BYLAWS

of the

Marilyn Yarbrough Chapter of the Black Law Student Association
at the University of Tennessee

ARTICLE I- NAME
The name of this organization shall be University of Tennessee Chapter of the Black Law Students Association, hereafter referred to as “BLSA,” or “the chapter.” The organization shall be affiliated with the National Black Law Student Association, hereafter referred to as “NBLSA.”

ARTICLE II- DECLARATION OF PURPOSE
The purpose of this organization shall be to represent the views of Black students at the University of Tennessee College of Law; to promote the welfare of its members through educational, professional, cultural and social programs; and to provide a forum for the discussion of local and national issues affecting both the Black law student community and the University community as a whole, thereby accepting greatness and entering excellence.

ARTICLE III- MEMBERSHIP
Section 1: General Eligibility
Membership in BLSA shall be open to all full time University of Tennessee law students students with an interest in furthering the goals and objectives of the organization.

Section 2: Membership Categories
1) General Body Membership: All students who have met the criteria established in Section 1 of this Article, and paid annual BLSA dues shall be considered the GENERAL BODY for the purposes of this Constitution.

2) Dues:
   a) Dues shall consist of a combination of national, regional and chapter dues
   b) Chapter dues shall be set as 45% of the current cost of national dues for the current calendar year

3) Active Membership: All students who have met the criteria established in Section 2 of this Article will be considered ACTIVE MEMBERS subject to the following conditions:
   a) They have attended at least two-thirds of General Body meetings during the fall and spring semesters; AND
   b) They have paid the annual BLSA dues; AND
      i) Participated in at least 1 community service event; OR
      ii) Participated in at least 1 fundraising event; OR
      iii) Participated in at least 1 Special Event; OR
      iv) Participated in Moot Court or Mock Trial Competition
v) Participation in any event MUST be recorded by the chair of the committee hosting the event AND turned into the chapter Historian for recording

4) Honorary Membership: Honorary Membership in BLSA shall be granted to the following:
   a) Former members of BLSA who have matriculated from The University of Tennessee College of Law
   b) Any person who has attained unusual distinction in the legal profession or in the field of law shall be eligible for honorary membership. The term “field of law” shall embrace any person elected or appointed to a legislature or engaged in the execution, administration, or enforcement of the law, whether or not such a person is a member of the legal profession. Persons who are granted membership under this clause must be nominated by a BLSA member and shall be granted membership upon a majority vote from the General Body.

Section 3- Faculty Advisor
The Faculty Advisor shall serve as a liaison between BLSA and the administration of the Law School, shall be chosen and ratified by the Executive Board, shall be a full time faculty member at the University of Tennessee College of Law, and generally assist members of BLSA in their quest to achieve academic excellence in the legal profession.

Section 4- Nondiscrimination Clause
The Black Law Students Association at the University of Tennessee does not discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, race, color, citizenship, religion, creed, age, national origin, political affiliation, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status or parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a disabled or Vietnam-era Veteran.

Section 5- Rights and Benefits of Membership
Any law student who is a member of the General Body as defined in Article 2, Section 2(a) shall have the right to attend both regional and national BLSA conferences, serve as delegates, hold office, participate in all activities and competitions, have access to BLSA course outlines, participation in BLSA member-to-member lending library, any available BLSA scholarship and awards, and shall generally be entitled to all the rights and privileges of BLSA as defined herein.

ARTICLE IV- MEETINGS
Section 1- General Body Meetings
There shall be a General Body meeting at least once per month, but not less that three (3) times during the academic semester with the first meeting of each semester being mandatory. A majority, or two-thirds of the General Body, including Policy Council and Executive Board members, present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum to do business. In the absence of a quorum, no voting business may be conducted. However, other business, of a non-voting nature, may proceed.

Section 2: Special Meetings
1) A special meeting may be called in the event important chapter business MUST be discussed before the next scheduled chapter meeting;
2) The President shall immediately notify the Executive Board of a request for a Special Meeting;

3) The President should then provide members of the General Body with at least three (3) days notice of a Special Meeting;

4) A special meeting may be called in either of the following ways:
   a) at the discretion of the president; OR
   b) by written petition meeting the following requirements:
      i) requests the President to call a special meeting
      ii) Has been signed by twenty-five (25%) of the General Body.
      iii) Clearly states the reason(s) for the proposed meeting.

ARTICLE V- EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1- Eligibility Requirements

At the time of general elections, nominees for any Executive Board position must submit proof to the Parliamentarian that they are:
   a) full-time law students currently enrolled at University of Tennessee College of Law;
   AND
   b) in good academic standing as demonstrated by an official letter of good standing by the University of Tennessee College of Law Office of the Registrar;
   AND
   c) General Body Members.

Section 2- Membership

The Executive Board shall consist of the following: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, Historian, First-Year Representative, Second-Year representative, and Third Year Representative.

Section 3- General Duties

The BLSA Executive Board will:
   a) have general power to administer any and all programs, business projects, and matters pertaining to or concerning BLSA;
   b) determine all questions of policy and procedure;
   c) be subject to the orders of the membership, none of its acts can conflict with decisions made by the vote of the General Body or the goals and objectives of BLSA;
   d) make recommendations to the General Body;
   e) make decisions at a duly called meetings at which there is quorum;
   f) have the power to discipline any officer pursuant to Article XII of this Constitution.

Section 4- Officer Duties

1) The President shall:
   a) be the chief executive and administrative officer of the chapter;
   b) call and preside at all Executive Board, General Body, and Special Meetings;
   c) ensure that all other officers perform the duties for their respective offices;
   d) serve as the official spokesperson for the chapter;
   e) be responsible for the welfare and dignity of the chapter;
   f) perform such other functions and exercise such further duties as the Board or the General Body may assign.
2) The Vice President shall:
   a) assist the President in the performance of such chapter duties as may be requested by the President.
   b) in the event of the absence, death, resignation, or removal from office of the President, the Vice-President shall perform the duties for the President;
   c) Serve as the chair of Committee Chair board
   d) Attend committee meetings when scheduled;
   e) Hold committee meetings with all committee chairs, if necessary
   f) Perform such other duties relating to the organizational structure of the chapter as the President may request.

3) The Treasurer shall:
   a) be the chief financial officer of the chapter;
   b) collect all dues;
   c) control all chapter funds and co-sign with the President all disbursements of chapter funds;
   d) prepare a budget, under the direction of the President, which shall be approved by the Executive Board and Committee Chair Council;
   e) receive all funds which are available to BLSA from the law school and university;
   f) raise money to support the proposed budget by coordinating activities that will generate revenue;
   g) Perform such other duties as the President may request.

4) The Secretary shall:
   a) be the chief recorder and correspondent of the chapter;
   b) assist the President in the calling and conducting of BLSA meetings;
   c) keep a true and complete record of all minutes of BLSA meetings and other matters pertaining to the chapter for future reference;
   d) dispatch notices of meetings to members as appropriate;
   e) create and distribute a directory of all current members in good standing (at the start of the fall semester) which shall include the members’ name and contact information
   f) Organize BLSA “new member” packet to be distributed to all new BLSA members as they join
   g) maintain an attendance list for all meetings, and a list of those members who are eligible to vote;
   h) check the BLSA e-mail and respond to those e-mails when necessary;
   i) be responsible for submitting official reports required of the chapter by the law school or university administration;
   j) maintain minutes and agendas for all meetings and distribute minutes within one week following each meeting;
   k) issue business communications of the President;
   l) update information emanating from the Office of the President;
   m) maintain BLSA’s contact with the black legal community ensuring that all necessary organizations are made aware of BLSA activities;
   n) perform any other duties that the President may assign.
5) The Parliamentarian shall:
   a) coordinate elections and voting of the general body;
   b) serve as Chairperson of Elections;
   c) assist the President in maintaining order during meetings according to Robert’s Rules of Order and subject to the provision of this Constitution and By-Laws;
   d) organize a Robert’s Rules of Order training session at the start of each fall semester;
   e) be the final authority on rules of parliamentary procedure during meetings;
   f) perform such other duties as the President may request.

6) The Historian shall:
   a) maintain an archive of all chapter events and activities including, but not limited to, the attendance of members at chapter events and a record of all members in good standing for the current calendar year;
   b) organize and maintain alumni records;
   c) photograph all BLSA activities;
   d) collect event information from committee members to be organized into a chapter calendar (each semester);
   e) create, distribute and collect post-event reports containing:
      i) title of the event
      ii) purpose of the event
      iii) speaker or host of the event (if any)
      iv) committee that sponsored the event
      v) event expenditures
      vi) event feedback
   f) use information from post-event reports to publish all Member and Chapter awards and accomplishments;
   g) perform any other duties that the President may assign.

7) The First Year, Second Year, and Third Year Representative shall:
   a) coordinate the activities of their respective class;
   b) alert the E-board of the concerns and ideas of the students in their class students;
   c) monitor and encourage class’s attendance at BLSA events and programs;
   d) perform such other duties as the President may request.

Section 5- Meetings

1) The Executive Board shall meet at least once a month, but not less than three (3) times per semester.
2) The Executive Board should meet prior to each General Body meeting and special meeting.
3) Except under special circumstances, meetings of the Executive Board shall be closed to members of the General Body. Any member of the General Body wishing to bring an issue of concern before the Executive Board must submit a written request to an Executive Board Member that the issue be put on the Executive Board Agenda.
4) Members of the Executive Board shall be notified two (2) business days prior to each meeting, unless an emergency meeting is required.
5) Any 3 Board members present shall constitute a quorum to conduct business.
6) No Proxy voting will be allowed in Executive Board meetings.

ARTICLE VI- COMMITTEE CHAIR COUNCIL

Section 1- Eligibility Requirements
At the time of general elections, nominees for any Committee Chair position must submit proof to the Parliamentarian that they meet the following requirements:

1. full-time law students currently enrolled at the University of Tennessee College of Law;
2. in good academic standing as demonstrated by an official letter of good standing by the University of Tennessee College of Law Office of the Registrar.

Section 2: Membership
The Committee Chair Council shall consist of the following: Community Service Chair, Fundraising Chair, Retention and Placement Chair, Special Events Coordinator, Public Relations Committee Chair

Section 3- General Duties
The Committee Chair Council will:
  a) solicit general body members to join their committee and assist them with carrying out the functions of their positions
  b) have general power to administer programs and activities which further the purpose of their office and the chapter;
  c) Be subject to the orders of the membership; none of its acts can conflict with decisions made by the vote of the General Body or the goals and objectives of BLSA,
  d) make recommendations to the General Body;

Section 4- Officer Duties
1) The Retention and Placement chair shall:
  a) coordinate academic support programs such as but not limited to mid-term and final examination study sessions, and the creation and distribution of course outlines;
  b) coordinate the BLSA Buddy program which shall include:
     i) coordinating a “welcome cook-out” each calendar to welcome new (potential) BLSA members in conjunction with the Special Events coordinator
     ii) coordinating an existing 2L or 3L member in good standing with an incoming 1L member to assist them with transitioning into law school
     iii) checking with new 1L members and corresponding buddy to ensure cooperation between the two
  c) organize and maintain lending library for the current calendar year, which shall include:
     i) soliciting participation of current chapter members for books
     ii) collecting and organizing a list of available books, owners, and borrowers
     iii) ensure books are returned to owners at the end of each semester
  d) organize and implement a blue booking seminar during the fall semester of each calendar year
e) conduct a mock exam during the fall semester during the midterm and final period for 1L students
f) Perform such other duties as the President may request.

2) Public Relations Coordinator:
   a) Shall be the contact person on the BLSA website (http://web.utk.edu/~blsa/)
   b) Update the aforementioned webpage on a monthly basis with all information concerning chapter events, and if possible all regional and national BLSA information
   c) Attend the University of Tennessee undergraduate orientation regarding marketing and advertising each calendar year in order to:
      i) Discover new ways to market and publicize BLSA programs
      ii) Meet with other organizations with whom BLSA may potentially want to co-sponsor a program
   d) Be the liaison between BLSA and the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA)

3) The Community Service Coordinator shall:
   a) coordinate activities between the chapter and the Knoxville community at large;
   b) Maintain a record of members who attend community service events and furnish this same record to the Historian after each event
   c) design and implement not less than two community service (non Pro Bono related) projects per semester,
   d) Oversee BLSA’s involvement in UT Pro Bono, specifically Street Law
      1) The coordinator of the Street Law program will:
         (a) Be a liaison between UT BLSA and the UT Pro Bono
         (b) Attend UT Pro Bono meetings and report any relevant information to the e-board and general body of BLSA
         (c) Keep a record of members who attend Street Law each week and furnish that record to the historian
         (d) Also turn in a record at the end of each month during the fall and spring semester of each calendar year to the UT Pro Bono office so that BLSA members shall have a record of their pro bono hours recorded for graduation purposes
         (e) Design and implement weekly Street Law lesson plans according to the National lesson plans

4) The Special Events Coordinator shall:
   a) coordinate special activities between local community and other BLSA chapters both locally and regionally;
   b) Ensure that the Chapter’s major programs are of consistent quality and efficiency throughout the year
   c) oversee all signature events and at least one original event, within the course of the school year; the signature events are as follows:
      i) “Welcome Cook Out”
(1) will occur during the first month of the fall semester
(2) invite all new (or potential) BLSA members
(3) will introduce the aforementioned to BLSA, its members, and programs
(4) can be held at a location of the coordinators choosing
(5) shall be subject to the approval of the e-board

ii) Black History Month
(1) Shall be-conduct during the month of February
(2) Will inform BLSA members and the UT law student body of African American achievement and issues
(3) Must include no less than two events throughout the entire month
(4) May appoint chair from committee to coordinate
(5) shall be subject to the approval of the e-board

iii) Mardi Gras Fundraising Ball
(1) Will occur during the last two weeks of February or the first two weeks of March
(2) Tickets sales must begin at least one month before the event
(3) A charity shall be chosen by the committee and presented to the general body for approval
(4) Shall be subject to the approval of the e-board

iv) Blackshear Banquet;
(1) Shall be conducted not less that two weeks of the Mardi Gras Fundraising Ball, but no later than the third week of March of each calendar year
(2) Must feature a speaker whose achievements are significant to the Black legal community
(3) Should feature the support of the University and local firms and legal organizations
(4) Proceeds should fund a scholarship to a deserving incoming student
(5) Shall be subject to the approval of the e-board

v) Graduate appreciation program:
(1) Shall be conducted within one month of the last final for graduating BLSA members
(2) Will be coordinated by the 1L and 2L representatives
   (a) 1L and 2L representatives may form a committee to plan this event if necessary
(3) May be held at a location subject to the committee’s choosing
(4) May include a small gift to be presented to graduating members

vi) Each signature event outlined above may (or shall) be ‘chaired’ by a member of the Special Events committee
(1) Sub-chair shall be responsible for coordination and implementation of their program
(2) Sub-chair will work with Special Events Coordinator to ensure efficient and seamless planning and implementation of the program
(3) Shall discuss the date, budget, ideas, and other program related information first during their committee meetings, and next at the general body meetings
Section 5: Meetings
1) The Committee Chairs will meet with the Vice-President at each committee chair council meeting, which shall be scheduled by the Vice-President, to give reports, budget proposals, make additional funding requests, and any other business that can be accomplished without the General Body.
2) Any member of the General Body wishing to bring an issue of concern before the Committee Chairs must submit a written request, which may via email, to a Committee Chair or the Vice-President to put the issue on the Committee Chair Council Agenda.
3) Committee Chairs shall be notified at least two (2) business days prior to each meeting, unless an emergency meeting is required.

ARTICLE VII- ELECTIONS
Section 1- Positions
Elections shall be held for all of the following positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, Parliamentarian, First-Year Representative, Historian, First Year Representative, Second Year Representative, Third Year Representative,

Section 2- Time
1) The election of officers for the following academic year shall be conducted in the month of February.
2) Notice of elections of officers shall be given at least seven (7) calendar days before said elections.

Section 3: Nominations
1) The Election Committee shall send out a notification of election procedures no later than two weeks prior to the elections. The notification should include the date(s) that nominations will be taken, the procedure for making such nominations, and the date(s) of the election.
2) BLSA Members Nomination of officers shall be held at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the election. The Parliamentarian, at such meeting, shall receive and record submitted nominations. The names of the nominees shall be posted on the following day.
3) Each BLSA member is entitled to nominate him or herself or any other BLSA member for any elective office. Only General Body and Active Members may be nominated for and hold office. The nominations and election procedures for the office of First-Year Representative shall proceed pursuant to section 4 of this Article.
4) At the end of the nomination period as determined by the election committee, all nominees will be notified of all positions for which they have been nominated. Each acceptance must be made in person or in writing and submitted to the Parliamentarian.

Section 4: Nomination and Election of First-Year Representative
1) The nominations for First-Year Representative shall take place at a General Body meeting no later than September 30.
2) ALL first-year General Body Members are eligible to hold office.
3) Only first year General Body Members may vote for the First Year Representative;
4) A simple majority of the eligible votes cast (50% + 1) is required for election. Where no candidate receives a majority of the votes, a run-off election shall be conducted at the same meeting between the candidates with the greatest number of votes.

5) The First-Year Representative shall assume the duties of the office on the date of election.

Section 5: Voting Procedures

1) The Parliamentarian shall announce the candidates for each office before the floor is opened for additional nominations. The Parliamentarian may open the floor for additional nominations before voting begins for each elected position.

2) The Parliamentarian shall close the nominations for officers when all nominations have been received from the floor.

3) Each candidate will be allowed to address the chapter for a period of no longer than three (3) minutes.

4) Voting procedures shall follow the repeated balloting voting system and governed by Robert’s Rules of Order.

5) A simple majority of the eligible votes cast (50% + 1) is required for election to any office. Where no candidate receives a majority of the votes, a run-off election shall be held among the candidates with the two highest vote totals.

Section 6: Special Elections

1) Should any position fail to be filled in a general election, or should a position become vacant by the removal or resignation of an officer, the position shall be filled through a special election held at a General Body Meeting. The Executive Board may appoint an interim officer to fill the position prior to such special election.

2) Should the position of President become vacant, the Vice President shall fill that position for the remainder of the term.

3) Should the position of Vice President become vacant, a special election will be held to elect a new Vice President.

Section 7: Validation of Election Results

1) Counting of the ballots shall be closed to the General Body and shall be conducted by the Parliamentarian, Faculty Advisor, and one member of the Committee Chair Council after the close of the election process. The election results shall be written for the record, and signed and dated by all who were present for the counting of the ballots.

2) An official list containing the names of all newly elected officers shall be published within 24 hours of the ballots being counted.

Section 8: Installation of Officers

Newly elected officers shall be installed within thirty, (30) days after the date of election of new officers.

Section 9: Term of offices
The terms of the office shall last for one year starting on the date of installation (30 days after the date of election of new officers) and end upon the installation of new officers the following calendar year.

ARTICLE VIII-CONVENTION DELEGATES

Section 1 - Duties

The Convention Delegate(s) shall:
1) Attend the Regional and/or National BLSA Conventions and shall represent the interests of The University of the Tennessee BLSA Chapter.
2) Provide a full report of Convention highlights and financial expenses to the general body at the first meeting following the conclusion of each Convention.

Section 2: Selection of Delegate(s)
1) The Executive Committee shall select the delegate(s) based on the following criteria
   a) meeting attendance;
   b) active involvement in BLSA sponsored activities.

2) The number of delegates selected to attend the Convention shall correspond to the total number of votes that the Chapter has on the Regional or National convention level.

ARTICLE IX- AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to the Constitution may be suggested by motion during a general body meeting. An amendment may be passed upon two-thirds vote of the general body, and shall be subject to the veto of the President. A renewed motion regarding the amendment upon two-thirds vote of the general body shall override the President’s veto. When so approved, such amendment shall be effective as soon as adopted, unless otherwise provided by the amendment. Notice of the proposed amendment shall be posted or placed in each member’s mailbox at least five (5) days before the amendment is offered.

ARTICLE X- RATIFICATION

Ratification of this Constitution shall be a two-thirds vote of those GENERAL BODY MEMBERS voting at a special meeting called for the purpose of ratification. A quorum to ratify this Constitution must consist of 50% +1 of the General Body Membership.

ARTICLE XI – DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

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

Section 1- Removal of Elected Officers

Any member holding an elective office in this organization shall be subject for removal from office, for good and sufficient cause. Abuse of any official position, including malfeasance,
misfeasance, or nonfeasance, shall constitute good and sufficient cause for removal from office of any such officer.

Section 2-Method of Removal

1) A member holding an elective office may be expelled, suspended, or otherwise removed from office by an affirmative vote of no less than two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Board and Committee Chairs. The Presiding Officer at the meeting will require a secret ballot vote for any proposed adverse action.

2) Notice of expulsion, suspension, or removal will be given to the officer in writing.

3) Any officer who receives notice of expulsion, suspension, or removal may appeal the decision in writing within 1 week from the day the notice was received.

4) Any officer may resign at any time. Resignation must be in writing and given to the President and Faculty Advisor.

5) The Executive Board shall report all disciplinary measures to the General Body; disciplinary measures are subject to review by the General Assembly.

ARTICLE XII – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised will govern BLSA in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and any special rules of order the Chapter may adopt.