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National Black Law Students Association
www.nblsa.org

2021 National Convention
Election Rules and Procedures

March 3 - 7, 2021
HELD VIRTUALLY
Denver, Colorado

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PLEASE READ THIS PACKET IN ITS ENTIRETY

Any violations of the rules and procedures outlined in the packet may result in disqualification from candidacy

Please email elections@nblsa.org with any questions

Rules and Procedures

I. POSITIONS AVAILABLE FOR ELECTION

Any dues-paying member of an active NBLSA chapter¹ may run for office. The following NBLSA positions are eligible for election, pursuant to Article VI, Section B of the NBLSA Constitution and Article 10 of the NBLSA Bylaws:

- 1 National Chair
- 1 National Vice Chair
- 1 National Secretary
- 1 National Treasurer
- 1 National Attorney General
- 1 National Board Members-at-Large (five positions)

No candidate may run for more than one office. No individual elected to a regional position for the 2021 – 2022 academic year may run for a position on the NBLSA National Board of Directors, unless they resign immediately from their regional position before submitting their application for a national position.

To learn more about the duties of each elected position, please refer to the NBLSA [Constitution](#) and [Bylaws](#) or reach out to the person currently occupying the positions.

¹ An active chapter is defined under Article II, Section B(3)(i) of the NBLSA Constitution. To be considered a member of an active chapter, your name must be included in the chapter's membership roster.

II. CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

There are (2) ways to certify yourself as a candidate for a position on the NBLSA Executive Board:

1. Pre-Certification
2. Nomination from the floor during the National Convention

This section will cover the rules and procedures for **both**.

A. PRE-CERTIFICATION PROCESS

- i. **In General:** Any active member who completes the documentation and requirements of the pre-certification phase and the final certification phase may qualify as a candidate for the NBLSA Executive Board elections.
- ii. **Purpose of Pre-Certification Process:** Pre-Certification allows candidates to begin campaigning early through social media outlets as well as at National Convention. *See* Section III, Part B of the Election Rules and Procedures.

1. **Pre-Certification Deadline:** All materials must be submitted as one PDF document no later than **11:59 PM MST on Saturday, February 20, 2021**, via e-mail to elections@nblsa.org. Each candidate will have until **at 11:59 PM MST on Thursday, February 25, 2021**, to cure any deficiencies.

Absolutely no pre-certification applications will be accepted beyond this deadline.

- iii. **Pre-Certified Candidate Meeting:** All Pre-Certified Candidates must attend the pre-certified candidates' meeting at the National Convention a time TBA by the Chair of the Elections Committee.
- iv. **Submission Requirements:** There are five (5) submission requirements. Each member must declare their intent to run for a national position by submitting the documents below. Items 2-4 will be included in this packet.
 1. **Statement of Intent:** The statement of intent should be a maximum of one-page in length and include a photograph in the top left-hand corner. The statement of intent must include a declarative statement identifying that the applicant has read the Bylaws;

2. **Completed Application:** Including a signed Statement of Understanding of Financial Obligation. Interested parties may apply for only one position **and** must maintain constitutional eligibility requirements throughout the term of office;
3. **Signed Local Chapter Endorsement and Certification Form:**
The form should be signed by the President of the local NBLSA chapter in which you are a member and certify your good standing with the chapter. If you are the President of your local chapter, your form must be signed by the Vice-President or Treasurer. You may **not** sign the form for your candidacy;
4. **Résumé:** 1-page limit, including any NBLSA positions held at the local, regional, or national level; and
5. **Letter of Good Standing:** Letter from your law school registrar or dean certifying your enrollment and good academic standing in an accredited J.D. or L.L.M. program.

B. NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

In General. Members who do not submit the required materials for pre-certification may still become a candidate via a nomination from the floor. The rules and procedures regarding floor nominations are as follows:

- i. **Who May be Nominated from the Floor:** Members who do not submit the required materials by the pre-certification deadline may still run for an elected position. Nominations from the floor are subject to the following rule:
 1. Any registered delegate or proxy with the proper authority may nominate an **active** NBLSA member present at the National Convention for a National Officer position **unless** said position has **two (2) or more** pre-certified candidates already on the ballot.
- ii. **Time of Floor Nominations:** Floor nominations will only occur during the First Plenary Session at the National Convention unless a proper motion to reconsider floor nominations is brought before the General Assembly.
- iii. **How to Make Floor Nomination:** To make the nomination, a chapter's

delegate need only rise, be recognized, and state “I nominate _____
for the position of _____.”

No second is required. The nominator is only permitted to nominate one
person for each officer position.

- iv. **Floor Nominated Candidate Meeting:** All Floor Nominated Candidates must attend a mandatory candidates’ meeting on a date TBA by the Chair of the Elections Committee.
- v. **Deadline to Accept Floor Nomination:** Each floor nominee will have until **9:00 AM MST** on **Friday, March 5, 2021**, to accept or decline the nomination should they not be present during the time of the floor nomination.
- vi. **Submission Requirements upon Accepting a Nomination from the Floor:** If a candidate is nominated from the floor, then the nominee must meet requirements set forth above in Section A. Sub-section iv. (Submission Requirements) of this packet. Floor Nominees must submit items 1 – 4 via e-mail to elections@nblsa.org within 12 hours of accepting their nomination. Item 5 may be provided via email to elections@nblsa.org no later than **11:59 PM MST** on **Sunday, March 14, 2021**.

C. FINAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS

In General. All candidates must meet the following criteria to seek National Office:

- i. **Mandatory Candidate Meeting**
 - 1. **Mandatory Pre-Certified Candidate Meeting:** All Pre-Certified Candidates must attend the pre-certified candidates’ meeting at the National Convention at a time TBA by the Chair of the Elections Committee.
 - 2. **Mandatory Floor-Nominated Candidate Meeting:** All Floor Nominated Candidates must attend a mandatory candidates’ meeting at a time TBA by the Chair of the Elections Committee.
- ii. **Mandatory Pre-Election Meeting:** All candidates for office must also attend the pre-election meeting to be held **30 minutes** prior to

the opening of election candidate speeches.

- iii. **Submission Requirement Upon Election:** All candidates who are elected must submit any outstanding documents requested under the pre-certification requirements to the National Elections Committee, elections@nblsa.org by **11:59 PM MST** on **Sunday, March 14, 2021** to maintain your office.
- iv. **Mandatory Transition Meeting:** Any candidate elected to NBLSA National Office is required to attend the Transitional Meeting on **Sunday, March 7, 2021, Time: 1:30-2:30 PM MST**. This meeting is **mandatory**, so please make your travel arrangements accordingly.

Important Considerations.

- 1. Serving on the NBLSA Board of Directors is a **significant commitment** that requires a substantial amount of time, travel, and extracurricular work. Please factor this into your considerations when deciding to run for office.
- 2. For most positions, NBLSA **does not fund required travel**; thus, it is important that you consider all other available financial resources, such as funding from your local law school, before deciding to run.
- 3. As a member of the NBLSA Board of Directors, you **must attend four in-person meetings**, including the NBLSA Joint Board Retreat in June for which travel may be required.

III. CAMPAIGNING

A. CAMPAIGN FUND LIMITATIONS

- i. **National Chair Limit:** No candidate for the office of National Chair shall expend more than \$500, excluding travel expenses.
- ii. **Limit for all other elected Positions:** Candidates for all other positions shall not expend more than \$300, excluding travel expenses.
- iii. **In-Kind Donations:** In-kind donations will be counted toward the budget limit at the fair market value.
- iv. **Accounting of Expenditures:** All candidates must submit a detailed list of all expenditures associated with their candidacy (excluding travel expenses) for a NBLSA National Office at the mandatory candidate meeting.

B. CAMPAIGN MATERIAL APPROVAL & FURTHER LIMITATIONS

Approval of All Campaign Materials: ALL candidates for National Office must submit their campaign materials and correspondence (social media, etc.) related to their candidacy for approval by the National Elections Committee via email at elections@nblsa.org **BEFORE** disseminating it to the electorate.

- i. **Candidates must account for social media expenses:** If any candidate incurs costs related to the use of any electronic medium, these expenses must be included in their reporting of campaign expenses.
- ii. **NBLSA Regional or National Listserv:** Candidates **MAY NOT** use any official NBLSA Regional or National listserv or NBLSA-branded social networking site (e.g. regional or national Facebook groups, GroupMe, YouTube Channels, or Twitter Pages) to disseminate campaign materials.

C. CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENT RULES AND PROCEDURES

i. Local Chapter Endorsement Rules:

1. Local chapters may not publicly endorse a candidate **prior** to the commencement of National Convention.
2. Any campaign-related expenditures made by a local chapter shall be counted toward the relevant candidate's campaign fund limit and should be reported accordingly.

ii. Current National and Regional Board Member Endorsement Rules:

1. National and Regional Board members, including Regional-Elect Board members, are **prohibited** from endorsing any candidate for National office at any time prior to or during convention.
2. This rule does not include past national or regional board members.

D. DEMEANOR PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF OFFICIAL CAMPAIGNING

- i. **Verbal Announcements are allowed:** Candidates **ARE** permitted to verbally announce their intent to run for office prior to the candidate's meeting to any NBLSA member in any region.
 1. Only candidates may endorse themselves prior to the mandatory candidate meeting.
 2. Local chapters and Regions are **prohibited** from making endorsements **prior** to the National Convention.
- ii. **No Dissemination of Campaign Material prior to the Mandatory Candidate Meeting:** No candidates may disseminate printed campaign material prior to attending the appropriate mandatory candidate meeting.
 1. **Social Media for Campaigning:** Once a candidate's application has been accepted and approved by the National Elections Committee, they may use social media to advertise their candidacy.

E. DEMEANOR AFTER COMMENCEMENT OF OFFICIAL CAMPAIGNING

- i. **Campaign Materials:** Candidates are permitted to wear and distribute approved campaign materials (flyers, buttons, etc.) to attendees at the National Convention. Such materials that are intended to be distributed must be submitted for approval by the National Elections Committee.
- ii. **No Campaigning during a Plenary Session (virtually or in-person):** No campaigning may occur during a plenary session. As such, no delegate is allowed to wear or prominently display any campaign materials within 30 feet of or inside of the room where plenary sessions will be held.
- iii. **Unfair Campaign Practice:** No candidate shall engage in any unfair campaign practice including, but not limited to, violation or contempt of any campaign rule; libeling or slandering another candidate, and/or maliciously disrupting another candidate's campaign.
- iv. **Responsibility for Others Campaigning on Candidate's Behalf:** Each candidate is responsible for the activity that another undertakes directly on their behalf unless the candidate sincerely and affirmatively discourages such activity.

F. CONCLUSION OF CAMPAIGNING

All campaign materials and solicitation of votes must be taken down and cease **ONE HOUR** prior to the commencement of candidate speeches.

IV. ENFORCEMENT OF ELECTION RULES AND PROCEDURES

A. COMPLAINTS

- i. Any dues-paying NBLSA member may file a complaint with the National Elections Committee member for violations of the election rules and procedures vis email at elections@nblsa.org.

B. ENFORCEABILITY

- i. These rules will be enforced by the National Elections Committee. An investigation into any violation is the sole responsibility of the National Elections Committee. If a violation is found to have merit,

then the offending candidate will be sanctioned, including but not limited to **immediate disqualification**.

C. APPEALS

- i. Any decision made by the National Elections Committee that results in the disqualification of a candidate may be appealed as a grievance to the National Board of Directors via the National Committee on Standards and Discipline [via email to grievance@nblsa.org].

D. AMENDMENTS OF ELECTION RULES AND PROCEDURES

- i. The National Elections Committee reserves the right to amend or add to the election procedures at any time prior to the commencement of the National Convention, except such procedures outlined in the National Constitution and Bylaws.

V. DEBATES AND SPEECHES

A. CANDIDATE SPEECHES

- i. All candidates for office are required to give a speech of no more than five (5) minutes and stand for questions during the Plenary Elections session.
- ii. The order of Candidate Speeches and Questions and Answers (Q&A) will be announced at the pre-election meeting.

VI. DELEGATE VOTING PROCEDURES

A. PLENARY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ELECTION VOTING

- i. Any active chapter with a registered delegate or proxy at the National Convention who attends at least seventy-five (75) percent of the plenary sessions during the 2021 National Convention is entitled to participate in the election of the 2021-2022 NBLSA National Board of Directors.
- ii. All delegates will receive their chapter ballots and any proxy ballots prior to the commencement of candidate speeches.

B. VOTING BY PROXY

- i. In order to utilize the proxy vote procedure, please refer to the 2021 National Convention Proxy Certification Form. Please contact parliamentarian@nblsa.org if you have any questions.

C. BALLOTS & VOTING

- i. **Secret Ballot:** The election of officers is determined by secret ballot.
- ii. **Winner:** The candidate that receives the largest percentage of votes for each position will be declared the winner of the position.
- iii. **Rules for unopposed candidates:** If a candidate is unopposed, they must receive a majority of the votes in order to be declared the winner of the position.
- iv. The names of elected officers will be announced during the virtual A. J. Cooper Legacy Awards Gala held on Saturday, March 6, 2021.
- v. Every candidate may request to inspect the physical ballots submitted for the position to which they were a candidate. This request must be submitted to the National Elections Committee at elections@nblsa.org by **11:59 PM MST on Sunday, March 7, 2021.**