

**National Black Law Students Association**

2019 National Convention **Election Rules and Procedures** March 12 - 17, 2019

*Little Rock, Arkansas*

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# Rules and Procedures

## POSITIONS AVAILABLE FOR ELECTION

Any member of an active 2018-2019 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:

𝥁 National Chair

𝥁 National Vice Chair

𝥁 National Secretary

𝥁 National Treasurer

𝥁 National Attorney General

𝥁 National Board Members-at-Large (five positions)

To learn more about the duties of each elected position, please refer to the NBLSA [Constitution](https://www.nblsa.org/governance) and [Bylaws](https://www.nblsa.org/governance) 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. In order to be considered a member of an active chapter, your name must be included in the chapter’s membership roster.

## 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**.

### PRE-CERTIFICATION PROCESS

* + - 1. **In General** Any active member who completes the documentation and requirements of the pre-certification phase and the final certification phase will qualify as a candidate for the NBLSA Executive Board.
      2. **Purpose of Pre-Certification Process** Pre-Certification allows for 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.
      3. **Pre-Certification Deadline** All materials must be submitted online as one PDF document no later than 11:59 PM EST on Thursday, February 28, 2019 via e-mail to [**elections@nblsa.org**](mailto:elections@nblsa.org) or uploaded online (<https://www.nblsa.org/convention>). Each candidate will have until **Thursday, March 7, 2019 at 11:59 PM EST** to cure any deficiencies.

No applications will be accepted beyond this deadline.

* + - 1. **Pre-Certified Candidate Meeting** All Pre-Certified Candidates must attend a pre-certified candidates meeting on **Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 8:00 AM EST.**
      2. **Submission Requirements** There are five (5) submission requirements. Each member must declare his or her 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** One-page Statement of Intent with photograph in 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 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** Form signed by the President of the local NBLSA chapter in which you are a member, certifying your good standing with the chapter. If you are the President of your local chapter, your form must be signed by the Vice- President. You may **not** sign the form for your own candidacy.
         4. **Résumé** 2-page limit, including NBLSA positions held at the local, regional, or national level;
         5. **Letter of Good Standing** Letter from your law school registrar or dean certifying your enrollment and good academic standing;

### NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

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

* + - 1. **Who May be Nominated from the Floor** Members who do not submit the required materials by the pre-certification deadline may still run for election. 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 at the National Convention for a National Officer position, **unless** said position has **two (2) or more** pre-certified candidates already on the ballot. In other words, an elected National officer position with one (1) or no pre-certified candidates is open for floor nominations.
      2. **Time of Floor Nominations** Floor nominations will occur during the First Plenary Session**, Thursday, March 14, 2019**, unless a proper motion to reconsider floor nominations is brought before the General Assembly.
      3. **How to Make Floor Nomination** To make the nomination, a chapter’s delegate need only rise 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.

* + - 1. **Floor Nominated Candidate Meeting** All Floor Nominated Candidates must attend a mandatory candidates meeting on **Thursday, March 14, 2019 at a time TBD**.
      2. **Deadline to Accept Floor Nomination** Each floor nominee will have until **7:00 AM CST** on **Friday, March 15, 2019** to accept the nomination should you not be present during the time you receive a floor nomination for an position.
      3. **Submission Requirements upon Accepting a Nomination from the Floor** In the event that a candidate is nominated from the floor, the candidate must meet requirements 1-3 set forth above in the Submission Requirements within 12 hours of accepting nomination. In other words, this year’s Floor Nominees have

until **Friday, March 15, 2019 at 7:00 AM CST** to submit required items 1-3 via e-mail to [elections@nblsa.org](mailto:elections@nblsa.org).

### FINAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS

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

* + - 1. **Mandatory Candidate’s Meeting**
         1. **Mandatory Pre-Certified Candidate Meeting.** All pre-certified candidates for office are required to attend a mandatory candidate meeting to be held at the 2018 National Convention from **8:00 AM CST – 8:45 AM CST** on **Wednesday, March 13, 2019.**
         2. **Mandatory Floor-Nominated Candidate Meeting** All candidates who are nominated from the floor must attend a mandatory candidates meeting to be held at the 2019 National Convention on **Thursday, March 14, 2019 at a time TBD which will be notified to you upon such nomination**.
      2. **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.
      3. **Running for More than One Office**
         1. No candidate may run for more than one National Office.
         2. No individual who has been elected to a regional position will be permitted to campaign or run for a position on the National Executive Board unless they resign immediately from their regional position **before** submitting their name for a National position.
      4. **Mandatory Transition Meeting** Any candidate who wins the election to NBLSA National Office is required to attend the Transitional Meeting on **Sunday, March 17, 2019, Time: 9AM**. This meeting is **mandatory**, so please make your travel arrangements accordingly.
      5. **Submission Requirement Upon Election** All candidates who are elected must submit **all** of remaining the documents requested under the pre- certification requirements to the National Elections Committee, [**elections@nblsa.org**](mailto:elections@nblsa.org) by **Thursday, March 21, 2019 at 11:59 PM CST** in order to maintain your office.
      6. **Important Considerations.**
         1. Serving on the NBLSA National Executive Board is a significant commitment which requires a substantial amount of travel and extracurricular work. Please factor this into your considerations when deciding whether to run for office.
         2. For most positions, NBLSA does not fund required travel; thus, it is important that you consider available financial resources before running for a position. The estimated cost of travel for an officer (excluding Chair and Vice-Chair) is roughly $5,000-$7,500 dollars. National Chair and Vice-Chair candidates should project travel expenses of approximately $10,000 each. Please note that any funds offered by your local law schools may be able to supplement the travel needs of such office you may be elected to.

## CAMPAIGNING

### CAMPAIGN FUND LIMITATIONS

If a candidate is under budget, they may expend additional monies up to the budget limit during the National Convention and **must** submit final receipts at the pre-election meeting.

* 1. **Accounting of Expenditures**. All candidates must submit a detailed accounting for all expenditures associated with their candidacy for a NBLSA National Office at the relevant mandatory candidate’s meeting.
  2. **National Chair Limit**. No candidate for the office of National Chair shall expend more than $1,500, excluding travel expenses.
  3. **Limit for all other elected Positions**. Candidates for all other positions shall not expend more than $1,000, excluding travel expenses.
  4. **In-Kind Donations**. In-kind donations will be counted toward the budget limit at their fair market value.

### DEMEANOR PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF OFFICIAL CAMPAIGNING

* 1. **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 the candidate may endorse himself or herself prior to the candidate’s meeting.
     2. Chapters and Regions are **prevented** from making endorsements

**prior** to the National Convention.

* 1. **No Dissemination of Campaign Material prior to the Candidate’s Meeting.** No candidate for NBLSA National Office shall disseminate printed material before the mandatory candidate’s meeting:

1. Pre-Certified Candidates -- Wednesday, March 13, 2019
2. Floor Nominated Candidates -- Thursday, March 14, 2019
   1. **Social Media Limitations on Campaigning**. After a Candidate has received notification from the 2019 Election Committee that his or her application has been accepted, he or she may use Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blogs, websites, or any other electronic method to advertise his or her candidacy.

### CAMPAIGN MATERIAL APPROVAL & FURTHER LIMITATIONS

**Approval of All Campaign Materials**. All **Pre-Certified Candidates** for National Office must submit all campaign materials and correspondence related to their candidacy to the National Elections Committee for approval **BEFORE** disseminating to the electorate. In all cases, all materials must be submitted for approval by **11:59 PM CST** on **Sunday, March 10, 2019**. Candidates will submit materials to the National Elections Committee at [elections@nblsa.org](mailto:elections@nblsa.org).

All **Floor-Nominated Candidates** must have their campaign materials approved by the Elections Committee prior to displaying or distributing any materials. Candidates will submit materials to the National Elections Committee at [elections@nblsa.org](mailto:elections@nblsa.org).

* 1. **Candidates must account for social media expenses.** If the candidate incurs any cost related to the use of electronic mediums, these expenses must be included in his or her budget.
  2. **Campaign Team**. Candidates must submit a list of campaign team members to [elections@nblsa.org](mailto:elections@nblsa.org) if any, by **11:59 PM CST** on **Sunday, March 10, 2019**.
  3. **NBLSA Regional or National Listserv**. Candidates may **not** use the official NBLSA Regional or National Listserv and may not post any campaign material to the NBLSA-branded social networking sites (e.g. local, regional, or national Facebook groups, GroupMe, YouTube Channels, or Twitter Pages). If such mediums are used to advertise your candidacy, you will receive a warning for the first infraction, and subsequent actions could lead to inability to run for the elected position.

### CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENT RULES AND PROCEDURES

* 1. **Local Chapter Endorsement Rules.**
     1. Local chapters may not **publicly** endorse a candidate **prior** to the National Convention. Local chapters may only endorse candidates after the commencement of the National Convention.
     2. Chapters endorsing a candidate are permitted to hold a chapter-specific reception at the National Convention, **but** this expenditure will count

toward the candidate’s campaign fund limit.

* 1. **Current National and Regional Board Member Endorsement Rules.**
     1. Current National and Regional Board members, as well as 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.

### DEMEANOR AFTER COMMENCEMENT OF OFFICIAL CAMPAIGNING

* 1. **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 to the National Elections Committee, who will then determine and authorize such distribution of items.
  2. **No Campaigning inside a Plenary Session**. 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.
  3. **Unfair Campaign Practices**. No candidate shall engage in any unfair campaign practice including, but not limited to, infraction or contempt of any campaign rule; libeling, or slandering another candidate, and/or maliciously disrupting another campaign.
  4. **Responsibility for Others Campaigning on Candidate’s Behalf**. Each candidate is responsible for the activity that another undertakes directly on behalf of the candidate, as if the candidate is undertaking the activity himself or herself, unless the candidate sincerely and affirmatively discourages such activity.

### TERMINATION OF CAMPAIGNING

All campaign materials and solicitation of votes must be

1. taken down and
2. cease

ONE HOUR prior to the beginning of the Candidate’s Speeches on **Friday, March 15, 2019 (this date is determinative of other business being proposed at plenary).**

## ENFORCEMENT OF ELECTION RULES AND PROCEDURES

### COMPLAINTS

* 1. Any NBLSA member may file a complaint with any National Elections Committee member for violation of election rules and procedures by sending an email to [elections@nblsa.org](mailto:elections@nblsa.org).

### ENFORCEABILITY

* 1. These rules will be enforced by the Elections Committee. Investigation into any violation is the sole responsibility of the Elections Committee. If a violation is found to have merit, the offending candidate will be sanctioned, including but not limited **immediate disqualification**. The rules are an effort to achieve the goals and principles of NBLSA.

### APPEALS

* 1. 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 [vice-chair@nblsa.org](mailto:vice-chair@nblsa.org) and [secretary@nblsa.org](mailto:secretary@nblsa.org)]

### AMENDMENTS OF ELECTION RULES AND PROCEDURES

* 1. The National Elections Committee reserves the right to amend or add to the election procedures at any time before the annual meeting, except for procedures outlined in the National Constitution and Bylaws.

## DEBATES AND SPEECHES

### DEBATE FOR CANDIDATES

* 1. All candidates for any position must participate in at least one debate to be held at the National Convention.

### CANDIDATE SPEECHES

* 1. 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.

### ORDER OF SPEECHES

* 1. The order of Candidate Speeches and Questions and Answers (Q&A) will be determined after the Mandatory Candidates Meeting(s), but **prior** to the pre- election meeting to best accommodate the needs of all candidates.

## DELEGATE VOTING PROCEDURES

### PLENARY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS ON ELECTION VOTING

* 1. Any active chapter with a registered delegate or proxy for the National Convention who attends at least seventy-five (75) percent of the plenary sessions during the 2019 National Convention is entitled to participate in the election of the 2019-2020 NBLSA National Officers.
  2. All delegates will receive their chapter ballot and all relevant proxy ballots prior to the commencement of candidate speeches.

### VOTING BY PROXY

* 1. In order to utilize the proxy vote procedure, please refer to the 2019 National Convention Proxy Certification Form. Contact [membership@nblsa.org](mailto:membership@nblsa.org) or [parliamentarian@nblsa.org](mailto:parliamentarian@nblsa.org) you have any quest

### BALLOT COUNT

* 1. **Secret Ballot**. The election of officers is determined by secret ballot.
  2. **Winner**. The candidate that receives the largest percentage of votes for the position will be declared the winner of the position.
  3. **Rules for unopposed candidates.** If a candidate is unopposed, he or she must receive a majority of the votes in order to be declared the winner of the position.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2019-2020 NBLSA ELECTED OFFICIALS

The names of elected officers will be announced during the 2019 NBLSA National Awards Gala held on Saturday, March 16, 2019 in Little Rock, Arkansas.

## INSPECTION OF BALLOTS

Every candidate has a right to inspect all the physical ballots submitted for the position to which (s)he was a candidate, before the close of the National Convention.

## Election Procedure Calendar

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sunday** | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** | **Saturday** |
|  |  |  |  |  | Jan. 11  Pre-Certification Application Packet and Procedures Released |  |
| Feb. 24 | Feb. 25 | Feb. 26 | Feb. 27 | Feb. 28  Deadline to submit pre- certification application at 11:59 PM CST | Mar. 1 | Mar. 2 |
| Mar. 3 | Mar. 4. | Mar. 5 | Mar. 6 | Mar. 7  Deadline to cure deficiencies in pre-certification application at 11:59 PM CST | Mar. 8 | Mar. 9 |
| Mar. 10 | Mar. 11 | Mar. 12 | Mar. 13 | Mar. 14 | Mar. 15 | Mar. 16 |
| Pre-Certified Candidates  Deadline to submit a list of campaign team members at 11:59 PM CST  Deadline to submit all campaign materials and correspondences related to their candidacy at 11:59 PM CST  \*reminder daylight savings time begins- “spring forward” 1 hour |  | First Day of the 2018 National Convention | Mandatory Candidates Meeting for Pre-Certified Candidates at 8:00 AM CST -  8:45 AM CST  Meet the 2018-  2019 NBLSA  National Board Networking Break. TIME: TBD | National Board Floor Nomination at Time: TBD  during **Plenary Session I**    Mandatory Candidates Meeting for Floor Nominated Candidates at Time: TBD | Candidates Speeches, Q&A Time: TBD **Plenary Session III** | Candidates Speeches, Q&A and voting at 9:00 AM CST  during **Plenary Session IV**  **(If necessary)**  Election winners announced during Annual Gala at 7:00 PM CST |
| Mar. 17 | Mar. 18 | Mar. 19 | Mar. 20 | Mar. 21 | Mar. 22 | Mar. 23 |
| NBLSA Transition Meeting at  TIME: 9:00 AM CST |  |  |  | Deadline to submit application and cure deficiencies post-election at 11:59 PM CST |  |  |

\*\**The 2018-2019 National Board reserves the right to extend or alter the dates above if deemed necessary.*