

# Constitution

## ARTICLE I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The name of this organization is Black Law Students Association. This organization will utilize the acronym BLSA in all publicity materials and correspondence. This organization is affiliated with the national organization known as NBLSA (National Black Law Students Association).

## ARTICLE II. PURPOSE STATEMENT

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

- Articulate and promote the professionals 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;
- 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 about 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.

Any interested enrolled UF student may be a member.

## ARTICLE III. COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

Upon approval by the Department of Student Activities and Involvement, Black Law Students Association shall be a registered student organization at the University of Florida. Black Law Students Association shall comply with all local, state and federal laws, as well as all University of Florida regulations, policies, and procedures. Such compliance includes but is not limited to the University's regulations related to Non-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment (including sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking), Hazing, Commercial Activity, and Student Leader Eligibility.

## ARTICLE IV. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

### Section A. Non-Discrimination

BLSA agrees that it will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act.

### Section B. Sexual Harassment

BLSA agrees that it will not engage in any activity that is unwelcome conduct of sexual nature that creates a hostile environment. Behaviors that could create a hostile environment include sexual harassment (which could include inappropriate sexual comments), sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

### Section C. Hazing

BLSA agrees that it will not initiate, support, or encourage any events or situations that recklessly, by design, or intentionally endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student for any purpose including but not limited to initiation or admission into or affiliation with any student group or organization.

### Section D. Responsibility to Report

If this organization becomes aware of any such conduct described in this article, BLSA will report it immediately to Student Activities and Involvement, the Director of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, or the University's Title IX Coordinator.

## **ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in this organization is open to enrolled students at the University of Florida. Non-students, spouses, faculty, and staff may be associate members; however, they may not vote or hold office. All members and associate members are free to leave and disassociate without fear of retribution, retaliation, or harassment.

## **ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS**

Section A: The elected officers of BLSA shall be President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Historian, Director of Communications, Community Service Chair, Fundraising Chair, Programming Chair, Social Chair, and Competition Chair.

Part 1: The President shall preside at all meetings of the organization and shall coordinate the work of the officers and committees.

Part 2: The Vice-President shall serve as an aide to the President and shall perform the duties of the President in their absence or inability to serve.

Part 3: The Treasurer shall receive all monies of BLSA; shall keep an accurate record of receipts and expenditures; shall pay out local funds in accordance with the approved budget as authorized by the organization. The Treasurer shall present a financial statement at every meeting of BLSA and at other times when requested by the President or Vice President.

Part 4: The Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of BLSA and shall perform other duties as may be delegated.

Part 5: The Historian shall take photos and or videos at all BLSA meetings, events, gatherings, and the like. The Historian is responsible for updating all of BLSA's social media sites, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Part 6: The Director of Communications shall distribute all relevant information to the general body, including scholarship opportunities and information about scheduled meetings or events; this is to be distributed via email or social media.

Part 7: The Community Service Chair shall be in contact with local service providers, plan and schedule community service projects for BLSA members to engage in after first reaching a collective consensus on what projects the organization is interested in participating in.

Part 8: The Fundraising Chair shall be responsible for organizing at least two (one in the fall semester and one in the spring semester) fundraisers benefiting the BLSA organization. The Fundraising Chair is to ensure that money collected from such fundraisers are transferred directly to the Treasurer, who in turn shall transfer the funds to the appropriate accounts associated with BLSA finances.

Part 9: The Programming Chair shall reserve all meeting rooms and coordinate with the President any events that require off campus speakers.

Part 10: The Social Chair shall plan the beginning of the year welcoming social, a mentor-mentee social, and two spring socials. These socials should be off-campus.

Part 11: The Competition Chair shall assist the President in securing competition coaches. The Competition Chair shall also register each competitor and coach attending a NBLSA competition and assist the President and Treasurer in coordinating travel and stay for each competitor and coach during competition.

Section B: Officers shall assume their official duties at the close of the last general meeting of the academic year and shall serve for a term of one academic year and/or until their successors are elected/appointed.

Section C: Any officer of BLSA may be removed from office through the following process:

Part 1: A written request by at least three voting members of the organization shall be submitted to either the President, Vice President, Treasurer, or Secretary. Written notification shall be sent to the officer in question asking that officer to be present at the next meeting and prepared to respond to the removal request.

Part 2: A two-thirds majority vote of members present is necessary to remove the officer.

Part 3: In the event of the removal of an officer, a special provision may be granted to the remaining officers to appoint an interim replacement from the pool of active

voting members until a general election can be held to fill the officer position. An election shall be held no later than 30 days from the date of the removal of an officer.

In the event of the removal of an officer during the summer months, a general election shall be held no later than 30 days after the start date of the next academic semester.

Section D: Any officer of BLSA may resign from office through the following process:

Part 1: The officer shall submit written notification of their resignation to either the President, Treasurer, or Secretary.

Part 2: A special provision may be granted to the remaining officers to appoint an interim replacement from the pool of active voting members until a general election can be held to fill the officer position. An election shall be held no later than 30 days from the date of the resignation of an officer.

In the event of the resignation of an officer during the summer months, a general election shall be held no later than 30 days after the start date of the next academic semester.

## **ARTICLE VII. ELECTIONS**

### **Nominations**

Nominations for all officers shall take place annually from the members at a general body meeting in March. Any member may nominate any other voting member, including themselves. Nominations may also be made during the election meeting, which shall be held in late March, prior to closing of nominations.

### **Voting**

Voting shall occur by secret ballot and a simple majority vote is required to elect an officer. If there are more than two candidates running and no candidate receives a majority vote, there shall be a run-off vote between the top two vote recipients during the election meeting. No person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

## **ARTICLE VIII. STUDENT ORGANIZATION ADVISOR**

The student organization advisor shall serve as a resource person and provide advisory support for the officers and members of the organization. The student organization advisor should attend executive and general meetings; however, the student organization advisor may not vote in any BLSA matters. The

student organization shall be nominated by the officers and confirmed by a majority vote of the members in attendance. The student organization advisor shall serve a one-year term with the ability to be re-appointed. If the student organization advisor can no longer perform his/her duties or is no longer eligible to be student organization advisor, then officers described in Article VI Section A shall select a replacement student organization advisor. The replacement advisor must be approved by a majority vote of members in attendance at the next BLSA meeting, before officially taking the position.

## **ARTICLE IX. FINANCE**

BLSA will not require membership dues; however, it will raise funds through carwashes and similar activities, for t-shirts, travel to leadership conferences, and to supplement student government funding for other BLSA activities.

Members are expected to participate in these fundraising activities. BLSA will also apply for Student Government funding.

## **ARTICLE X. DISSOLUTION OF ORGANIZATION**

In the event this organization dissolves, all monies left in the treasury, after outstanding debts and claims have been paid, shall be donated to "UF Caring and Sharing Mentoring Project."

## **ARTICLE XI. VOTING MEMBER**

Section A: Who can vote?

Part 1: To be an eligible voting member, one must attend three BLSA events during the current academic year, except in the event of the removal or resignation of an officer. These events can be on or off campus, but strictly social events cannot constitute all three required events for voting eligibility.

Part 2: To vote, you must be present and have heard the speeches of all candidates running for the position you are voting for.

Part 3: No one may participate in voting once the initial speech begins, if they were not originally present.

## **ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION**

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of BLSA by two thirds vote of the members present and voting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment was given at the previous meeting. All amended constitutions must immediately be submitted directly to the Department of Student Activities and Involvement for review and approval.