Mid-Atlantic Regional Board Policies and Procedures

§ I. BOARD POWERS & RESPONSIBILITIES

a. *Powers of the MABLSA Regional Board*

The business of the Mid-Atlantic Black Law Students Association (MABLSA) shall be transacted by a Regional Executive Board, comprised of no fewer than the officers stipulated by Article V, Section A, Subsection 4 of the Constitution of the National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA). Said officers shall constitute the voting members of the Regional Board. Further Regional Board members may be created by the National General Assembly, the Regional Assembly, or the Regional Executive Board, but shall have no inherent vote except as authorized by NBLSA policy. References to "the Board" throughout the Manual shall encompass all voting and non-voting members thereof.

The Board shall collectively exercise responsibility for the oversight of the Region's programming, initiatives, operations, and fiscal fortitude, as well as regional and chapter compliance with NBLSA policy.

Exercising its powers of responsibility for the Region, the Regional Board:

1. Establishes Regional policies to regulate the operation, continuity, and administration of the Region, to be executed by the Regional Chair and regional executive officers, and regulate the internal operations of the Board, its committees, or any authorized programs thereof;

2. Appoints committees it deems necessary to carry out the missions, programming, and mandates of NBLSA and MABLSA;

3. Exercises oversight and evaluates the progress of the Region, set the overall policy direction, programmatic agenda, and objectives of MABLSA, and shall authorize the creation and execution of initiatives, events, and programs, receiving regular reports from the Regional Chair, Regional Vice-Chair, and other regional officers in this regard;

4. Sits as an intermediate appellate review board, hearing appeals from disciplinary actions and other grievances transacted at or issued from the Chapter level;

5. Determines question of interpretation of national and regional policy, subject to the superseding interpretations of the National Executive Board or the NBLSA General Assembly, and resolves questions of Regional officer and Board member discipline;

6. Transacts the financial, operational, and internal business of the Region, including the establishing of fiscal priorities via a Regional Budget and authorizing allocations for expenditures, subject to NBLSA financial policies and procedures;

7. Evaluates and acts upon nominations to vacant positions, as may be appointed from time to time by the Regional Chair; and,

8. Exercises all other explicit and implicit authority as granted by the NBLSA Constitution, NBLSA Bylaws, and any NBLSA General Assembly and/or Executive Board policies to accomplish the purposes for which the Region exists.

b. *Regional Board Meetings*

The power of the Regional Board shall be exercised in the context of its regular meetings, which shall be held at a time and in a method or location that shall be suitable for transacting MABLSA business and announced to Board members in advance. At no time shall the Board or any subset thereof meet or transact business at a time or place that is kept secret from the Board at large.

The following policies shall govern meetings of the MABLSA Regional Executive Board:

1. The Regional Board shall meet in-person four (4) times during each NBLSA fiscal year, with other monthly meetings being held by conference calls as determined by the Board or the Regional Chair. Written notice of the date, time and method/place of each regular meeting shall be sent to each Board members at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

2. All meetings of the MABLSA Regional Board and its committees shall be recorded in minutes and/or on audio recordings maintained by the Regional Secretary. The chair of each committee of the Board shall be responsible for recording minutes of each of its meetings and submitting them to the Regional Secretary.

3. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Regional Chair or upon the written request of any five (5) members of the Regional Board having the power the vote. Such requests shall be made to the Regional Secretary. Written notice of the time, date, and location/method of each special meeting shall be sent to all Board members at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

4. For all meetings of the Regional Board, or any subset thereof, a quorum of a majority of voting members shall be required to transact business.

5. Except as provided by NBLSA policy or applicable law, the vote of a majority of present and voting Board members at any meeting or through any voting apparatus authorized by the Board or the Regional Chair at which quorum exists shall held as a valid act of the Regional Board.

6. In the case of an absent Board member, such a member may proxy their vote to a non-voting Board member via a written statement transmitted to the Regional Chair and Regional Secretary no less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting.

7. Teleconferencing or other electronic means of communication approved by the Regional Chair or the Board can be held as official meetings of the Board or any committee thereof.

8. The parliamentary authority of all meetings of the Board, and any subset thereof, shall be the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

c. *Regional Board Committees*

1. The Regional Board shall be empowered to establish various standing and special committees so as to discharge the various decisions, programs, and initiatives of MABLSA. Each committee shall be composed of at least three (3) members of the Board and shall be headed by a committee chair, all of whom shall be appointed by the Regional Chair, where not stipulated by NBLSA policy or extant Regional Board policy.

2. All Regional Board members shall serve on at least one (1) standing committee, and may elect to serve on any other special committee, with the concurrence of the Regional Chair. The Regional Chair and Regional Vice-Chair shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees.

3. The committees of the Regional Board shall meet no less than once per month and shall report regularly on the issues, programs, and operations under its jurisdiction.

4. The standing committees of the Regional Board shall be the Finance, Membership, Programming, Regional Convention Steering, and Executive Committees. The special committees shall be the Constitution and Bylaws, Grievance, and Elections committees.

5. All committees whose mandate is not explicitly defined by these Bylaws shall be given their responsibilities by directives formulated by the Regional Chair or the Regional Board.

6. The duties of committee chairs shall be to:

    i. Preside over the meetings of the committee;
    ii. Oversee committee activities; and,
    iii. Report regularly on the activities and actions of the committee, to the Regional Chair and the Regional Board

7. The charges of the various committees shall be stipulated as Board policies, where not conflicting with extant NBLSA policy.

§ II. BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

a. *General Board Member Responsibilities*

The MABLSA Regional Board serves as the executive and administrative body of the Region and, in so doing, fulfill three roles: exercising a governance function over the Region between the meetings of the Regional Assembly, providing direct oversight over the activities of individual officers, and having input over the direction, vision, programs, and progress of the Region, subject to applicable Regional Assembly and NBLSA policies.

In these roles, members of the Board serve as fiduciaries to the members of the Region, i.e., the students and chapters at the schools affiliated with NBLSA and MABLSA, and are obligated to act in their best interest and in the best interests of the organization.

The responsibilities of MABLSA Regional Board members include, but are not limited to:

1. To uphold the legal, procedural, and fiscal responsibilities of the Regional Board and the national organization as specified in the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, and Bylaws of NBLSA;

2. To devote sufficient time and interest to the programming, strategy, and vision of the Region, and to be genuinely knowledgeable about NBLSA and MABLSA, able to convey and interpret to the public the mission, strengths, and goals thereof;

3. To attend regularly and participate actively in Board meetings, committee assignments, and programming initiatives;

4. To carry out Regional programming and National initiatives, where applicable, as well as any directives from the Regional Assembly, the Regional Board, or the Regional Chair;

5. To contribute to the cause of advancing the mission of NBLSA and MABLSA by reaching out to students, alumni, and others to support its goals through membership, financial support, or active participation; and,

6. To support the Regional Chair and other regional officers in the exercise of their Regional and, where applicable, National responsibilities.

b. *Regional Board Disciplinary Provisions*

1. Any member of the Regional Board may be subject to disciplinary action for the following offenses, including but not limited to:

    i. Misfeasance, malfeasance, and nonfeasance of duties;
    ii. The willful, reckless, or negligent misappropriation or embezzlement of MABLSA funds, or the willful, reckless or negligent authorization of the same;
    iii. Failure to execute the directives of NBLSA, the Regional Assembly, the Regional Board, or the Regional Chair;
    iv. The willful, reckless or negligent cause of damage to the reputation of MABLSA or NBLSA;
    v. Interference in or obstruction of an investigation conducted by the MABLSA or NBLSA, its officers, or its entities; or,
    vi. Failure to abide by MABLSA or NBLSA policy.

2. A grievance must be submitted in writing, with appropriate supporting documentation and proper authorities and the names of the submitting party, to the Regional Chair who shall refer the matter to the Grievance Committee.

3. A grievance shall contain the following:
    i. A short and plain statement of the facts surrounding the alleged violations of MABLSA or NBLSA policy;
    ii. A short, reasonably particular, and plain statement and citation of the specific MABLSA and/or NBLSA policies violated; and,
    iii. The signature of the complaining party or parties, signifying an affirmation of the accuracy and veracity of the allegations, to the best of their knowledge, subject to the provisions of their law school's Honor Code.

4. If a Board member has been charged by the submission of a grievance, they shall be notified in writing or by electronic communication and provided a copy of the filed grievance within 48 hours. They shall be advised, in this communication, of all policies regarding disciplinary procedures.

5. Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, the accused may submit a written Answer to the chair of the Grievance Committee, which shall contain the following:

    i. A short and plain set of statements either admitting or denying the allegations asserted in the Grievance.
    ii. A short, reasonably particular, and plain set of statements as to any defenses available under NBLSA or MABLSA policy or other explanations with any associated documentation
    iii. The signature of the responding party or parties, signifying an affirmation of the accuracy and veracity of the responses, to the best of their knowledge, subject to the provisions of NBLSA policy and their school's Honor Code.

6. Upon receipt of a Grievance, and any applicable Answers, the chair of the Grievance Committee may conduct an informal meeting with the Regional Chair and the parties to the item in question in an attempt to conciliate the issue. Parties to the issue may request such conciliation as an alternative to formal proceedings. Voluntary corrective action may be pursued in lieu of formal proceedings, but shall be evidenced as a writing agreed upon by the Regional Chair, the chair of the Grievance Committee, and the subject of the grievance. Voluntary corrective action shall be found to sufficiently resolve the complaint, and no further proceedings shall be pursued.

7. In the case of egregious actions or where conciliation has failed or is impracticable, the chair of the Grievance Committee shall convene a committee meeting within five (5) days to determine whether the grievance has sufficient evidentiary merit, reasonably interpreted with all submitted facts taken as true, for a formal hearing before the Regional Board.

8. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Grievance Committee shall be required to move forward with a formal disciplinary hearing, which shall be scheduled as an emergency meeting at the next available date. Failure to reach such a majority shall constitute an immediate dismissal of the complaint and closure of the matter alleged.

9. The Regional shall then hear from the complainant and respondent on the charges presented, with equal time allocated to each party for argument, and the Board shall have sufficient time for questioning throughout, subject to normal rules of meeting procedure.

10. After each party has been allowed to present their rationale before the Regional Board, the complainant and respondent shall be excused and the Board shall then engage in debate on whether to find the respondent “responsible” or “not responsible.”

11. A motion to find a respondent either “responsible” or “not responsible” on each charge or all charges shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Regional board. The vote shall be taken by secret ballot, unless otherwise ordered by the Board.

12. If a Board member is found responsible, they shall be excused from the meeting room while the Regional Board discusses an appropriate disciplinary sanction, which shall be suggested as a motion and shall need another two-thirds (2/3) majority to pass.

13. The presiding officer then shall inform the member of the sanction selected by the Regional Board, at which point the meeting shall be deemed adjourned. The Regional Secretary shall send a formal notification of the Regional Board’s decision to all parties, the Regional Board, and the National Chair within five (5) business days of the meeting’s adjournment.

14. Disciplinary sanctions can include, but are not limited to:

    i. Formal Censure
    ii. Suspension From Office or From Duties
    iii. Removal From Office
    iv. Referral to Law School Honor Code Proceedings

15. Disciplinary actions at the Regional level may be appealed to the NBLSA Executive Board, as may be provided under NBLSA policy.

c. *Compliance and Ethics Protocol*

1. All members of the MABLSA Regional Board, and persons acting under its authority, are required to avoid explicit and implicit conflicts of interest when voting or acting in their official capacities as representatives of the organization. If such conflicts exist, members shall exercise professional judgment and recuse themselves from action, as appropriate.

2. MABLSA, its officers, and its agents shall comply with all relevant local, state, and federal laws, as well as the regulation of any university at which a MABLSA event is held, while acting in the furtherance of MABLSA or NBLSA business.

3. MABLSA Regional Board members shall adhere to the NBLSA Compliance and Ethics Policy for all NBLSA and MABLSA matters.

§ III. BOARD OPERATIONAL POLICIES

The following policies shall govern MABLSA operations and procedures, pertaining to attendance and Regional Board performance, Regional finances, and communications.

a. *Regional Board Attendance Policy*

1. Members of the MABLSA Regional Board are expected and required to attend the following Regional meetings and events: all Regional Board in-person meetings and conference calls, the MABLSA Leadership Retreat, the MABLSA Community Service Weekend, and the MABLSA Regional Convention, in its entirety.

2. Regional officers shall also be expected to attend Regional programs or Regionally-sponsored held in the sub-region where they attend law school.

3. MABLSA Board members having knowledge that they will be or need to be absent for an academic, professional, reasonably personal, or other reason that interferes with the ability to otherwise be present must send notification one (1) week prior to the impending absence to the following officers: Regional Chair, Regional Vice Chair, Regional Chief of Staff, and Regional Secretary.

4. Voting MABLSA Board Members who will be absent from a Board meeting are required to find a proxy, i.e., someone who may vote and be counted for quorum in their absence, and submit that proxy at the same time as they submit their absence. An acceptable proxy is one of the two options: a) a non-voting Regional Board member, or b) a BLSA local chapter president.

5. Regional Board meeting attendance shall be maintained by the Regional Secretary. Chairs for each committee shall maintain the attendance for each committee meeting.

b. *Regional Board Performance Management*

1. Members of the MABLSA Regional Board are expected to perform all duties of their positions, as well as initiatives voted upon by the Regional Assembly, the Regional Board, or directed by the Regional Chair.

2. Failure to perform duties shall subject the offending officer to follow-up from the Regional Chair, Regional Vice-Chair, or Regional Chief of Staff, who shall work with the officer to create a voluntary corrective action plan. Further failures to perform shall open the member to such disciplinary actions up to and including impeachment and removal from office.

c. *Regional Board Finance Policy*

1. All Regional expenses shall be authorized by the Regional Chair and/or the Regional Treasurer, and shall conform to the NBLSA Finance Policy.

2. The Regional Treasurer shall be the Region's representative on the National Finance Committee, and shall maintain the interests of the Region in voting, advocating, and acting thereupon.

3. MABLSA Board Members having spent personal funds on authorized Regional expenses may submit such receipts to the Regional Treasurer or Regional Financial Secretary. The Regional Chair shall be the authorizing officer for any reimbursements, where permitted by NBLSA policies.

4. All contracts binding the funds of the Region shall be reviewed by the Regional Treasurer and Regional Chair. Only the Regional Chair may sign for contracts of the Region, where permitted by NBLSA policies.