification by a two-thirds vote of members voting in an election.

C. By-law amendments shall be made by a simple majority vote of members present and voting at a duly constituted meeting of the organization.

Section 3. Redrafting the Constitution

The organization may redraft, substantially revise, or reorganize this Constitution upon the passage of three-fourths votes of members voting in an election.

Section 4. Effective Date

The Constitution and By-laws of the Association, or any amendment thereof, shall become effective immediately upon adoption, except where an alternative date is specified therein.