

**BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
ROBERT H. WATERS CHAPTER
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI SCHOOL OF LAW**

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I: NAME AND AUTHORITY

Section 1

Name

This Association shall be known as the Black Law Student Association at the University of Miami School of Law. [hereinafter "UM BLSA"].

Section 2

Authority

This Constitution regulates the UM BLSA chapter, and the UM BLSA executive board. It is the intent of this instrument to guide UM BLSA and to supplement the purpose, duties, and rights stated in the National Black Law Students Association Constitution [hereinafter the "National Constitution"].

Section 3

Governing Body

The governing body UM BLSA shall be the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall adopt and maintain Bylaws and Policies and take such other actions as are necessary for the welfare of UM BLSA. The Executive Board shall be responsible for executing UM BLSA policies, decisions, and mandates, while overseeing the day to day affairs of UM BLSA.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of UM BLSA shall be to bring about a union of black law students at University of Miami School of law and to:

- provide Black law students a forum for expressing their unique needs and concerns;
- open and maintain the lines of communication between Black law students and the Black community;
- utilize the collective resources of the member chapters to improve the quality of legal education and effectuate goals of the National Black Law Students Association;
- provide greater opportunity for employment for UM BLSA students;
- articulate and promote the professional needs and goals of Black law students;
- foster and encourage professional competence; and
- promote legal awareness in the Black community.
- Utilize the collective resources of the member chapters to effectuate the goals of the National Black Law Students Association as expressed in Article II of the National Constitution.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1

Composition

UM BLSA shall be composed of paid members from the University of Miami School of Law

Section 2

Membership

A. Eligibility for Membership

General Membership shall consist of all matriculating Black law students at the University of Miami School of Law

B. Classifications of Membership

- i. Active membership is defined to be all members that have fulfilled the payment of dues for that fiscal year, which entitles them to all rights and privileges of UM BLSA defined herein.
- ii. Inactive membership shall consist of any member that does not fulfill the dues requirement.
- iii. Associate membership of UM BLSA shall be limited to Black law graduates and designated members of associate organizations.
- iv. Honorary membership may be extended to any person nominated by the general membership and approved by majority vote of the general assembly.
- v. Individual membership: For the purposes of voting, running for any office, being appointed to any office, and participating in the Frederick Douglass Moot Court Competition and the Mock Trial Competition, an individual member is any Black law student who is a financial member of UM BLSA and in academic good standing at University of Miami School of Law.

Section 3

Rights

- i. Active members shall have the right to attend meetings, participate in programs, vote, and run for executive board offices.
- ii. Inactive members may attend meetings and programs of UM BLSA, but may not vote.
- iii. Associate members may attend BLSA meetings, participate in BLSA programs, but may not vote nor seek an office.
- iv. Honorary members may attend BLSA meetings and participate in all BLSA programs, but may not vote nor seek an office.

Section 4

Duties

Each member shall regularly participate in the activities of UM BLSA.

In order to activate membership, as stated in Article III, Section 2(b), each member shall remit payment of dues. Dues shall be submitted no later than October 1st the current academic year. The amount of dues required of UM BLSA shall be determined by Article IX, Section 1 of the National Black Law Students Association Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV: STANDING COMMITTEES

The following shall be standing committees of the UM BLSA: Elections Committee, Fundraising Committee, Community Service Committee, Membership Committee, Mentorship Committee, and Grievance Committee.

ARTICLE V: EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1

Composition

The following may be the officers of UM BLSA:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

- SRBLSA Liaison
- Historian
- Community Relations Chair

Section 2

Appointment

The UM BLSA Executive Board shall have the authority to appoint any staff persons in order to effectuate the goals and policies of UM BLSA. The President may appoint the following non-voting officers: Fundraising Chair, Chaplain, SBA Liaison, Sergeant at Arms, and Parliamentarian. All appointments must be ratified by three-fourths (¾) vote of the elected officers of the Executive Board. Appointees shall have no voting rights on the Executive Board.

Section 3

Meeting Attendance

- i. UM BLSA Executive Board Members must attend each Executive Board meeting.
- ii. If a member is unable to attend he or she must submit a typewritten report, if due, to the Secretary forty-eight (48) hours before the scheduled meeting, unless otherwise excused by the President.
- iii. In order to remain an Executive Board member, board members must be present at the majority of Executive Board meetings unless otherwise agreed upon by the Executive Board.
- iv. Any removal or impeachment of a Board member will be governed by the UM BLSA Bylaws.

Section 3

Elections

- i. Election of Officers: Executive Board members shall be elected by a majority of the voting members at the UM BLSA voting meeting. Such elections will be coordinated by the Election Committee and must occur no later than the first week in April of the current school year.
- ii. Term: The officers shall serve in office for a term of one (1) year. A term of office shall commence May 1 and shall terminate April 30 of the following year.
- iii. Transition: There shall be a mandatory transitional meeting of the current and newly elected Executive Board members at the conclusion of the current school year

ARTICLE VI: VOTING

Section 1

Apportionment

Each member shall have one (1) vote for the purpose of election of UM BLSA officers and to enact all other issues submitted to vote.

Section 2

Proxy

Each Executive Board member giving proxy must comply with the following provision:

The Executive Board member must present a written proxy to be certified by the Secretary or the Parliamentarian.

Section 3

Absentee Ballots for Elections of Officers

- i. Members that cannot attend the UM BLSA voting meeting, and thus, vote in the election of officers, must submit a legitimate reason to the Secretary.

- ii. Upon determination that a member's reason for non-attendance at the voting meeting is legitimate, the Executive Board shall issue the member an absentee ballot.
- iii. Members permitted to vote by absentee must submit their vote to the Elections Chairman one (1) week prior to the UM BLSA voting meeting.
- iv. The absentee ballots will be prepared in advance with the names of the prospective candidates and the positions for which they are running.
- v. The ballots must be turned in by the member requesting it and must be signed by the President.
- vi. The UM BLSA Academic Advisor must certify the absentee ballots.
- vii. The Elections Chairman will then announce the number of absentee ballots prior to the commencement of the voting process.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS

Section 1

Adoption

The following method will be used to adopt and ratify all amendments to the Constitution:

- i. Proposed amendments will be placed first on the agenda and submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.
- ii. During the meeting each proposal may be discussed and debated. Debate on each proposal will last no longer than twelve (12) minutes.
- iii. Debate may also be closed by a motion from the floor, after which, the proposal will be presented for vote in its final form.
- iv. The Secretary and Parliamentarian shall prepare a report of all passed amendments set forth in their final form and distribute it to the voting delegates at the final plenary session.
- v. At the final plenary session, the President shall call for the ratification vote on each proposed amendment in accordance with the appropriate standard. Ratification shall require a majority vote of all Executive Board members and Constitution Committee & Bylaws members.
- vi. Amendments shall take effect immediately after ratification.

Section 2

Constitution Amendments

Adoption of additions and/or repeals to this Constitution require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active members present.

Section 3

Bylaws Amendments

Adoptions of additions and/or repeals to these bylaws may be made by a majority vote of the active members present.

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BYLAWS

**CHAPTER I
ARTICLE I: ENTITIES OF UM BLSA**

Section 1

Executive Board

The elected Executive Board shall be the managing directors for the general operation of UM BLSA consistent with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws.

- i. The Executive Board shall consist of the officers and representatives elected by UM BLSA members, which are the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Community Relations Chair, Historian, and SRBLSA Liaison. Appointed members of the UM BLSA Executive Board include: Fundraising Director, Chaplain, SBA Liaison, and Parliamentarian.
- ii. The Executive Board shall meet at regularly scheduled intervals and take such action as is appropriate to carry out the directions and decisions of UM BLSA.
- iii. The Executive Board shall have the authority to appoint an Executive Director and staff, as provided for in the Constitution and Bylaws of UM BLSA, to perform the administrative support and general operational tasks of UM BLSA.
- iv. The Executive Board shall take such actions as are appropriate for the efficient operation of UM BLSA so long as such actions are not inconsistent with, nor prohibited by the approved actions of the University of Miami School of Law Inter-Club Council [hereinafter "ICC"] or the Constitution and Bylaws or the National Constitution and Bylaws.
- v. The Executive Board shall make timely distribution of policies of UM BLSA as well as program directives and operational guidelines established by the ICC Policies and Procedures Manual for use in regulating and conducting business of UM BLSA.

Section 2

Authorized Members

The Black law students are the duly authorized membership of UM BLSA for whom UM BLSA and its organizational entities exist to support and nurture.

An Honorary Member shall be approved for membership and inducted by the Executive Board. They are entitled to affiliate with UM BLSA, but shall be ineligible for elected or appointed office in UM BLSA.

An Associate Member shall be approved for membership and inducted by the Chapter. They are entitled to affiliate with UM BLSA, but shall be ineligible for elected or appointed office in UM BLSA.

An individual shall be limited in their membership rights and privileges without being afforded due process with respect to allegation made against them.

An individual shall be in good standing as a member by paying UM BLSA Chapter dues for the given fiscal year.

ARTICLE II: BYLAWS

UM BLSA shall have the right to adopt Bylaws for the regulation of affairs so long as such Bylaws are not inconsistent with, nor prohibited by, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Region or the National Black Law Students Association.

ARTICLE III: VOTING

Section 1

Apportionment

Each member shall have one (1) vote for the purpose of election of UM BLSA officers and to enact all other issues submitted to vote.

Section 2

Proxy

Each Executive Board member giving proxy must comply with the following provision:

The Executive Board member must present a written proxy to be certified by the Secretary or the Parliamentarian.

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- iii. Members permitted to vote by absentee must submit their vote to the Elections Chairman one (1) week prior to the UM BLSA voting meeting.
- iv. The absentee ballots will be prepared in advance with the names of the prospective candidates and the positions for which they are running.
- v. The ballots must be turned in by the member requesting it and must be signed by the President.
- vi. The UM BLSA Academic Advisor must certify the absentee ballots.
- vii. The Elections Chairman will then announce the number of absentee ballots prior to the commencement of the voting process.

CHAPTER II: OFFICERS

ARTICLE I: ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE AND TERMS OF OFFICE

Section 1

Elected Officers

The officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Community Relations Director, Historian, and SRBLSA Liaison. These officers shall be elected at each academic year voting meeting, and may not succeed themselves in their respective office after service of two (2) successive full terms. The elected officer must be an active member as defined by Article III of the UM BLSA Constitution.

Section 2

Appointed Officers

The offices of Parliamentarian, Chaplain, SBA Liaison, Sergeant at Arms, and Fundraising Director may be appointed by the President with the advice and confirmation of the Executive Board before the conclusion of each academic year voting meeting or as soon as possible thereafter.

ARTICLE II: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1

President

The President shall be the Chief Executive of UM BLSA, Presiding Officer and Chairman of the Executive Board. It shall be the duty of the President to:

- i. Exercising general executive authority over the business and activities of UM BLSA;
- ii. Order the disbursement of the funds of UM BLSA as and to sign checks whenever necessary;
- iii. Require periodic written reports from each of the elected Executive Board Members giving an account of their respective works for the proceeding quarter and their plans and/or program for the ensuing quarter. A digest of these reports, with such comments as the President deems expedient, shall be forwarded to each Executive Board Member;
- iv. Provide documentation to the Executive Board (i.e. receipts, etc.) for all non-budgeted expenditures;
- v. Set and implement administrative procedures for the efficient operation of UM BLSA;
- vi. Provide information regarding the state of UM BLSA to the Members;
- vii. Recommend appointments for Office of Parliamentarian, Chaplain, Fundraising Chair.
- viii. Appoint other such officers as provided for in the Constitution and Bylaws;
- ix. Name Committees and appoint the Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons and members of the committees;
- x. Represent UM BLSA at relevant conferences and meetings that occurs within or outside the University of Miami School of Law if such conference or meeting will benefit UM BLSA;
- xi. Implement Regionally Mandated Projects, in accordance with Article XII of the National Constitution;
- xii. Performing such other functions and duties as the ICC may provide; and
- xiii. Performing such other functions and exercising such further duties as assigned by the Constitutions and/or Bylaws of the National Black Law Student Association.

Section 2

Vice President

The Vice President shall be the second in order of leadership of UM BLSA and shall:

- i. Assist the President is carrying out responsibilities and duties set for in Section 1 of this chapter;
- ii. Preside over general membership meeting and/or Executive Board meetings in the absence of the President;
- iii. Perform such duties as are assigned by the President and the Executive Board;
- iv. Exercise coordinating supervision over the activities of all standing committees, see that these committees are functioning, and provide the President and/or the Executive Board with a periodic report of the progress and work being performed by the several committees; and
- v. Convene at least one joint meeting of all committee chairmen for the purposes of coordination and clarification of the activities that each committee is pursuing.

Section 3

Secretary

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to:

- i. Keep strict record of the proceedings of the Executive Board and to send a report of same to each Executive Board member within seven (7) days after the close of and Executive Board Meeting and to file a copy of the report with the official records of UM BLSA;
- ii. Keep an accurate history of UM BLSA covering the period of his or her term of office and, upon leaving office, to disseminate the document to the newly elected Secretary;
- iii. Send the family of a deceased member an appropriate letter of condolence in the name of UM BLSA immediately upon receipt of notice of the death of the member;
- iv. Cause the creation of and maintain such system of records and documentation as might be required to ensure the efficient operation of UM BLSA;
- v. Perform other secretarial duties of the Executive Board at the direction of the President;
- vi. Maintain a list of all members in UM BLSA;
- vii. Use a standard form to collect the personal history of each member the chapter and furnish the Regional Secretary and Sub-Regional Director with a duplicate copy of such history, with additions and changes;
- viii. Maintain a list of all officers in UM BLSA; and
- ix. Act as an alternate signatory when necessary.

Section 4

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be the Chief Financial Officer of UM BLSA. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to:

- i. Receive and account for all funds of UM BLSA;
- ii. Provide regular accurate reports of the financial status of UM BLSA to the Members;
- iii. Disburse the funds of UM BLSA on order from the President and to countersign such all disbursed checks;
- iv. Become and remain bonded for the duration of the term; and
- v. Submit a final written comprehensive report to the Executive Board prior to or during the last General Meeting at the discretion of the President.

Section 5

Community Relations Chair

It shall be the duty of the Community Relations Chair to:

- i. Develop and implement community projects consistent with Regional Resolutions;
- ii. Report on the community service activities of the various members and the Executive Board;
- iii. Provide guidelines for community service; and
- iv. Submit a final written comprehensive report to the Executive Board prior to or during the last General Meeting at the discretion of the President.

Section 6

Historian

It shall be the duty of the Historian to:

- i. Maintain a complete and accurate account of UM BLSA events, programs, and initiatives;
- ii. Maintain a file of all photographs, documents, or any other item identified at the discretion of the President;
- iii. Oversee the preparation of any and all UM BLSA scrapbooks and/or historical files; and
- iv. Produce newsletters detailing member and chapter activities for UM BLSA members, University of Miami School of Law faculty and administration, UM BLSA alumni, and other UM BLSA supporters within the legal community.

Section 7

SRBLSA Liaison

It shall be the duty of the SRBLA Liaison to:

- i. Disseminate any and all information from the Southern Region to the UM BLSA Executive board and UM BLSA members; and
- ii. Communicate with the Sub-Regional Director any concerns, comments, or suggestions UM BLSA may have.

ARTICLE III: APPOINTED OFFICERS

Section 1

Chaplain

The Chaplain shall be the spiritual advisor of the Association and shall:

- i. Provide inspirational advice and guidance to the Executive Board and UM BLSA members; and
- ii. Provide direction and cause the annual commemoration of the passing of Members.

Section 2

Parliamentarian

It shall be the duty of the Parliamentarian to:

- i. Serve as an advisor to implement the parliamentary authority of UM BLSA;
- ii. Update the Constitution with all proposals and resolutions passed by the Executive Board; and
- iii. Serve as the Chairperson of the Recommendations and Constitution and Bylaws committees.

Section 3

Fundraising Director

It shall be the duty of the Fundraising Director to:

- i. Oversee and implement UM BLSA fundraisers;
- ii. Seek donations for UM BLSA; and
- iii. Seek sponsors for the activities of the UM BLSA Banquet.
- iv. Keep records of all fundraising activities.

Section 4

SBA Liaison

It shall be the duty of the Student Bar Association Liaison to:

- i. Attend all SBA meetings that are open to the public;
- ii. Express the Chapter's opinion on various issues; and
- iii. Report to the Chapter the various activities and decisions of the SBA.

Section 5

Sergeant at Arms

It shall be the duty of the Sergeant at Arms to maintain order in all UM BLSA meetings.

ARTICLE IV: SUCCESSION AND REMOVAL OF OFFICERS

Section 1

President Succession

In the event of death, disability, or vacation, the succession to the President shall be:

1. Vice President
2. Treasurer
3. Secretary

The remaining members of the Executive Board shall meet to elect a chief executive officer until the academic year voting meeting, if none of the above is available to serve.

Section 2

Other Officer Succession

In the event of the disability, death, vacation, or inability of other officers to properly perform their respective duties, the President, by and with the confirmation of the Executive Board, shall appoint a successor.

Section 3

Officer Removal

Executive Officers may be removed from office for cause subject to the discretion of the Executive Board and three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) affirmative vote.

Section 4

Grounds for Removal

Failure to perform the duties of the office as prescribed in this Constitution and Bylaws, or engaging in conduct detrimental to the well-being of UM BLSA shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

Section 5

Disciplinary Proceeding

Recommendation: An Executive Board member or any member may submit to the Executive Board a written recommendation that an officer be disciplined for conduct described in Section 4 of this Article.

Hearing: The Executive 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 executive 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. A report will be generated documenting the hearing meeting.

Discipline: If grounds for disciplinary action exist, censure or impeachment or any other measure as deemed reasonable by the Executive Board shall be appropriate against the officer in question.

Censure: Censure shall be in order upon two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Executive Board.

Section 6

Impeachment

Impeachment: Impeachment is in order upon a three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) vote of the Executive Board or a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the General Membership.

ARTICLE V: REMOVAL OF APPOINTED OFFICERS

In the event that any member of a committee or authority, or any person appointed by the President to perform services for UM BLSA shall become incapacitated, or should resign before expiration of their term of office, or if they fail to perform their duties in a manner satisfactory to UM BLSA, the President, by and with the consent of the Executive Board, shall appoint a successor for such disabled or resigning

member for the unexpired term of said member. In the case of disability, the Executive Board shall determine when the disability begins and ends.

CHAPTER III: UM BLSA CHAPTER AFFAIRS

ARTICLE I: MEETINGS

Section 1

General Membership Meetings

- i. There shall be at least six (6) UM BLSA general meetings per year.
- ii. General meetings shall be open to all active, inactive, honorary, and associate members of UM BLSA.
- iii. At the President's discretion, the general membership meeting shall be closed to honorary and associate members.

Section 2

Executive Board Meetings

- i. There shall be at least four (4) Executive Board Meetings per semester.
- ii. Executive Board meetings shall be open to Executive Board members, University of Miami School of Law Dean of Students, UM BLSA Advisors, and committee chairs.
- iii. At the President's discretion, an Executive Board Meeting shall be closed to University of Miami Dean of Students and committee chairs

ARTICLE II: DUES

UM BLSA dues calculation and payment scheduling will be governed by Article III, Section 5 of the National Black Law Students Association Constitution.

ARTICLE III: FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Section 1

Expenses

The UM BLSA may assist in covering the expenses of Regional and National Executive Board members in representing the UM BLSA provided:

- i. Expenses do not amount to over two-thirds (2/3) of a total requested budget;
- ii. Alternative forms of support have been sought.

Section 2

Bank Account

The Treasurer and the President must maintain a dual signature account with the University of Miami School of Law Budget Office. The Executive Board may also grant signing authority (in conjunction with either the Treasurer or President) to the Vice President.

ARTICLE IV: STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1

Authorization

UM BLSA may establish and maintain the following standing committees: Community Service, Elections, Grievances, Fundraising, Membership, and Mentorship. When deemed necessary, subcommittees shall be established. Each retiring committee chairperson is charged with the duty to turn over all committee documents to his/her successor.

Section 2

Regulations

The President with the consent of the Executive Board thereof shall appoint the Committees and Chairpersons.

Standing Committees shall be composed of not less than five (5) members.

Section 3

Duties of Standing Committees

The duties of Standing Committees are as follows:

- i. Community Service - The Community Service Committee organizes several short term projects for BLSA members to participate in during the academic year.
- ii. Elections – The Elections Committee shall be responsible to overseeing officer election procedures in accordance with UM BLSA Constitution and Bylaws
- iii. Fundraising – The Fundraising Committee shall develop an implement various fundraising programs for UM BLSA
- iv. Grievance – The Grievance Committee shall mediate disputes as deemed necessary between UM BLSA members. These grievances shall be reviewed by the Grievance committee prior to escalation to the Dean of Students or UM BLSA Advisor.
- v. Mentorship - The Mentorship Committee shall assist UM BLSA members in obtaining a mentor within UM BLSA. This committee is also responsible for coordinating events between UM BLSA members and their corresponding mentors within the Miami legal community.
- vi. Membership - This committee facilitates communication with UM BLSA members and prospective members from the University of Miami School of Law community.

ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board and Constitution and Bylaws Committee members.

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 UM BLSA may adopt.

Section 2

Interpretation

The Parliamentarian shall be the final authority, subject to review of the Executive Board, 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.