Good Afternoon,

My name is Brandon Cahee and I have had the pleasure of serving as the 49th National Chair of the organization for this year. It’s so erie to see that only about a year ago today, that I was sitting in the same seats as you and had the honor and privilege to have been elected to office. Now for those that don’t know, not only do I serve as National Chair, but I do work full time at the National Education Association and am also a part-time evening 4L Student at the University of Baltimore School of Law.

I am so elated and excited to have served, I can truly say that the Chair’s job is not easy and is a daunting task, but I can say that beyond all opportunities that have been afforded to me, that this has been one of the most rewarding experiences of them all. If many don’t realize, I’m the one that actually goes on our NBLSA Social Media pages to comment and share many highlights that are happening at both the regional and local level simply because of the fact that I am so proud of all of the work taking place to advance the mission of NBLSA which is to increase the number of culturally responsible Black and minority attorneys who excel academically, succeed professionally, and positively impact the community. I can say that I have been amazed at all of the work taking place and look forward and know that the valiant efforts are advancing our association forward.

At the beginning of the year, which you should be aware, when I assumed office I wanted to consider what would be a National Theme of the organization as we led for the 51st Board of Directors. The National Board in agreement moved to approve the theme below in which I am proud to say that we have beyond measure met the goals I wanted to achieve this year. Please see below for the National Theme and Context on the National Theme.

**National Theme:**

NBLSA 51

Shifting the Paradigm: Envisioning the Next 50 Years

**Vision Around the Theme:**

Leaning on our rich history and reflecting on the historical legacy of NBLSA as we enter into our 51st year of the Association, we need to lead our efforts in both new and innovative ways. Building on the foundation that has been laid over the past 50 years, the goal of the Association will be to create a paradigm shift as we envision our next 50 years.

We will make a commitment in the work that we lead to increase and engage our members and alumni, create and build tactful and strategic partnerships, transform our outreach in the community through committed acts of service, and uplift the great work of the Association through both collective action and the sharing of our narrative. In order to accomplish the great work we envision for the year, we will do so under the platform of utilizing our collective efforts from the national, regional, and local levels to support our membership and advance our efforts in the community at large. As we take on this great honor and privilege to lead the Association, we will commit to leadership through service to our members, alumni, and the community.

Overall when thinking about Shifting the Paradigm, the goal was to really think about how we can reflect on the past, but be very strategic around creating anew. This was to mean that we be innovative in all that we do to not only advance the organization, but to be able to have the organization be in such a place that it could thrive. With this in mind, we wanted to Shift the Paradigm and really hone into what really matters the most which is you, the Membership. As you will see from some of the facets we have advanced these tenets in our theme, we have truly been working to set ourselves in such a place that we can continue to advocate on behalf of our members and be strategic in the work we do.

Tenets:

* Increase and engage our members and alumni
  + Some ways in which this has been done is really thinking about what our members not only want, but need as a member of the Association. We have been strategic in all programing to engage our members and alumni in new and innovative ways.
    - For the first year we started Alumni based dues structure to ask alumni to make a pledge, so as do students, to commit to ensuring that NBLSA is able to keep advancing what we do.
    - We have considered how to host strategic programming focused around our membership and this can really be seen from the purposeful programs at National Convention that are taking place as well as other events such as our Joint Board Retreat which took place in New Orleans, as well as the week of events that took place at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference.
    - Another instance of how we were able to do such was advancing since we aren’t able to hold a lot of events at the national level, hosting national webinars in regards to pre-law engagements, career and professional development engagements and other events that we have tried to solidify how we reach our membership in new ways and engage with them to provide the utmost resources to advance their legal education.
* Create and build tactful and strategic partnerships
  + We have created so many new and strategic partnerships that have been able to lead to the opportunities we currently have. Some have been partnerships that we have engaged with to provide opportunities to advance not only the national organization, but regions as well such as partnerships with Blueprint LSAT Preparation. We have also engaged with national partners to advance our dialogue around national platforms to advance our organization.
* Transform our outreach in the community through committed acts of service
  + This year our efforts at the national level have been led in regards to acts of service in regard to ensuring that we give back and ensure that we advance our organization forward and continue towards our mission.
* Uplift the great work of the Association through both collective action and the sharing of our narrative.
  + We have full revamped our social media presence and communications platforms and have recommitted ourselves to ensuring that we share the efforts we are advancing and continually sharing the narrative of the great work our national, local, and regional levels have been doing.

Overall: This year we started off in financial setback, but overall with such tenets we have been able to consider where we have been overall and how we see ourselves going forward that advances our mission and our financial perspectives as the organization. We are not only currently stronger, but moving our association forward Shifting the Paradigm to envision the next 50 years.