

Black Law Students' Association - [LAW SCHOOL NAME] Chapter Constitution

ARTICLE 1

Definitions and Interpretation

The name of the organization shall be Black Law Students' Association - [LAW SCHOOL NAME] Chapter, ("BLSA - [LAW SCHOOL NAME]" or the "Chapter").

"Black Law Student"	means a law student registered at [LAW SCHOOL NAME] who self-identifies as black;
"By-Law"	means a by-law of the Chapter that has been approved by two-thirds of the Executive and designated as a By-Law;
"Designated Signing Officer"	means that Executive member designated by the President and the Treasurer to be the third signing officer;
"Executive"	means those members elected by a majority of the Members to represent the interests of the Chapter;
"Executive Meeting"	means a meeting of a majority of the Executive;
"General Meeting"	means a meeting of the Members of the Chapter;
"In Camera Meetings"	means a meeting of the Executive, and any other persons the Executive deems necessary, to conduct special business. Minutes of In Camera meetings shall be kept confidential;
"Voting Member"	means an individual who has paid any required fees and registered with the Chapter; Only registered and paid (where applicable) Chapter members can vote;
"Quorum"	means fifty-one percent of BLSA - [LAW SCHOOL NAME]'s registered Chapter members;
"School year"	means the that period commencing with the official calendar date upon which [LAW SCHOOL NAME] begins and ending with the official calendar date upon which the final semester ends.
"National Newsletter"	means the official monthly newsletter curated by the Black Law Students' Association of Canada ("BLSA Canada").

ARTICLE 2

Purpose

The purposes of BLSA - **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]** are

1. to promote the welfare and interests of black students and racialized students, and to provide services, activities, publications, social forums and facilities which address black students' needs and objectives;
2. to articulate and promote the professional needs and goals of black law students;
3. to foster, develop and encourage professional competence and development;
4. to instill in the black law student and black lawyer a greater awareness and commitment to the needs of the black community;
5. to influence **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]**, legal fraternities and other legal-adjacent associations and institutions to utilize their expertise and resources to initiate a change within the legal system that will make it more responsive to the needs and concerns of the black community, and to educate such organizations about the importance and need for a diverse student body in law;
6. to encourage a more diverse field of applicants to **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]**; and
7. to work with other organizations with similar objectives and mandates.

ARTICLE 3

Membership

1. Membership in the Chapter will require each individual to remit to the Chapter **[INSERT: no fee/a fee of \$_____]** (the "Membership Fee") payable as and when determined by the Executive. **Individuals shall not be considered Members of the Chapter until the Membership Fee is paid.** The amount of the Membership Fee may be modified by the Executive by a unanimous vote of the Executive. Modifications to the amount of the Membership Fee may not be applied retroactively, and may only take effect in the school year subsequent to the school year in which the modification was approved.
2. The Executive will maintain a list of registered and past Members of the Chapter. This membership list must be updated by the end of the school year, prior to the Executive transition meeting, and sent to the National Chapter Representative of BLSA Canada prior to the end of the exam period of **[INSERT LAW SCHOOL]**.
3. All **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]** students may become members of the Chapter. Membership will be renewed each year until graduation. Members are required to attend General Meetings unless they give any member of the Executive reasonable notice that they will not be able to attend a meeting. If a Voting Member is not present at a meeting, they will not be able to vote on any matters discussed in that meeting. If a Member is unable to physically attend a General Meeting and provides reasonable notice to the Executive, the Executive may arrange telephone or video conference to participate in the General Meeting, upon the Member's request. Members who participate remotely may vote in the

General Meeting. Voting Members of the Chapter shall be entitled to:

- (a) vote at General Meetings, in elections, referenda and recall of the Chapter;
 - (b) propose or second amendments to this Constitution;
 - (d) stand for election or hold office on the Executive; and
 - (e) participate in all events or activities sponsored by the Chapter.
4. Non-registered students at [LAW SCHOOL] may also participate in Chapter events and activities sponsored by the Chapter at the discretion of the Chapter's Executive.
5. Any Member can resign from membership at any time by emailing the President or Secretary of the Executive and informing them that they wish to resign.
6. Where membership fees are required, non-paying members can still participate in all events or activities sponsored by the Chapter, at the discretion of the **Black Law Students' Association - [LAW SCHOOL NAME] Chapter Executive**. However, non-members cannot stand for election or hold office on the Executive, unless they are a member of the Chapter, and have paid the required membership fees were applicable

ARTICLE 4

The Executive

1. The Executive shall be the executive body of the Chapter and:
- (a) shall implement general policy;
 - (b) may propose and enact By-Laws;
 - (c) is charged with the day-to-day functioning of the Chapter;
 - (d) shall adhere to the BLSA Canada Code of Conduct (see Schedule B).
2. To qualify for an Executive position, the Member must be a Voting Member. The Executive positions and duties shall consist of:

A. President

The President will be the Chief Executive Officer of the Chapter. The President will have

oversight of the executive committee. The President will be responsible for external Chapter communications with the **[INSERT THE BODY THAT OVERSEES CLUBS AT YOUR LAW SCHOOL]**, faculty members, law school administration and other external organizations. The President must attend all Executive and General Meetings, unless responsibility has been deferred to another executive member prior to the meeting. The President must ensure that the mandates of the Chapter are complied with at all times by all Members. The President will have the signing power for the Chapter. The President shall be present at all official meetings and functions as the representative of the Chapter as required. The President, in addition to whomsoever the President assigns, is responsible for managing and overseeing events hosted by the Chapter. Other duties may be assigned to the President if agreed to by all members of the Executive. The President will also be required to participate in the transition process when a new President is elected. The office of the President at the **Black Law Students' Association - [LAW SCHOOL NAME] Chapter Executive**, must be held by a Black Law Student. Where a Black Law Student is unable to hold the position of President, the Vice President shall temporarily be assigned the duties of the President, until a Black Law Student can be appointed to the role of President through a by-election.

B. Vice President

The Vice President will perform the operations and functions of the Chapter as set out by the President. The Vice President will report to and work directly with the President to assist with any such duties that are assigned. In the President's absence, the Vice President will represent and temporarily assume the role, duties, and responsibilities of the President as prescribed in Article 4(2)(A) of this Constitution. The Vice President will also be required to participate in the transition process when a new Vice President is elected.

C. Vice President of Finance/Treasurer

The Treasurer will be responsible for diligently handling the finances of the Chapter. This duty involves maintaining full and accurate financial records, including a detailed report of Chapter funding, expenses, receipts, and disbursements in proper books of account. The Treasurer will be responsible for ensuring all money or other valuable effects are deposited into the BLSA - **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]** account and/or to the credit of BLSA - **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]** from time to time as directed by the President . The Treasurer will also be required to participate in the transition process when a new Treasurer is elected.

D. Secretary

The Secretary will be responsible for recording and storing the minutes of the Chapter's

meetings, administrative tasks, and keeping and maintaining books for that purpose. The Secretary will be responsible for booking meetings for the Chapter, and notifying the other members of the Executive of the time and location of meetings and events. The Secretary is the custodian of the Chapter and all of its non-financial books, papers, records and correspondence documents. The Secretary will also be required to participate in the transition process when a new Secretary is elected.

E. Vice President of Communications

The Vice President of Communications (“**VP Communications**”) will have the responsibility of spearheading all internal and external communications for the Chapter, promoting all BLSA events, and communicating the respective duties to Members and coordination of any volunteers during each event. The VP Communications will be in charge of keeping the Chapter active in the online community, especially on social networks and forums. The VP Communications will also encourage subscription of all members for the BLSA Canada national newsletter. The VP Communications will also be required to participate in the transition process when a new VP Communications is elected.

ARTICLE 5

Terms of Office and Elections

1. There will be one annual election meeting, the date of which will be set by the current Executive, but which must occur during the second semester of the school year, for the purpose of electing the next Executive. A specific date for the transition of roles (“Transition Date”) must be established, at which the responsibilities of each role will shift to the next Executive. The position will be held until a new Executive member is elected at the next annual election meeting and the next Transition Date occurs.
2. Any Voting Member of the Chapter may apply for the Executive positions by submitting an email of intent to the President. The letter of intent (see Schedule A) must detail the position being applied for and why they are suitable to fill said position. All Members will receive a list of candidates prior to the annual election meeting. At the annual election meeting all present Voting Members of the Chapter will be able to vote for a candidate for each position. The majority vote will determine who is elected. **In the event of a tie, the current President, under consultation of the current Executive, shall schedule a date for a run-off vote to take place between the two tied candidates, within five days of the announcement of the original election results.**
3. The Executive may vote to add new positions to the Executive. Adding a new Executive position would require a two-thirds majority vote from the Executive. They will then be required to amend the constitution within two days of the vote, to reflect the changes in

positions and have an election to fill the new position(s). New position(s) will be assumed until the next scheduled election is held.

4. All elected Executives, particularly the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Vice President Communications, will be required to thoroughly transition with the incoming Executive by the Transition Date.

ARTICLE 6

Rules and Procedure

1. The President shall chair all meetings of the Executive. If the President is unable to attend, the President shall appoint another elected Executive to chair the meeting. All meetings where Members will be voting on a matter require at least fifty-one percent Chapter attendance, including the Executive.

ARTICLE 7

Meetings

1. The Executive must meet at least once a semester to plan General Meetings for all Members. Executive Meetings will consist of only the Executive.
2. The President may call an Executive or General meeting at any time, provided there is one weeks reasonable notice prior to the meeting.
3. General Meetings shall be held at least once a semester. Members of the Chapter should be given one weeks reasonable notice prior to the meeting, and the Executive will determine the frequency of such meetings.
4. Voting at General Meetings or Executive Meetings shall be done by a show of hands. Each member present at the meeting and entitled to vote shall have one vote. Each member can elect to select a proxy where they are unable to attend the meeting in person and exercise their one vote.

ARTICLE 8

Minutes

1. Minutes of the General Meetings and Executive Meetings, except In Camera meetings, shall be made available to any Member of the Chapter in good standing.
2. Minutes of In Camera meetings shall be kept confidential and are to be for the reference of the Executive alone.

ARTICLE 9

Finance

The financial affairs of BLSA - **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]** shall be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Sources of funding for BLSA - **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]** will include BLSA events, Chapter membership fees and other contributions.
2. BLSA - **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]** is to carry on its operations without financial gain to its Members and any profits or other accreditations to BLSA are to be used in promoting its objectives.
3. The official signatories of the Chapter for all financial transactions shall be any two of the three signing officers, namely the President, the Treasurer or the Designated Signing Officer.
4. BLSA Canada Chapters are unincorporated and should not be entering into any contracts. Chapters should speak directly to their Faculty Advisor and/or Student Law Society to discuss entering into contracts.
5. In all cases, the President and the Treasurer must be notified and give approval prior to any financial transactions being carried out.

ARTICLE 10

Executive Accountability Guidelines

1. All members of the Executive are responsible to the Members of the Chapter for all actions relating to their role as elected Executive Officers. At no time should major commitments be made or programs initiated without the knowledge and consent of the Members. Major commitments means anything which the Chapter believes to be something substantial.

2. Removal/Replacement

- (a) There are four grounds on which Executive members may be removed from office and replaced. Those grounds are as follows:
 - 1. failure to attend two consecutive meetings of the Executive without reasonable justification;
 - 2. failure to complete assigned tasks within a reasonable time;
 - 3. acting in a manner contrary to the mandate, purpose, objects or best interests of the Chapter;
 - 4. breaching any article contained in the BLSA Canada's Code of Conduct (see Schedule B).
- (b) Whenever removal is contemplated, written notice will be sent to that Executive member by the President, and the Executive member must be given an opportunity to respond.
- (c) Unless otherwise noted, removal will be effective upon agreement of at least 75% of the Chapter's membership, including the Executive.
- (d) Upon removal of an Executive member, the vacant position will be filled according to the processes set forth in Article 9(3) of this Constitution.
- (e) The Chapter should immediately notify BLSA Canada's Chapter Representative that the executive has been removed from their position and is no longer in good standing within the Chapter.

3. Assigning Vacant Position

- (a) Should a vacancy need to be filled, the Executive shall be empowered to appoint members to fill the unexpired term.
- (b) The vacant position shall be filled by the Executive appointing the first runner-up of the most recent Election. In the event that the first runner-up cannot, or refuses to fill said position, the option shall be given to the second runner-up, and so forth, until such time as the position is filled, or the list of runners-up is exhausted.
- (c) If no member can be appointed from the most recent Election, a by-election will take place to fill the vacant position.

4. Attendance

- (a) Unless a reasonable excuse is provided for their absence, each Executive member is required to attend all Executive Meetings, including both the monthly conference calls, and the quarterly in-person meetings.
- (b) Where an Executive member is not able to attend a meeting, they are required to give notice to the President, or alternatively, the Secretary, who must notify the rest of the Executive about the planned absence.
- (c) Where an Executive member has missed 2 consecutive meetings of the Board, they will be sent a written notice by the President or a delegate thereof of their impending removal from the Executive. They will then have the opportunity to explain their absence to the Executive's satisfaction. If they have not explained their absence, and are not present at the next Executive meeting, **removal will take effect.**

5. Assigned Tasks

- (a) Executive members will take on and/or be assigned various tasks. They will be expected to provide a deadline within which each task will be completed.
- (b) Executive members will be provided with a list of all the tasks that they have committed themselves to accomplishing soon after the meeting at which the undertaking was given.
- (c) If any Executive member has not completed or made reasonable efforts to complete the task by the next meeting after the set deadline, they are subject to removal from the Executive.
- (d) On agreement of a majority of Executive members, the failure of the Executive member to complete assigned tasks may be excused where there are extenuating circumstances.

6. Conduct Unbecoming

- (a) All Executive members are expected to act in keeping with the mandate, purpose, objectives and best interests of BLSA Canada, and not to bring the organization into disrepute.
- (b) Where two-thirds of the remainder of the Executive finds that an Executive member has acted in a manner contrary to the mandate, purpose, objectives or best interest of BLSA, **they may remove that member from their position.**
- (c) The mandate, purpose, objectives and best interests of BLSA - **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]** will be determined by reference to this Constitution, the BLSA Canada Code of Conduct and to the mandate and priorities set by the Executive at the beginning of their term.

ARTICLE 11

Amendments to Constitution

1. This Constitution may be amended by two-thirds majority vote of the Chapter Members. If any amendments are made to the BLSA - **[LAW SCHOOL NAME]** Constitution, it shall be submitted to the **[INSERT THE BODY THAT OVERSEES CLUBS AT YOUR LAW SCHOOL]** within 30 days of the amendment.

ARTICLE 12

Dissolution

1. Chapter dissolution may occur with a unanimous vote by the Executive as well as two thirds majority vote of the Voting Members. If the Chapter is dissolved, none of the Chapter's finances shall be distributed to the Members.
2. Where a Chapter's Student Law Society is not responsible for a Chapter's funds, the funds of the Chapter shall be remitted to BLSA Canada and the Chapter's bank account closed.
3. Documentation of the vote shall be sent to the National Chapter Representative of BLSA Canada to indicate that the Chapter has been dissolved in accordance with Article 12(1) of this Constitution.

SCHEDULE A

LETTER OF INTENT FOR CANDIDACY

[M/D/YYYY]

Candidate:

Position of Interest:

Academic Year:

Dear [insert President's name here],

The Candidate should indicate their intent to run for an elected position on the BLSA - [LAW SCHOOL NAME] Executive for the upcoming academic year (Minimum two paragraphs; Maximum one page). In this letter of intent candidates must state:

- 1. Which position(s) they are interested in running for;**
- 2. Why they are running for the position(s); and**
- 3. All relevant experience that would make them a good fit for the position(s).**

Sincerely,

[insert candidate's name]

SCHEDULE B

BLSA CANADA CODE OF CONDUCT