CONSTANCE SLAUGHTER-HARVEY BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
University of Mississippi Chapter

Constitution

ARTICLE I: NAME AND AUTHORITY

Section 1

Name: This Association shall be known as the Constance Slaughter-Harvey National Black Law Students Association, Inc. University of Mississippi Chapter (hereinafter “the Chapter.”)

Authority: This Constitution regulates the Chapter. It is the intent of this instrument to guide the Chapter and to supplement the purpose, duties, and rights stated in the national and regional Black Law Students Association Constitutions (hereinafter “national and regional”).

Article II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Chapter shall be:

1. To promote the professional, academic, and political needs and goals of black law students.

2. To instill in the black law student and black attorney a greater awareness to bring about meaningful change and commitment to the legal needs of the black community.

3. To utilize our collective resources and do all things necessary to accomplish the goals and support the programs of the local, regional, and national Black Law Student Associations.

4. To provide a united front and develop future black leadership.

Article III: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1

Membership:

A. Eligibility of Membership: All matriculating law students at the University of Mississippi shall be eligible for membership.
B. **Classification:**

i. Active Members shall consist of all members who have paid their dues by the required deadline and have attended at least 5 (five) BLSA sponsored events, which may include but is not limited to meetings, programs, and activities, etc.

ii. General Members shall consist of all members who have paid their dues by the required deadline.

C. **Rights:**

i. Active members have the right to vote on all matters brought before the general body and use and promotion of the BLSA name. Active members have the right to participate in the election of BLSA officers, run for local, regional, or national office. Active members have priority in participating in the national and regional conferences and competitions.

ii. General Members shall have the right to vote on all matters brought before the general body and use and promotion of the BLSA name. General Members have the right to participate in the election of BLSA officers, run for local, regional, or national office.

D. **Scholarships:**

i. One first year General or Active Member in good academic standing shall have the right to be considered for the Larry Pittman Scholarship in the amount of one thousand dollars ($1000) to be presented at the annual banquet.

   a. General and Active Members shall have the right to be considered for the aforementioned scholarship and shall be nominated based on:
      
      - A minimum 2.0 GPA
      - A written personal statement conveying why the member believes he or she should be considered for the aforementioned scholarships.
      - General participation in BLSA
      - And overall contribution to the chapter
      
      The executive board shall select 3 nominees for the scholarship. Those selected shall present a personal oral statement before the general body to be voted on and chosen based upon a majority vote.

ii. One second year General or Active Member in good academic standing shall have the right to be considered for the W. Howard Gunn Scholarship in the amount of one thousand dollars ($1000) to be presented at the annual banquet.
a. General and Active members shall have the right to be considered for the aforementioned scholarship by submission of the W. Howard Gunn Scholarship Application. The executive board shall select 3 nominees from the applications submitted to be given to W. Howard Gunn for review. W. Howard Gunn shall make the final decision of the scholarship recipient.

iii. One third year General or Active Member in good academic standing shall have the right to be considered for the Dean Cox-McCarty Scholarship in the amount of seven hundred fifty dollars ($750) to be presented at the annual banquet.

a. General and Active Members shall have the right to be considered for the aforementioned scholarship and shall be nominated based on:
   • General participation in BLSA
   • Overall contribution to the chapter
   • And an oral personal statement to be presented before the general body.
   The nominees shall be voted on and chosen based upon a majority vote of the general body.

E. Non-Discrimination Clause

   i. The Chapter does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities.

Article IV: EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1

Composition: The executive board shall be composed of the following: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, parliamentarian, and two first-year representatives.

Section 2

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

A. Appointment: The executive board shall have the authority to appoint any committee heads or staff positions and such committees as it deems necessary to effectuate the goals and policies of the Chapter.

B. Decisions: Any decisions of the executive board shall be made at a duly called executive
board meeting at which there is a quorum. Board members must attend each Chapter meeting. If a member is unable to attend, he or she must submit a legitimate excuse within a reasonable time of the meeting.

C. **Interpretations:** The executive board shall have the final authority, subject to the power of the General Body to review and overrule, modify or revise any decision of the executive board by two-thirds vote, to decide all questions of interpretation and construction of this Constitution and its By-Laws, the parliamentary authority, and the procedural rules of this Chapter.

Section 3

**Officers:**

A. **Election of Officers:** Candidates for any Chapter executive board must be in current good standing at the University of Mississippi School of Law as evidenced by a letter of good standing from the Law School Registrar. Chapter officers shall be elected by a majority of the general and active member votes. The election shall occur no later than one week before the annual BLSA banquet. If no banquet is scheduled, then three weeks before the end of the Spring semester.

B. **Term:** The officers shall serve office for a term of (1) year, commencing June 1, and terminating May 31 of the following year.

C. **Transition:** There shall be a mandatory transitional meeting of the current and newly elected Chapter officers at the conclusion of the Spring semester.

D. **Removal:**

   ii. The failure of any executive board officer to attend at least one third of the Chapter meetings within one semester without legitimate excuse within a reasonable time shall be subject to removal.

   iii. Any officer who fails to fulfill his or her responsibilities and duties as an officer of the Chapter or who fails to promote the purpose and goals of the Chapter may be removed by a majority vote of the executive board, subject to a two-thirds (2/3) vote for removal by the general body.

**Article V: AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1**

**Ratification:** The Constitution and By-Laws of this Association shall be ratified by a simple majority of the active and general members present, and shall become effective immediately.
The ratification vote must occur every year within two weeks after the deadline for the tendering of dues. In the absence of any vote to ratify, this Constitution and By-Laws shall take effect immediately after the ratification period has expired.

Amendments: Additions and/or repeals of this Constitution require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active and general members, except for additions and/or repeals to Article II which shall require a unanimous decision by the General Body.

By-Law Amendments: Additions and/or repeals to the By-Laws of this Constitution require a two-third (2/3) vote of active and general members.

Article VI. COMMITTEES

Section 1

Standing Committees and Special Committees:

A. The Standing committees of the Chapter shall be the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, the Banquet Committee, the Fund-raising committee, Community Service Committee and the Historical Committee.

B. Such other committees, Standing or Special, shall be appointed by the President of the Chapter, as the executive board or the Chapter shall from time to time deem necessary to carry on the work of BLSA.

C. The chairpersons of all Standing and Special Committees shall be appointed by the President of the chapter, subject to the approval of the executive board.

D. The executive board may delegate such appointive powers as are necessary to facilitate the organization and operation of a committee.

E. All committee decisions may be reviewed and revised, overruled, or modified by the executive board, subject to final approval by the General Body.

BY-LAWS

Article I: OFFICERS

Section 1

Duties:

A. President: The President shall be responsible for:
i. Assisting Chapter with implementing projects on a local level.

ii. Representing the Chapter at relevant conferences and meetings that occur regionally and nationally.

iii. Exercising general executive authority over the business and activity for the Chapter.

iv. Appointing and establishing committees to further the goals and purposes of the Chapter.

v. All other authority needed to implement the goals and purposes of the Chapter as he or she sees fit.

B. Vice-President: The Vice-President shall be responsible for:

i. Assisting the President in implementing the goals and purposes of the Chapter.

ii. Overseeing and advising the Standing and Special Committees

iii. All other authority given to him or her by the president.

C. Secretary: The Secretary shall be responsible for:

i. Maintaining a current list of all members.

ii. Keeping the minutes at all meetings and making them readily available to all members.

iii. Overseeing attendance to determine general and active members.

iv. Assisting the President and Chapter in any other manner needed to implement the goals and purposes of the Chapter.

D. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be responsible for:

i. Collecting all dues, dispersing all funds, and receiving all monies from all BLSA entities raised, or otherwise gained, through BLSA related business.

ii. Overseeing the implementing of local fund-raisers.

iii. Making a full financial report to the Board and the general members at designated meetings.

iv. Assisting the President and Chapter in any other manner needed to implement the
goals and purposes of this Chapter.

E. **Parliamentarian**: The parliamentarian shall be responsible for:

   i. Keeping order and peace at all meetings and functions.

   ii. Overseeing attendance to determine general and active members.

   iii. Assisting the President and Chapter in any other manner needed to implement the goals and purposes of the Chapter.

   iv. Chairing the Constitution and By-Laws Committee.

   v. Interpreting the Constitution and By-Laws subject to the rules in Article IV section C of the Constitution.

F. **First Year Representatives**: The First-year Representative shall be responsible for:

   i. Overseeing the interests of the first-year class in regards to the executive board.

   ii. Encouraging participation and involvement of the first-year class.

   iii. Assisting the President and Chapter in any other manner needed to implement the goals and purposes of Chapter.

Section 1.2: STANDING COMMITTEES

Duties:

A. **Constitution & Bylaws Committee**: This committee shall be responsible for:

   i. Assisting the Parliamentarian in amending and revising the Constitution as needed to implement the goals and purposes of the Chapter.

B. **Banquet Committee**: This committee shall be responsible for:

   i. Planning and executing the end of the year banquet which includes the following:
      • Creating and acquiring sponsorship for the Ad Booklet.
      • Obtaining a location for the banquet.
      • Organizing the banquet dinner.
      • Acquiring a speaker.
      • And any other actions required in planning and executing the banquet.
C. **Fundraising Committee**: This committee shall be responsible for:

   i. Organizing and overseeing all fundraising events.

   ii. Organizing and executing at least two (2) fundraising events per academic year.

D. **Community Service Committee**: This committee shall be responsible for:

   i. Organizing and overseeing all community service related events.

   ii. Organizing and executing at least two (2) community service events per academic year.

E. **Historical Committee**: This committee shall be responsible for:

   i. Creating a BLSA newsletter

   ii. Updating the website

   iv. Filming and photographing BLSA events.

Section 2

**Succession**: In the event that the President is unable to complete a term of office, the Vice-President shall become President and the office of Vice-President shall be vacant.

**Article II: DUES**

Section 1

Dues shall be reflective of the regional and national dues and shall increase or remain as set the previous year due on a date designated by the executive board.

Section 2

Dues shall be paid regionally and nationally according to their respective schedules and prices.

**Article III: FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**

Section 1

**Bank Account:**
A. **Signatures:** The Treasurer and the President must maintain a dual-signature account. The Board may also grant signing authority (in conjunction with the Treasurer or President) to two (2) additional Board members.

B. **Location:** The Chapter dues shall be maintained at a bank located in the city of Oxford, Mississippi.

**Section 2**

A. **Discretionary Spending:** The President shall have the authority to make non-budgeted expenditures, so long as he or she does not expend more than three hundred dollars ($300.00) within a two-month period.

B. **Limits:** Any expenditure other than those authorized by the President under the Discretionary Spending provision of Article III, Section 2.

**Article IV: CHAPTER DUTIES**

**Section 1**

**Participation:**

A. **Communication:** The Chapter shall maintain regular communication with the Region, indicating the Chapter’s activity and insuring the information is disseminated in a timely manner.

B. **Notification of New Officers:** Chapters shall notify the Regional Secretary of its new officers no later than 30 days after their election.

**Section 2**

**Convention:**

A. **Delegations:** All Chapters must register at least one (1) delegate or proxy at the Regional Convention. Delegates shall attend at least a majority of the plenary sessions at the Convention.

   i. Delegates may be chosen based on general participation and contribution to the Chapter and shall be approved by a majority vote of the general body.

B. **Other Requirements:** Chapters registering a team(s) to participate in the Frederick Douglass Moot Court Competition shall also register at least one (1) delegate.
Article V: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Robert’s Rules of Order: The rules contained in the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly revised shall govern the Chapter in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and these By-Laws, and special rules of order the Chapter, or the National or Regional BLSA Association may adopt.
APPENDIX – AMENDMENTS

Constitution

Art. I. Sec. 1.
• Amended Spring 1997 to include “National” before “Black Law Students Association”
• Amended Spring 1998 to include “Constance Slaughter-Harvey” before “National”

Art. II. cl. 6.
• Amended to include “to establish our financial independence in order” Spring 1997.

Art. II
• Amended its entirety Spring 2009 to revise previous language and consolidate the purposes put forth. Article II previously read as follows:

The purpose of the Chapter shall be:

1. To articulate and promote the professional, academic and political needs and goals of Black law students.
2. To foster and encourage professional and academic competence.
3. To instill in the Black attorney and Black law student a greater awareness and commitment to the needs of the Black community.
4. To struggle in the legal community to bring about meaningful change to meet the needs of the Black community.
5. To provide a Black united front and develop future Black leadership.
6. To establish Our financial independence in order to utilize our collective resources and do all things necessary to accomplish the goals and support the programs of the local, regional, and national Black Law Student Associations.

Art. III. Sec. 1.
A. Eligibility of Membership:
• Amended to include “subject to a two-thirds vote…Chapter Creed.” Spring 1997

B. Classification:
• Amended Spring 2009 to replace wording of heading of Section B from “Classification and Rights of Members” to “Classification.”
• Amended Spring 2009 to remove subsection (iii) which read “Associate Members shall
consist of all matriculated Black law students at the University of Mississippi who have failed to pay dues by the required deadline, or otherwise failed to seek to become a general member BLSA.”

C. Rights:
• Amended Spring 2009 to remove subsection (iii) which read “Associate Members shall only have the right to attend BLSA functions, but may participate in BLSA activities upon request to and permission from the BLSA Executive Board.”

D. Definitions: (This Former Sec. D has been Repealed)
• (i) Amended Spring 1997 to replace the words “the Parliamentarian shall be the judge for the awarding” with “the Parliamentarian and Secretary shall oversee the awarding.”
• Amended Spring 2009 to remove the “Definitions” section which read as follows:

Definitions:

i. A Participation Point shall consist of any point that a general or active member is awarded for the work he or she has done with any BLSA committee or any BLSA activity or function. The Parliamentarian and Secretary shall oversee the awarding of participation points based on reports from Committee heads and any other methods that enable ascertainment of participation. In event of any grievance as to the awarding of participation points, the Executive Board shall maintain final authority as to any decision. Attendance at BLSA meetings or functions shall not equal participation for the purpose of awarding points. At least one participation point must be awarded for work with a BLSA community service project.

ii. A BLSA Function shall consist of any programs or events sponsored by BLSA and open to the general public.

iii. A BLSA Activity shall consist of any programs or events sponsored by BLSA which are open to only BLSA general and active members. This may also consist of any programs or events which are not sponsored by BLSA but call for the participation of BLSA general and active members.

D. Scholarships: (Formerly Section E)
• Amended Spring 2008 to include Section E i-iii.
• Amended Spring 2009 to change “Scholarships” from Section E to Section D.

E. Non-discrimination clause
• Amended Fall 2010 to include Section E i.
Art. IV. Sec. 2.
C. Interpretations:
   • Amended to add section “C” to Article IV Spring 1997

Art. IV. Sec. 3.
A. Election of Officers:
   • Amended Spring 1997 to include “Candidates for any current good standing... Registrar.”
   • Amended Spring 2009 to include the word “general” to state “Chapter officers shall be elected by a majority of the general and active member votes.”

D. Removal:
   • Amended to include section D Spring 1997.
   • Amended Spring 2009 to subdivide section D into subsections (i) and (ii). Removed the word “tendering” from the former phrase “without tendering legitimate” from subsection (i). Removed the phrase “of that officer” which completed subsection (i).

Art. V. Sec. 1.
Ratification:
• Amended Fall 2003 to replace “within one week” with “within two weeks.”

Amendments:
• Amended Spring 1997 to include “except for additions and/or to Article II which...Body”

By-Law Amendments:
• Amended Spring 1997 to replace “additions and/or repeals to these By-Laws may be made be three-fourths (3/4) vote of the active and general members” with “additions and/or repeals...general members”

Art. VI. Sec. 1.
Standing Committees and Special Committees:
• (A) Amended Fall 2003 to include “Historical Committee.”
• (E) Amended to include section “E” Spring 1997.

BY-LAWS

Art. I. Sec. 1.
B Vice-President:
   • Amended Spring 2009 to include section “iii.”

C. Secretary:
• Amended Spring 1997 to include section “iv.”
• Amended Spring 2009 to remove subsection “iv.” which read “Overseeing the awarding of participation.”
• Amended Spring 2009 to include subsection “iii” and former subsection “iii” was moved to subsection “iv.”

D. Treasurer:
• (i) Amended Spring 1997 to include “dispersing all…business.”

E. Parliamentarian:
• (ii) Amended in Spring 1997 to replace “Determining who shall be awarded points for participation.”
• Amended in Fall 2003 to include sections iv. and v.
• Amended Spring 2009 to rewrite subsection “ii.” which read “Overseeing the awarding of participation points.”

Art. II. Sec. 1.
• Amended in Spring of 2008 to replace “dues in the amount of thirty-five dollars ($35).”
• Amended Spring 2009 to replace language “Dues shall thirty-five dollars ($35) per year due on a date designated by the executive board” with “Dues shall be reflective of the regional and national dues and shall increase or remain as set the previous year due on a date designated by the executive board.”

Art. III. Sec. 2.
B. Limits:
• Amended Spring 1997 to replace the words “Over three hundred...Period” with “other than...Spending”

Art. IV. Sec. 2.
Convention:
A. Delegations:
• Amended Spring 2008 to include section i.

Art. V.
• Amended Spring 1997 to include Article V.

Art. III: MEMBERSHIP: Sec. D.
• Amended to include Scholarship Requirements

Art. I: BYLAWS: Sec. 1.2
• Amended to include the duties of the Standing Committees