

# Howard University School of Law

## Student Bar Association

### Constitution

*Preamble*

*Article I General Provisions*

*Article II Structure*

*Article III Non-Discrimination Policy*

*Article IV Amendments*

*Article V Enactment*

#### **PREAMBLE**

We, the students of Howard University School of Law (hereafter HUSL), seeing the necessity to provide for broad involvement and adequate representation of all HUSL students; a mechanism to speak to the needs of students in the School of Law; improvement of the channels of communication between the administration, faculty, and HUSL students; effective maintenance of relationships with Student Bar Associations at other institutions; a mechanism capable of addressing itself to community concerns; coordination of an overall thrust for student interests and concerns; and finally, and most important, assistance in determining the future direction of Howard University School of Law; do establish this constitution and its governmental structures to achieve all these desired goals.

“Through our activities and initiatives, we strive to further legal education; promote fellowship and goodwill among the students, faculty, and administration; and advocate the concerns raised by the student body. The Student Bar Association (hereafter the SBA) is also responsible for overseeing the various student organizations at the law school, which includes the appropriation of funds.”

# Article I

## General Provisions

### Section 1. Name and Operational Calendar

The name of this organization shall be known as the Howard University School of Law Student Bar Association (hereafter referred to as the SBA). The elected officers of this organization shall serve in the office on a twelve-month basis from noon on Commencement Day of the year they are elected to noon of the following Commencement Day.

### Section 2. Membership

Clause A. All students of Howard University School of Law are to be considered members of the Student Bar Association.

Clause B: No other body or entity at Howard University School of Law shall have sole authority over the Student Bar Association. The Office of Student Affairs and Dean of Students shall serve in a non-compulsory advisory capacity to the Student Bar Association.

All School of Law students, by virtue of their registration at Howard University School of Law, are members of the SBA and shall be subject to this Constitution.

### Section 3. Definition

Clause A: Clause A. The Executive Board of the SBA shall be composed of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Clause B. The SBA shall be the central advocacy, governing, and programming body of Howard University School of Law and shall serve to develop, maintain, and coordinate joint programs between the University Administration, class councils, and student organizations.

### Section 4. Qualifications for the Election of Officers

Clause A. All elected officers to the Executive Board of the SBA shall meet the following requirements at the time of election and during their term of office:

The candidate and elected officer must:

1. Have been a full-time student the semester immediately prior to assuming office and during their term in office.
2. Must be in good standing based on Howard University School of Law's standards at the time of the election and during their term in office.
3. Must not graduate prior to the completion of their term in office.
4. Both 1Ls and transfer students may seek positions not filled in the General Elections during the Special Election held in the Fall, at which time the stipulation that the candidate must have been a full-time student the semester immediately prior to assuming office will be waived.
5. Must have at least an 80 GPA [or Howard University School of Law equivalent] at the time of the election and during their term in office.

## **Section 5. Elections.**

### **Clause A. Time and Purpose**

1. The General Elections shall be held no later than the first Wednesday in April. The candidates for the SBA President, the SBA Vice President, the SBA Treasurer, the SBA Secretary, Student Council Officers, Senators to the Howard University Student Association Senate (hereafter HUSA Senate), Representatives to the Graduate Student Assembly (hereafter GSA), as well as Proposed Referenda and/or Amendments to this Constitution, are to be placed on the ballot at that time.

A Special Election shall be held no later than the fourth Wednesday of September to fill vacancies left from the General Election held in the Spring. The election of First-Year Class Officers and the placement of Proposed Referenda and/or Amendments on the ballot will take place at this time.

### **Clause B. Candidates**

1. Candidates for the SBA President and the SBA Vice President may run together on the same ticket.
2. Candidates for the SBA Executive Board and Class Council must submit a petition of not less than five percent (5%) of the student population's signatures before the candidates can be considered duly nominated.
3. All candidates for any student government position must meet the qualifications specified within this document.

### **Clause C. Election Results**

1. During General and Special Elections, any candidate receiving a plurality of the votes cast shall be duly elected.
2. For whatever reason, if it is found by the HU Elections Commission that a run-off is necessary, it will be held between the top two (2) contenders no later than the second Wednesday in April.
3. During the Run-off Election, any candidate receiving the simple majority vote cast shall be duly elected.

## **Section 6. Transitional Meetings**

Clause A. After the Spring General Elections of each Academic School Year, there shall be at least one transitional meeting consisting of all incumbent and newly elected members with their respective bodies.

1. The Transitional Meeting must be scheduled within 14 days after the election results have been announced.
2. During the Transitional Meeting, the newly elected members should be briefed concerning the duties of the respective offices and activities of the past year.

## **Section 7. Meetings**

Clause A. It shall be the duty of every member of the Executive Board to attend all Executive Board meetings unless excused by the presiding officer of the meeting in question. The SBA meetings must be conducted in accordance with the adopted parliamentary procedure.

# Article II

## Structure

### Section 1. The Executive Board

The Executive Board shall consist of the SBA President, the SBA Vice President, the SBA Treasurer, and the SBA Secretary. No Executive Board member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in office.

#### Clause A. Duties of the SBA President:

1. Shall serve as the Chief Executive Officer and official spokesperson of the SBA.
2. Shall act as an administrator and ambassador for the School of Law and Howard University.
3. Shall serve as the Student Administrator of Howard University School of Law
4. To represent the student body with city, state, and government officials/events.
5. Shall call and preside over all SBA meetings as Chair, except when an alternative presiding officer has been duly designated, and shall call special meetings of the Executive Board if needed.
6. Shall present an annual budget for the SBA to the HUSA Senate to receive that body's recommendation.
7. Shall represent the SBA at all permissible HUSL activities and functions and provide for additional or substitute representation when necessary.
8. Shall appoint the SBA Cabinet with the approval of the SBA Executive Board.
9. Shall use the executive power vested in them to uphold, support, and defend this document, the Constitution, and the Bylaws of HUSA, and pursue courses of action in the interest of the HUSL student body.
10. Shall attend all permissible HUSL faculty and administration meetings, at which another member of the Executive Board should accompany them.
11. Shall maintain communication with the HUSA Senate and comply with the HUSA constitution.
12. Shall uphold the names of Howard University and Howard University School of Law, enforce this constitution, and implement changes for the benefit of the student body
13. Shall have the power to establish committees, whether standing or temporary in nature, and shall have the power to appoint a staff to aid with the management of the Executive Board and to carry out the duties of the Office of the President and said staff.
14. Shall host mandated State of the Student town hall.

#### Clause B. Duties of the SBA Vice President:

1. Shall assist the President in performing the functions of their office.
2. Shall assume all responsibilities of the President in the event of their absence or removal.
3. Shall attend all Executive Board, Cabinet, and Registered Student Organization's Presidents' Council Meetings.
4. Shall uphold the names of Howard University and Howard University School of Law, enforce this constitution, and initiate, coordinate, and implement programs, in conjunction with the SBA President, for the benefit of the student body
5. Shall serve as Chair of the Registered Student Organization's Presidents' Council, which is to meet at least once a semester.
6. Shall ensure the effective functioning of Howard University School of Law's Thurgood Marshall Academy Program (hereafter TMA) by:
  - a. being actively involved in TMA or appointing an experienced TMA volunteer to organize the program – organization of the program includes communicating with Thurgood Marshall Academy faculty and staff to choose dates for volunteer opportunities; reserving rooms on HUSL's campus for volunteer opportunities, interest meetings, and training sessions; raising funds for the TMA program; appointing

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TMA coordinators who help organize the program; preparing presentations and activities relating to topics discussed during volunteer opportunities; and finally, anything else that serves the goals of the HUSL TMA Program.

7. Shall assume responsibility for HUSL Elections in accordance with the Howard University Election's Code, unless they are seeking a position in the election, then such responsibility shall fall on the highest-ranking officer of the Executive Board who is not seeking election if none, the Director of Graduate Elections shall assume full responsibility of the election cycle.

Clause C. Duties of the SBA Treasurer:

1. Shall serve as the Chief Financial Officer of the SBA.
2. Shall maintain an accurate financial account of the SBA budget.
3. Shall assist the President in formulating the budget for annual operations to be presented to the Senate for its recommendations and approval.
4. Shall prepare and present financial reports regularly and upon request to the SBA.
5. Shall organize and maintain the treasury and funding allocation system of the SBA.
6. Shall work with RSOs to create annual budgets.

Clause D. Duties of the SBA Secretary:

1. Shall maintain communications and correspondence for the SBA.
2. Shall maintain the general upkeep of the SBA office (coordinating files, taking messages, etc.)
3. Shall maintain a roster of all officers and elected members of the SBA.
4. Shall record, type, and duplicate the minutes of the SBA Board meetings, and make them available upon request to the student body.
5. Shall maintain a permanent record of all minutes as corrected.

## **Section 2. The SBA President's Line of Succession**

Clause A. The following shall be the line of succession should the SBA President be unable to discharge their duties.

1. If, by reason of death, resignation, removal from office, inability, temporary incapacitation [for greater than 24 hours], or failure to qualify, the line of succession shall be as follows: the SBA Vice President, the SBA Treasurer, the SBA Secretary, and the SBA Chief of Staff.

## **Section 3. The Cabinet – Elected**

The SBA Cabinet shall consist of the following elected positions: GSA Representatives and HUSA Senators.

Clause A. The GSA Representatives shall:

1. Serve as a member of the SBA and Graduate Student Assembly (hereafter GSA).
2. Work with the SBA and GSA to promote programs that interest the Graduate and Professional Schools.
3. Effective communication between the SBA and GSA.

Clause B. The HUSA Senators shall:

1. Serve as a member of the SBA and HUSA Senate.
2. Work with the SBA and the HUSA Senate to promote the interests of the School of Law student body.
3. Effectively communicate between the SBA and HUSA.

## Section 4. The Cabinet – Appointed

The President may appoint at their discretion the following positions to the SBA Cabinet: Chief of Staff, ABA Representative(s), Academic Affairs Chair(s), Alumni Relations Chair(s), Social Action Chair(s), Social Media Chair(s), and Student Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair(s).

For each appointed position category, the President may appoint up to two people (2), except for the Chief of Staff position, which will only be one person (1).

Clause A. The Chief of Staff shall:

1. Work hand in hand with the President to help manage the SBA Cabinet.
2. Provide leadership and effective management in all areas of staffing and personnel, project completion, information technology, and development.
3. Be the liaison between the Cabinet and the Executive Board.
4. Hold meetings in relation to projects, administrative progress, and personnel-related issues.
5. Assist with any additional duties as requested by the President.

Clause B. The ABA Representative(s) shall:

1. Become knowledgeable in all ABA-related matters.
2. Be a campus liaison between HUSL students and the ABA/DC Voluntary Bar.
3. Be active in at least one ABA Specialty Group.
4. Coordinate or host ABA events on campus.
5. Participate in ABA annual and mid-year meetings.
6. Inform the SBA about the activities of the Law Student Division Leadership Council.

Clause C. The Academic Affairs Chair(s) shall:

1. Serve as a scholastic resource for other HUSL students seeking aid with classes, homework, and general knowledge.
2. Build a tutoring network of 2Ls and 3Ls who excelled in a variety of classes, especially those without Teaching Assistants, who can provide feedback regarding hypotheticals, outlines, and practice exams.
3. Must be in the top 35% of their class and have interpersonal skills. The OSA will confirm the academic rank.
4. Act as a liaison between the Office of Academic Affairs and the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Clause D. The Alumni Relations Chair(s) shall:

1. Communicate and plan events with HUSL alumni and partners, including the Homecoming tailgate and reception.
2. Draft special letters/email solicitations directed to HUSL alumni.
3. Maintain a record of HUSL alumni while working with the Social Media Chair(s) to keep alumni aware of SBA happenings.

Clause E. The Career Services Chair(s) shall:

1. Solicit ideas from the student body of the needed/desired career events and resources.
2. Assist OCS in providing the student body with timely and adequate job opportunities and support in securing them.

Clause F. The Social Action Chair(s) shall:

1. Oversee community service and pro bono initiatives.
2. Be responsible for organizing HUSL students for various social justice movements.
3. Plan and execute two service projects per semester.

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Clause G. The Social Media Chair(s) shall:

1. Maintain SBA's social media accounts.
2. Be Responsible for creating and dispersing digital and print flyer advertisements.
3. Determine new channels that are important for SBA based on popularity and usage among students.
4. Attend as many events as possible to obtain pictures and videos.
5. Work with the Alumni Relations Chair(s) to inform alumni of SBA happenings.

Clause H. The Student Affairs Chair(s) shall:

1. With the assistance of OSA, OCS, and OD, create a working calendar of the SBA, Student Organization, and other institutional events.
2. Work in tandem with Class Councils and student organizations to help address student concerns regarding non-academic student experience.
3. Solicit ideas from the student body of the needed/desired events and resources.

Clause I. The Student Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Chair(s) shall:

1. Support, manage, and implement diversity and inclusion strategies and programs.
2. Partner with various entities to regularly communicate diversity and inclusion initiatives, events, and progress.
3. Shall maintain contact with, but not limited to, Disability Support Services, University Counseling Services, Student Wellness Services, etc.

Clause J. With prompt notification to the Executive Board, the SBA President is at liberty to collectively add additional officers to the SBA Cabinet to fulfill responsibilities that the Executive Board deems necessary.

Clause K: Executive Officers are prohibited from serving as officers in any other campus organizations that can or are likely to present a conflict of interest. All Officers must have a cumulative 80 grade point average at the time of appointment and maintain such a grade point average during their tenure in office.

Clause L: All SBA Officers must attend at least one SBA-planned service event per semester. Additionally, Cabinet members are expected to attend all SBA events directly related to the function and execution of their office. They are highly encouraged to attend and support events of other Cabinet members and SBA officers.

## **Section 5. Financials**

The Executive Board will create and approve a budget each year. Only Executive Board members may receive salary or payment for serving as an SBA Executive Board member.

## **Section 6. Disciplinary Proceedings**

The SBA is empowered to make and enforce its own rules and to require that its members and officers refrain from conduct injurious to the SBA or its purposes.

Clause A. Removal

1. The Executive Board shall have the sole power of removal, with the President as Chair of Removal inquiries and proceedings.
2. The only basis for removal shall be the substantial violation of any provision of this Constitution or the neglect or refusal to perform their official responsibilities and duties.

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3. Any petition for removal proceedings or inquiry must begin with a written statement to the Chair of the Removal process stating the cause of action.
4. Any elected officer of the Executive Board may be removed from office only through the following conditions:
  - a. By student body petition of more than 50 percent of the enrolled students of Howard University School of Law calling for removal from office presented to the SBA President for impeachment.
  - b. By resignation or voluntary/involuntary removal from school.
5. Class officers may be removed from office only through any of the following conditions:
  - a. By petition of more than 50 percent of the members of the applicable graduating class involved, presented to the SBA President for impeachment.
  - b. By resignation or voluntary/involuntary removal from school.
6. Appointees may only be removed for any reason other than substantial nonperformance by the President.
7. Cabinet Appointees may also be removed upon motion of any Executive Board member, seconded by another Executive Board member, and a three-quarters (3/4) vote of all voting Cabinet members.
8. Any member subject to a motion for removal shall not be entitled to vote on that motion and shall not be counted when determining the requisite number of votes for the passage of said motion.
9. All persons elected in Graduate Student Elections must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 80 or above. Failure to do so will result in immediate removal from office as enforced by the Executive Board.
10. Removals must be communicated in writing to the removed, the Executive Board, and the Cabinet within 24 hours of the conclusion of the proceedings.

#### Clause B. Vacancies

1. If any Executive Board officer is removed or the office is vacant for any reason, the President will appoint someone to fill the vacancy, subject to confirmation by the Executive Board.
2. When a vacancy occurs in a Class Office, the Class President shall appoint someone to fill that position, except where the appointment conflicts with this constitution.
3. In the event a Class President is separated from office, the Class Vice President shall become the Class President; they shall appoint a Class Vice President.



## **ARTICLE III**

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

#### **Section 1. Policy Statement**

The Student Bar Association is committed to fostering an educational community that is inclusive and empowering for all students at HUSL. Accordingly, this organization does not tolerate discrimination or harassment against any person. All members of the Student Bar Association shall follow the nondiscrimination policy of Howard University.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Amendments**

#### **Section 1. Procedures for Amending the Constitution**

Amendments to this Constitution shall be originated by a majority vote of the SBA Executive Board. After this process, the proposed amendments shall be placed on the ballot to be approved by a 2/3 majority of those students voting in a Howard University School of Law-wide Referendum.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Enactment of This Constitution**

#### **Section 1. Constitutional Approval**

Upon ratification by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the students voting, this Constitution shall be effective immediately.